

# Meeting of Eastern Colorado Museums and Historical Societies

Saturday, October 1, 2011

Lincoln County's Hedlund House Museum – Hugo, CO

Dee Ann Blevins (Hedlund House Museum) presided as the chairman for the fall meeting of the Eastern Colorado Museum's and Historical Societies (ECM&HS). The meeting began at 10:00AM. First order of business was to go around the room and have everyone introduce themselves and note which organization they were representing. There were 15 people in attendance, representing 10 different historical groups.

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) Arriba Museum (Arriba, CO)

- Eunice Burge announced that the museum has moved into the town hall as a result of Bob and Shirley Coulson moving out of state. To celebrate the new location, the museum hosted a reception this summer that welcomed 40 plus visitors.
- They constructed wall panels to display their photographs, in addition to adding a digital frame that contains 200 pictures.

B) Cherry Creek Valley Historical Society and Melvin Schoolhouse & Museum (Aurora, CO)

- Lee Whiteley reported that CCVHS holds quarterly meetings, and that they are continuing to work on developing and interpreting the 17 mile house historic site.
- He announced that the Smoky Hill Trail Association Convention will be in Oakley, KS this fall and that an article recently appeared in Colorado Heritage (Colorado Historical Society's magazine) on the Leavenworth Pikes Peak Express.

C) Elbert County Historical Society & Museum (Kiowa, CO)

- Carla Martell explained that attendance had been good this year and that a number of school and group tours had been given.
- Lucy Hoffhines described the summer exhibit on tools and how it had brought a lot of interaction from the community. Attendance this summer was around 700 visitors.
- Cindy and Gerry Taylor talked about the town festivals that ECHS attended during the summer. They explained how they had brought tools from the main exhibit and how that had generated interest in the museum.
- Joe Martell described the changes that ECHS started implementing this summer which included: developing a museum season sponsorship program, adding a "volunteer" tier to their existing levels of membership and he passed around copies of their new donation brochure that addresses frequently asked questions about artifact donations.

D) Douglas County Repository (Castle Rock, CO)

- Joe Martell read an email on behalf of Mark Howard. Mark reported that this year he and others are hoping to focus on recruiting and working with young people and the DC school system to heighten the awareness of local and state history as well as finding ways for young folks to have some sort of hands on interaction.
- Another project via Mark and several volunteers is to establish a para training program to interested dedicated volunteers and law enforcement to monitor sites and what to look for regarding looting and or vandalism. Law enforcement would not monitor, volunteers would.
- He also encouraged the other museums to research the idea of salvaging the prehistoric artifacts in their counties much like they did in Douglas and Elbert County.

E) Historic Douglas County (Castle Rock, CO)

- Mary O'Pry announced that HDC's website is up and running. They have links to area historic groups and a calendar of events that is updated regularly.

- In the spring they participated in the Front Range Showcase -an event that promotes area business. Approximately 90 businesses were in attendance.
  - Open Space Day at Prairie Canyon Ranch was in June and HDC was there promoting the different historic groups. Mary reported that HDC is excited to announce they are co-hosting the event next year and are hoping to make this their premier annual event.
  - HDC had a booth at the Douglas County Fair in August, where they promoted 7 other groups as well as the *Our Journey* program. Their 2012 calendar were also unveiled at the fair.
- F) Kit Carson County Carousel and Museum (Burlington, CO)
- Jo Downey announced that the KCCC hosted the National Carousel Convention this summer. Visitors from the convention really gave a heightened boost to their gift shop.
  - Jo reported that the *Our Journey* program had its best year yet as far as expressed interest in packets; however most attractions reported attendance numbers were down. Arriba, Genoa and the clown museum brochures were added to this year's packet.
  - Channel 4's *Colorado Getaways* filmed half of the *Our Journey* attractions this year.
  - *Our Journey* is exploring a one-on-one bus trips excursion for next summer.
- G) Lincoln County's Hedlund House Museum (Hugo, CO)
- Terry Blevins reported that they had the most advertising they've ever received, and yet had one of the poorest visitor attendances this summer. However, over the summer they were able to work on organizing and preserving materials that have previously been neglected.
  - Dee Ann Blevins was pleased to announce that the Lincoln County Tourism Board funded moving the caboos from Burlington to Hugo's roundhouse. Norma Pankrantz and the City of Burlington helped to make the move possible.
- H) Lincoln County Historical Society (Hugo, CO)
- John LaBorde announced that LCHS had introduced a successful speaker program this summer ranging from trails to yucca plants. Attendance brought people from outside the area -as far away as Denver. Door prizes at these events included related books.
- I) Parker Area Historical Society (Parker, CO)
- Larry Smith announced that they had changed displays for Parker Days and this year's displays focused on the beauty shops.
  - PAHS is concerned about the future of their museum space because the building they are currently in is up for sale.
  - They sponsored an old time baseball game that was very successful and was well attended -about 400 people. Larry reported that the state antique baseball association was impressed by the event and PAHS hopes to expand it to a 2 day event next year.
  - Their Civil War reenactment was well attended but didn't have the same kind of attendance as last year. As a result, they may try to hold this event every other year.
  - PAHS prints their own calendars but have a limited window to sell them each year.

After everyone had given their updates, the group took a lunch break. After lunch, Dee Ann Blevins began an Open Discussion. First topic was setting dates and locations for the 2012 spring and fall meetings. Historic Douglas County, Inc. volunteered to host the spring meeting in Douglas County on Saturday, April 7, 2012. The fall meeting will be in Burlington, Colorado on Saturday, October 6, 2012.

Dee Ann asked the group if anyone had suggestions for companies to contact whenever plaques or signs are needed. Jo recommended Rand Hood with Visual West in Larkspur.

The next topic was how best to communicate concerns and/or needs between the groups. John suggested starting a Yahoo or Google group where organizations could post inquiries, questions, etc., into a general forum. Mary mentioned that HDC's website might possibly be used for such a forum; she

will look into that and let Joe know what she finds out. A third option was that such inquiries or questions could be emailed to a designated individual who would then forward to the entire group.

Another topic discussed was defining ECM&HS's boundaries. A concern shared among those present was that without a defined boundary the group could become too spread out to really benefit anyone. Joe stated that ECHS's original intent for this forum was to network the museums and historical societies in the *Our Journey* program (Cheyenne, Elbert, Kit Carson and Lincoln Counties) with its neighbors in Arapahoe, Douglas and El Paso Counties. It was agreed that while we welcome interaction from groups outside our region, it would be most beneficial to retain the existing boundary.

Lucy encouraged the groups to speak with antique stores in their own communities to inquire about marketing their gift shop items during the off season as a means for additional exposure. Larry noted that PAHS has done this for years and it has worked out very well for them.

John asked if Lee would be interested in giving regional bus tours. Lee said he would be willing to be a speaker for such an excursion if the tours were organized by someone other than himself.

Meeting adjourned at 1:30PM with a tour of the courthouse room in the Old Hugo Depot followed by the Hedlund House Museum.