# 2022 President’s Annual Report to the Owners

The President’s Annual Report is written and distributed to Owners in advance of the Annual Meeting, rather than verbally delivered and then included in the Annual Meeting minutes. This practice is in recognition that monthly Board meeting minutes are now distributed via email so those who choose may already know what has been happening. This is intended to shorten the Annual Meeting, but in no way cut off discussion of anything Owners wish to discuss in an open forum – either at the Annual Meeting or any regular monthly Board meeting. The Zoom meeting will begin at 1:00 PM. If you would like an invite to the Zoom meeting, please email your request to Chris Gober cgober101@outlook.com by 5PM Friday August 5, 2022

This report covers the past year (August 2021 – July 2022) and discusses the major happenings that may be of interest to property Owners as well as present the issues on the Annual Ballot. Again, this year much has been happening to improve Deer Valley and keep it in the forefront of premier places to live in southwest Colorado.

**New Owners**

Of our 84 lots, seven have changed hands since last summer. We would like to extend a special welcome to all our new Owners. Three new homes are being built, and one has been completed within DVE.

**Fire Mitigation Continues**

Residing within a Wildland Urban Interface comes with some unique risks not generally found in other parts of the County. One such risk is the ever-present threat of wildfire. Wildfire is an event nature uses to enhance the overall health of our forests. Fire removes dead, diseased, and overgrown vegetation, which in turn provides nutrients for new growth and improved wildlife habitat. It is impossible to prevent wildfires from impacting communities in the Wildland Urban Interface; as such, homeowners need to learn to live with that ever-changing environment without increasing the risk or subjecting their homes to increased level of threat

In 2009, Deer Valley Estates (DVE) completed and gained approval of our Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). It was one of the first in southwest Colorado and the first in La Plata County. Because of the CWPP, and the fire mitigation work that began along our roads, we received national recognition as a Firewise Communities USA program in 2010, which is part of the National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA). A sign on the front gate acknowledges our continued recognition and annual compliance.

That, coupled with the United States Forest Service (USFS) prescribed burn around DVE in the fall of 2014 and 2018 plus major mechanical mitigation directly across Hwy 160 from DVE, has greatly reduced our wildfire risk. Many Owners have assisted in this effort in numerous ways, but special thanks go to Les Kole for his tireless efforts writing and updating the CWPP, writing grant requests, coordinating the mitigation activity with DVE Owners, and attending Wildfire Adapted Partnership (formally Firewise of Southwest Colorado) as our representative since 2006.

We can all be proud of this recognition. Even more important is the significant mitigation that we achieved in DVE. It truly provides a safer, more defensible environment for everyone in the event of a wildfire in our area.

Fire mitigation is not a one and done type of thing. Your defensible space needs to be maintained. Defensible space is the**buffer you create between a building on your property and the grass, trees, shrubs, or any wildland area that surround it**. This space is needed to slow or stop the spread of wildfire and it helps protect your home from catching fire—either from embers, direct flame contact or radiant heat. We have all put time and effort into protecting our homes from wildfire, let’s not let that go to waste! Maintaining your defensible space is a every year type of maintenance that needs to be completed. If you need assistance in determining how to maintain your defensible space, or need assistance fire mitigation on your property, please do not hesitate to contact myself or Les Kole who can put you in the right direction.

This spring the U. S. Forest Service began a multi-year project of logging in 300/400-acre units surrounding DVE in the Saul’s Creek area. Once the logging is under way, they also intend to burn the slash piles and oak brush as weather permits. This project is another important measure that the U.S. Forest Service is doing to help mitigate a large catastrophic wildfire in our area.

**Road Maintenance**

This year the Road Maintenance Committee met several times throughout late winter and early spring to determine discuss this year’s road maintenance. The RMC recommended to the Board of Directors that this year’s road maintenance be suspended until the completion of the fiber backbone had been completed. This recommendation was considered by the Board who approved this recommendation. This was not an easy decision to make, but we did not want to interfere with the fiber project that we have waited so long for. The contractor for the fiber project is required to repair and clean up our roadways and we will ensure that is completed. The monies that were budgeted for this year’s road maintenance has been put into a savings account and will be used next year to complete this year’s scheduled road maintenance. This means that we will do two years of road work (2022 & 2023) next year in 2023.

In September we replaced a culvert that crossed under Wieland Dr. that was clogged and caused water to run over the roadway. In a major rainstorm last summer, it became clear that if the culvert wasn’t replaced, major damage to Wieland Dr. would occur from run off. In September a work party of several owners were able to install the new culvert within a few hours without causing a disruption of traffic in the area. A huge thank you to allow involved.

To help maintain our roadways, please mind your speed. Remember our roads are used by owners walking, riding bicycles, ATVs, and UTVs, there are also several blind spots so please **SLOW DOWN**!

**Fencing**

Our long-term fencing replacement is now complete. There is approximately 25,000 feet of perimeter fence around DVE. We continue to maintain areas of the fence that need repairs from wildlife, trees, or cattle damage. Thanks to Les and Linda Kole for completing this year’s maintenance on the fence.

On Saturday afternoon June 4, 2022, a calf wandered into DVE, and his Momma was on the other side of the fence in the forest. Les Kole, Danny & Jodi DeHondt, Michael & Connie Blankenship and Tom Angevine were able to wrassle the calf back through the fence (momma was happy) and make fence repairs that were necessary. (The fence had to be cut to get the calf into the forest.)

Thank you to Danny DeHondt for reporting the loose calf!

**Front Entrance**

At the March Board meeting, the Board approved the purchase of three cluster mailboxes at a cost of $5,959.00. These cluster mailboxes along with the two that were gifted to us by the U.S. Post Office will bring the total of available mailboxes to 80 with 10 parcel boxes. Because USPS requires one parcel box per eight households, these recommended units provide for additional, and needed, parcel boxes at no addition charge. This will give us a total of 16 parcel boxes as we are going to incorporate the existing parcel boxes with the new mailboxes. Because the mailboxes are front loading, we are able to relocate them to western edge of the pavement. By moving them to the edge of the pavement it will allow owners to stop and get their mail without impeding traffic, will make it easier to clear snow from the entrance, and will make the area uniform and more aesthetic. Once the mailboxes are installed the Postmaster will assign the boxes based on street address, for example all the Spur Lane addresses will be grouped together. This should help reduce the amount of mail being placed in the wrong mailbox. We are also in the process of redesigning the newspaper boxes to an updated configuration that will be like our front entrance sign. The Board approved closing the CD that matures in November early, to pay for this project. The remaining funds will be put into our savings account. Currently our savings account is accruing a better interest rate.

We are also in the process of updating our receiver for the gate, but due to shipping delays this has taken longer than was expected. The new receiver will have three different channels and is capable of nearly a hundred remotes. Once this new receiver is installed, we will schedule a day and time for everyone to come down and get their remotes/vehicles reprogrammed.

**High Speed Internet**

Perhaps the most exciting thing that has happened this past year is the fiber project. As most of you know, DVE has been on a mission for many years to pursue high-speed internet service for our subdivision. In October 2020, we were notified that Brainstorm had been awarded $277,050.75 by the State Broadband Board for the project. This Grant required matching funds of $92,350.25 from our Owners for a total project cost estimate of $369,401.

It has been a long hard road for this project, but we have seen great progress recently. The past year has been filed with ups and downs. Things have been slow moving until last September when information began flowing on a totally reconfigured backbone plan for our project.  Recall that originally Brainstorm planned to hang the fiber backbone on the power poles, assuming that this would be the most cost-efficient method, until the make-ready costs from LPEA far exceeded those from prior years plans.  This caused Brainstorm to reconsider burying the fiber backbone.  We learned that Futurum, the parent company of Brainstorm was bought out by Vero. This also caused a minor delay, and we were unsure what the future held. Fortunately, Vero was excited about working with us and has continued the original project as approved by the State. The State did approve Vero taking over our grant and did not change what is required from DVE.

This spring Vero along with their contractor Circle Z began the process of burying the fiber backbone. Initially they tried to trench down the middle of the roadway which was deemed too difficult and time consuming due to the compaction, and amount of road base. This is a testament to how well our roads are currently being maintained. They then opted to use a mini excavator to bury the fiber line along the shoulder of our roads. This was completed in late May.

The installation of the conduit/fiber to our homes began in early June and continues with both Vero and Circle Z on site.  Part of this process will be the installation of the equipment cabinet, electricity and the radio signal receiver (dish) along the road on Elk Valley. This dish will be temporary and located on Lot 46 until a major fiber line is installed along Highway 160.  We understand that part of this fiber line is being installed from Wolf Creek Pass to Pagosa Springs this summer. Circle Z will also be doing remediation on the roads, ditches, culverts and road right-of-way during this time.  All the conduit, fiber and supplies have arrived for the fiber drops to the homes. Likewise, the equipment cabinet that will be installed along Elk Valley is also on hand and ready for installation.  LPEA is also preparing to run power to the equipment area.  (Gratitude, again, to Kay Walsh, Owner of Lot 46, for granting another easement, this one to LPEA, to help make this project a success.)

 Our Agreement with Vero is that any Owner that wants conduit/fiber run to their home, regardless of whether they want Vero Internet service or not, will have it run to their home free of charge. This is only available while construction crews are doing work on our project.  Anyone wanting conduit/fiber installed after construction crews leave will have to pay to have it installed at a cost of $99.

To ensure the most efficient installation process, we have given a list of homeowners, with phone numbers, to Vero so that they may arrange with each Owner directly for the installation. We also required Vero to destroy and not use this list in the future for solicitation purposes. When Vero is ready to run fiber to your home, you will be called by a Vero Customer Service Team member to make those arrangements.  If you do not want them to run fiber to your home, simply let them know at that time.  (Remember, this Phase only brings the conduit/fiber to the outside of the house and will not require any work inside the home.  Free installation into your home will occur in the final phase of our project.)  For absentee homeowners, John Beebe and Les Kole will be happy to be your eyes on the ground for the conduit/fiber installation.

As of writing this Vero has yet to request reimbursement from DVE. We continue to hold the $92,400.00 in savings.

**Trash Removal**

We seem to waver on our trash situation. **OUR DUMPSTERS ARE FOR HOUSEHOLD TRASH ONLY!** Unfortunately, we continue to see items including electronics, furniture, carpet, wheelbarrows, yard waste and other inappropriate deposits in our dumpsters. No number of emails, or notices on the dumpster surround, have curtailed this activity. We have provided detailed information on recycling options in the area as well as information on the transfer station and where to take flattened cardboard. Our service with Waste Management was increased to both dumpsters being emptied twice per week. We are all ordering more items online, which means more cardboard boxes. If you do not wish to recycle, PLEASE be considerate of your neighbors and flatten your boxes. Also, please do not leave items you do not want at the dumpster. It interferes with the emptying of the dumpsters, and we risk the driver refusing to empty them. It is important that we all cooperate in sharing the dumpster space or we will be forced to add pickup days which will increase the cost for trash removal.

**Financial Affairs**

We entered our 2021-2022 fiscal year with a $2,460.23 carryover from the previous year. We added 3% of our operating budget to the Reserve Fund which now totals $32,651.15. Our Road Maintenance work totaled $13034.89 which included $1,824.18 for the Wieland Dr. Culvert, and $11,210.00 for snow removal

**DVE Board of Directors Positions**

We have two vacancies to be filled on our Board of Directors this year. Two Owners have submitted their statement of qualifications – Les Kole and Mark Wagner. Each candidate’s Statement of Qualifications is attached for your review. Please feel free to reach out to the candidates if you have questions of them and remember to turn in your ballot.

**Annual Meeting Ballot Issue**

We have had a request from an Owner to add a ballot initiative this year. Please review the information submitted by Kathy Moore and additional comments from the Board and mark your ballot accordingly.

**Secretary Position**

We are still looking for one of our owners to volunteer to by the Secretary. Although we did have Ellen Maxon serve in this position, she had to resign for personal reasons. Thank you, Ellen, for your time and hard work. Currently Mark Wagner is doing his best to fill the role of Secretary, thank you Mark for your hard work and all the long hours you have put in. In past years the Secretary had a large number of duties assigned to them, the Board has worked to reduce that workload, to recording of the minutes of Board and Annual meetings and maintaining the Property Owner’s lists. If you are interested in this position and have questions, please don’t hesitate to contact one of the Board members.

**Comments**

In conclusion, thank you all for a great year and being patient during the installation of the fiber backbone! Hopefully, you have found some of this information helpful. We all know that the past couple of years, with having meetings via Zoom, have been difficult for all of us. We hope to be to meet in person in the upcoming year. If you have questions, concerns or issues, please bring them to any Board member’s attention before the meeting so we can research them and provide appropriate answers. We hope that you will join us for our Annual Meeting.!

Respectfully,

Chris Gober - President