

**La Veta/Cuchara Chamber of Commerce
Board/Membership Meeting
February 2, 2009
5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
La Veta Library Community Room**

The Meeting was called to order by President Steve Perkins at 5:00 p.m.

Board/Officers Present: Steve Perkins, Liz Henson, James Cooper,
Nancy Wooldridge, Don Lowell, Dave Rinehart,
Brad Atchison, Mitzi Keairns, Chris Hudson

Board Members Absent: Tracy Webb & Rich Snyder

Others Present: See Attached Sign-In Sheet

The **Minutes of November 9, 2008** were approved as submitted upon motion by Dave Rinehart, second by Don Lowell. The new 2009 Chamber Board Members were reviewed. Board Members and Officers were elected at the December 5, 2008 Annual Meeting/Christmas Party. (See Attached for Board Members/Officers and Terms)

A Financial Update was presented by Dave Rinehart – our account balance as of 2/2/09 is \$6,310.83.

Memberships – Dave noted that \$3,580 in 2009 membership renewals has been received to date (about 50-60% renewal). We may begin telephone calls to remind and solicit more memberships. Dave noted that Premier Alfalfa (Chamber member from Hugoton, KS) sent in \$250 for their 2009 dues and offered to assist financially in the future should the Chamber need some additional funding. A thank you note will be sent to them from the Chamber. It was suggested that the Chamber look at different membership levels for 2009. Suggestions were Platinum, Silver, Bronze; Red, White & Blue. No decisions were made.

Website - Chamber website – Summer '08 averaging 200+ hits per day and January '09 receiving 120+ hits per day. Total 2008 visitors to the web site was 45,000 – up 25% from prior year. Cathy Cramer is our web master. The Chamber is looking for a “Chamber Link or Liaison” between Dave Rinehart and our web master (Cathy Cramer).

Future improvements/suggestions for website: Possible links for Art in the Park, Oktoberfest, Celtic Festival, Spanish Peaks Country. Include more information on campgrounds, parks, trails, etc.

Brochure - 15,000 brochures were printed in 2008 and distributed to surrounding visitor centers and available through La Veta Chamber members and to train visitors. The Signature and Granpa & Granma's still have 2008 brochures – we will possibly cut back

on our production for 2009. Renee Rinehart has offered to again create our Chamber brochure and should have a mock-up available for review at our next meeting. A suggestion was made to possibly delete the town map in the brochure, although no ideas were given for info to replace that space. Majority seemed to feel the map was an important part of the brochure.

Advertising/Marketing – 2008 campaign included radio advertising (KRCC-Colorado Springs and High Plains Public Radio (Oklahoma, Kansas, Texas) and newspaper advertising - Signature Summer Guide, Denver Post Travel Section. Approximately \$5,000 was spent on advertising in 2008. Grants in the amount of \$5,000 (\$2,000 COG Matching Grant & Huerfano Tourism Grant in the amount of \$3,000) were used in our marketing/advertising campaign. An additional \$500 was also received from the Tourism Council for Christmas decorating. An advertising budget for 2009 will be addressed at a later date once all membership dues are received.

Grants – The COG and Tourism Grants will be pursued again for 2009.

Tourism Feedback – Suggestions were given on obtaining feedback from our local tourists in the form of tally sheets, questionnaires, guest books and/or survey form on web site. Feedback info would include: How did you hear about La Veta? Where are you from?, etc. Brad Atchison will develop a draft tally sheet/questionnaire.

San Luis Train – It was suggested that we invite John Thomas (San Luis Train Marketing Director) to a future Chamber meeting for a brainstorming session. Prior to this meeting we will gather information on number of beds available in La Veta, lunch options, etc. Steve will confirm with The La Veta Inn as to whether they will be serving lunch this summer.

New Promotion Initiatives – Ideas and Programs - Robin Chelmiss agreed to head up a Business-to-Business Committee to develop plans to encourage groups (Patriot Riders, Auto Clubs, Bike Riders, Antiquers, etc.) to come to La Veta and offer them incentives in the form of discounts. This will be discussed further in our next meeting.

The Century Bike Ride will go forward in 2009 under the coordination and direction of the Cycle Club and Rotary. The Chamber will offer volunteer staff on call.

A **Town Map** with Chamber members will again be addressed this year. We may possibly ask the train for permission to erect the map on their right-of-way.

Phones/E-mails – Upon motion by Don Lowell and seconded by Brad Atchison, the Chamber will renew the contract with Betty Brown/Methodist Church for the answering of the Chamber phone and e-mails for the period of May – October, 2009 at the rate of \$250 per month. The motion passed unanimously. Betty is currently finishing out her current contract through April, 2009 at the rate of \$100 per month. Betty noted that monies earned under this contract go to mission work. She also noted that the bulk of the phone calls come in approximately 6 weeks prior to Oktoberfest.

Joint Community Awards-Huerfano Chamber/La Veta Chamber – Steve Perkins and Mitzi Keairns will meet with the Huerfano Chamber of Commerce to try to coordinate this event for March, 2009.

Future Chamber Board/Membership Meetings - 1st Monday of each month – Monday, March 2nd; Monday, April 6th; Monday, May 4th. Unless otherwise changed, the meetings will begin at 5:00 p.m. and be held in the Community Room of the La Veta Public Library. Upon motion by James Cooper, seconded by Don Lowell these dates were approved for future meetings.

Huerfano County Historical Society - John Carlson extended an invitation to all Chamber members to attend the monthly meetings of the Huerfano Co. Historical Society. The meetings are held the 1st Wednesday of every month at 5:30 p.m.

Grant Monies to Re-surface La Veta track – Betty Brown made note that letters of support are being solicited to supplement a grant proposal to “Great Outdoors Colorado” for the re-surfacing of our La Veta track. Letters need to be received by February 13th and directed to: George Matthews, 6917 Chipendale Drive, Ft. Worth, TX 76134.

New Business – Sam Law and Deb Lathrop announced that they will be offering tours this year at “Up Top” and noted that they will also be open as a destination venue. The chapel is already open on a daily basis for visitors. They will be looking for future volunteers.

Cuchara Recreation Co-Op – Bob Reece announced that he is working with the newly-formed Cuchara Recreation Co-Op on their public relations efforts.

Fort Francisco Days - Chris Hudson announced that the public is invited to a meeting on February 12th to offer input on Fort functions and Fort Francisco Days. There will be an effort to get more events and involvement in the upcoming year.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Elizabeth Henson, Secretary