

SMOKY HILL EXPRESS

Elbert County Historical Society & Museum Newsletter

SPRING 2023

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**THE MUSEUM IS OPEN
THURSDAY THRU SUNDAY
1:00 TO 4:00PM EVERY WEEK
DURING THE SUMMER!**

UPCOMING EVENTS

**Elbert County Museum
2023 Opening Day**
Sunday, May 28, 1:00 - 4:00 pm

Pioneer Fourth Celebration 2023
Tuesday, July 4, 10:00 am - 3:00 pm
Elbert County Museum Grounds

Annual Membership Meeting 2023
Saturday, September 9, 9:00 am
Elbert County Museum Office

**DONATE NOW
THROUGH
COLORADOGIVES.ORG**

POUR THE CHAMPAGNE, THE MUSEUM IS TURNING 30!

It's been said that Elbert County Historical Society members are a patient lot, having waited nearly four decades to open their museum, but that is exactly what happened.

The Society originated from an Old Timers picnic in 1956, with a collective vision of one day opening a history museum. After years of fundraising and collecting county artifacts, photographs and family keepsakes; in 1990 a new generation of Society members led by Jim Martell, Angie Arterburn and Lisa Gilbert, worked to successfully acquire the old Kiowa High School. As work to transform the old schoolhouse into a county museum took shape, John Hoffhines and Joe Martell were at the forefront of early building renovations as dark brown paneling was ripped from the walls, floors were refinished, original classroom doors were found, refinished and reinstalled, plaster walls were repaired and hues of turquoise, pink and goldenrod were painted over.



DEDICATION OF THE ELBERT COUNTY MUSEUM, 1993

A core group of volunteers including Lucy Hoffhines, Betty Janssen, Jim Jones, Carla Martell, Lee and Jane Whiteley and others contributed not only to the building improvements; but also with a second endeavor when the Society was awarded a research and development grant from the Colorado Endowment for the Humanities in early 1991. Working with scholars Mark Gardner and Darrell Wood, exhibit designer Berkeley Blashfield, and CEH associate director Maggie Coval; the grant marked the beginning of an 18-month effort to bring together an exhibit that was the product of countless oral histories, photo days and historic research across the county. The end result, *Window to the Past -Door to the Future*, was an impressive and thorough interpretive history of the

THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT!

This year's exhibit features a variety of early forms of entertainment.

Long before iPhones, tablets or home computers, there was *old-school* entertainment -recreation that didn't require a WI-FI connection.

Back then amusement came in a variety of ways and some were even free!

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ELBERT COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM

JOE MARTELL

President

DEBBIE SCOGGIN

Secretary

PATSY NORTH

Board Member at Large

CARLA MARTELL

Past President

DONNA SMITH

Vice President

HANK SMITH

Treasurer

MONTY ASHLIMAN

Board Member at Large

ELBERT COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

515 Comanche Street • PO Box 43
Kiowa, Colorado 80117

ElbertCountyMuseum.org

The Elbert County Museum is owned and operated by the Elbert County Historical Society, a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization.

MISSION STATEMENT

To record and maintain the history of Elbert County, Colorado from the earliest settlement.

To work for the establishment of appropriate vaults and archives for the preservation of original manuscripts, documents, photographs and artifacts which may come into the possession of the Society.

To maintain, preserve and house the above stated articles in the Elbert County Museum.

UPCOMING SESQUICENTENNIAL

Elbert County was established on February 13, 1874, and its 150th birthday is right around the corner!

To help celebrate this historic milestone, the museum gift shop is pleased to announce the arrival of beautiful keepsake coffee mugs.

These handmade mugs feature a gorgeous sandstone color glaze, with a generous handle and wide-lip brim. They are dishwasher, microwave and oven safe, and proudly made in the USA.



MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

Individual - \$15

Student/Senior - \$8

Family - \$20

Volunteer - Donation of six (6) hours of volunteer time or participate in two (2) functions and/or events.

SEASON SPONSORSHIPS

Museum Season Sponsorships are collected annually and expire at the end of each calendar year. Sponsorships support the general operating fund, new and permanent exhibits, development of educational initiatives and public programs, and the historic museum building and its infrastructure.

Season sponsorships are available at four different levels and are identified by icons of early Elbert County industry

LOCOMOTIVE-

Contributions of \$200 cash/merchandise or more will receive:

- acknowledgment as a Season Sponsor on all exhibit and event flyers (including Pioneer Fourth)
- recognition on signage inside the museum and at the Pioneer Fourth
- inclusion in the newsletter(s) and
- on our website



PONDEROSA PINE-

Contributions of \$100 cash/merchandise or more will receive:

- recognition on signage inside the museum
- inclusion in the newsletter(s) and
- on our website



WINDMILL-

Contributions over \$25 cash/merchandise will receive:

- recognition on signage inside the museum
- inclusion in the newsletter(s)



CULTIVATOR-

Contributions of \$250 cash or more through the **East Central Enterprise Zone**** will receive:

- acknowledgment as a Season Sponsor on all exhibit and event flyers (including Pioneer Fourth)
- recognition on signage inside the museum and at the Pioneer Fourth
- inclusion in the newsletter(s) and
- on our website



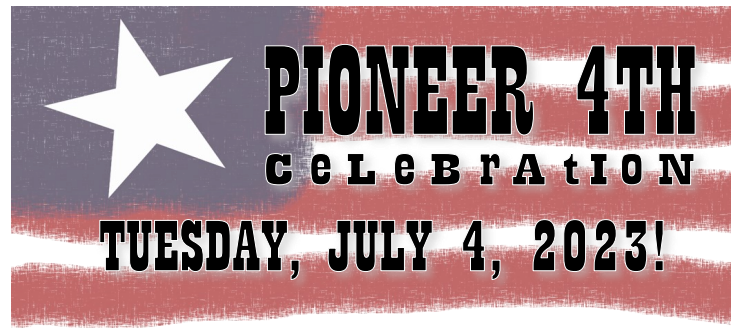
**East Central Enterprise Zone

By making a \$250 or more cash donation, **contributors receive 25% of that amount as a credit against their state tax liability (i.e.: \$250 donation = \$62.50 credit).** The contribution also may be itemized on their federal tax return.

For additional details on the different levels of **membership** or **sponsorship**, forms can be picked up at the museum's visitors desk or printed off our website at ElbertCountyMuseum.org.

MUSEUM HOST ORIENTATION

The 2023 museum host orientation was held Saturday morning, May 20. A fun and energetic group of over twenty volunteers attended the meeting. In addition to getting a sneak peak of this year's exhibit, the group learned the behind-the-scenes stories of some of the museum's most interesting and curious artifacts.



PIONEER FOURTH CELEBRATION

Tuesday, July 4 from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm
Elbert County Museum Grounds

Mark your calendars so you can plan on spending a fun-filled time celebrating Independence Day with new and old acquaintances, neighbors, and visitors. Enjoy live music, games, silent auction and viewing the exhibits inside the Museum. Don't miss out on the traditional BBQ lunch prepared fresh during midday. The cakewalk and pie auction will provide everyone the opportunity to take a delicious homemade pie or cake with them. Local artisans will be demonstrating their talents again this year in various locations throughout the grounds.

NEW RUNNING CREEK DAR CHAPTER

The Elbert County Historical Society was honored to participate in the organizational meeting of the Running Creek Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution on Saturday, March 25, 2023.

ECHS President, Joe Martell, spoke at the celebration and gave an entertaining program on how the county seat question was finally settled, entitled: *An Early Tale of Elbert County*.

Congratulations Running Creek DAR!



ELIZABETH TOWN HALL STAGE CURTAIN

The Elizabeth Town Hall was constructed in the spring of 1905, with a stage on the north end of the building that faced a large open assembly hall. In addition to hosting traveling performers, minstrel shows and theater troupes who passed through town on the Colorado & Southern Railroad; boxing and wrestling contests and community dances were held there, as well as basketball games and high school graduations before the new schoolhouse was completed in 1920.

In the 1970s, the stage opening was framed-in with a solid wall and partitioned off from the assembly hall. Town government offices were placed where the stage had been, and for a time the town library was located in the large assembly room. Today the building is owned by the American Legion.

The curtain was rescued from a dumpster behind the building in the early 1990s and brought to the museum. It's thought to date back to the early days of the hall.



EXPLORE THE MUSEUM GIFT SHOP

Be sure to stop by the museum gift shop this summer for fun and unique gift giving ideas. With over 30 local/ regional history book titles, colorful t-shirts, lamps, mugs and much more, there is something for everyone. We now accept credit cards!

Check out some of our newest titles:

COLORADO & SOUTHERN

RAILWAY'S D&NO ROUTE is the highly anticipated follow-up to Jim Jones' long out of print *Denver & New Orleans: In The Shadow of the Rockies* (Sundance, 1997). This coffee-table chronicle measures 254 pages, with hundreds of images, many never seen before.

DOUGLAS COUNTY

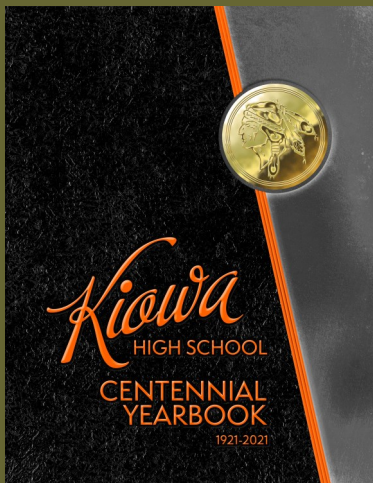
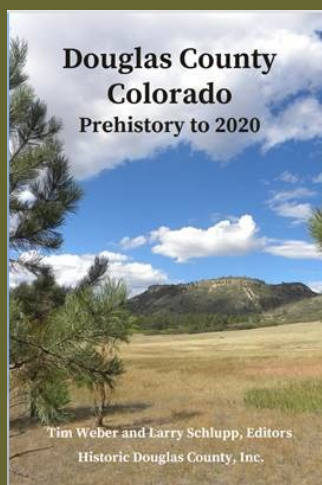
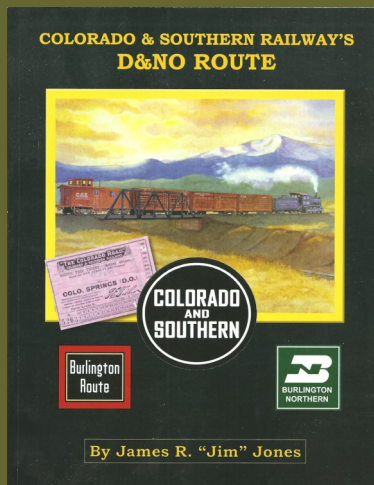
COLORADO: PREHISTORY TO 2020.

In the early 1990s, Douglas County, Colorado was the fastest growing county in the United States, and by the early 2020s, its population had surpassed 350,000. Douglas County was founded in 1861, when Colorado became a U.S. Territory. In the 160 years since then, it went from being rural to suburban as cattle ranches and dairy farms were turned into subdivisions and shopping centers. Throughout its history, residents have coped with droughts, floods, depressions, and political change. Over time, some of its small historical towns grew large, while others resisted growth and stayed small. New towns gobbled up open space, and increased traffic led to continuous new road construction. But the most important part of the Douglas County story is its hardworking and forward-looking people who often argue about growth but still believe it is a beautiful place to live and raise their families. This is their story.

KIOWA HIGH SCHOOL CENTENNIAL YEARBOOK

In the late 19th Century, many small school districts were scattered across Elbert County, Colorado. Each of these districts had its own small, one-room schoolhouse, which served as the center of their local community. In addition to holding classes, many of these buildings hosted box socials, church services, community dances, and even served as polling locations.

This Centennial Yearbook chronicles the early one-room school districts that consolidated to become Kiowa School, the history of Elbert County C-2, the many beloved traditions of Kiowa High School, 100 Years of KHS graduates, and includes personal memories and fun anecdotes.



SHARE THE MUSEUM

Planning a family reunion, birthday party, alumni reunion, church event, homeowner's association meeting or other special occasion this summer? Please keep the museum in mind. Doors are open four days a week, **Thursday through Sunday from 1:00 to 4:00 pm.**

This would be an excellent opportunity to share with others the rich history of Elbert County.



RECURRING DONATIONS: GIFTS WE CAN COUNT ON!

Your recurring donation to the Elbert County Historical Society & Museum is support we can count on!

When you use this option, you are making a commitment to donate a particular amount over a specific period of time. You can give as little as \$10 per week, month, quarter or year. Simply set up your donation schedule and your deductions will happen automatically, straight from your credit card, debit card or bank account.

To learn more about recurring donations, contact ECHS Treasurer Hank Smith at info@elbertcountymuseum.org, or visit www.ColoradoGives.org FAQs.

POUR THE CHAMPAGNE, THE MUSEUM IS TURNING 30!

Continued from page 1

county that not only became the first permanent exhibit unveiled at the museum's grand opening, but also set the bar for future displays. The Society would later go on to receive the coveted Denver Posse of Westerner's *Fred A. Rosenstock Award* for its efforts to preserve western history through the new exhibit.

The Elbert County Museum's Grand Opening took place on Sunday, June 6, 1993, with the usual pomp and circumstance of any milestone. Throughout the afternoon local musicians and speeches entertained the crowds out on the front lawn and an open house was held upstairs in the museum, where visitors got their first glance at the new exhibit and the Gentsch Dioramas. Later that year, Donna Reese became the museum's curator and an era of fun, creative and memorable exhibits began.

The arrival of the twenty-first century did not diminish the dedication of Society members and museum friends. In 2000, the Pioneer Fourth Celebration made its debut and has become an annual county tradition ever since. That same year the museum building was designated an Elbert County Landmark and the following summer a Historic Structure Assessment (HSA) Grant was awarded to identify restoration and preservation needs on the old schoolhouse. Towards the middle of the decade, the museum closed for a two-year break during which time the Society addressed thoughtful and necessary building renovations that encompassed such projects as roof and window replacements to updating interior finishes and exterior curb appeal. A new generation of volunteers including Monty Ashliman, John and Sherry Metli, Donna and Hank Smith, Cindy Taylor and others, rolled up their sleeves to help with the renovations and further the Society's mission.

The Elbert County Museum reopened in 2007 with a fresh new look that harkened back to the building's historic roots with a reimagined main floor that included multiple exhibit areas and for the first time, a dedicated gift shop space. The museum also became an active participant in Prairie Development Corporation's *Our Journey* program, which promotes heritage tourism along the Colorado Front Range. Three years later, the Society established the Eastern Colorado Museums and Historical Societies, a networking and resource forum for staff members and volunteers of small eastern plains museums and historical groups.

In 2018, museum volunteers completed the most ambitious project to date with a professionally designed exhibit that presents the story of transportation in Elbert County in a fun, interactive and imaginative way. The Smoky Hill Trail exhibit was a multi-phase project that traced the origins, destination and purpose of the historic trail, and continuing through to the advent of the railroads and automobiles. As a result, the Society became the recipient of the Smoky Hill Trail Association's *Award of Merit* for contributions towards the preservation, protection and promotion of the Smoky Hill Trail through the new exhibit.

Today the museum is a vibrant and recognized institution, not only in Elbert County but also in Eastern Colorado. Its success over the last three decades is due largely to the talented, knowledgeable and faithful volunteers who remain steadfast to the mission that was set out all those years ago.

Happy birthday to the Elbert County Museum!



EARLY VIEW OF THE COURTROOM FURNITURE ALONG THE WEST WALL OF THE ASSEMBLY ROOM.



Joe Martell, president of the Elbert County Historical Society, poses by a museum exhibit.

ABOVE: JOE MARTELL. (RANCHLAND NEWS, MONTY GADDY)

RIGHT INSET: CARLA MARTELL. MUSEUM DEDICATION, JUNE 6, 1993



FIRST PHASE OF THE SMOKY HILL TRAIL EXHIBIT, 2016



ELBERT COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM

PO Box 43 • KIOWA, COLORADO 80117

ELBERT COUNTY MUSEUM SPONSORS

While the museum receives funds through monetary donations given at the museum and with annual historical society memberships; Season Sponsorships and the Pioneer Fourth celebration are the main areas of income which allow the Elbert County Historical Society to develop exhibits and educational opportunities and to improve and maintain the museum building.

Thank you for your commitment to the educational and historical importance of the Elbert County Museum!

LOCOMOTIVE

Bender Menders
Bino's Pizza
Laurel Brown
Colorado Greenhouse
Builders, LLC
Mark & Lynn Conroe
CORE Electric Cooperative
Ben & Laurie Duke
Elbert County
Abstract & Title Company
Front Range Kubota
Gordon Insurance Agency, Inc.
High Plains Food Store
High Prairie Survey Co.
Lucy Hoffhines
Integrated Electrical Contractors
Jill's Feed & Country Supply
JR's Village Repair
Kamerzell Bros
Well & Pump Service
Kiowa Car Wash
Katee & Rick Kolm

(LOCOMOTIVE CONT.)

Legacy Plow & Trailer
Jim & Carla Martell
Mountain View
Electric Assn (MVEA)
Sawmill Bar & Grill
Tom & Debbie Scoggin
Sun Valley Electric Inc.
Patti Thayer
Through Your Eyes Photography
Town of Kiowa
True Value -Elizabeth

PONDEROSA PINE

360 Diesel & Auto Repair
AAC Enterprises
Monty & Phyllis Ashliman
Big R -Elizabeth
Boykin Chiropractic Care, PC
Carriage Shoppes Tea Room
Costco -Parker
Culver's -Castle Rock and Parker
Elizabeth Locker Plant

(PONDEROSA PINE CONT.)

Galt, Inc.
Hamacher Well Works Inc.
Christian Hertneky
HOO Motors
IC Threads, Inc.
Tom & Marge Mottinger
Murdoch's -Parker
Napa -Elizabeth
Patsy & Jason North
Sprouts Farmers Market
-Castle Rock and Parker
Mindy Webb

WINDMILL

1897 House "The Nest"
Adriana's Mexican Restaurant
Anna's Car & Dog Wash
Leanne Cook
Cowboy Handyman
Dairy Queen -Elizabeth
Dusty Plains Veterinary Service
Fuzzy Pets Grooming
Freddy's -Castle Rock
Gayle Gardner
H1 Enterprise LLC
Home Depot -Parker
Pat Huddleston
Isabel's Coffee
Jac's Pizza
Kiowa Creek Community
Church Foodbank
KW Home Accents
-Karin Royston
Barbara LeTourneau
Janet Malerich
MK Liquors

(WINDMILL CONT.)

Mountain Man
Fruit & Nut Co. -Elizabeth
Outback Liquor
Patty Ann's Cafe
Parker Port-A-Potty
Safeway -Elizabeth
Sizzor Magic -Betty Haulman
and Linda McFarland
Betty Taylor
The Gals at the
Carriage Shoppes
William Thomas

CULTIVATOR

Advance Quality Auto Repair
Catalina's Diner
David & Linda Ehmann
Farmers State Bank of Calhan
Glaser Gas &
Equipment Co. -Kiowa
Harold Heckman
JC Martell
Sherry Metli
Raylene Owen
RE/MAX Accord
-Tammi Schneider
Simla Frozen Food Locker, LLC
Smith Ranches