

Hotchkiss Community Chamber of Commerce

July 6, 2011 – 7:30 a.m. Hotchkiss Public Library

Present: President Nathan Sponseller (First State Bank,) Bill Long - Vice Pres. (TDS Telecom, Corresponding Secretary - Katherine Colwell (Rivendell Retreat), Rhonda Duclo- Co-Treasurer (Hotchkiss Library), Tom Wills - Recording Sec. (Wills Gallery and Used Books), Steve Ela (Ela Family Farms), Todd Sheets (Hutman Media & Delta County Tourism Cabinet), Julia Schloesser (Health and Wellness by Design), Joanne Tullis (Creamery Arts Center), Katie Gnauck (Hotchkiss Trading Company), Jessica Milstein (Slice Deli) and Marshal Dan Miller (Town of Hotchkiss).

Chamber President, Nathan Sponseller, called the meeting to order in the basement of the Hotchkiss Public Library. There were 78 paid-up members of the Chamber as of the meeting.

The minutes of the June meeting, as written by Tom and proofed and e-mailed out by Katherine, were approved on a motion by Todd Sheets. The minutes are now also available on the Hotchkiss Chamber website (www.hotchkisschamber.com).

Rhonda Duclo presented a year-to-date Treasurer's report, which was approved as presented. Total income for the year to date is \$4,416.70 and the total 2011 expenses to date were \$4120.20.

Corresponding Secretary Katherine Colwell reported that she attended Thin Air Media website classes in Delta this past month and learned a lot. For example the joint chambers website needs "meta data" added so that web search engines find us better. (Note: a Google search on the day of the meeting showed the Hotchkiss Chamber site as the number 1 result for "Hotchkiss, Colorado")

Hotchkiss Library Director, Rhonda Duclo, told the members that the Delta County Libraries will soon be offering expanded computer service within the libraries including: new laptop computers for patron use while at the library, more and newer desktop computers and more classes on using computers. Each library will also have one iPad for patron in-library use. The improvements will come through a federal stimulus funded Bridging Technology Opportunity Grant (BTOP) administered by the state.

The library offers several business-related services including a computer-based program to teach people how to prepare resumes.

Tom Wills presented a six-page Hotchkiss Business Community Master Plan Survey to those present to fill out and return. Tom, Katherine, Elsie Winne Edstrom and others have spent the month writing, proofing and tweaking the document.

The survey will also be mailed and e-mailed to members and other businesses in Hotchkiss. The survey's purpose is to gather business-related planning input that will help the Town update their 2006 Master Plan. The survey begins by asking basic questions of local business owners including listing what they think can stand some

improvement and why they choose to do business here. It then proceeds to restating business-related goals from the 2006 Hotchkiss Community Comprehensive Master Plan along with a menu of recommended actions to accomplish those goals along with some updated and new ones as well as an opportunity for people to suggest a few of their own.

The Chamber also asks members how the Chamber can best serve them. Chamber members are encouraged to fill out and return their surveys as quickly as possible.

In other discussion, Todd Sheets, the Hotchkiss area's representative on Delta County Tourism Cabinet asked if the Chamber would be willing to endorse the idea of the County hiring a fulltime Tourism and Activities Coordinator. Sheets asked that the Chamber send a letter of support of the idea to the Delta County Commissioners. This position, if funded, would possibly be filled by current part-time Tourism Coordinator, Kelli Hepler, who Sheets said (officially) works for the county 15 hours per week. The tourism work of Hepler and the Tourism Cabinet is currently funded by a countywide 1.9% lodging tax collected by hotels, motels, lodges and bed and breakfasts.

After some consideration it was decided to notify the membership of the idea of a letter of support for creating the position and then decide whether or not to approve of it at the August meeting.

Bill Long reported that the Town has Okayed a building permit for the visitor's center roof and Mountaintop Coatings of Paonia will begin work next week. Funding for the project will come from the Chamber's special projects account.

There was a discussion of developing a Business After Hours policy and the purpose for Business After Hours. It was suggested that the Chamber actively support (e-mail notification to members etc.) no more than one BAH per month and make sure there is a reasonable amount of lead-time. Nathan will write something up and have the officers review it.

Joanne Tullis announced that the North Fork 20/20's Creative Coalition has received a \$1,000 grant to develop a marketing plan.

The next Chamber Meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 3 at 7:30 a.m. in the basement of the Hotchkiss Public Library.

Respectfully submitted by Tom Wills - Recording Secretary