**A MESSAGE FROM MITCH- 12/20/20**

*Homeowners,*

*Christmas is just days away and I want to wish everyone a very joyous holiday season.  Carla and I were out in the neighborhood last evening and were pleasantly surprised at the holiday spirit on display in our community.  There was hardly a house visible from Favorite Gulch Road that didn’t have some holiday lighting and a few that obviously take their lighting responsibility very seriously!*

*I know I sent you a President’s Message just two weeks back, but I wanted to take just a small portion of your social media space today to say thanks to all of you for allowing me to serve you on the Board of our ElDorado Heights Homeowners Association and to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.  I know for me and I think I can speak for the entire Board of Directors, serving on the Board has been an exciting endeavor.  It is my first time serving on an association board and I appreciate this eye-opening opportunity.*

As a new Board Member, what I found most enriching was the community spirit that is lying just below the surface.  While we are all living a quiet Montana life in our community, I’ve not found anyone who is not willing to step up and help when help is needed.  We had a spontaneous neighborhood cattle drive when some of Mr. Winterburn’s cows found their way to the river area on the Friday before Labor Day Weekend.  I made one phone call to the Burke’s and what started as a car, two ATVs and me walking moving about 40 cows towards the mailbox area, turned into more than a dozen of you joining in with trucks, ATVs, horses and on foot successfully getting the cows back where they belonged.

Our picnic was another show of community spirit.  We had planned it on a Saturday and when the weather failed to cooperate, we made a last-minute change and moved it to Sunday.  Even with that last minute change, the attendance was the best that I can recall for our picnics.  The food you brought was unbelievable and everyone enjoyed the fellowship.

Our social media platforms are beginning to gain traction as more and more of you sign up.  Jeanne Daw has taken this on as her personal challenge for the year and I’m seeing increased dialog between neighbors.  I hope this continues and that we all see it as a forum to communicate with friends and to get to know new neighbors.

Carla and Jeanne took on the challenge of maintaining adding some seasonal decoration to our Association Bulletin Board.  When they were out of town and unavailable, Debbie Cargile stepped in to add the Christmas spirit to the board and to the mailbox area.  It looks great in the daytime, but fantastic at night!  I hadn’t noticed the solar lights till last night.  Thanks Debbie.

Finally, at our November “open” Board Meeting, there was a brief discussion of the need for a Social / Welcoming Committee.  I’m terrible at these sorts of things and the idea just laid there with no action taken by the Board.  Thank goodness Saundra Ott was in the room.  She was not going to let the Christmas season slip by without some neighborhood outreach.  So, the Association Social / Welcoming Committee is now a reality!  Saundra reached out to Jeanne, Carla and Lisa Lee and they all participated in an all-day baking event (Jeanne was there in spirit) which resulted in wonderful breads and homemade stockings showing up on doors, gates and fences all over the neighborhood.  While Jeanne, Carla and Lisa helped, I don’t think they would be offended if I said that 90% of this effort was Saundra’s doing.  Thanks Saundra, for taking on this Christmas challenge and for kickstarting the Association’s Social / Welcoming Committee.  If anyone wants to be more involved in this new committee, just let me know.

The ElDorado Heights Homeowners Association is a formal working body that elects a Board of Directors to manage the business of its members and I am certainly proud to have your confidence and to serve on the Board.  However, it is the community-based actions that I mentioned above that make the Association a “neighborhood” and I’m most proud to be a part of that.  Thanks to all of you for helping to make us a community of friends.

**I hope you all have a wonderful Holiday Season and I hope that you will not hesitate to reach out to me, the rest of the Board or any of your neighbors if you need assistance.**