

Custer County Community Economic Development Committee Minutes June 30, 2008

In Attendance: Angela Arterburn, Nora Drenner, Dee Hoag, Lockett Pitman, Jim Austin, Dick Downey, Carole Custer, Jan Lee, Tom Millikan, Bob Dreher, Kimberly Stein, Charles Bogle, Bob Senderhauf, Cindy Howard, Robert Weisenbach, and Karen Crumbaker.

Following introductions, the following announcements were made:

Announcements

- Dee Hoag reported back to the Committee on a country-wide basic economic development course she attended that was hosted by Colorado State University, the Economic Development of Colorado, the International Economic Development Council, and the Jefferson Economic Council.
- Kathy Reis updated the Committee on the Business and Tourism survey the County is conducting. The results from the Business Survey have not been completed yet. The Tourism Survey results will not be available until after January 1, 2009. The survey was sent to motels, restaurants, gift shops, and is available on the Town of Westcliffe's website.
- Bob Dreher reported on the impact of veterans in Custer County. Veterans enhance the economy in Custer County. If a veteran receives benefits in Custer County, he/she is counted; the result is approximately 591 veterans. If a veteran does not receive benefits, they are not included in this number. As a result, Bob estimates there are closer to 1,100-1,200 veterans in Custer County. On another issue, Bob would like to see the Clinic accept veterans under their benefit plan. In reply to the possibility of having a Veterans Cemetery in Custer County, Bob stressed the honor it would bring to the County, as well as the economic impact.
- Charles Bogle updated the Committee on the possibility of establishing a Veterans Cemetery in Custer County. The Pikes Peak Veterans Cemetery Committee visited the proposed site on June 24, 2008. The reason for looking for a new site is that the Fort Logan Veterans Cemetery is near capacity. The Committee was impressed with the site in Custer County, commenting it was "the most beautiful site they had seen." Issues with the site were water, electricity, utilities and a road. These will need to be addressed. One criteria for the site is that it be a 100 year cemetery, with a minimum of 400-500 acres. The Custer County site meets these criteria. Five million dollars has been set aside in the 2009 budget for development of a future veterans cemetery. However, not all of the money earmarked for a cemetery is for Colorado alone.

What needs to be done next to help secure the Custer County site is to satisfy the criteria to meet the needs of the Pikes Peak Veterans Cemetery Committee. Next,

having the support of neighboring Counties is important. Finally, Charles Bogle and Robert Weisenbach are asking for help on this project. Please contact either Charles or Robert if you are willing to help with this effort.

- Robert Weisenbach updated the Committee on the activities of the Custer County Tourism Board. As of this date, no monies have been collected on behalf of the lodging tax. The Board is developing a philosophy, mission statement and marketing plan. They are also looking at how to bring in an expert in web design to enhance the existing webpage.

Break into Groups

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: Dee Hoag.

- Dee Hoag said the Tourism survey would be compiled this fall after hunting season has ended.

Natural Resources – Community Leader: Robin Young

- Lockett Pitman reported on behalf of the NR group. He encouraged all to attend the Candidate Forum on July 30, 2008 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. in the Multi Purpose Room at the school. Questions to ask the candidates should be turned in to the Chamber of Commerce by July 4, 2008.
- There will be a community meeting on the purchase of the H2O Ranch in mid-July or early August. A notice will appear in the Wet Mountain Tribune.

Human Resources – Community Leader: Kimberly Stein

- Kimberly Stein advised the Committee that Habitat for Humanity is not feasible in Custer County. However, through the Upper Arkansas Area Council of Governments, the potential to build 2-3 low income homes in the County is a strong possibility.
- Kim also informed the group on the Food Shed Alliance. The Human Resources group is researching the possibility of becoming involved.

Meeting adjourned at 1:00pm

Next meeting: August 25, 2008, 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Cliff Lanes meeting room.

Respectfully submitted by:
Karen Crumbaker