

SMOKY HILL EXPRESS

Elbert County Historical Society & Museum Newsletter

FALL 2010



FRIENDS OF THE ELBERT COUNTY MUSEUM...

We welcome you back to the Smoky Hill Express! We ran out of water on the trail, and after a couple of dry years, the newsletter springs to life.

2010 SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

The 2010 Season featured two exhibits—an encore presentation of “Prehistoric Kiowa” and the new “The 1930s—A Decade of Disasters.”

The **PREHISTORIC KIOWA** panels and artifacts, which were also featured in 2009, celebrated the 10th anniversary of the core drilling at the Elbert County Fairgrounds and highlighted the findings of the Denver Basin Project. The exhibit and graphics were sponsored by the Denver Museum of Nature and Science and the National Science Foundation.

THE 1930'S —A DECADE OF DISASTERS exhibit included interpretive panels that featured information and photographs about the 1935 Kiowa Creek Flood, the CCC Camp, the Dust Bowl years, and Simla Olympian — Glenn Morris. The exhibit was enhanced by a life-size diorama depicting a moment in the life of a rural family enduring the effects of the Dust Bowl. Also on display was a collection of Depression glass. A seasonal addition to the Main Street exhibit was a sewing and 1930's quilt display which showed the creativity of the times.

GIFT SHOP

Those of you who had the chance to stop by the gift shop this season noticed the addition of crafts and gift items by local artists as well as a greater selection of new titles in the book section.

The museum looks forward to offering new items in the future that will make great gifts for yourself and others!

LONG TERM PLANNING FOR THE MUSEUM

The Board of Directors will be taking this winter to formulate a new 5 and 10 year plan for the museum. The last plan was done in 2001 and the Board is happy to report that a majority of those goals, which seemed far-fetched at the time due to resources and labor required, have actually been reached.

Some of the areas the Board will be looking at are: themes of seasonal exhibits, additional permanent exhibits, gift shop, improvements to the museum building, programs and activities held at the museum, community outreach activities and programs, membership and volunteer opportunities, advertising, promotion and fundraising.

The strength of the Elbert County Historical Society comes from everyone contributing his or her unique gifts. Ideas are a valuable resource, whether they can be implemented immediately, or need to wait until other pieces are in place. Your willingness to be a part of the planning makes the over-all vision stronger. Thank you for caring and for sharing!

If you have any thoughts or ideas, please share them! Also, please share your concerns. Who knows what will come forth which will improve or allow the museum to expand in a whole new way.

Please e-mail your idea(s) to elbertcountymuseum@gmail.com or visit with one of the board members. Suggestions can also be mailed to: Elbert County Museum, PO Box 43, Kiowa, CO 80117.

Thanks to all who contributed to the writing of this issue of the Smoky Hill Express

IMPORTANCE OF VOLUNTEERS

The Elbert County Museum relies completely on volunteer help. Some of the ways in which people have volunteered this year include:

- Construction and painting of the Main Street Exhibit
- Refinishing interior steps and landings
- Researching and working on panels, diorama and displays for the 1930s Exhibit
- Restoration of artifacts for future exhibits
- Researching and writing local Pioneer Family histories
- Arranging items for sale in the gift shop
- Pioneer Fourth
 - Garnering sponsorships, collecting items for the silent auction
 - Set up and break down for activities
 - Baking cakes and other goodies for the cake walk
 - Working various areas the day of the festivities (games, pie judging, cake walk, silent auction, food, museum open house, etc.)
- Cleaning up water damage after summer rain storms
- Representing the museum at various events
- Attending meetings

...and since the museum can only open its doors if there are hosts, a big **THANK YOU** to everyone for including "Hosting at the Museum" in their summer activities for 2010.

The museum had over
**600 visitors during the
2010 Season**

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION OPEN HOUSE

If you were unable to attend the Volunteer Appreciation Open House on September 12th and enjoy some ice cream, please know that all the ways you volunteer your time is greatly appreciated.

Thank you for helping to make the Elbert County Museum a wonderful local museum, as well as preserving the area's history for future generations.

2010 OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

The Society participated in:

- The *Our Journey* train ticket program, in association with Prairie Development Corp.
- *First Saturday* -an event at the Governor's Mansion to promote the *Our Journey* summer program.
- Kiowa Street Fair
- Craft Fairs

The Society hosted:

- Kiowa School Alumni Open House
- *Colorado's Most Endangered Places in 2010*, program presented by Colorado Preservation, Inc.
- Special tours for schools and other groups
- 1st meeting of Eastern Colorado Museums on October 9th. Nine museums and historical societies were represented. It was a productive day of sharing ideas and goals.

PIONEER FOURTH

The hail storm wasn't the only exciting thing that happened on the 4th of July this year.

The Museum held another successful day filled with fun, food, family, and friends. Some of the activities included a cake walk, museum open house, children's games, pie baking contest, silent auction, and live music.

**Thanks to all the sponsors and volunteers
for their support and hard work!**



CCC CAMP IN ELBERT COUNTY

In response to the economic chaos, unemployment, and depression felt by the nation in the early 1930s, President Roosevelt created many programs designed to put Americans back to work and to preserve the pride of the workers in their own ability to earn a living.

One of the measures of the “New Deal” was an Emergency Conservation Work Act (ECW), better known as the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC).



Inside one of the barracks of CCC Camp No. 2117, Elbert, CO.

established in 1935 and was known as SCS-9-C. The “SCS” indicated that it was a Soil Conservation Service project with an identification number of “9”, and the “C” meant that the camp was in Colorado.

Camp SCS-9-C was located on the Carnahan Ranch (halfway between Elbert and Kiowa) just west of Elbert Road. After the Kiowa Creek Flood in 1935, the surrounding area had suffered from serious wind and water erosion. As a result, the principal work projects focused on building contour furrows and check dams. Today, all that remains of the camp is the water tank and foundations of a couple barracks.

By 1932, the CCC began incorporating education programs which made the young men more employable and helped structure the evening time. The educational classes at the Elbert camp included auto mechanics, plane surveying, soil conservation, first aid, forestry, leatherwork, music, mathematics, photography, agriculture, woodworking and typing. In addition to work and school, the young men attended town dances in the Kiowa, Elizabeth and Elbert communities, as well as the movies. Athletics were equally important, and the camp baseball team won the sub-district championship and was state runner-up in 1937.

The Civilian Conservation Corps was one of the most successful New Deal programs of the Great Depression. It existed for fewer than 10 years, but left a legacy of roads, bridges, dams, and buildings throughout the U.S., as well as reforestation, soil conservation, water conservation, and enlarging the use of National Parks and Monuments and State Parks. Between 1933 and 1941, more than three million men served in the CCC. Elbert County was one of the many places which benefited from the hard work and the commitment of these young men to persevere in the face of adversity.

Resources: Colorado State Archives, U.S. History.net, Howstuffworks.com, and History of Civilian Conservation Corps—Colorado-Wyoming District, Summer 1938

While Congress only required U.S. citizenship to work at the CCC camps, eligibility set by the ECW included sound physical fitness and men had to be unemployed, unmarried, and between the ages of 18 and 26, although the rules were eventually relaxed for war veterans. The men were paid \$30 a month, with mandatory \$25 allotment checks sent to families of the men. Enlistment was for a duration of six months, although many reenlisted after their allotted time was up.

In 1935 the Colorado CCC was divided into two districts with headquarters at Grand Junction for Western Slope camps and Fort Logan for camps east of the Continental Divide (the Colorado-Wyoming headquarters then moved from Fort Logan to Littleton). The CCC camp in Elbert County was



The men of Company 2117, Camp SCS-9-C, Elbert, Colo. August 1938. The Carnahan Ranch is center background.

COLORADO ENTERPRISE ZONE -END OF YEAR CONTRIBUTIONS

What Is The East Central Colorado Enterprise Zone? An Enterprise Zone is a state-designated area in need of economic growth and diversification. It provides various state income tax credits to encourage the private sector to invest resources to create or maintain jobs within the zone area. All of Kit Carson, Cheyenne and Lincoln Counties are located within the East Central Colorado Enterprises Zone. In general, all of Elbert County except its western residential subdivisions is within the zone but all of the area within the city limits of Simla, Kiowa and Elizabeth is within the zone.

The Contribution Credit- The Colorado State Legislature has established a number of tax credits to benefit enterprise zone investors, but the most generous allows a 25% state income tax credit for private contributions to an enterprise zone that will assist in implementing that zone's economic development plan. The continued expansion and development of the **ELBERT COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM** has been determined by East Central Council of Governments and the State Economic Development Commission as a project that helps implement the area's Economic Development Plan.

If you choose to make a cash donation to the East Central Enterprise Zone for the Elbert County Historical Society & Museum, **you will receive 25% of that amount as a credit against your state tax liability.** The contribution also may be itemized on your federal tax return.

Taxpayer Benefits- As a Colorado taxpayer, the enterprise zone community contribution credit benefits you in several ways:

- It decreases the amount of taxes you owe.
- It gives you an opportunity to invest in your community.
- It lets you direct the use of your dollars in ways that have more immediate and personal meaning for you and your family.

Community Benefits- Historically, rural communities have depended on state and federal government and private foundations for assistance with community development projects. Unfortunately, as time passes, available resources cannot keep up with increasing demands, and it becomes more and more difficult for smaller communities to make needed improvements.

A contribution to the enterprise zone, however, offers several benefits for communities:

- It comes from a donor who has a personal interest in the project.
- It can be received at any time during the year.
- It represents an additional source of funds.
- It triggers other investment in the community, thus helping to stabilize the local economy.

Ready To Claim Tax Credits? To be eligible for the Community Contribution Tax Credit, your contribution check must be made out to the ECCOG/Enterprise Zone, and should be accompanied by a notation as to which project your contribution is to benefit.

You may designate one project for your contribution, or you may contribute to more than one project in any given year. A minimum contribution of \$250 is encouraged.

Smaller contributions to individual projects are always welcome, but those should be made directly to the project, rather than to the Enterprise Zone, and would not be eligible for the 25% tax credit.

The contribution should be mailed to the Enterprise Zone Administrator. The administrator will complete a certification form that will be returned to you to attach to your tax return. Any state credit not used in the current year can be carried forward for up to five years. ECCOG will pass through 100% of your enterprise zone contribution to the Elbert County Historical Society & Museum.

Want Additional Information? For more detailed information about the East Central Colorado Enterprise Zone, about the Community Contribution Tax Credit or designated enterprise zone projects, or about any of the other available enterprise zone tax credits, contact:

Enterprise Zone Administrator • East Central Council of Local Governments

128 Colorado Avenue • Stratton, Colorado 80836

(1-800-825- 0208 or 719-348 5562) - jdowney@prairiedevelopment.com

The Elbert County Museum is owned and operated by the Elbert County Historical Society, a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization.

ELBERT COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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