

"World Class Service" should result from merger of two community foundations

The merger of community foundations in Crested Butte and Gunnison has been approved by the organizations' boards of directors and members feel the result will be "world class service" to donors and the area's nonprofit groups.

The boards of the Crested Butte Community Foundation and the Gunnison Area Community Foundation officially approved the merger earlier in October with an effective date of November 1, 2007. On that date the two foundations began conducting business as the Community Foundation of the Gunnison Valley.

"Merging our two community foundations into the CFGV creates synergy that will benefit our nonprofit organizations, our residents and our donors," said Diane Mueller. "We are now a community foundation where nonprofits will receive increased financial resources and technical support that enables them to operate more effectively." She also said, "The new foundation has an opportunity to pioneer a new standard for civic commitment, bringing the valley together as one community, interdependent and richer because of its diversity."

Pam Montgomery, executive director of the newly formed organization, said the merger "reminds us that we are all one and that what benefits one end of the valley also benefits the other." She said the merger will cut in half the amount of work required of local nonprofits as they apply for funds. "The combined organization," she said, "will also have more resources and depth than either of the two had before the merger."

In the past, the two foundations had maintained separate donor bases and worked with many of the same nonprofits, according to Tim Fretthold. "We expect that combining our strengths will create a more efficient and effective foundation," he said.

Fretthold, former board president of the Crested Butte foundation, has been elected president of the new board; Mueller, a former Gunnison foundation board member, is now board chair of the new organization; Mark Ewing is board vice president and vice chair; and Pam Montgomery, former executive director of the Gunnison foundation retains her title with the new organization. Amy Shellenberger, former executive director of the Crested Butte foundation has been named Program and Communication Manager of the new foundation and Nancy Ruehle stays in place as Administrative Assistant.

Ewing said the new organization will be dedicated to "improving the quality of life in our valley by encouraging philanthropic giving. We look to build our endowment and continue to provide support and funding to the many nonprofits that service the human and cultural needs of our community," he said.

Among services provided by the Community Foundation of the Gunnison Valley will be personal service for donors, whether for a single gift or creating a long-term fund, grant-making, consultation with professional advisors for the benefit of their clients, education for nonprofit groups and convening and facilitation services for the community through the Civility Initiative.

Benefits are expected to include economies of scale, complementary strengths of the combined boards, a richer, deeper impact on the valley as a whole, an expanded ability to involve the public in key community issues, great capacity to engage donors in supporting the nonprofits of the valley, and an opportunity to streamline the grants process and expand the expertise and capacity of the valley's nonprofits.

Early in October the Gunnison Area Community Foundation learned that it had met the nation's highest standards for philanthropic operations. The notice came from the Council on Foundations, a national professional association based in Washington, D.C. The association said the GACF had "demonstrated a commitment to operational quality, integrity and accountability."

That same kind of service and professional approach to service will continue with the new foundation," said Montgomery. Mueller echoed her promise. "Donors can be confident that their money will be professionally managed to maximize the investment in the communities," Fretthold added.

"We know that nothing but good will come from this merger," Montgomery said. "We also know there is a great deal of work ahead of us as we continue to strive for the "world class" level of service to which we all aspire."

Check out the new foundation's developing website at [www.CFGV.org](http://www.CFGV.org) .