

**8 Dec 09**  
**Upper Rio Grande Economic Development Council**  
**Regular Members Meeting**  
**The Hungry Logger South Fork, CO**

The meeting was called to order by President TJ Brown.

There was an initial brief discussion of how many members had obviously exercised the wisdom to not creep through the blizzard to attend the meeting. Those of us in attendance choose to believe this was not one of Mother Nature's IQ tests.

The previous meetings minutes were approved on a motion by Doug Davie and a second by Shon Davis.

The Treasurer's Report was approved on a motion by Bonnie Asplin and a second by Shon Davis.

Suzanne passed around an e-mail she had received pertaining to business loans available from [www.accionco.org](http://www.accionco.org) .

Shon presented a request from Donna Wehe who is our SBDC agent for the valley. She is looking to make her local funding more stable and reliable by requesting the URGEDC consider a \$500 annual contribution. We took it under advisement and delayed any decision until a meeting when more members are in attendance. Jim Clare suggested we consider a future discussion on our goals and objectives for fund uses. Mentioned were a second printing of the Community Profile, the data base for prospective businesses, and the locations that data base could be posted and made available.

The program was presented by Todd Wright on behalf of Rio Grande County. They have been doing a substantial amount of work on Pre-Disaster Mitigation planning. This is a process that must be in place to quickly access available FEMA funding should the need arise. Weather is the largest source of disasters and the idea is to reduce long range losses and risk. This regional plan will help coordinate all the counties, towns and cities in the Valley. One of the requirements is to show public support and involvement through meetings with each town and presentations at events. Rio Grande County is currently the lead on accomplishing this task. Organizations that have actively participated in discussing probabilities and possibilities to date are the Del Norte Fire Protection District, the Monte Vista Fire Protection District and the Monte Vista School District.

A good source of prevention will be building codes and land use decisions. The next source is public awareness. This involves natural resource protection, emergency communications, and access issues to specific regions. The obvious concerns are flooding and drainage. The school district believes that educational opportunities for students will get this information into the homes and to the parents far more effectively than some of the other options. One of the items they hope to fund is a new flood plain map. Since the existing one is so old, it is no longer accurate. Todd explained one possible solution for properties in the flood plain is hydraulic canals, which would channel water back to the drainages and rivers. He stated that Davis Engineering is currently working on some of these designs. Another issue is storm

water management in the municipalities which could include culverts to quickly divert water away from critical areas. The fire departments are interested in establishing protection plans for the urban areas as well as the rural and strongly urge the small areas that are not protected to petition into one of the fire districts.

A hydrologic study should be done to determine the peak flow at any point in our waterways. That would help determine what can be done with regard to dirt and fill, which redefines the flows. It will need to consider how to move the water through these areas and even consider new buildings being up on piers so as not to displace as much waters. The unanimous solution to communication is redundancy.

This process is available on the County webpage. You can link to it and make comments. The intention is to have a final plan adopted by all of the counties. On January 12 there will be a meeting at the Rio Grande County Annex from 1 to 5 p.m., and we are all encouraged to attend.

In local reports, Monte Vista has a new store open in their downtown. They are also making good progress on the facilities at Ski Hi Park, and everybody was reminded that Feb. 9 – 12 is the Rocky Mountain Agriculture Conference to be held at Ski Hi.

Del Norte is currently looking at all of its wells and how they might be incorporated in addition to moving forward on the Potato Co-op. The Parade of Lights and the Stuffed Stocking Auction were both well attended and successful.

South Fork reported that their budget is being affected by a weakness in sales tax revenues. They are working on annexing the River Mill area, which is owned by Kurt Carlson and will also be developed using the Smart Code. The South Fork Home Tour and Holiday Bizarre had five homes and 16 participating vendors, netting almost \$4,000. The Beaver Creek Youth Camp has a new conference facility, and having completed its infrastructure, is making it available.

Rio Grande County said that they are finalizing their budget which reflects no raises to the employees, but also no lay-offs. Attrition will be addressed in a case by case basis with regard to re-hires. The Museum Board is working to have the county museum open from Memorial Day to Labor Day. The McMillan building will remain closed except by arranged event, which will include a fee. The BOCC is not sure what next year's property taxes will represent with the current value trends.

As a wild card, it was reported that Saguache is currently working on a trail project up to their Reservoir. The downtown theater is remodeled and now open. They are having good attendance when they show movies. They have obtained a grant for Main Street remodeling.

Everybody congratulated Jim Clare on his retirement, and he mentioned his new e-mail address is [jamesc@amigo.net](mailto:jamesc@amigo.net).

On motion by Suzanne and second by Jim, the meeting was adjourned, and everybody crept back home.

Submitted, Marty Asplin