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**Star Valley Ranch Association's  
"Funding Implementation Steering Committee" (FISC)**

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**FISC Bulletin Number 4  
Early First Quarter, 2005**

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You have selected the name of our Town to be

**Star Valley Ranch, Wyoming.**

Thanks to all who participated in the naming of our Town.

**MANY THANKS**

Thanks to all the Wyoming residents who are supporting the efforts to get our two bills passed in the Wyoming State Legislature that will ensure a much easier and less expensive path to our Town's incorporation. The letter that was sent January 13 was self-explanatory, but for those of you who are not Wyoming residents the following is a very brief explanation:

The first of four requests for lobby letters or e-mails was sent to all Wyoming residents of SVRA asking them to write or e-mail members of the House Corporations Committee who are reviewing our bills, requesting their approval and to send the bills on to the House floor for a vote. Additional lobby letters or e-mails will request similar action as the bills get to the House floor for a vote and hopefully move on to the Senate committee and to the Senate floor.

**House Committee Sends Bills to Floor– January 25, 2005**

Both bills were approved by the House Corporations Committee and have been sent to the House floor for consideration. The next steps in the House include three readings. Our bills are read three times and members may question, amend, make statements concerning the bills and verbally vote for or against them. As long as the majority of verbal votes continue to support the bills, then a roll call vote is taken. If the bills are passed, they will be forwarded to the Senate.

The Board and the FISC give our thanks to all of you who have graciously "rounded up" your payment for the annual assessment to include a donation to the "For Our Future" fund. We do not yet know what the total cost will be for legal advice, boundary survey, to provide continued mailings and other expenses needed to complete the Town formation. Additional funds are needed but your response has been great and we have a good start. We also want to thank in advance those members who have not yet paid their assessment and will be following the tremendous example of those who have already "rounded up" their payment.

Thanks to those of you who have signed up to use svranews@silverstar.com as your primary communications vehicle. E-mails saved us nearly \$1,000 in materials, mailing and postage costs in 2004. Silverstar Communications has been very cooperative in helping us meet our objectives. At our request, they ran an *E-mail is Easy* class for Ranch members last fall. We hope to do a similar class this spring. In addition their new rates and offerings are very attractive to both those who live here full time and to the snowbirds wintering in the South. We urge anyone who is not on our e-mail list to do so quickly, thank you.

The FISC and the SVRA Board are working diligently on the activities needed to solve the financial

shortcomings of the Ranch through formation of a Town and to keep you informed of what we are doing and why. We are working to accomplish the activities needed for formation of our Town, such as arranging for introduction of bills in the Wyoming Legislature, in a manner that will assure approval of our application for our Town when it is submitted to the County. We are trying to walk the tight line of keeping our Bulletins concise but still providing sufficient information so that the Ranch membership is well informed and your continued support will be there when you are asked to write letters to our state Representatives and Senators, vote for formation of our Town, vote for the Mayor and Council, give your approval to transfer of the culinary water system from SVRA to our Town and other activities where your support is essential. Your support has been fantastic and we want to make sure it continues.

## **FISC UPDATES**

Bulletin # 1 provided information on the FISC and the sub groups within it and the mission statements for each of these groups and committees. A brief summary of their recent activities and future efforts is included below.

## **COMMUNICATIONS GROUP**

This group spearheaded the successful Town Name project, the *E-mail is Easy* workshop, the campaign to increase e-mail use among the SVRA membership and the updating of the SVRA website. It has edited and prepared four Bulletins for publication via svranews and U.S. mail, and circulates information about our progress to nearby towns and to the Star Valley Independent. Future Bulletins will be published as planning proceeds and issues become clearer.

## **TOWN PREPARATION GROUP**

This group was involved in developing our Town Vision, which was included in Bulletin #2 and our Town Financial Vision included in this Bulletin. They continue to research Town finance and budget information, anticipated income, expected expenses, grants that can be applied for and how Town formation will improve the financial structure of the Ranch and reach the goal of adequate funding for an improved culinary water system and road improvements. This information is being researched to provide a recommendation to our future Town officials and SVRA, giving them a head start and the ability to move with confidence toward accomplishing the changes that will be needed so that the improvements can move forward.

### **TOWN FINANCIAL VISION**

The following financial vision represents our initial view. This information is not binding on our future Town or SVRA, but we feel that it is very important to make the membership aware of the options because SVRA's financial short falls are the reason for proceeding with incorporation.

This vision is based on information from the Wyoming Association of Municipalities (WAM), the Wyoming Water Development Council (WWDC), visits to neighboring towns, information from SVRA and many hours of study and research. This vision can provide a sounding board for all who see it. We foresee changes as we proceed with Town implementation and the responsibilities of our Town become better defined. The vision can provide an opportunity for future candidates for Mayor and Council to voice their support, non-support or recommended changes. Your questions, comments and recommendations are sincerely welcomed and appreciated. Please e-mail them to [svrtown@silverstar.com](mailto:svrtown@silverstar.com) or send them via U.S. mail to SVRA, Town Financial Vision Questions, P.O. Box 159, Thayne, WY 83127.

Our Town could expect to receive Wyoming shared revenue of approximately \$480,000 based on the population in the 2000 census. Our Town will also need to implement an 8-mil property tax because this is a basic requirement to qualify for most water system improvement grants. The estimated tax increase on a \$20,000 lot would be \$15.20 annually. Based on the 2002 assessed valuation of \$9.7 million, the 8-mil tax would produce approximately \$75,000 in additional annual revenues.

Revenue from the Town's ability to charge a water service fee or the expenses of maintaining the culinary water system are not being quantified in this vision because the expense of maintaining the

antiquated system could be offset by potential revenues received for the service.

The Town will have start-up and recurring expenses that will likely include the hiring of a highly-recommended Town Clerk, office space rental, utilities, legal fees, insurance, telephone, office supplies and Mayor and Council expenses. Revenue from state sources is not received immediately upon forming a Town, nor is it received in a lump sum. Therefore, the Town operations will have to be phased in. We can visualize first-year Town expenses ranging from \$125,000 to \$200,000. This may leave a significant amount of money that could be placed in a reserve fund for future use to obtain matching grant money for improvement of the culinary water system. The expenses are difficult to estimate because the new town officials will need to establish their own goals, priorities and implementation plan before an accurate cost estimate is available.

We have had an excellent team researching the availability of grants and matching funds to improve our outdated and aging culinary water system. The state of Wyoming offers assistance to towns through several agencies for these types of projects. Many of these agencies provide advice, counseling and support in all phases including evaluating, planning and implementing the various phases of water system development.

The State has a very disciplined planning process leading to the availability of grants for construction projects. The planning process helps assure success of the overall system. Grants are available to fund 100% of these preliminary reconnaissance and planning phases.

The process will take 2-3 years before actual improvement projects can begin. Information indicates that there is significant grant money available for water projects. Most construction grants require 50% matching funds from the community. The Town may also be able to obtain low cost loans to supplement its own available revenue in providing matching funds.

### **TOWN FORMATION GROUP**

This group is deeply involved with the legislative actions that were highlighted in Bulletin #3 and are now going on. After the legislative action is completed and the results known, this group will have a better understanding of the extent of survey requirements and will be developing plans for getting the survey, census, petition and other requirements for our Town formation application completed. You will be hearing a lot from this group in future Bulletins.

### **SVRA MEMBERSHIP GROUP**

This group has been researching how the culinary water system can be transferred to the Town. The transfer of the culinary water system to the Town is without question the most logical thing to do and it should be a cooperative effort between SVRA's Board, membership and the Town to get it done. Since most of the roads were dedicated to the public when the subdivision plats were filed, and those that were not originally dedicated have been used by the public without restriction for over 30 years, they too would be considered public and not require any formal transfer. It should be a high priority of both SVRA and the Town to cooperate and make this happen, since it will immediately relieve SVRA of significant expenses.

We know there are significant obstacles to transferring the culinary water system to the Town because of the restrictive DCCRs but we believe that it can be done. DCCRs Article 5 Section 1e states:

*"The right of the Association to dedicate or transfer all or any part of the Common Area to any public agency, authority, or utility for such purposes and subject to such conditions as may be agreed to by the Members. No such dedication or transfer shall be effective unless an instrument has been signed by two-thirds (2/3) of the entire Class A membership and two-thirds (2/3) of the entire Class B membership, if any."*

The information provided here is and will remain very preliminary until the Town is formed and the Mayor and Council can work with the SVRA Board and FISC to develop a plan to accomplish the transfer.

## **SUMMARY**

Your Steering Committee has a growing confidence that we, the members of SVRA, will be successful in solving the financial problems of the Ranch by forming a Town, obtaining the shared revenues, and transferring the culinary water system and road maintenance to the Town. Our thanks to the whole Board, especially to Mr. Harrison, Chairman and Mr. Petty, our Committee's Advisor from the Board, for all of the support they have provided.