

Meeting of Eastern Colorado Museums and Historical Societies

Saturday, April 2, 2011
Elbert County Museum – Kiowa, CO

Joe Martell (Elbert County Museum) presided as the chairman for the meeting. First order of business was to go around the room and have everyone present, introduce themselves and note which organization they were representing. There were 30 people in attendance, representing 12 different historical groups. Douglas County had representatives from 5 organizations. Meeting began at 10:00AM.

Next, each group was given an opportunity to present current projects, planned events and any other related topic. Here are brief notes from each group:

- A) Bailey Saddleland Museum (Simla, CO)
 - Don Bailey gave an explanation of how he began his saddle collection, and now it has grown into a collection of over 300 saddles, the Museum will be open to the public on weekends beginning Memorial Day weekend
- B) Castle Rock Museum and Historical Society (Castle Rock, CO)
 - Ed Hooks explained that CRM&HS will be offering a variety of activities during May 2011 to 'honor' history month, there will be scheduled Walking Tours of Downtown Castle Rock on Saturdays (check web link for details). HDC will post the dates on the website.
 - Angie DeLeo reported that the Museum has rotated artifacts that are on display and they have some newer ones to view.
- C) Cherry Creek Valley Historical Society and Melvin Schoolhouse & Museum (Aurora, CO)
 - Garry O'Hara reported that CCV was holding an open house at the Schoolhouse Museum in Aurora later today; he distributed a flyer that had directions.
 - Lee Whiteley also explained that CCV covered an area from Confluence Park in Denver to Parker as part of the 'Smoky Hill Trail', which was a portion of the Cherokee Trail that extends through Douglas and Elbert counties.
- D) Douglas County Repository (Castle Rock, CO)
 - Mark Howard explained that a group of people were on an artifact finding mission in Larkspur this morning, trying to determine a location of an old fort.
 - Norma Miller highlighted the 'virtual museum' that was created on line in 2010, and gave a brief review of the cataloguing methods used at the Repository. Many in the group share a similar problem to Douglas County, more artifacts than space available.
- E) Elbert County Historical Society & Museum (Kiowa, CO)
 - Joe Martell gave an update on how the Museum has entered into an arrangement with the Carriage Shoppes in Elizabeth, CO to display and sell books and brochures. By doing this, the Museum gift shop items are on display and for sale on a year round basis instead of seasonally.
 - The Elbert County Historical Society and Museum has recently been designated a Colorado Enterprise Zone Contribution project.
 - Joe also stated that 2011 is the 90th 'birthday' of the Museum building, which originally was a school in Kiowa. They have recently added a Teller Cage display that has original artifacts from one of the earliest banks in Kiowa.
 - Joe told the group about this year's Annual Pioneer Fourth, which is held on the 4th of July on the Museum grounds. There will be food, contests and children's activities.
- F) Historic Douglas County
 - Jim Weglarz began by answering a question that was brought up by Larry Smith of Parker. It was a 'complaint' re: the 2010 DC Fair, in respect to the flow of traffic being greatly reduced from previous years. Jim said that HDC was going to discuss this issue with the Events Center coordinator next week at the Front Range Showcase. The other

DC groups expressed the same concern about the drop in foot traffic, and whether this was going to be worthwhile event for the groups.

- Jim also highlighted the revamped HDC website, and explained to all the groups that there are 2 major features that we want to share – ‘About the West’ to list any historic group and the related website, AND the Events calendar that we can list their respective events. Any event must be submitted a HDC board member for listing on the website.
- The other item discussed, was the DC Open Space Day planned for Saturday, June 11 at Prairie Canyon Ranch. Jim encouraged the Eastern Museum group to develop a one booth display that could be shared by the various Eastern groups. This would be easier to staff VS individual booths for each group. Jim stated that the deadline for deciding on a booth was April 30th.
- Mary O’Pry distributed calendars to the groups, and explained how the sponsorship program would be ‘highlighted’ by the website sponsorship feature. Mary also outlined how HDC has a grant writing person available to assist with grant applications on a paid fee basis (not pro bono).
- Mary also stated that the theme for the 2012 DC Historical Calendar will be ‘Having Fun in Early Douglas County’ – this should be interesting.

G) Kit Carson County Carousel and Museum (Burlington, CO)

- Jo Downey and Norma Pankrantz brought many items from the Museum gift shop, the gift shop is a major revenue source for the Museum. The carousel is owned by the County, but staffed by the historical group. The cost for a single ride is 25 cents and admission to the Museum is \$ 1.
- Jo and Norma gave out several brochures and had copies of a nicely done poster (please check the group’s website for more details (www.kitcarsoncountycarousel.com)). The carousel has a great story to it, it was made in Philadelphia for Elitch garden, and sold to Kit Carson County in 1928. After being restored, it has been on display for over 35 years in Burlington, CO.
- Kit Carson is the central group for the Our Journey Packet which includes museums and historic venues in 4 counties. Jo and Norma explained how a variety of grants and other funding paid for the printed materials used in this very unique and clever program. There is a ‘Passport’ that is used and each participating location has a stamp for its assigned page. While Jo Downey is actively involved with the Carousel group, she works for East Central Council of Governments and Prairie Development Council (ECCOG/PDC). This is a state agency whose focus is on economic development and is based in Stratton, CO. ‘Our Journey’ is one of PDC’s programs and they fund, market and support this tourism initiative.

H) Larkspur Historical Society (Larkspur, CO)

- Ann Aviles gave the report for Larkspur, Ann handed out copies of the January 2011 Larkspur Newsletter, and briefly touched on the topics that were listed:
- Educational tour for Larkspur Elementary that included a tour of the Crull-Hammond cabin
- 4th of July celebration and Christmas tree lighting festival in full period costumes
- Opening of the Crull-Hammond cabin in May 2010
- Riverside cemetery walks in May and October
- Walking tour of Larkspur
- Spring Valley cemetery walk with period costumes and displays
- LHS is very active in working with Douglas County Open Space for the Greenland School, Spring Valley School and identifying work for Huntsville and Ft. Lincoln, both are ongoing projects
- Larry Schlupp has undertaken a large endeavor to digitize the many LHS books, filled with historical details of the Larkspur area
- LHS is very active in many projects throughout Douglas County

I) Lincoln County Historical Society and Hedlund House Museum (Hugo, CO)

- Dee Ann Blevins gave an overview of the historic groups in Lincoln County, there are 3 groups in Hugo: Lincoln County H/S, Hedlund House Museum (which she described as being the county museum), and the Hugo Roundhouse Restoration group. A fourth group in Lincoln County is the Limon Heritage Center Complex in Limon.
- Hedlund House was donated to the County in 1971, the Historical Society collected many of the artifacts from other county residents, and the Society staffs the museum with volunteers. The Hugo Roundhouse is just beginning the restoration phase; this will be an ongoing project for several years.
- Dee Ann and Terry Blevins had several historic books that they passed around among the group. One in particular stood out as very interesting: The Walls Talk - Historic House Museums of Colorado. Terry will email the information on how to obtain a copy.

J) Parker Area Historical Society (Parker, CO)

- Larry Smith asked a question re: attendance at the History booths at last year's DC Fair, Jim W from HDC addressed that issue. HDC will review the entrance into the Fairgrounds with the DC Event Center director.
- Parker has 2 events scheduled for this summer: Old Time Baseball Game on May 21 at Noon, and Civil War re-enactment to be scheduled in August. HDC would like to post both events on the Events Calendar.
- Parker H/S is also scheduling a walking tour of Downtown Parker on Sunday, May 15, time to be determined.
- Larry gave an update on the progress of Restoration Park, which is 2 miles north of Parker on Hwy 83. Presently, they are working to furnish a railroad coach car that was acquired. Larry said they need more seats. They have also moved an old house onto the site and this will require additional restoration work.
- Parker H/S is looking for a few items to add to the park: a windmill, any furniture items for the old house, and any railroad type items.

After all the groups had time for their updates, the group took a lunch break. After lunch, Joe Martell began an Open Discussion. First topic was how to communicate with all the groups, it was unanimously agreed that email is the preferred method, not U.S. mail. Next topic was the next meeting in October 2011. After some discussion on miles and distance, it was agreed that the next meeting will be held in Eastern Colorado. The Lincoln County H/S group volunteered to host the meeting in Hugo, CO. Meeting will be Saturday, October 1, 2011. Time and specific place will be determined at a later date.

Next topic was how to share exposure with all the groups. The Kit Carson group explained that they have distributed Carousel brochures to the CDOT rest stations in Burlington and Pueblo. It was noted that one of the best venues to have brochures is at a historic museum; the people who go to historic museums are more likely to be interested in seeing another historic venue.

Another topic that was brought up was the 'Facebook' issue, should the historic groups be listed on Facebook. One facet of this discussion centered on attracting younger people, it was agreed that younger folks relate more to Facebook than the older people. This topic will probably be an open issue for quite some time; it appears that the social media sites offer some 'pros' (attracting younger people) with some 'cons' (each group would need a dedicated person to monitor the site). TO BE CONTINUED.

Last discussion topic related to membership questions, honorary members, lifetime members, in kind membership. It appears that none of the groups rely solely on membership dues (although it helps financially). The bigger issue is what the groups can offer to encourage members to participate. Kit Carson does NOT have membership dues, but they do insist on work in kind to staff the Carousel and Museum. If someone does not meet the volunteer minimum hours, they are out. It looks like this issue is somewhat 'personal' to each group, depending on number of members, types of activity, etc.

Meeting adjourned at 1:45PM with a tour of the Elbert County Museum.