

Hotchkiss Community Chamber of Commerce

Monthly membership meeting

August 3, 2011 – 7:30 a.m. Hotchkiss Public Library

Present: President Nathan Sponseller (First State Bank,) Corresponding Secretary - Katherine Colwell (Rivendell Retreat), Treasurer -Rhonda Duclo (Hotchkiss Library), Recording Sec. – Tom Wills (Wills Gallery and Used Books), Steve Ela (Ela Family Farms), Katie Gnauck (Hotchkiss Trading Company) and DMC chair- Elsie Winne Edstrom (The Rose).

Chamber President, Nathan Sponseller, called the meeting to order in the basement of the Hotchkiss Public Library. There were 79 paid-up members of the Chamber as of the meeting.

The **minutes** of the May meeting as written by Tom, and proofed and e-mailed out by Katherine, were approved. She reminded everyone that the new Business-After-Hours policy as well as the minutes are now available on the Hotchkiss Chamber website (www.hotchkisschamber.com).

Rhonda presented the **Treasurer's** report in the form of income and expenses to date. Expenses to date come to \$4,687.50 with income from the year at \$4,544.70. The checking account has a carryover balance of \$4,132.73 and Special Projects has a balance of \$6,977.02. It was observed that spending for the remainder of the year will have to be somewhat restrained.

Corresponding Secretary: Katherine updated the members on her continuing work on the Chamber's website as well as the day-to-day responding to inquiries coming in to the Chamber. Katherine and Nathan will meet with Ethel of the Paonia Chamber to discuss ongoing website issues.

Surveys: Tom reported that he had completed tabulation of the Business Master Plan surveys received so far and would produce a copy with the vote numbers inserted, all written comments transposed and will also write a narrative summary of the results both for the Town and for the Chamber.

Tom summarized the results so far as: Businesses see “small town atmosphere” as the most important reason they live and do business in the Hotchkiss area, business people still want to see a downtown streetscape/improvement plan but some wonder how to fund the costs, and business people support the goal statements relating to economic/ downtown development and tourism. Transportation issues such as street and sidewalk maintenance and bike paths were highest among areas needing improvement.

Members are urged to get their late surveys in before August 17th.

Visitor's Center Roof - It was announced that the roof of the Visitors Center had been redone and payment to the contractor had been approved by the officers. Funds will be paid from the Special Projects account.

A letter of support for the hiring of a full time Delta County Tourism Coordinator was approved to be sent to the Board of County Commissioners. The membership was notified of the position vote last month. Katherine made the motion seconded by Katie with all in favor. Nathan will draft and send the letter.

October 22 Business/Joint-Chamber symposium. Nathan announced that the officers had discussed what the Chamber could do for an October business symposium. It is our turn to do one. Rhonda will book Memorial Hall for the morning and afternoon of Saturday, October 22 (9-1 time tentatively).

It was agreed that the theme of “Local Business Meets Local Government,” would be timely. The idea would be to have representatives from each town, and the County, giving short presentations on how their planning meshes with economic development and support of existing businesses, and then perhaps having a mix of panel discussions and town-specific break-out groups so that individual business communities could discuss issues with their town representatives, as well as having discussions of issues that all three towns and general valley-wide business community shares.

Tom suggested asking Oxbow Mining to do a lunchtime presentation at the symposium on issues related to their ongoing Oak Mesa Project. In a discussion including Steve Ela whose organic orchard is just south of the proposed mine/coal access route, it was suggested that Oxbow be asked to talk about early thoughts on how their new mine and access would mesh with the valuable organic farming region on Rogers Mesa. How one very important local industry (coal) would respect another (organic, value-added farms and orchards). Perhaps even support and accentuate one another.

Recently the Chamber has been receiving additional support and membership from the local organic/natural farming community. It was agreed that the proper role of the Chamber included providing a neutral forum to facilitate initial, positive discussion on the issues.

Tom will write up a rough agenda and proposal for the symposium and submit it to the officers. Possible participants will then be contacted so they can plan for the date and help the Chamber with presentation details.

Downtown Merchant’s Committee – Holiday promotion/Craft Fair. Rhonda agreed to head up an expanded two-day Hotchkiss Chamber Arts, Crafts and Business Fair on November 18 and 19 (the weekend before Thanksgiving). Tom will talk to the Downtown Merchant Committee about coordinating the November *Hotchkiss is Happening!* event with that date, plus whatever else the committee has in mind for the holidays.

It was announced that the August *Hotchkiss is Happening* Event will take place on August 12, 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. during the Fair. The Pack Shack (next to the Coaltrain Coffeehouse) will host live music as well as a fundraiser for the Hotchkiss High School Cheerleaders. Other businesses will be open for the extra hours with special sales and more prior to the Ranch Rodeo at the Fair.

The next regular member meeting will be in the Hotchkiss Library basement on Wednesday, September 7 ay 7:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted, Tom Wills –Recording Secretary.