

RIVER VALLEY RANCH: Carbondale Public Education Foundation

River Valley Ranch has made community involvement a priority from the beginning. Recognizing that the Ranch's community does not end at its property line but rather is an extension of the neighboring Carbondale area, Hines, the developer of River Valley Ranch, embarked on a mission to bring the development and the town together. In 1995, River Valley Ranch formed the framework for a public education initiative, which today is known as the Carbondale Public Education Foundation.

The Carbondale Public Education Foundation (CPEF) was established to support and enhance the educational environment of Carbondale's local schools. Its objective is to administer charitable funds for the Carbondale schools, while building a permanent endowment fund that will support projects and additional programs in the school curriculum for years to come. CPEF's purpose is to fund areas that are not normally funded by the local school district and to launch programs that do not overlap the efforts of other traditional support organizations such as the Parent/Teacher League. In this way, the CPEF can complement others' efforts rather than duplicate them.

By initiating the formation of this foundation, River Valley Ranch has achieved its objective to channel its community giving into a focused philanthropic program while offering its management resources and demonstrating its sincere interest to contribute substantially to the Carbondale community.

Gerald Hines, developer of River Valley Ranch, at the start donated \$50,000 in seed money to the foundation and has given \$25,000 per year over the last four years to ensure the success of the program. Along with the seed money, a group of Carbondale locals was appointed to the foundation's board of directors representing a broad cross section of leadership including restaurateurs, contractors, bankers, teachers, and high school students who have a strong interest in its community's educational environment.

In its first two years, the Carbondale Public Education Foundation made great strides including the establishment of a teacher appreciation award which recognizes outstanding teachers and their exceptional qualities. In addition, the foundation has awarded grants to the four Carbondale public schools including money for an upgraded telephone system, an expanded computer lab, new carpeting in elementary school classrooms, landscaping projects and more.

River Valley Ranch has been instrumental in helping to establish similar foundations in the Roaring Fork Valley. It has provided non-monetary support to the Basalt Education Foundation through administration, direction, structural recommendations, and presentations to the Basalt town trustees. It has made headway in helping Glenwood Springs form its own public education initiative

and River Valley Ranch representatives sit on the Colorado Mountain College Foundation Board of Directors.