



Volume 6, Issue 1

January 2009

Officers

President

BB Hahn.....(719) 676-2324

Vice President

Jim Miller.....(719) 676-4487

Secretary

Steve Adams(719) 676-2725

Treasurer

Jeanette Bogren ..(719) 676-2330

Member at Large

Mark Gose.....(719) 676-3249

Important dates!

January 31, 2009

**Deadline for dues
and assessments**

July 11, 2009

1:30PM

**Annual Meeting
Craver Middle School
Colorado City**

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*Page 5 of the newsletter is on
the back of the assessment.*

East Hatchet Ranch Home Owners Association, Inc.

President's Letter

Greetings from a warm and dry East Hatchet Ranch, and a hearty welcome to our newest residents and land owners.

After a lengthy winter with cold temperatures, drought conditions began with summer. This fall has been wonderfully warm and long, but the moisture falls far short of the norm. The NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) forecast for December through February stands at more than 33% warmer than normal. Roads are being well-maintained, but we must wait for rain/snow before roads can be graded, so they get wash-boarded quickly. Please have patience; our contractor grades and improves the roads as weather permits. Our thanks to the Road Committee.

With drought comes the possibility of wildfires. Rye Fire Protection District formally turned down our petition(s) for inclusion on June 12, 2008. Since August 12, 2008, the Board has been working diligently with GCC, the cement plant south of Pueblo, which formed a coalition of GCC and every subdivision south to Sikes Ranch, just south of East Hatchet. The coalition presented our plight to the County Commissioners on 10-30-08. At that meeting, the Commissioners requested the coalition come back with a firm plan, and then they would look at its feasibility. Your Board is also looking into fall-back options, should this plan somehow fail. As of 12-18-08, Gina Facca of GCC has left messages with the Sheriff's and Commissioner Cordova's offices to schedule a meeting of the Coalition. They have not yet returned her calls.

In the past year, your Board has faced illegal tree cutting, theft of our contractor's equipment, the issue of motorbikes and ATVs on our roads and properties, noxious weed queries, and various covenant and zoning issues. Let us know how we're doing!

Our major mission in the next few months is to define what the Board's responsibilities actually include. Of course, road main-

tenance and repairs are top priority; however, some feel that this is our only duty. Dr. Mark Gose, our Member at Large, has talked with an attorney who opined that tethering the Board to just the roads is "ludicrous" [the attorney's word]. So, we are broadening our horizons to include Fire and Emergency Medical Protection, and anything else that may affect our community as a whole. I'd like to hear your comments on this, so please email or call me or another Board member to let us know how you feel. If necessary, we will seek a written opinion from an attorney not involved with East Hatchet or its former owners, to put the matter to rest.

The Board will also be investigating avenues of approach for future revenue sources. As prices for fuel, gravel, rotomill material, and labor increase, we feel it is extremely important to be prepared for that future.

At our annual meeting in July of 2009, we'll be electing three new members to the Board of Directors. Please attend so that your voice will be heard and your vote counted; a quorum is necessary to do business other than approving the budget. Keep in mind that becoming involved in the HOA is a great way to meet people, do good things for our ranch, and feel good about yourself!

Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call or e-mail any Board member. Each of us is dedicated to responding promptly, and to continue our Open Board Policy.

May you and your families have a blessed holiday, and a healthy, prosperous new year. Hope to see you in July, if not before.

Best regards,
BB Hahn, President

**Slow Down, Keep Right,
&
Yield to Uphill Traffic**

The Inside Dirt from Your Road Committee

The goal of the Road Committee (RC) is to insure access to all properties on the ranch by maintaining, repairing, and restoring the roads as necessary. As everyone should be aware, the primary reason for the creation of the homeowner's association was for the care and maintenance of the non-public roads within our development. Besides affecting driving conditions, good roads also contribute to preserving property values.

Membership

The RC currently has 8 members – property owners who donate their own time, transportation, etc., in order to help maintain the 48 plus miles of roads in our community. There have been 5 formal meetings this year and the minutes have been posted on the HOA web-site. As this committee is made up entirely of volunteers, we welcome everyone who would like to participate. The only requirements are a willingness to get involved and a desire to keep Hatchet Ranch looking good. This is a great opportunity to meet new people and be part of the team serving our community. If interested, please contact Jim Elliott (719)676-5108 (helenell@daeo.net) or Ted Christakes (719)676-2773 (tchrista@ghvalley.net) for times and dates of our next meeting.

Following are some of the RC's accomplishments during the 2008 calendar year:

Regular Maintenance

The sharp increase in fuel costs this past year also affected our expenses. To keep these added costs at a minimum, the RC and our contractor, All Seasons Excavating, have continued to improve efficiencies. Rather than try to adhere to a strict time schedule, the road grading was performed to more closely coincide with weather and moisture conditions. The optimum time to grade is immediately following precipitation when the road base still has some moisture. Our contractor is very responsive to this and has recently purchased a second motor grader. Both graders are normally parked on the ranch so they can be put into action at short notice.

Major Projects and Repairs

- 1] - Early this summer, a heavy rain deposited debris, consisting mainly of large tree trunks and branches in Muddy Creek under the bridge on Greenhorn Creek Drive. Upon inspection, it was discovered that the ground under one of the bridge's main support pillars was badly eroded and, if left unrepaired, could have led to a catastrophic bridge failure. After the debris was removed, and excavation performed, concrete was used to rebuild the base of the pillar. The bank was then lined with 12 "dead-man" concrete blocks to form a diversion from future erosion.
- 2] - Later this summer, a heavy rainfall caused minor washouts and undercut two concrete crossings - one on Wildflower Road and the other on Rail Road Springs Drive. As an interim repair, heavy rock was brought in to backfill until more permanent repairs can be undertaken.
- 3] - In response to requests from several property owners after the sale of the ranch house closed that location for parking, a small parking area was added on the side of Greenhorn Creek Drive just north of the mailboxes.
- 4] - Last but not least, new aggregate was applied to a total of approximately 4 miles of various road sections. Recycled asphalt was added to Pine Bluff West and on the top of the hill and S-curves on Sunflower Lane. Recycled concrete was applied to various other problem areas as identified by our committee and/or other property owners. After several years of experience using various types of materials, it was found that recycled concrete gave the best overall results on flat areas with rolled recycled asphalt the better choice on steep slopes.

Other Events & Accomplishments

A Volunteer Work Day was held on May 17. A number of volunteers joined in and did back-hoe work, general clean-up and installed approximately 50 additional reflective delineator T-Posts. On June 25, volunteers assisted our contractor in applying fresh asphalt to repair pot-holes on the first hill on the south leg of Pine Bluff West, Greenhorn Creek Drive, and a cattle guard at the entrance from the frontage road.

Future Projects & Planning

Priorities for 2009 are: Ongoing road base restoration of "soft areas" including spots brought to our attention by property owners; addressing erosion concerns; concrete repairs at low-water crossings and wing-walls to correct erosion as required; and weed control along the roadways. The RC has extended the service contract for general road maintenance and snow plowing with All Seasons Excavating. However, with the volatility in fuel prices, the costs of purchasing materials along with delivery and spreading have continued to increase and this cost has been passed on to the Association. Weather, erosion, and road aging, coupled with ever increasing road usage as more homes are built, continue to take their toll. With the current Common Assessment barely covering routine maintenance, grading, and repairs, additional funding will still be required if we are to continue to restore and maintain our road base. (Average cost is currently running \$18,040 per mile for aggregate material.) Recognizing these factors, the Road Committee unanimously agreed, once again, for the need to levy the Special Assessment for the coming fiscal year.

The Road Committee wishes to express their heartfelt gratitude to all contributors, both past and present, who have voluntarily donated their time and services for the benefit of our community.

Road Committee

Chairperson

Jim Elliott 676-5108

Secretary

Ted Christakes 676-2773

Members:

Steve Adams 676-2725
 Don Bock 676-2088
 Jack Helm 676-2531
 Jon Josephson 303-777-6319
 Warren Lau 676-3933
 Dan McCraw 676-2098

Open Board Policy

As a new member, I am pleased to report that I am personally impressed with the commitment and enthusiasm of your current Board. We want to represent you well and take action on issues of concern to all homeowners and landowners at East Hatchet Ranch. Our highest priority issues at present are the pursuit of Fire Protection for our community and community visibility into Board actions and intentions.

We make every effort to provide visibility by posting detailed minutes of all Board meetings on the *HatchetEast.org* web site. Our problem is that the web site is a one way communication from the Board to the community. The Board needs feedback and guidance on issues of concern to you. Direct contact with the Board or individual Board members is the best way to make your concerns known.

Three methods of direct contact with the Board are available for your use. The *HatchetEast.org* web site has a link labeled "contact a board member". The link enables a direct email connection between you and any Board member, and you will receive a timely response and action based on any submitted email. Your requests or inputs will be part of the following Board meeting and reflected in the minutes if

deemed of interest to the community. However, we will not delay response and action until the next meeting unless appropriate. The "contact a board member" link has been used effectively by several community members already and we welcome additional comments and queries.

The second method, for those of us that feel emails can be misleading, is to telephone a Board member. The home telephone numbers for all Board members are listed on the *HatchetEast.org* web site and also in this letter. We welcome the personal touch of a telephone call, and will respond as quickly and thoroughly as we will with an email query.

The third method is the most effective for local homeowners and landowners. All Board meetings are open to the community. The next meeting time and location are published in the minutes for each meeting and, again, the minutes are available on the *HatchetEast.org* web site. We have only had a few community members attend the Board meetings to date, but welcome all that have concerns or anyone that is just interested in what the Board is accomplishing. The best way to understand Board intent and action is to attend a meeting.

To complement our open Board policy, we have reached out to other communities that face similar issues. Work on Fire Protection has given us insight and connections to Hatchet West, St Charles River Estates, and Eagle Ranch Board members. We intend to pursue these connections on areas of common interest, such as Fire Protection.

Some community members have used the Hatchet Yahoo Group to exchange items of community interest. If you want to know where the bear and her cubs are currently or who owns the goat eating the flowers in your front yard, then the Yahoo Group is a good exchange medium. However, if you want to voice common concerns or issues and want Board action to correct a problem, please use the direct Board contact opportunities discussed above.

The purpose of the Board is to represent the East Hatchet Community and address issues and concerns of common interest. We intend to do exactly that and welcome your input and support.

- Jim Miller, Vice President

Fire & Medical Emergency Response

As most of you know, members of the East Hatchet Ranch community have been pursuing dedicated fire protection and emergency response service for several years. Currently, the ranch is not covered by any fire protection district, and therefore we are part of the approximately 82% of Pueblo County that has no real fire coverage for structures. That means that if fire breaks out in our area, fire response is for controlling brush and timber fire only, not house fires. In addition, paramedical response is normally the responsibility of the city of Pueblo, which takes an extremely long time to get an ambulance out here. Although Rye has responded with ambulance service over the last few emergencies, they are not legally required to do so.

Why is this important? There are three main reasons. First, obviously we

would like some chance to save our property in case of fire. This almost goes without saying. Second, and perhaps more important in my opinion, we need fire insurance for our homes and buildings. Given the recent spate of fires across the country, insurance companies are taking a closer look at all of us living outside of cities. Many, if not most insurance companies will not cover us since we are not within 5 miles of a fire station, and other insurance companies recently have begun dropping customers or have increased premiums for fire coverage—sometimes doubling or tripling them. We know that all of these things have occurred recently on Hatchet Ranch. Remember, without fire insurance, most mortgages come due. Third, property values can be negatively affected when potential buyers find out that there is no fire coverage.

For a quick background, more than three years ago several members of the Homeowners' Association initiated the long bureaucratic process to gain coverage for our area by the Rye Fire Department (RFD). Initially, the Fire Chief, Phil Daniels, was very cooperative and supportive of our efforts. He informed us that we needed to develop/meet certain requirements such as, 1) petitioning our landowners for their approval and permission to begin a new fire/emergency tax levy, 2) arranging donated land for a firehouse and cisterns, 3) identifying possible resident volunteers, and ensuring that those volunteers were willing to meet training requirements provided by RFD, and 4) researching the resident tax base that could pay for this.

(Continued on page 4.)

Fire & Medical Emergency Response

(continued from page 3)

We quickly met these demands, including even two different petition processes to meet the changing criteria mandated by the RFD. However, very quickly in the process it became clear that there was resistance from the Fire District Board, and perhaps most important, by the Fire Chief himself. Among other things, the Board kept asking more questions and demanding different kinds of data, for the next 2 ½ years! Finally, last Spring (2008) the “East Hatchet Ranch Fire Committee” pushed the Fire Board for a final decision. We were given a definitive “no” to including us in the RFD, without any clear or logical reason.

Since we were turned down by the RFD, we have engaged the County Commissioners, the County Sheriff, other local subdivisions not covered by a Fire District and the Concrete Plant, as we attempt to pursue fire coverage. One major difference now is that our Homeowners’ Board is taking this on as a vital responsibility with the help of several of our residents and members. President Hahn’s article in this newsletter outlines some of the latest in this coalition approach which we hope to use for developing a new fire district or special district. Other less feasible options include organizing a volunteer fire department (expensive and at least a 3-year bureaucratic process), purchasing fire retardant chemicals to be used to protect houses (again, not a solution to the insurance problem), pursuing various legal avenues (all of which are very expensive without any real chance of success), or simply doing nothing.

How can you help? Primarily, we ask you to write to our county officials, including the Commissioners and our County Sheriff. After all, they are elected and we are their constituents. So, please write to them and use the following for some points to discuss:

1. Outline the fact that we, as county residents pay property taxes and yet get limited return for those taxes—no road maintenance on the ranch, no real fire coverage, constrained emergency services, distant mail service, and little help on county zoning violations. **In fact, Hatchet Ranch homeowners received some of the largest increases on property taxes in the county last year.**

2. Mention the limited and expensive insurance coverage for fire in our location,

including the real chance that most of us could lose our insurance either from being dropped outright or because it becomes too expensive

3. Talk about the great potential for catastrophic fire without dedicated fire protection for our unincorporated areas, or without at least closer fire protection. This could mean a widespread conflagration for the whole county, especially if the current drought continues into the years ahead.

4. Discuss the positive aspects for the county of increasing fire coverage. This means that fire protection translates into overall economic growth, more house construction, greater tax base, and higher land values—all of which contribute to the county coffers.

5. If you have any personal stories of dropped or increased insurance, etc., mention that in your letter. These kinds of anecdotal evidence mean a lot.

One last comment here, and I apologize to most of you for even making it. Please try to keep your comments as professional and to the point as possible. Political leaders, like anybody, respond more to factual comments and discussion, than to negative attacks or demands. In any case, we hope you will help us inform and educate those in the government to our plight here and if you have ideas for possible solutions, provide those as well. Thanks in advance for any help you can provide. I believe we have only a short window of opportunity to get fire protection before we really begin facing some nightmarish personal decisions.

Addresses:

Pueblo County Commissioners

- Mr. Anthony Nunez
- Mr. John Cordova
- Mr. Jeff Chostner
215 W. 10th Street
Pueblo, CO 81003

Pueblo County Sheriff

Sheriff Kirk Taylor
909 Court Avenue
Pueblo, CO 81003

- Mark Gose, Member-at-Large



East Hatchet Ranch Home Owners Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 19941
Colorado City, CO 81019

Visit us on the web at www.hatcheteast.org for:

- Maps
- Covenants
- By Laws
- Notices
- Minutes
- Calendar
- Weather
- Contacts
- Resources

Activities and Contacts

Book Club

Jeanette Bogren..... 676-2330

Friendship Get-Together

Sandie Jacobs..... 676-2174

Garden Club

Sandie Jacobs..... 676-2174

New Resident Welcome

Sandie Jacobs..... 676-2174

Quilting Group

Kathleen Helm..... 676-2531



Treasurer's Report

As of December 1, 2008, the finances of the East Hatchet Ranch Home Owners Assoc. Inc are as follows:

ASSETS

CD reserve:	\$38,827.51
Checking account	\$9,046.80
Savings account	44,394.19
Petty cash	<u>\$2.33</u>
Total Assets:.....	\$92,270.93

The balances in the checking and savings account cover the remainder of the 2008 budget and the holdover for 2009. The reserve monies held in the certificate of deposit are for unforeseen emergency expenses.

In the period July 1, 2008 to December 1, 2008, we spent the following:

EXPENSES

Decrease in accounts payable (non routine road-maintenance)	\$26,020.00
Roads - routine maintenance	\$22,446.83
Roads - snow plowing	\$0.00
Other – clerical expenses.	<u>\$860.21</u>
Total expenses	49,327.04

The collection of budgeted and Special Assessment will begin in January. We expect to receive about \$100,000.00, allowing funding of routine maintenance of the roads and, also, for the special projects

the Road Committee has requested and the Board has approved. In 2009, the Special Assessment will be used to purchase and apply aggregate to several sections of roads that badly need it.

A big thank you to the owners who paid their dues on time. We filed 14 liens (\$12,788.96) against the property of 9 members who failed to pay their dues. Please pay your dues in a timely manner to avoid accruing extra fees related to the assessment.

- Jeanette Bogren, Treasurer

Proxies and Address Changes

The Annual meeting is still months away, but it is not too early to emphasize the need for proxy forms. A quorum is needed to have a valid business meeting. A quorum is defined as 20 percent representation of the properties. We have 348 properties, so we need 70 lots represented at the meeting. A couple of our past annual meetings have barely crossed this threshold. The proxy forms are important!

Proxy forms will be mailed with the pro-

posed budget in May. The form also may be downloaded from the *HatchetEast.org* web site and printed on your printer. Complete the form and mail to the association at our P.O. Box or to the person specified as your representative in the proxy form. You may assign your proxy vote to any property owner.

Colorado law specifies the association secretary maintain records, which include bylaws, articles of incorporation, minutes

from meetings, and an address list of all association members. Keeping an accurate list of all members is challenging. Please be sure to include the association when you change your address. Remember, it is your responsibility to notify the Pueblo County Assessor's Office of any address change.

- Steve Adams, Secretary

Return this portion with your payment (see reverse).