

# Rural Revitalization Initiative Newsletter

Des Moines Municipal Schools

Winter 2010

## RURAL COMMUNITIES VALUE THEIR SCHOOLS



As the legislative season draws near, we know that there will be discussion, as usual, about the best ways to reduce state budget costs and where education fits into all of that. Quietly at first, legislators will start the conversation about the expensiveness of small schools; it's unlikely that ugly word "consolidation" won't show up. Because we know the beauty of our small school district and the positive differences our students have made in this and other states, we'll stand up, the best we can, to that discussion. We need to stand up every day. That's the understood mission of the RRI Steering Committee and all of its helpers. With an assets-based approach, the RRI supports a variety of activities and educational experiences that speak to the success of the Des Moines School District. **A Cornell study shows that on almost every indicator of economic and social wellbeing, rural communities with their own schools fare significantly better than rural communities that no longer have schools.** When a school goes in a rural community, it's the death knell. This study shows consistently that for the smallest rural communities, the presence of a school is linked to many social and economic benefits. (Thomas A. Lyson, Professor of Development Sociology) Des Moines School District is part of a statewide initiative dedicated to rural community and school revitalization. In its partnership with the Board of Education, faculty/staff, students, and school district communities, the RRI Steering Committee stands up tall for the vitality in this school district. We are all reminded that it is important to stay informed and involved about current affairs in New Mexico, including those events of New Mexico's State Legislature.

## COMMUNITY/SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL (CSAC)

*This Council will support volunteer involvement with the school, along with advising to the school district.* The CSAC is an organization outside the school, a newly formed parent/community/teacher group. Its financial activity will comply with local policy and Public Education Department procedures. This important group can provide volunteer service in a variety of school projects, and it will be important in providing a parent/community component to planning of such programs as Title I, Safe Schools, Technology, Textbook Adoption, etc. The CSAC will develop and present "action plans", in support of the Board's strategic planning process. That process also belongs to the RRI Steering Committee process. Participants will be directly involved in information-gathering and planning discussions related to school programs and specific budget matters. CSAC will be a positive support group for our schools and our educators. That will result in stronger programs, wider district participation, positive school climate and staff morale; of most importance, the very best in learning opportunities for children in the District. An open invitation is extended to school district citizens to attend CSAC meetings that are tentatively scheduled for January, March, May, July, September, and November. Call Ashley Warner, CSAC Chairman, or Supt. Jaynee Burchard for additional information.

**YOU ARE INVITED . . . RRI STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS . . .** The Steering Committee for the RRI meets on the first Tuesday of each month at 6:00 at the school. You are invited to attend those meetings and to become involved in workgroup activities.

### Thank You to...

**Baca Valley  
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for their help in printing and mailing the RRI newsletter and for their continued support of the Des Moines Schools' revitalization projects.

### NEW MEXICO STATE LEGISLATURE

Begins at noon on January 19 — Ends at noon on February 18

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR! MARCH 18TH AT 6:00 PM**

**Community Catch on to Health and Fitness Family Night**

Join us for a healthy progressive dinner and activity games!

## FOCUS: LOVIN' WHERE YOU LIVE



*Linda Morrow said it loud and clear on national television, on New Years Day, that we live and raise our kids in the most wonderful place in the world.*

Linda's lifelong dream came true when she traveled to California for the Rose Parade on New Years Day. It was a special gift from her family. Linda wanted to go to the Rose parade since 1936; she was eight years old and her critically ill sister was taken there because research was being done on the disease, nephritis. Because it was a dream of her sister, who passed away soon after that, her doctor, a nurse, and her parents took the child to the parade in an ambulance. Linda's sister told precious stories of the parade that Linda never forgot. Linda was welcomed to the Parade and interviewed by RFD Television Network while they were covering the building of the National FFA Float. What a treat it was for her to place flowers on that float! And what a treat it was for us to hear her describe her home near Capulin and all of our communities as a wonderful, beautiful, place to raise our families! The sincerity in her voice and the happiness on her face couldn't have been more convincing. That's where revitalization of communities begins; with people, like Linda, who value the positive things that are already here.

In the interview, she was asked direct questions about FFA in our school, her own children's participation in FFA, and the value of such a program. Her own rural values served her well. She talked about the participation of her five children and her grandchildren in the FFA program. She most respected the value of many associations that they all had, through FFA. She talked about the importance of meeting and knowing people away from home, as well as the good relationships at home. Linda said just what RFD

wanted to hear; that raising families in rural communities has special rewards. We know that Linda and her family have always been wonderful supporters of Des Moines School District. They have valued the accomplishments of all of our children, just as we all do. She was lucky enough to say it loud and clear from the Rose Parade in Pasadena.

## THE NEW YEAR...THE NEW DECADE...A NEW BUSINESS

Some say "it doesn't take much to make us happy". The truth is, we don't have to lose much to be unhappy. That's how it was with "the station" that was closed from October 1, 2008 to October 15, 2009. Some can think back farther, but a lot of us remember the Seaton's station before Marvin Sheldon, then Clay Bailey and Gerard Karr. Never mind the inventory; the beauty has been in a place for friends to meet once in a while. Children have been known to tell stories at school about their Mom and Dad meeting at "the station" (at least, that's what they imagined). Well, it's a New Year and a new decade and "the station" has a new shiny look and new owners. **High Country Mercantile** is owned by Kirk and Cathy Kennedy and Don Hatch. One of



our kids has come back home, with his family, to manage the business...and we couldn't be happier. Drew Kennedy has been involved from the start with the construction phase and now, management of the business. His goals are for a "customer-oriented" business that provides products and services the community wants. Phillips 66 fuel is back. Absolutely important, for the future, is a balance between convenience store and grocery supplies. Hopefully, later expansion will address that. Claim to fame for today: Des Moines' first ATM machine! Happy New Year! Best wishes to the owners and to Drew, his wife Brianna, and baby daughter, Brooklynn. New business is vital to the revitalization of our communities and its schools. RRI's Economic Development Workgroup will be looking at other ideas for maintaining our current business activity and the development of new business ventures.