

Hotchkiss Community Chamber of Commerce

June 1, 2011 – 7:30 a.m. Hotchkiss Public Library

Present: President Nathan Sponseller (First State Bank,) Corresponding Secretary - Katherine Colwell (Rivendell Retreat), Co-Treasurer - Rhonda Duclou (Hotchkiss Library), Co-Treasurer, Gloria Crank (North Fork Merchant Herald), Recording Sec. – Tom Wills (Wills Gallery and Used Books), Elsie Edstrom (The Rose), Todd Sheets (Huttman Media & Delta County Tourism Board) Katie Gnauck (Hotchkiss Trading Company) 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 77 paid-up members of the Chamber as of the meeting.

The minutes of the May meeting as e-mailed out by Katherine were approved. She announced that the minutes are now also available on the Hotchkiss Chamber website (www.hotchkisschamber.com).

Katherine updated the members on her continuing work on the Chamber's website including the addition of the meeting minutes located as a menu item under the "home" button. Soon there will be a "membership" button. Katherine continues to do a lot of the day-to-day heavy lifting in improving Chamber service to the members. Nathan complimented her on her valuable work and dedication.

Nathan announced that the Creamery would like to have a Business After Hours on July 8th and North Fork Family Dentistry has tentatively scheduled a Business After Hours event for August 12. Both of those would happen as part of the Hotchkiss is Happening! Second Friday (5-7) evenings.

Briscoe and Associates will stay open from 5-7 p.m. during the June 10th "Hotchkiss is Happening!" for a Business After Hours to introduce new attorney associate, Sandra Nettleton, to the community.

There was a discussion of the community events calendar on the website. It was agreed that the Chamber should continue to maintain it's own calendar. The issue of what should be on it was discussed and the general consensus was that to keep it readable just North Fork Valley events and meetings should be listed. Members are encouraged to look closely at the on-line calendar and send any comments, and event items for posting, to Katherine at: chamberinfo@hotchkisschamber.com. Gloria said that the North Fork Merchant Herald is also compiling a comprehensive local calendar at www.merchantherald.com

There was an after-the-event discussion of the Hotchkiss Sheepcamp Stockdog Trials. It continues to be a spring boost to the town but benefited some businesses more than others. There seemed to be more yard sales and people attending them this year.

This led to more talk about a need for more and different events and how the Chamber might encourage more events to locate in Hotchkiss, and possibly making use of the Fairgrounds. Maybe something involving local food and wine?

Tom presented a proposal that the Chamber survey its members in order to collect information and input to be presented to the Town of Hotchkiss during their update and revision of the 2006 Hotchkiss Community Master Plan. Everyone agreed it was a positive thing to do. Tom said that the survey should ask members what the Town should be doing in regard to three goal/themes in the Plan: Economic Development, Downtown Business Center and Tourism. Among other things the

current plan contains the recommendation to develop a downtown streetscape plan including trees, planters and additional traffic safety items. This might be a good time to ask about the specifics of that as well for idea on how the Chamber and Town can better work together.

Tom will draft a survey and Elsie will help copy edit, the officers will review it and the initial result will be presented at the July meeting. The goal is to have the survey mailed and returned, the results tabulated and presented to the Town by sometime in September. Members are also encouraged to send individual comments in to the Town during their input period this summer. E-Mail: clerk@townofhotchkiss.com What do you like about the town? What could be improved? What is important to accomplish over the next 10 years?

There was discussion of whether the survey should include businesses that are not members or not located inside Hotchkiss (but in the immediate area) and the consensus seemed to be to try to include as much as possible all businesses with an interest and ideas.

Todd wondered if something could be done about road-killed animals, specifically the deer left on the side of the main highway. CDOT apparently does not pick them up as promptly as they used to. There has been a deer on the west Hotchkiss grade for some time.

Elsie Edstrom, who chairs the Downtown Merchants' Committee, reported that getting everything done each month for the "*Hotchkiss is Happening!*" events is taking up more time than the business owners sometimes have. She wondered if the Chamber would consider hiring someone to help coordinate the event. The Chamber has contributed \$300 so far for advertising help.

There was some discussion of the previous idea of the Hotchkiss and Paonia Chambers sharing a part-time paid position to do things like event coordination and website maintenance. Current budget limitations make actually doing that a challenge.

This topic then led to a far ranging discussion of how the Chamber could or should focus differently. Should the Chamber just help with business-positive projects that are brought to them or should the Chamber be more proactive in creating such projects?

The next regular meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 6, at 7:30 a.m. in the basement of the Hotchkiss Public Library.

Respectfully submitted, Tom Wills – Recording Secretary.