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Arapahoe County Open Space brings in the green *Residents learn the economic benefits of open space in Arapahoe County*

Littleton, CO --- Last week, residents took advantage of the opportunity to learn more about how the Arapahoe County Open Space Program is bringing in the “green.”

While the immediate benefits of open space tend to be obvious – conserving natural land and wildlife habitat, providing a place for people to connect with nature and enjoy the great outdoors, and increasing the amount of the color green in an urbanized, concrete environment in the form of trees and grasses, the presentation explained how open space also brings in the “green” in the form of increased revenue, job creation/retention and improved property values.

Presenter Chuck Flink, President of Greenways Inc., explained that the five-year investment of \$96 million in Arapahoe County’s Open Space sales tax revenue in open space conservation, park, greenway and trail development has made the County more attractive for new business and industry, served as an inducement for the “creative class” worker, attracting an educated and skilled workforce, and supported a quality of life that is in high demand.

“The County’s open space program represents a very good return on investment,” said Flink. “Its open space system protects and preserves land and water resources that will enable the county to accommodate future growth and development, maintain an affordable cost of public services and provide the green infrastructure of developed parks and trails necessary to sustain quality living conditions for decades to come.”

Conservatively, the Arapahoe County Open Space Program returns \$3 in economic value for every \$1 invested by the program. One example is the County’s partnership with the City of Glendale, having provided \$4 million in capital dollars to support development of Infinity Park.

Glendale estimates that this \$4 million investment has yielded approximately \$40 million in economic benefit to the City and has fueled other economic development and expansion throughout the community. This represents a 10 for 1 return on investment. Additionally, through the creation of Infinity Park there are now more opportunities for goods to be purchased within the City of Glendale, which in turn generates more sales tax revenue to invest in additional parks, open space and trails.

“All of this would not be possible without the voters who generously approved the Arapahoe County open space sales and use tax in 2003,” said Arapahoe County Commissioner Chair Rod Bockenfeld.

The event coincided with the development of the County’s *Open Space Master Plan*, which will serve as a guide for making strategic decisions about the program’s future.

Residents interested in commenting on the draft master plan can drop by an open house 4 – 8 p.m., March 23 at CentrePoint Plaza, 14980 E. Alameda Dr., Aurora, or review the draft plan online at www.greenways.com/arapahoe.

For more information, contact Bob Finch with Arapahoe County Open Space at 720-874-6734 or rfinch@co.arapahoe.co.us.

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To download a photo click on the link: <ftp://www.co.arapahoe.co.us/Pub/CM/Photos/OpenSpace/>
Presentation: Residents learn about the variety of economic benefits reaped through the Arapahoe County Open Space program during a presentation by Chuck Flink, Greenways Inc.