

*FINALLY, SOME GOOD LOCAL NEWS FOR THE PUBLIC!*

Douglas County's NEW Economic Frontier

Official zoning application was submitted late February 2009

- Roxborough, Colorado.

Even with a national economic slowdown, three Coloradans who believe strongly in the strength of Colorado are stepping forward with an innovative, sustainable water-wise community development plan that would infuse Douglas County with new and much needed revenues to the tune of more than ten million dollars annually. The proposed Sterling Ranch community development project would also create over 4,000 jobs, and have an annual economic and fiscal impact exceeding \$400 million per year over the next ten to twenty years.

According to Patty Silverstein of Development Research Partners who conducted a comprehensive analysis of the proposed development in December 2008, "The total economic and fiscal impact of all activities at Sterling Ranch is estimated to be about \$435.4 million per year, including \$11.2 in estimated retail sales and property tax revenues at build out."

Diane Smethills, Harold Smethills, and Jack Hoagland are the Coloradoans who are putting their future thinking into forward motion. The Sterling Ranch master plan development will be formally submitted to Douglas County for its official zoning application later this month. The project encompasses 3,120 acres in northwest Douglas County – the single largest remaining undeveloped parcel in Chatfield Basin that overlooks Chatfield State Park.

The Smethills/Hoagland team recently acquired 2,200 acres from the Franklin and Joy Burns family. The new owners are only the third family to have owned Sterling Ranch since its inception in 1866. Joy Burns, well known for her many community contributions, agreed to sell the land to the Smethills/Hoagland families because she sees a shared vision in what will become of it. "I've been approached by many developers over the years to sell this land, but it was important to me that it be designed by local people I have known for years, who share my vision in the land, and, who have a proven track record for their ability to make it happen."

All Colorado natives, the Smethills/Hoagland's love of the area and commitment to green infrastructure ensures their vision of balance between people, nature, water, and wildlife habitats. In a comprehensive mixed-use development, homes will feature **Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)** Green Building for diverse single and multi-family housing options. The master plan also includes multi-purpose athletic and recreational

facilities as well as equestrian and hiking trails. The development includes a community town center similar to Old Littleton, protection of natural wildlife habitats, an 'Agriburbia' crop production area for 4-H youth education and community-wide local use; all of which are designed as a cutting-edge, holistic approach to a water-wise resource program for maximum environmental responsibility and sustainability.

In addition to the Sterling Ranch acreage, 640 of the total 3,120 acres are a joint venture with the State Land Board who have selected the Smethills/Hoagland team to entitle its property in conjunction with Sterling Ranch to maximize the value to the State School Trust fund. Seventy percent of the profits from the 640 acres developed will go directly to serve the school children of Colorado who will benefit from additional educational resources. The decision by the State Land Board to select the Sterling Ranch team, from a total of 9 request for proposals (RFP's) received by major developers was an arduous one in a year-long review process. It resulted in the contract signing with Sterling Ranch in 2007 in anticipation of the County's comprehensive master plan going forward.

"We are making a sizeable economic investment to create a sustainable development that will provide Douglas County residents with new jobs, new schools, and facilitate an ongoing economic stimulus that more people can benefit from in this unique valley," said Harold Smethills. The proposed development calls for more than one third of the land, roughly 1,100 acres, to be preserved as open space. Unlike other developments of this magnitude, the principals behind Sterling Ranch have spent more than seven years meeting with water, conservation, and infrastructure experts, along with local residents and Douglas County planning members, to create new standards of efficiency. One of the leading objectives is to respect the natural environment as well as effectively plan for the County's projected growth demands.

This tight-knit community has always faced water supply needs as one of its most critical issues. Said General Manager of the Roxborough Water & Sanitation District, Larry Moore, "Water is a huge issue in every Colorado community, and we are no exception; so what Sterling Ranch brings to our landscape is the platform for a renewable water supply to serve the Chatfield basin area." In a show of their commitment, Sterling Ranch has already agreed to purchase Roxborough's former wastewater treatment facility and other resources, and is working with water experts and hydrologists to create a combined water-wise and conjunctive use water delivery system to ensure new conservation standards are achieved. The benefit of a conjunctive use system provides for a more reliable and less expensive water supply option to the homeowner in its use of combined ground and surface water based on dry/wet annual precipitation levels which saves huge amounts of evaporation during dry seasons. The water-wise plan is designed toward low-water irrigation systems

and appropriate plant selections conducive to this climate that will be used throughout Sterling Ranch.

According to Beorn Courtney, P.E., Director of Water Resources Engineering on the project, “Sterling Ranch has fully integrated water resources planning in its land use plan by incorporating open spaces throughout the community that require little to no water and reducing inefficient placement of turf in residential and common areas.”

Amy Conklin, Manager of the Chatfield Watershed Authority says, “Sterling Ranch will be the first new development to incorporate the Low Impact Development practices embraced by the Authority. We anticipate these practices will minimize the impacts of this development to Chatfield Reservoir compared to other developments in the basin.”

Pat Gallagher, former board member of the Roxborough Park Foundation, has lived in Roxborough Park for fifteen years. He has seen the plans and said, “If anyone is going to develop this area, we’re lucky to have these guys because they’re dedicated to doing it right.” He added, “This will be their legacy and it’s quite an undertaking because I can’t imagine a national developer coming in and giving this level of consideration to our environment the way they are.”

With the plan contingent upon the county’s zoning approval later this year, the Sterling Ranch development team, the Chatfield Basin Conservation Network, and county planning members have held meetings with many of the existing property owners most concerned about wildlife preservation who wish to maintain a less populated expansion. Marilee Utter, trustee of the Urban Land Institute, recently reported that these particular homeowners, people who own a house, a horse, a well, and a septic tank on two or three acres of land, (known as suburban sprawl), actually **increase** the county’s service expenses by 25 to 40 percent as opposed to higher density communities who collectively share county services and benefit more from a stronger economy of scale.

Jack Hoagland added, “What we have here is a bold and timely opportunity to deliver a project which is hand crafted to address Douglas County’s unique environment and diverse lifestyles, while providing a sustainable 21<sup>st</sup> century community intertwined in economic vitality.”

Diane Smethills (Jack Hoagland’s sister) said, “We understand some people are concerned about development of any kind which is why we have been talking with so many residents to get their input and totally define the critical infrastructure this community needs to thrive.” She added, “As a parent, I can promise you our project will reflect state-of-the-art planning and technology where families will live well for generations to come.”

The biggest employer in the area, Lockheed Martin Space Systems at Waterton Canyon, also stands to benefit by the availability of new housing, additional commercial usage, and recreational amenities for its employees. Construction, engineering, and public infrastructure jobs would receive the bulk of the Sterling Ranch development expenditures, in excess of \$3.4 billion investment over the next ten to twenty years.