

Custer County Community Economic Development Committee
Minutes
February 25, 2008

In Attendance: Angela Arterburn, Charles Bogle, Robin Young, Lockett Pittman, Sue Pittman, Jan Lee, Dana Meek, Cindy Howard, Carole Custer, Kimberly Stein, Kathy Reis, Robert Weisenbach, Lynn Attebery, Wilbur Miller, Nora Drenner, Mike Liebman, Jerry Lacy, Jess Price, John Johnston, Kathryn Greeson, and Karen Crumbaker.

1. There was some confusion as to the list of appointed Economic Development Committee (EDC) members and those who participate in the EDC meetings on behalf of the Community Action Plan (CAP). Karen Crumbaker clarified that all members on the EDC are appointed by the Custer County Commissioners. However, there are a number of individuals who participate in the monthly EDC because of their involvement with the CAP. These people are not listed on the list of appointed Economic Development Committee Members that was handed out at the February meeting.
2. Stephanie Steffens of the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade will be at the next EDC meeting on March 31, 2008. Stephanie will be interested in the accomplishments of each team that was created during the CAP and be available to offer suggestions on resources to help accomplish goals.
3. Angie announced the upcoming Hospitality Tax seminar will be put on by the EDC and the Custer County Merchants and Chamber of Commerce. The seminar will be held March 26, 2008, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Cliff Lanes and is Free. RSVP is required by contacting the Extension office at 783-2514. This seminar/class is usually presented in Denver, so it is a good opportunity for people to take the class closer to home. **LODGING, RESTAURANTS, TOWN AND COUNTY CLERKS SHOULD ATTEND.**
4. Angie also announced that the Boat and Trade Show will be in Denver, Colorado on March 6 - 9, 2008. The Getaway group from the Chamber, as well as a couple of other volunteers, will be there on Saturday and Sunday helping with the booth.
5. Karen Crumbaker shared some Grant information she received. Extra copies were available. Anyone interested in receiving future Grant information should let Karen know and she will e-mail opportunities as they are received.
6. The four groups created from the Community Action Plan broke into work sessions. This was followed by a summary update, as follows:

~**Business and Community Development** – Community Leader: Allen Butler.

Kathy Reis provided information on the County survey being done. Out of the 6,200 survey sent out, 175 had been received to date. One week was left before the surveys were due.

Charles Bogle reported that a survey would be forthcoming from the Chamber of Commerce.

Charles also gave a report regarding the National Veteran's Cemetery effort. Custer County has been chosen as one of eleven potential sites for the Colorado National Veteran's Cemetery. A landowner in the south part of the county has offered to gift 930 acres for the site. The Committee for the National Veteran's Cemetery will visit the site within the next two months. There are ten other sites, however, Custer County is unique in that it is the largest proposed site and it does not sit on the I-25 or Highway 115 corridor. Charles reminded the group that this is a long process, which can take up to ten years to complete.

~Natural Resources – Community Leader: Robin Young

Water

Water augmentation plan final draft - Terry Skanga (Co. Water Commissioner) will submit the final draft to the commissioners for review by December. Robin will let the EDC know when that draft is in.

Agriculture

Wilbur Miller stated that we need improvements to existing hay storage facilities. The problem is there is too much moisture that ruins the hay. He had his storage area destroyed by high winds and replacement cost was \$35,000 for 75'x50' storage that has a capacity of 200 acres of hay. He would like to know if there is funding available. Robin stated that there are grant opportunities from the USDA Rural Development for agricultural needs.

Robin stated that Agriculture lands are a main source of renewable energy. This could be an alternative resource for the ranchers and a constant supply of renewable energy to the valley. The question is, "How to implement all renewable energy in Custer County?"

Forestry

Robin updated the group that the pro-bono pre-feasibility study from Biomass Energy Resource Center (BERC) for the school has been completed. The numbers from the study show that the school would save about one-half the cost in the first year. A full feasibility study is needed to determine the full savings, and that BERC is putting together a proposal for that study. Since this will cost money, Robin stated she is seeking funds for this; any help is appreciated. Money could be available through the GEO and Robin has been communicating with our area representative.

~Human Resources – Community Leader: Kimberly Stein

Kimberly Stein briefed the group on the work being done to attract a junior technical and trade school to the area. The Colorado Technical University, Pueblo is interested. However, an obstacle would be the location in Westcliffe. Wetmore would be a better site.

Kimberly reported on a grant with the Economic Development Assistance Program under the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 for distressed economies. This grant reaches out to rural counties and is a \$9.3 million dollar grant for land and infrastructure. Whether or not it is a matching grant is unknown at this time.

~Tourism and Marketing – Community Leader: Angie Arterburn

- I.D. website – Angie will be working with Elizabeth French from the Counties 211 to help with the linking to various websites.
- Visibility - The Chamber Getaway group, along with a couple of volunteers from the Chamber office, has helped with the updating of information on websites.
- Coop. This will not be done at this time. It should have been started earlier and now the Custer County Tourism Board is officially meeting and will be working on promoting Custer County.

The following members of the Marketing and Tourism committee: Cindy Howard, Dana Meek and Jan Lee would like to at this time work with some of the other areas of the Economic Development committees. Angie Arterburn and Bob Weisenbach will continue to work together on the Marketing/Tourism Committee working on information of what businesses are here and what infrastructure is here for new businesses wanting to relocate, etc.

Angie Arterburn and Carol Custer will continue to work with the Hospitality Training which will also include working with the Business Development group.

Meeting adjourned at 1:00pm

Next meeting: March 31, 2008, 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Cliff Lanes meeting room.

Respectfully submitted by:

Angela Arterburn
Robin Young
Karen Crumbaker