

November 2013

Winter

Newsletter



# President's Message

by *Karen Ripperda*

Hart Ranch Camping Resort – BOD President

As we approached the Ranch, coming in on Spring Creek Road, we could immediately see piles and piles of tree branches!!! Almost afraid to come into the front gate; however, the staff have done a wonderful job of getting the broken trees and branches trimmed, and picked up. The October blizzard did a real number on our trees. Some of our guests were involved in a very rustic camping adventure – since the electricity was off for several days. The Lodge had a generator that helped to provide some heat, and the restaurant pitched in with food preparation – and sounded like a real experience!!

We had a great Board meeting. The weather was nice – so hard to stay inside and work; but we did a Budget Meeting on Thursday. (Just in case you wonder if your Board does anything.....we started looking at numbers at 8:00 a.m. and left Thursday evening at 7:15 p.m.!!)

However, we were all comfortable with the income projections for the 2014 year, as well as the expenses, and capital expenditures that need to be made.

Friday we held our workshop, and it was so nice to be able to look at By-Law clarifications, and making plans for our **30<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY** coming in 2014 in lieu of trying to squeeze the budget and the workshop into one day. Our regular quarterly meeting was held on Saturday, November 9.

Tim and his staff are making some wonderful plans for next year – if you haven't been to Hart Ranch for a while, please try and make your vacation plans to come next year. They are looking at having every weekend a 'theme weekend'; we are having two rodeos, and are in discussion of holding a 'Down Home Music Festival'. The staff is to be complimented on looking for activities not only for children; but

also teens, parents, and grandparents. I look forward to seeing many of you next summer.

Please let me take this opportunity to wish everyone a very Happy Holiday Season; and for some of you that will be traveling, may you have safe travels to be with family and friends.



# Sales / Marketing

By Brad Rohrich, Sales Manager

We are striving to bring Hart Ranch to a new level. Our whole marketing strategy for the coming year will be geared towards family, towards unforgettable experiences, and towards lasting memories. Through this strategy, we will bring value back into Hart Ranch and ultimately bring value back into our memberships. What I want to see is for our members to see more value in their memberships and desire to find time to come back to Hart Ranch. For non-members to look at our Resort and say I need to be a part of that! I understand there are circumstances that will require some of you to sell your memberships and that is ok, however we are already seeing a change in member retention. Fewer and fewer members are selling or giving back their memberships. This is huge for the Ranch!

I am excited to announce Tabitha has joined our team and will be your new member services coordinator. She brings a lot of great talent and I am sure you will be pleased when working with her. Contact Tabitha if you have questions about your membership, need to add associates, add RPI, transfer your membership, or update your info.

We have increased the nightly rate for non members to \$59.95 during the summer. We have also changed our philosophy on the sales stays. Previously we allowed a non member to go through our sales tour and stay in the resort for 3 days @ \$39.95. The conversion rate on these people was very low. That program was



simply just abused and used as a way to stay at Hart Ranch for cheap. So to drive value back into Hart Ranch and our memberships, sales stays are now \$109.95 which is still saving a non member almost \$70 from the non member rate for 3 nights. This again will drive value into our memberships as well as increase revenue for the resort! With the increased revenue from non members, we are able to once again keep the maintenance fees the same! We always have great conversion rates from member referrals so keep it up! You can still pass out member referral cards to non members. People you refer still can use the \$39.95 rate for 3 nights on the sales stay as long as they have a member referral card with your name and member#. If you need more referral cards, email Tabitha at [members@hartranchresort.com](mailto:members@hartranchresort.com) and she will get some more out to you!

The board of directors have voted to cease operating as a Coast to Coast Affiliate park. This is great news for the Resort. Previously we had to

commit 21 RV sites every night for non member Coast to Coast to stay at. We now have 21 additional sites for our members to use as well as sales stays for prospective members. Our members that had Coast to Coast memberships have been granted complimentary RPI memberships which is basically the same as a Coast to Coast membership. We now have a greater opportunity to convert some of the Coast to Coast members that have been staying here for years into Hart Ranch members.

Just a little glimpse into 2014 and what you can look forward to..... 2 rodeos, a week long music festival headlined by a National Artist out of Nashville, themed weeks every week, great food, great entertainment, a warm pool, friendly staff, new activities, perfect weather, and a summer full of memories.

See the last page for some December Specials!!!!!!  
See you soon!



## Hart Mart

With the increase in winter campers, we have chosen to keep the Hart Mart open year round as an added benefit. We are running weekly specials as well as keeping our fuel competitively priced. Stop by!



## Chuckwagon Restaurant Operated by Parkway Catering

### Winter Hours:

Friday: 5pm – 8pm BBQ Rib Night!

Saturday: 8am – 8pm Prime Rib Night!

Sunday: 8am – 2pm Breakfast Specials!

Reserve your spot today for a fabulous Thanksgiving Buffet! November 28<sup>th</sup> 10am – 3pm. We are serving turkey and dressing, sliced pit ham, mashed potatoes and sweet potatoes, corn and homemade buns, variety of salads, pies and cookies for dessert. \$12.99/person. Make your reservations today!



## Reservations / Front Desk

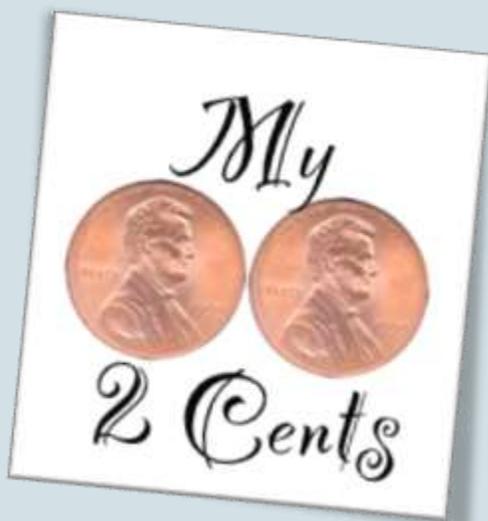
by Bobbee Guggenmos

With the Holidays just around the corner, keep in mind that many of our cabins are open and available for your Holiday enjoyment. Call the Front Desk for more information on our Holiday Cabin Packages.

- ✚ Start early to begin your plans to come join in the summer fun for HART RANCH'S 30<sup>th</sup> YEAR CELEBRATION. From start to finish, it aims to be a summer to remember. Your reservations can be made 60 days in advance of your arrival.

### Notification:

- ✚ Beginning January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014 there will be an additional \$10 per night for the PET CABINS, up to \$25.
- ✚ Example: 2 nights = additional \$20
- ✚ 3+ nights = additional \$25
- ✚ For the 2014 season, sites 389 – 396 will be converted to 'pull through' sites for short term use only.
- ✚ The Lower Lodge will be getting a 'new look'; the work to begin after the 1<sup>st</sup> of the year. From all of us here at the Front Desk & Mailroom, we wish you all a  
 \*\*\*HAPPY THANKSGIVING and a VERY  
 MERRY CHRISTMAS\*\*\*



by Tim Schnabel, Resort Manager

As 2013 winds down, you would think the staff would be doing the same after a very busy summer season. Well let me assure you, the fall and winter thus far have been anything but relaxing! With an unexpected blizzard hitting the resort at the beginning of October, plans were altered by having to move snow, trim trees and in general just clean up! Even though those efforts are settling down, except for the tree removal, we are working extremely hard planning for a very exciting 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2014! Our number one goal for 2014 is to present a calendar that is filled with activities for all ages. As you may know, we have confirmed rodeos for Memorial Day Weekend as well as August 14-16<sup>th</sup>. In addition, we are working on finalizing details for a Country Music Festival that will be sure to entertain! Without giving away too many details, this will be a one-of-a-kind event that will give singers a chance to perform on a “big” stage and interact with talent straight from Nashville!! This is slated to be a highly interactive event that will showcase both local and Nashville talent combined with workshops, seminars, and

performances! Warm up your vocal chords and bring the kids! This will be a true family event!

Teenagers get ready! In the past, we have heard concerns that there are not enough activities for teenagers. Well this summer will offer some pleasant surprises! Some of the events we are working on include paintball, teen dances, and movie nights along with a little Xbox Kinect competition! And we’re just getting started! In addition, we’ll be working with local attractions to offer Hart Ranch members discounted passes at various attractions.

As 2014 will be my 3<sup>rd</sup> summer at Hart Ranch, I want to say the most enjoyable part of my job is getting to know the members of Hart Ranch a little more each year. You have truly become part of my family! As such, I am committed to providing the best possible experience that a resort could offer. We have so many opportunities for growth here that keep the excitement level extremely high! Even though we occasionally have issues that need to be addressed, I want to thank those members that have offered solutions to these issues. It doesn’t take much effort to complain, but it definitely takes some thought to think through how we can operate better!

As always, my door is always open, phone is always on and email is always available! Don’t hesitate to drop a note once in a while to let me know what you’d like to see at the Ranch! In the meantime, may God bless you and your families over the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. We truly have much to be thankful for.

Tim Schnabel  
Resort Manager

## Expansion Survey Results

The recent survey conducted to determine whether there was enough interest in expanding the resort to include long-term sites provided some interesting results. With over 800 responses, we did have several dozen members that were interested in the development of these long-term sites. However, as we were only able to provide limited information without spending several thousand dollars on engineering and design for this type of expansion, I think this survey produced more questions than answers. I would like to share with you some of the concerns that were expressed to me. For instance, there were several references to “trailer park” atmosphere. If and/or when this type of development should happen, there would be stringent guidelines as to what is permissible and what isn’t. Hart Ranch would determine what type of units would be allowed as well as what would be permitted at each site. Therefore, “trailer park” would be the opposite end of the vision of how this particular area would be developed. Also, references were made to focusing more on kids’ and family activities. With 2014 being the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Hart Ranch, I think most people will be pleasantly surprised at the amount of focus being given to activities to children of all ages—from 2 to 92! However, I welcome input on what activities would be suggested here at the resort at any time!

For now, the decision was made by the Board of Directors to table any action related to expansion. However, as the park continues to grow, expansion will always be part of the discussion. I encourage productive input from anyone at any time. As this would be a significant addition to Hart Ranch, much

consideration would need to be given to the overall impact of how this type of development could be structured to positively impact all members.

### Wi-Fi plans for 2014

One of the most common concerns that we heard throughout the summer of 2013 was the ability to consistently access Wi-Fi. To say the least, we have learned a great deal about our current Wi-Fi system and the concern of how to address the ever-changing technology being produced daily. To summarize most of what we have learned, laptops (with adequate antennas) had the best success in accessing Wi-Fi. Devices that seemed to struggle the most were Tablets, iPads and similar devices that were designed for use primarily within individual's homes with routers in close proximity. These devices are also notorious for having extremely weak antennas. Now with the latest wave of new devices, this technology is sure to put Hart Ranch's Wi-Fi network to the test. So what do we plan to do about it? To provide perfect Wi-Fi throughout the resort with the least amount of interference, we would need to invest nearly \$70,000 in new equipment that would saturate the park with access points. This is based on several proposals from companies that have analyzed the physical layout of the park as well as the impact that camping units have on Wi-Fi reception. That's the good news. The bad news is this equipment will last about as long as when the next newest technology is introduced. As such, we are committed to provide exceptionally strong Wi-Fi reception in the Restaurant as well as Lodge—creating a concept of an "Internet Café" or "Wi-Fi Hot Spots" if you will. We will continue to provide Wi-Fi service throughout the entire resort,

but there will definitely be limitations. We will also do our best to provide the clearest channels by helping individuals utilizing their own routers to be programmed to the correct channel, and thus minimize interference with Hart Ranch's Wi-Fi. As always, please maintain communication with myself or the front desk anytime you have having issues with your Wi-Fi and we will do our best to resolve them.

### Upgrades planned for 2014

We are excited to announce the approval of the following improvements that will be made to the Resort in 2014!

- Site Expansion/repair. We have set aside funds to further expand approximately 26 more RV sites. We will also be making repairs to sites that have suffered duress over the years.
- Cabins. Our goal will be to add 3 more new cabins this year replacing 2 Colt cabins as well as placing a new cabin on site 427 located next to the Eagles. The new Ponderosas were well-received and demonstrated the highest occupancy and revenue for the 2013 season during the time they were in service. The exact layout of the new cabins is yet to be determined.
- Restaurant/Pavilion upgrades. Both of these areas will be receiving new flooring! These are exciting updates that will help to create a significant improvement to the ambience in both areas!
- Lower Lodge upgrade. To follow suit with the upper Lodge, we will be replacing the carpet and making noticeable updates to the wall coverings. Be sure to check out this area next Spring
- New Phone System. Even though the current phone system does presently work, it is so antiquated that we are no longer able to purchase parts for it or receive technical support. We are in a dangerous time should something happen and the phone system crashes! As such, we are investigating phone systems to determine what type of set up will best accommodate current and future needs of the Resort.
- This may seem like a no-brainer, but due to traffic patterns, we will be adding a sidewalk from the Activities Shed, past the fire pit to Deadwood Avenue. As this is a highly travelled path anyway, we kind of figured cement is better than mud!
- We are also investigating upgrades for one of the towter vehicles. As it is nearing the end of its useful life, we want to make sure we are well-prepared for a very busy 2014. In addition, we will be looking to replace 3 maintenance golf carts with utility vehicles that can

sustain the type of wear and tear of our maintenance crew—no more “leaners”!

### Changes in By-laws

There were minimal changes in the policies as outlined in the By-Laws. Following is a summary of the changes made during the November Board meeting:

1. Article 1, Section 2.c.in regards to B memberships was revised so it would read the same as A's and P's, as was the original intent. It now reads: “Full use of all recreational facilities; use of two RV sites; no rental rights to any rental units during peak season.”
2. Also to clarify the intent of the park Article I Section II, added to the second paragraph: “The number of memberships with categories may be limited by the Board, as utilization requires. The second RV site referred to in Article I, Section 2 a., b, c, is to be used for associates or guest nights.”
3. A new policy, #30, Criminal background checks, which will allow Hart Ranch to perform background checks on new members, transfer of members and addition of new associate members was reviewed and discussed. As this is rather lengthy, I will refer to Policy #30 in the By-laws located on the Hart Ranch Web-site.



### Pool Updates

We are excited to report the pool has been re-painted for the 2014 season! This process involved sandblasting the bottom of the pool to reveal multiple cracks that were contributing to a substantial water loss throughout the season. These cracks have been sealed and the entire pool and kiddie pool painted. We are optimistic this will address much of the water loss occurring throughout the season. In addition, the Board has approved the purchase of a Handicap lift as well as new ladders for access into the pool. Both of these additions will help us maintain a safer environment in the pool area.

**Seeking Nominees For the Hart Ranch Camping Resort Board of Directors Send a biography of no more than 200 words Along with a picture to:  
Hart Ranch Camping Resort Club  
Attn: Nominating Committee  
23756 Arena Drive  
Rapid City, SD 57702  
~ Or Email ~  
[resortmanager@hartranchresort.com](mailto:resortmanager@hartranchresort.com)  
DEADLINE:  
January 31, 2014**

## RV Storage



Our Storage lot is full! We have members that are using more than one site. For those members that have 2 sites, the cost of the second site will now be \$240/yr + tax. All other storage sites will be \$190/yr + tax. The increase is very minimal. Other local storage facilities range from \$300 - \$420/yr so this is still a great service to our members. With the added revenue, hopefully we can expand our storage next year.

### \*December Special\*

- Add Associates \$100 each
- Associate Upgrades to B Membership with RPI Preferred - \$395



### Hart Ranch Camping Resort Club

764 people like this.

Campground

Sponsored



**Don't forget to connect with us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/hartranchresort](http://www.facebook.com/hartranchresort) to receive updates on activities and events for 2014 as well as receive special offers!**



A reminder, we will be having another auction April 12. Last years was very successful so we want to continue that service. You will have the opportunity of having some of your items auctioned again if you wish.

Contact Paul 605-939-3105