

UPPER RIO GRANDE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Regular Meeting Minutes | Tuesday, November 14, 2017 | 7:00 a.m.

Boogies Café | Del Norte

Attendees: Lyndsie Ferrell, Larry Crowder, Karla Shriver, Bernadette Martinez, Jake Capron, Marty Asplin, Tom Slade, Traci Holmes, Joelle Boos-Medina, Roni Wisdom, Mike Wisdom, Forrest Neuerburg, Jim Clare, Dan Hicks, Shon Davis, Brent Logan, Suzanne Bothell, Mike Hurst, Gene Glover, Mark Ulrich, Kathy Rogers, Linda Robinson, Pam Bricker, Monte Robertson, Joe Schlabach, Andrea Oaks-Jaramillo, Gene Farish, and Bonnie Asplin

- I. **Call to Order** (7:05 a.m.) by Vice President, Tom Slade
- II. **Present Agenda:** M/S for approval by Shon Davis/ Mike Hurst; approved
- III. **Minutes of the October 10, 2017 meeting:** M/S for approval by Karla Shriver/Shon Davis; approved
- IV. **Treasurer's Report:** Bernadette Martinez reported the account balance to be \$57,143.48, of which \$12,797.43 is obligated funds; M/S for approval by Pam Bricker/Roni Wisdom; approved
- V. **Director's Report:** Marty Asplin spoke about some of last month's activities, including giving presentations to Investor Members' boards and councils to ask for financial support for URGED for the next three years; attending the EDCC *Drive/Lead/Succeed* Conference which had several sessions on outdoor recreation as an economic driver – Coloradoans spent more than \$13 billion on outdoor recreation in 2016; working with Frontier Drive Inn project; updating the URGED website and compiling more business information in our data base project; submitting letters of support, one being to US DOT for the SLV Regional Airport; and attending the 2nd SLV Hemp Symposium at ASU – a great success with great panel discussions, information on the ASU hemp seed research program, Power Zone's work on equipment development, and the potential for ancillary businesses in the Valley.
- VI. **Business:**
 - a. Candidates for Board of Directors – Tom announced the candidates for board positions for two-year terms to be Shon Davis, Tom Slade, Kathy Rogers, and Traci Holms. We will vote at the December meeting.
 - b. Investor Action Plan for 2018-2020 – There were no questions or discussion.
 - c. One example of economic development – Proximity Malt in Monte Vista
- VII. **Program:**

Tom Slade introduced our program speaker, **Jake Capron, Regional Manager Proximity Malt**, who began by giving his ranching, educational and corporate background that lead up to his position at the Proximity plant. Capron embraced the opportunity to move to Colorado and manage in a small specialty malthouse (between craft and corporate size), working with kilns and roasting. Jake brought two malts and one barley sample for the group to taste.

Proximity contracts through Rio Grande Feed and Grain. They are working with specific barley varieties, Genie being the most suited for this region, and getting 140 bushels per acre yield. Grain comes in with 9 – 12% moisture and is 4% when shipped out. The shrinkage from barley to malt is 20 to 24% in size.

The plant employs 19 people who were hired from here in the Valley with an hourly starting wage of \$18 to \$18.50 per hour. They have successfully used the resources of the Colorado Workforce. Jake has an assistant manager and sales person on staff as well.

Many hires have been out of the local potato warehouses. All have been trained specifically for the malting plant. Jake says training is extensive and on-going; employees will never stop learning about the process and industry, and will eventually become great malters.

Proximity's primary target markets are craft brewers and food companies in Colorado. As an aside, Jake says there is always room for more tap houses in the Valley. To be competitive, Proximity targets in areas as close to the Valley as they can, yet with some movement in Texas and New Mexico.

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This year the plant is processing one million pounds of barley per week. The current volume is 11,000 metric tons of malt per year with 50% bulk and 50% bag. They are working slowly and as demand grows, they will ramp up; their goal is 20,000 metric tons per year. Proximity has plans to roast other grains as well, including rye and wheat.

There was substantial investment in the new plant, and upgrades to the old facilities on the property will be performed as needed in the future.

Questions and Answers followed.

Regular Reports:

- a) *Rio Grande County* – RGC is working on the budget, the RFP for appraising the old Denver & Rio Grande Railroad track repurposing project, and on updating their Code Books. 2017 was a good year with housing startups, an increase in property valuations and sales tax increases (e.g., five new business startups in Monte Vista). Waste water is a huge issue in the near future as we see more growth and investment in Rio Grande County.
 - b) *South Fork* – Kiwanis Club will be serving 600 to 700 Thanksgiving meals again this year to kick off the Yule Tide Christmas tree lighting, ice skating, bonfires, and Rio Grande Club holiday sales event with local craftspeople. They are still working on expansion of ATV trails along the highway and forest trails. Programs of focus include Town budget, sign regulation code, municipal codification, prairie dog abatement and the construction of a new 750 square foot road maintenance building.
 - c) *Del Norte* – Upcoming events include Parade of Lights with (bigger than last year) fireworks show, and a Christmas Gala on Dec. 2nd. They are working on “Scope of Work” for the co-op renovation project that will go out for grant in the spring. CDPHE has approved the finalization of the lift station by spring. RG Associates has finished the streetscape project to go out to public meetings in January. And the new DNSD school was approved by voters.
 - d) *Monte Vista* – Voters voted down retail sales of recreational marijuana, but approved funding of sales tax; passed Initiative 300; and voted in two new city councilors and a mayor. The city is working on numerous solar projects, including an Xcel Energy solar array program. The chamber of commerce, the city, and the county are partnering to leverage monies for structural improvements to Ski Hi. Their Holiday fest during the first week in December includes a large parade downtown and fireworks at the high school stadium. New businesses are continually inquiring with the city, and M.V. is seeing some slow and steady growth.
 - e) *Alamosa* – Holiday tree lighting is this Friday night; they have a new pavilion; a new mayor and several new councilors were elected.
- VIII. *Other* – Recycling waste diversion is working to meet the requirements by CDPHE at their recycle centers.
- IX. **Next Meeting:** December 12, 2017, at 7:00 a.m., location and program to be announced.
- X. **Adjourn:** 8:15 a.m. Respectfully submitted, Bonnie Asplin