

ELDORADO VISTAS

VOLUME XIII, ISSUE 8
August 2011

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Monthly Newsletter of the Eldorado Community Improvement Association

1 La Hacienda Loop, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87508 ▼ (505) 466-4248 ▼ www.eldoradosf.org

Sundae in the Park

12th Annual Ice Cream Social & Silent Auction to Benefit Vista Grande Public Library

SUNDAY, AUGUST 28, FROM 1:00 TO 4:30 PM AT THE COMMUNITY CENTER

What better way to celebrate the end of summer than with music, neighbors, family fun for all ages—and all the ice cream you can eat—and at the same time help to fund The Vista Grande Public Library? Come join in pleasures of the 12th Annual Ice Cream Social and Silent Auction, the Library's biggest and grandest fundraising event of the year.

The star of the event is the all-you-can-eat ice cream station with sundaes galore, root beer floats, banana splits—and iced coffees courtesy of the Agora's own Las Chivas.

For the "under 12" crowd, Under The Big Top is back this year with fun activities for kids, including a Zum Room and the much-loved Bouncy House. For grown-ups, the Silent Auction is your chance to bid on a wide variety of fabulous finds, from restaurant certificates to haircuts, jewelry, fashion items, one-of-a-kind pieces by local artists, and more. It's a great opportunity to do your holiday shopping early and benefit the Library at the same time.

You can purchase tickets for this year's VGPL Ice Cream Social at the Library. Admission prices are \$8 per ticket or 4 tickets for \$25. Kids age 5 and younger get in free.

In our current economy, the Library needs your support more than ever. Besides coming to the event, another way to help is to be a sponsor or auction donor. The VGPL Ice Cream Social could not happen without its wonderful sponsors. The Library recognizes these generous individuals, businesses, and institutions with signs at the event, mentions on the Library website, www.vglibrary.org, and a big "thank you" in the Library's weekly "Library News" emails. Likewise, the Ice Cream Social's Silent Auction could not take place without the generosity of businesses and others who donate items and services.

If you're interested in becoming an Ice Cream Social sponsor, or in donating items or services for the Silent Auction, please contact **Joan Lemmon** at 466-4490, or **Diane Gulseth** at 466-6509.

And mark your calendars for Sunday, August 28!



Eldorado Area 2010 Census

The Census Bureau has begun releasing information on the Eldorado area from the 2010 Census. The first set of information includes demographic profile data. Other information, such as economic and educational, will be released later.

The Census Bureau's Census Designated Place (CDP) for our community includes Alteza, Belizia, Dos Griegos, and Eldorado at Santa Fe. Remembering that Eldorado alone has about 2,700 housing units, this tract has the following characteristics:

Total Population:	6,130	
Total Housing Units	3,100	
Owner-occupied Housing Units	2,598	90.0%
Median Age	55.2 years	
Female Population		53.6%
Male Population		46.4%
Age 0-9 years	415	6.8%
Age 10-19 years	569	9.3%
Age 65 years and over	1,291	21.1%
White Non-Hispanic		83.4%
Hispanic/Latino		12.7%

For more information, go to factfinder2.census.gov, then enter, in the geography box, **Eldorado at Santa Fe CDP, New Mexico**, click GO, and click on the first title that appears (Profile of General Population).

—Dan Drobnis

**ECIA Board
Meeting,
Community
Center, Thurs.,
August 18,
7 pm.**



**Share your
comments
with us!**

*For policy and
deadline, see
below*

Editorial Policy

Vistas invites opinions, ideas, stories, photos, and art from the community at large. Please include contact numbers for fact checking purposes. The newsletter will not publish unsigned letters or material deemed inflammatory. Material will be printed at the discretion of the editors. Letters over 150 words will be edited for fit. Community announcements are welcome; accompanying photos are welcome, too. **DEADLINE:** Newsletter deadline is the 3rd day of each month. Submissions can be dropped off or mailed to the ECIA office or e-mailed to ECIADiAna@aol.com. Please include "Attn: Vistas" in your message.

Mission Statement

The mission of *Vistas*, the monthly newsletter of the ECIA, is to inform the Eldorado community about issues before the ECIA Board and the membership at large. By so doing, the publication seeks to foster increased neighborhood pride and community participation in the decision making process.

Solar Shades and Awnings in Eldorado

Every year many Eldorado homeowners find their homes getting overly hot owing to the strong southern exposure and look for ways to reduce their southerly solar gain in order to make their homes more comfortable. Some choose to install solar shades inside their homes as a way of reducing solar heat. Since this kind of project is inside the home, it is not regulated under the Guidelines for Protective Covenants and Building Restrictions for Eldorado, and no ECIA approval is needed.

That said, when residents choose to add exterior solar shading or awnings on their homes, this *does* require review by the ECIA Architectural Committee, due to the fact that this would be a permanent exterior alteration, above the natural grade. This is detailed in the covenants as Article II, Section B:

b) No additions nor exterior alterations above the natural grade shall be made to an existing building until the design, location, exterior colors and



building materials for such additions and alterations have been approved in writing by the ECIA Board of Directors or its designees.

Since the Guidelines currently lack a detailed section that specifically addresses such shading devices, we encourage residents to choose those that would be most in keeping with the architectural style of their homes and the least obtrusive. We discourage metal rolling shading as well as any color of shading material that does not match or complement the exterior color of the home.

Residents who are interested in installing exterior solar shade structures or awnings are required to complete an architectural plan submission form and submit it to the ECIA for review by the Architectural Committee. Any questions should be addressed to me at the ECIA via e-mail at eciaccr@aol.com or at 466-4248.

—Mark Young, Covenant Compliance Representative

Our Pets and Emergency Preparedness

On the evening of June 13, as I was preparing to leave Santa Fe for a brief visit to Atlanta, I was overwhelmed with the smell of something burning. I went outside to see how close the fire was, saw cars traveling Avenida Eldorado with headlights that looked as though they were peering through thick fog, and began to panic. I have two cats and more "things" than any person needs. What to take, where to go, how do I secure my household items? All questions flooded into my head. I found out that the smoke was from the Arizona fires, which was a relief, but the questions nagged on.

Here are a few tips for pet owners, which may ease any emergency situation we may face:

- ▶ Make sure your pets have ID tags with both home and, especially, cell phone contact information. If you must leave your home, the home phone number will not be useful.
- ▶ Consider having your pet(s) microchipped. It is an easy procedure and an ideal way to ensure your vital information can be found.
- ▶ Each pet should have its own carrier.

- ▶ Keep a leash and harness in each carrier.
- ▶ Put together a kit, which should include necessary medications, water and food bowls, and a couple of favorite toys.
- ▶ If your pet is on a special diet, pack enough food for at least a week.
- ▶ Know where several kennels are and have their phone numbers handy. Kennels fill up very quickly in an emergency.
- ▶ Know "pet friendly" hotels/motels ahead of time. While many allow pets now, there may be weight restrictions.
- ▶ Pets sense panic or chaos and have a tendency to flee such situations. When readying for departure, make sure your pets don't have access to open doors or other means of escaping.

RECENT CRIME STATISTICS:

6/14/11 Burglary/larceny

6/26/11 Aggravated burglary, conspiracy, and larceny

NEXT NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH MEETING:

August 1, 7–9 pm.

—Nina Harrison

Festival Time

From every angle, the Eldorado Summer Festival was an exceptional success. Last spring, at the Sustainable Eldorado Residents Alliance Town Hall, a popular suggestion was made that Eldorado organize seasonal festivals to bring residents together to build the social connections in our community. Certainly the Fourth of July Independence Day festivities this year fulfilled that vision.

I saw people from every section of Eldorado eating pancakes and drinking juice at La Tienda—old timers from the Verano-Moya area, and newly retired couples settling into their new home in the Avila area—all celebrating the spirit of “interdependence.”

I saw children from western Eldorado whom I’ve known since they were babies, marching in the parade between the rodeo queens on horseback and the teenage boys on stilts.

The festivities at the Community Center were powered by a jump house, an ample supply of hot

dogs, sno-cones, and popcorn, thanks to the Eldorado Community Church and ECIA. The bagpipers, square dancers, and children’s theater performers rounded out the entertainment.

And finally, at the end of the day, the patio outside the Taphouse filled up with the last revelers, sipping and chatting as the sun settled into the smoke-filled sky.

By now, the fun-filled Fourth of July is a memory. As you read this, children and parents are preparing for the coming school year, a traditional harbinger of autumn. Soon we will notice the shorter days that signal the transition from summer to winter. We harvest the last crops and flowers and clean up the gardens. We bring out the sweatshirts, and get that last bit of firewood to last until spring.

Let’s get the discussion going: What does fall mean in Eldorado? How would you like to celebrate autumn, Eldorado style? Send me your ideas.

—Ed Moreno, ECIA President
edmoreno@newmexico.com

Recent Board Actions

At its June 16, 2011, meeting, the ECIA Board took the following actions:

- ▶ Authorized signers of ECIA checks were adjusted for the new officers to include President Moreno, Vice-President Colello, and Treasurer Handy.
- ▶ Jan Pietrzak was appointed Parliamentarian for Board meetings.
- ▶ A variance request was approved to allow an existing garage and concrete pad at 4 Cerrado Court to extend 12 feet into the required 20-foot side setback and 2 feet into the 10-foot utility easement.

- ▶ A variance was approved to allow a post and wire fence at 11 Gualdo Road to encroach 20 feet into the required 50-foot roadside setback.
- ▶ A variance request to allow chickens to be kept at 35 Encantado Road was tabled, for consideration at a subsequent Board meeting.

Board meetings are scheduled on the third Thursday of each month at 7 pm at the Community Center, and are open to the public. For complete minutes and meeting agendas, visit the ECIA office or website: <http://eldoradosf.org>.

Recyclopedia Tip

ELDORADO AREA’S BEST KEPT SECRET

The Eldorado Transfer Station, just two miles south of Eldorado on Highway 285 (look for sign: Waste Transfer Station) accepts the following recyclables free of charge:

- ▶ All colors of glass food and beverage containers (no lids, please).
- ▶ Flattened corrugated cardboard (wavy middle) and brown paper bags.
- ▶ Commingled recyclables: paper (newspapers, junk mail, office paper, magazines), aluminum foil and cans, steel cans, and #1 and #2 plastic containers with a narrow neck (no lids, please). All commingled recyclables go into one dumpster.

The Transfer Station also takes:

- ▶ Waste oil
- ▶ Fluorescent light bulbs
- ▶ Small batteries (alkaline and lithium)
- ▶ Scrap metal

For complete information, go to their website www.santafecounty.org (select Public Works, Solid Waste, and your topic.)

—Brought to you by
Sustainable Eldorado Residents
Alliance (SERA) Recycles!

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Conservation: John Parker
Election: Jean Crawford
Facilities & Grounds:

Jeanne Calzada

Finance: Dan Drobins

Information: Frank Schober

Neighborhood Watch:

Marilyn Walker

Stable: Lisa Bessone &

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COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Vista Grande Library

466-READ

Security

204-2945

Fire and Rescue

466-1204

eldoradofirerescue.org

County All Purpose

820-CNTY (2689)

Free Yoga Classes All Summer

Join the Eldorado Yoga Center's teaching team for an all-levels yoga class Friday nights this summer after the Farmer's Market at La Tienda. No experience necessary, no need to bring anything—we have everything you need. For questions, contact the studio at info@eldoradoyogacenter.com or 310-8660. Classes are first-come, first-served from 6 to 7 pm on the following Fridays: July 29; August 5, 12, 19, and 26.

Eldorado Children's Theatre/Teen Players

Eldorado Children's Theatre and Teen Players, in its 12th season, is now accepting applications for its fall program for ages 7–18! Your children can be part of a full-scale slightly fractured fairy tale production of Rodgers and Hammerstein's "CINDERELLA" to be performed at the James A. Little Theater with professional costumes, lights, sets, and orchestra as well as receive excellent training in theater, movement, and voice from the highest-

level teachers in town. Your children will do all of this while having a great time, building confidence, and making new friends. Putting together a full-scale musical is an unforgettable and exciting experience for any child or teen. Classes will be held in Eldorado, and the show will be performed in early December. Classes begin August 30. For more information or to download an application, go to www.eldoradochildrenstheatre.org. Space is limited, so don't delay!

Eldorado Gardening Tour 2012

Plans are already underway for the 3rd Annual Gardening Tour next June. If you, or someone you know, may be interested in having your garden on the tour, please email John (Obie) Oberhausen at Jwo1959@aol.com.

Flea Market in September

The Adam Senior Center will co-host the September Flea market with the Vista Grande Library. The Flea Market is scheduled for Saturday, September 17, from 8 am to 12 noon in the parking lot of the Eldorado Community Center. Spaces for Eldorado residents will be \$10. Once again, it is a first-come, first-served event with limited spaces. Begin now to set things aside for sale. Further details will appear in the September *Vistas*.

Arts & Crafts Fall Show

Mark Your Calendars: The Eldorado Arts and Crafts Fall Show has a new date and a new location. This year we are taking our art and traveling to Santa Fe. Our new location is St. John's United Methodist Church at 1200 Old Pecos Trail. The dates are October 28–29. For more information, go to www.eldoradostudiotour.org.

MOON PHASES FOR AUGUST



SPEC Needs the Voices of all Whos

The newly formed Sustainability, Planning, and Education Committee (SPEC) will be holding its regular meetings on the 2nd Thursday of every month, at 7 pm in the ECIA Community Center. The Dr. Suess book, *Horton Hears a Who*, is a story about Whoville, a micro-sized planet seen by most to be a speck of dust on a flower. However, when an elephant named Horton hears the Mayor of the Whos talking on the speck, he goes on an adventure to protect the tiny planet from harm. In the end, the only thing that saved the speck from being boiled in "Beezelnut oil" was all of the Whos combining their voices as one. Within the ECIA, the speck (SPEC) needs all of its Whos to plan and speak for our future. Please make your voices heard and join the SPEC at their next monthly meeting on Thursday, August 11.

Put on Your Dancing Shoes!

La Tienda at Eldorado celebrates the 42nd Anniversary of Woodstock 1969–2011 . . . and everywhere there was song and celebration. Come out for a fun evening of dancing and fun at La Tienda on Saturday, August 13, from 7:30 to 10:00 pm. DJ **Donna Every** will be spinning old and new party favorites on the patio. This outdoor dance is a free all-ages-welcome event in the same space as the farmers market. Food will be available from La Plancha. Beer will be available at the Taphouse within their approved patio.

County Raises Transaction Fees

Effective July 1, 2011, Santa Fe County raised fees on transactions. This impacts ECIA property owners when documents such as liens are filed. This recording fee is invoiced to ECIA property owners when a lien is filed or released. This fee was raised from \$9 per transaction to \$25 per transaction.

End of Summer Community Day

Save the Date: Labor Day, Sept. 5, late afternoon. Dance, swing band, games and barbecue. Call to order BBQ plate (466-4248) or bring picnic.

Pool Hours

Lap Swim: Every day 8–10 am; Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays 6–8 pm

General Swim: Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays, Sundays 10 am–8 pm; Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays 10 am–6 pm





ASTRONOMY CORNER

August 2011



August 12–13 Perseids

Many consider the Perseids, which often peak at 50 or more meteors per hour—to be the year's best meteor shower, at least when the moon is out of the sky. This year, though, the full moon will spoil the Perseid display, obscuring all but the brightest meteors during the shower's peak. But with dark skies, you can see Perseids in the weeks leading up to the peak, too. Start watching for them in the first week of August, when they are building gradually to their peak. By the second week of August, the moon will begin interfering with the skies between midnight and dawn. On the mornings of August 12 and 13, you can still watch for some Perseid meteors streak across the sky from midnight until dawn, especially in the early hours before dawn. These meteors are often bright and frequently leave persistent trains.

—Source: earthandsky.org

LIGHT POLLUTION

Milk spilt on dark skies,
Galaxy strewn for our eyes,
Bulbs bring its demise.

—Elan Colello

Protect Our Night Skies:

Lights left carelessly on may spoil the views of our night sky.

Pickup Soccer Game

Some Eldorado residents would like to organize a weekly pickup soccer game at the school field; date and time TBD. Contact Dylan Clear, pickupsoccer@santafesports.org.

August Events

Left out? Help us compile a comprehensive events listing.

Email info@eldoradosf.org with your meeting/event information, or bring it to the ECIA office by the 3rd of the month for publication in the following month's *Vistas*.

Please include "Attn: Vistas" and be sure to indicate:



1. **Type of Event**
2. **Location**
3. **Date & Time**
4. **A Resource Person** (one who can answer questions both about the event and the sponsoring organization) and his/her telephone number.

Photographs (digital or snapshots) are encouraged!

Note: All meetings are at the Community Center, unless otherwise noted.

LR=Living Room, F=Foyer, CFR=Conference Room, CR=Class Room, RR=Railroad, K=Kitchen

AUGUST SPECIAL EVENTS

Woodstock Anniversary Dance	Sat., August 13, 7:30–10 pm	La Tienda
Ice Cream Social	Sun., August 28, 1–4:30 pm	CC

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Architectural Committee	Tues., August 9, 7-9 pm	Mark Young	466-4248	Foyer
Architectural Committee	Tues., August 23, 7-9 pm	Mark Young	466-4248	Foyer
Board Work Study	Mon., August 15, 7-9 pm	ECIA	466-4248	CFR
Conservation Committee	Tues., August 2, 7-9 pm	John Parker	466-7513	F
ECIA Board	Thurs., August 18, 7-9 pm	ECIA	466-4248	CR
Facilities & Grounds	Tues., August 2, 4-6 pm	Jeanne Calzada	466-1947	CFR
Finance Committee	Wed., August 10, 9:30-11:30	Dan Drobnis	466-4781	CFR
Information Committee	Tues., August 23, 7-9 pm	Frank Schober	310-8593	CFR
Neighborhood Watch	Mon., August 1, 7-9 pm	Marilyn Walker	466-2553	CR
Road Committee	Mon., Nov. 14, 6-8 pm	Nolan Zisman	466-2968	CFR
Stable Committee	Wed., August 30, 7-9 pm	Lisa Bessone	466-7100	Foyer
Sustainability, Planning...	Thurs., August 11, 7-9pm	Dana Richards	690-5500	CFR

MONTHLY / SEMI-MONTHLY MEETINGS

Boy Scouts	2nd & 3rd Thurs., 6:30-7:30	Johnny Boggs	466-3680	RR
EACA Meeting	Last Thurs of month		204-7007	LR
EAWS&SD*	1st & 3rd Thurs, 7-9 pm	Anna Mondragon	466-1085	RR
Eldorado Dog Club	4th Saturday 9:30 am	Freddi Fullington	466-2005	Dog Park
Girl Scouts 295	Every other Fri., 5:30-7 pm	Michelle Jaschke	466-2422	CR
La Cañada Wireless	2nd & 4th Mon., 7-9 pm	lcwireless.org		
Library Book Group	2nd Saturday 9-10:30	Joan LaMarque	466-6000	CFR
Library Book Group	3rd Mon., 7-9 pm	Pam Henline	466-4781	VGPL
Roadrunner RV	3rd Tues. of month	Pat Stewart	820-0303	
Search & Rescue	2nd Thurs, 7 pm	santafesar.org		CR

WEEKLY MEETINGS

AA	Tues., 5:30-6:50 pm			CFR
AA	Wed., 10:30-11:30 am			CFR/CR
AA	Wed., 5:45-6:45 pm (Men Only)			CFR
AA	Thurs. 5:30-6:30 pm (Women Only)			CFR
AA	Fri., 6-7 pm			CFR/LR
AA	Sat., 10:45-11:45 am			CFR
AA	Sun., 5:15-6:15 pm			LR/CFR
Basketball	Thurs., 6:30 pm			BB Court
Boy Scout Troop 414	Wed., 7-9 pm	Fritz Denny	466-4070	RR, CR, LR
Bridge	Every Fri., 1-4:30 pm	Pat Lavengood	466-9765	LR
Bridge	Wed., 9-noon	Nancy Rost	466-2832	LR
Community Church**	Sun., 9:30 & 11 am	David McPherson	466-2495	La Tienda
Eldorado Hikers	Tues., 8:30 am	Terry Gibbs	466-6914	CC
Fire & Rescue Training	Wed., 7-9 pm	Fire Station Office	466-1204	Station
Fire & Rescue Work Duty	Sat., Call for time	Fire Station Office	466-1204	Station
Girl Scouts 286	Fri., 4-6 pm	Lisa Engeldinger	466-0077	CR
Knitting Club	Tues., 10-12 noon	Joyce Hanmer	466-3018	LR
Life Drawing	Mon., 10-12 noon	Ann Sharp	466-4733	RR
Senior Lunch***	Mon.-Fri., 12-1 pm	Senior Center	466-1039	
Softball	Sundays 10:00 am	Tom Miller	466-6059	CC
Square Dancing	Fri., 6-9 pm	Richard Robinson	466-7319	RR

*Eldorado Area Water and Sanitation District **For other religious/spiritual services, go to <http://santafe.areaconnect.com/churches.htm> ***Reservations Required

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.eldoradosf.org

Coyotes Need Friends Too

Coyote cub spotted in Eldorado.
Photo: Riki Stevens

Most Eldorado residents have probably either seen a coyote along the road or heard their haunting wails and yips on moonlit nights in the community greenbelts. The wily coyote was highly revered by early Native Americans, which made it the subject of many fables. Unfortunately, today coyotes suffer a largely undeserved reputation among many livestock ranchers as well as some pet owners who have had a cat that never returned home.

Some ranchers call them “varmints.” From an environmental standpoint, all wild animals play important roles in our overall ecosystem.

While coyotes occasionally try to take on a rancher’s sheep, in most cases it is not worth the effort for them. By and large, their main diet consists of fruit, seeds, berries, grasshoppers, rodents, and rabbits. Importantly, rodents like mice, squirrels, and rats are the very animals that can transmit the regionally prevalent hantavirus and plague to humans. In this context, coyotes are definitely beneficial to humans. Yes, a coyote can try to catch a pet cat; but it is unknown to what degree coyotes may be responsible for missing cats.

Unfortunately, owing to the coyote’s bad reputation, the State

of New Mexico permits the use of steel leg-hold traps—to capture not only coyotes but also any other fur-bearing animal. These traps are extremely cruel to animals, an ancient holdover from the 18th century. Coyotes have been known to chew a paw off to get out of a trap. While 78% of Americans believe that leg-hold traps should be banned, our state game commissioners still allow their continuing use, perhaps under pressure from ranchers. Most other states, including Arizona and Colorado, have long banned their use. Interestingly, the 1996 issue of *New Mexico Wildlife Notes* distributed by the New Mexico Fish & Game Department included the following statement: “Despite ranchers’ claims that coyotes kill domestic livestock, deer, and antelope, these blanket statements frequently prove false under closer scrutiny. In the long run, simply leaving coyotes alone may be a more effective way of allowing their numbers to reach a normal balance.”

Leg-hold traps placed on ranch land can also be extremely dangerous for children and dogs. Just recently, a dog in Truchas was caught in such a trap. Unfortunately, several thousands of acres of State Trust land abut the western boundary of Eldorado. For the most part, this public land is leased to private livestock ranchers who can set leg-hold traps. Eldorado residents who live near our western boundary should be very careful not to let their children or pets venture onto this State Trust land.

—Don Dayton

(Don was a former Wildlife Manager employed by the National Park Service)



Adam Senior Center News

The Adam Senior Center is fortunate to have Eldorado artists volunteer their time to teach classes. The art programs are extremely popular activities.

In August, **Lynne and Bob Coyle** are teaching their popular weaving and clay classes at the Adam Center on Thursdays, from 1:30 to 3:30 pm, beginning August 4 and ending on September 22. An art class to explore collage techniques is planned for September, with **Darcy Gray** teaching on Tuesdays. The class will explore design, color, and materials. Following in October, **Janet Amtmann** will teach basic painting, and simultaneously a general art class for advanced students. The painting class will begin October 11 and end December 6, with a break for Thanksgiving week. Classes run afternoons from 1:30

to 3:30 pm. Sign-up sheets for the classes will be posted two weeks in advance of each art course.

For the remainder of the summer, the travel committee has two trips planned each month. Seniors can stop by the Center to find out the details and times of the trips and to sign up.

General senior services continue to be transportation, Meals on Wheels, daily noontime lunches, and exercise class on Wednesdays. Reservations for lunch are required a day in advance by calling 466-1039. As always, volunteers are needed for answering the phone for a couple of hours in the morning, driving for Meals on Wheels, and helping in the kitchen. Our volunteers are an integral part of making the Adam Senior Center a warm, hospitable place for seniors.

—Janet Amtmann

Our Fire Department Needs You!

Eldorado's Fire and Rescue Service (EFRS) is rated among the best volunteer department in the State of New Mexico. The 20 men and women who train on Wednesday nights and Saturday mornings at the firehouse on Avenida Vista Grande are our neighbors—but of a special sort. They are ready 24/7 to respond to homes and nearby highways when called for medical emergencies, fires, vehicle extrications, and HAZMAT incidents.

Three-quarters of their responses are medical in nature. Fire and calls for personal service occupy the balance, with the latter representing a wide variety of issues, such as a resident needing help to get out of bed or off the floor following a fall. When the situation gets too big to handle with local resources, other departments will provide assistance, known as “mutual aid.” But if the other departments are already involved in a county-wide emergency, their aid will come much later or not at all. It is no exaggeration to state that the EFRS led by chief **Stephen Tapke** is all that stands between us and personal and community disasters when—not if—they occur.

The title of “Among the Best” does not come easy. The ISO* annually rates full-time and volunteer departments in the state and nation and gives them a numerical rating based on their levels of training, their ready access to a sufficient supply of water, and the adequacy of their equipment and its state of maintenance. The EFRS is rated as “4”—the highest number an all-volunteer department can achieve.

One fact of life that confronts us in Eldorado and in all of the rural West is that volunteers are both a source of safety and a cost-effective enhancement of our local communities. If the EFRS were to be disbanded due to a lack of volunteers, all of us would see a very significant rise in our taxes as paid firefighter and medics took their place.

The EFRS needs volunteers to keep its equipment at the ready to save lives and protect our land and the dwellings in this very special community of Eldorado. You don't have to be on the front lines of the department to belong to it; you can serve as a member in a limited-duty status, helping out where and as needed on the fire ground during an incident. You can do such things as helping with the

ever-present paperwork that the department faces in maintaining supply and training records. You can also help with food service for the department's members. If you are at least 16 years of age, think about becoming a Fire Cadet. In a shorter time than you realize, you will be a first responder, a regular firefighter like the ones you admire now.

As you pass Eldorado's Main Fire Station, you will see a sign with the number of calls the department has received since the beginning of the year. That sign does not tell the full story. It might be hard to quantify, but it would be good for us all if it said “Lives saved this year.” Some future number might be ours.

Come by the Fire House some Saturday morning and ask anyone there, “Where's the Chief?” Begin your conversation with him with something most of us have probably thought about, “You know, since I was a kid, I've always wanted to be a firefighter.” Give it a try. You will have a very special T-shirt to wear around Eldorado.

—Frank Schober



Above: Tower (aerial truck) training.
Left: Extrication training (removing patient from wrecked car).
Photos Ken Pinter.

Numerous studies reveal that volunteers are more satisfied with their jobs, have a better work ethic, and are more persistent in working toward long-term goals and rewards in their lives.

*ISO: The ISO uses a uniform set of criteria called the Fire Suppression Rating Schedule (FSRS). The FSRS incorporates recognized standards developed by the National Fire Protection Association and the American Water Works Association. The better a department's rating, the lower its community's fire insurance rates are likely to be.

ELDORADO VISTAS

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ECIA's New Labyrinth

In case you haven't heard, Eldorado has its very own labyrinth, built by **Breo Freeman** as his Eagle Scout project, with the help of about 20 family and friends. Breo wanted to do something to enhance his community. Labyrinth plans were found online, received approval from the ECIA, and now it's a reality—located behind the pool

A labyrinth is not the the same thing as a maze. You can get lost in a maze, but not in a labyrinth. There is only one way in and one way out of a labyrinth. Come try it!

While you walk, you may want to meditate upon an aspect of your life, to receive guidance about a problem, or simply open your heart and mind to inspiration. Or, perhaps you might just want to say you did it!

—Jackie Koger



Photo by Breo Freedman