



Monte Vista Chamber of Commerce Newsletter June 2023

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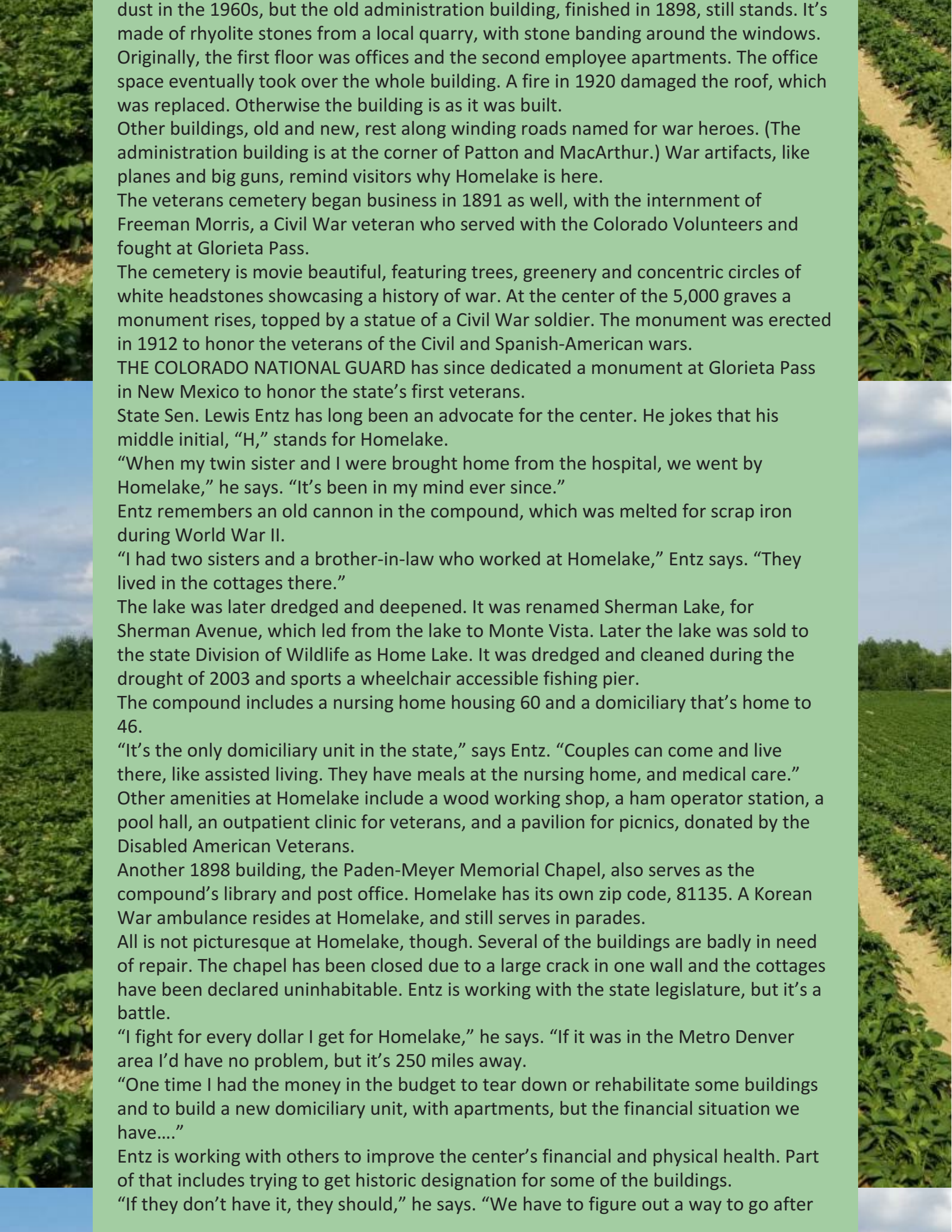
Did You Know? The History of Homelake

Article by Marcia Darnell

Veterans – November 2004 – Colorado Central Magazine

HOMELAKE IS APTLY NAMED: It's a lake, with trees and fish and peaceful waters, and it's a home, the oldest veterans' home in Colorado.

Homelake was founded in 1891 as the Colorado Soldiers' and Sailors' Home. Adair Wilson, a state senator from Del Norte, had passed legislation to establish a veterans' home in the San Luis Valley a few years earlier. The site near Monte Vista was determined by the donation of land by two Monte Vista families, who continued to farm the acreage around the home for years. There was also a dairy on the property. The original donation included perpetual water rights plus 90 artesian wells, 1,000 cottonwood trees, rock and sand with which to build, and a small swampy lake, then called Stanger Lake. The donations totaled \$24,500, a generous sum at the time. The first buildings, a hospital and barracks, went up in 1891. Those structures bit the



dust in the 1960s, but the old administration building, finished in 1898, still stands. It's made of rhyolite stones from a local quarry, with stone banding around the windows. Originally, the first floor was offices and the second employee apartments. The office space eventually took over the whole building. A fire in 1920 damaged the roof, which was replaced. Otherwise the building is as it was built.

Other buildings, old and new, rest along winding roads named for war heroes. (The administration building is at the corner of Patton and MacArthur.) War artifacts, like planes and big guns, remind visitors why Homelake is here.

The veterans cemetery began business in 1891 as well, with the internment of Freeman Morris, a Civil War veteran who served with the Colorado Volunteers and fought at Glorieta Pass.

The cemetery is movie beautiful, featuring trees, greenery and concentric circles of white headstones showcasing a history of war. At the center of the 5,000 graves a monument rises, topped by a statue of a Civil War soldier. The monument was erected in 1912 to honor the veterans of the Civil and Spanish-American wars.

THE COLORADO NATIONAL GUARD has since dedicated a monument at Glorieta Pass in New Mexico to honor the state's first veterans.

State Sen. Lewis Entz has long been an advocate for the center. He jokes that his middle initial, "H," stands for Homelake.

"When my twin sister and I were brought home from the hospital, we went by Homelake," he says. "It's been in my mind ever since."

Entz remembers an old cannon in the compound, which was melted for scrap iron during World War II.

"I had two sisters and a brother-in-law who worked at Homelake," Entz says. "They lived in the cottages there."

The lake was later dredged and deepened. It was renamed Sherman Lake, for Sherman Avenue, which led from the lake to Monte Vista. Later the lake was sold to the state Division of Wildlife as Home Lake. It was dredged and cleaned during the drought of 2003 and sports a wheelchair accessible fishing pier.

The compound includes a nursing home housing 60 and a domiciliary that's home to 46.

"It's the only domiciliary unit in the state," says Entz. "Couples can come and live there, like assisted living. They have meals at the nursing home, and medical care."

Other amenities at Homelake include a wood working shop, a ham operator station, a pool hall, an outpatient clinic for veterans, and a pavilion for picnics, donated by the Disabled American Veterans.

Another 1898 building, the Paden-Meyer Memorial Chapel, also serves as the compound's library and post office. Homelake has its own zip code, 81135. A Korean War ambulance resides at Homelake, and still serves in parades.

All is not picturesque at Homelake, though. Several of the buildings are badly in need of repair. The chapel has been closed due to a large crack in one wall and the cottages have been declared uninhabitable. Entz is working with the state legislature, but it's a battle.

"I fight for every dollar I get for Homelake," he says. "If it was in the Metro Denver area I'd have no problem, but it's 250 miles away."

"One time I had the money in the budget to tear down or rehabilitate some buildings and to build a new domiciliary unit, with apartments, but the financial situation we have...."

Entz is working with others to improve the center's financial and physical health. Part of that includes trying to get historic designation for some of the buildings.

"If they don't have it, they should," he says. "We have to figure out a way to go after

some grants or something to try to get those buildings back in shape.”

The cemetery needs to be enlarged as well. There are fewer than 10 unoccupied gravesites left.

Some of Homelake’s land has been sold to DOW, but 17 acres remain for the expansion of the compound and cemetery. Entz would like to build another nursing home, with cottages for low-income employees of Homelake. Others have suggested the addition of a war museum and a community center.

The problem, as always, is money.

“It’s an endless battle,” says Entz, “but worthwhile.”

Business of the Month:



Phone: (719) 852-3505

Address: 195 North Washington St. - Monte Vista, CO



Alfalfa



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Colorado Seed LLC is dedicated to helping you find the seed you need for success in your farming/ranching operation.

Located in Monte Vista and established in 1976, we are family owned and operated. We’ve been striving to create lasting relationships with our customers, and guarantee that they can count on us for honest pricing and quality seed. We offer a large range of alfalfas, grains, native grasses, cover crops, pasture grasses, lawn seed, and flowers. We have many different mixes for all of the needs of the San Luis Valley and surrounding areas. We also can do custom mixes. It’s been our pleasure to be a part of the

Monte Vista community for many years and many more to come!



Oats



Rocky Mountain Wildflower Mix

CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION!

The Chamber is looking for a part time assistant manager!

If you are interested, please call the Monte Vista Chamber at 719-852-2731.

**Office hours are 9am - 12pm and 1pm - 4pm
Monday through Friday**



Drag Main through some old mountain towns before cruising the Silver Thread

Scenic Byway - Presented by SLV Fast Friends

Draggin' Main will take you from Monte Vista, Colorado through some old mountain towns and alongside the headwaters of the Rio Grande River on the Silver Thread Scenic and Historic Byway, one of the most beautiful roads in Colorado. There will be stops along the way to admire wildlife, historic sites, and fun surprises. There will be photo sites manned by automotive photographers, as well as some outstanding photo ops along the route. Everyone is welcome to join the tour, which will start with breakfast at the Best Western Movie Manor three miles west of Monte Vista on US 160 at 7:30 a.m. The cruise will leave beginning at 10:00 a.m. There is no entry fee, but a poker-run style 50/50 drawing will be available to participants for a chance at winning fifty percent of the pot. Depending on the turnout, the pot could be sizable. The remaining funds and all other money raised above expenses will be donated to the San Luis valley 4-H Foundation's Scholar Support program to benefit kids in all six counties of the San Luis Valley.

Upon return to Monte Vista, there will be a block party downtown including a slow cruise through town, followed by a double-feature of hot rod movies at the Movie Manor. All in all, June 3 should be a fun, memorable day for all who decide to join us. Good people, good times, and a great drive through some gorgeous country promise those who come a memorable weekend. We will also be posting other great destinations in the San Luis Valley for those who decide to come early or stay late.

[For More Information Click Here](#)

Draggin' Main **BLOCK PARTY**

In Conjunction with the Draggin' Main Tour of the Silver Thread Scenic Byway

June 3, 2023 3 - 8:30 P.M.

**Downtown Monte Vista
FOOD • BEER GARDEN • VENDORS**

♪ **Music by Ol Scratch** ♪

50/50 Drawing

*Slow Cruise through town for Draggin' Main Tour Participants
Followed by a Hot Rod Double-Feature at the Star Drive-In*

Presented by

SLV FAST FRIENDS OptiMystics Citizens Action Network
Monte Vista Chamber of Commerce LOR Foundation
City of Monte Vista Mystic Valley Arts Council
Best Western Movie Manor/Star Drive-in



This street festival will take place on Saturday, June 3rd, from 3-8:30PM. The 100 & 200 block of Adams Street will be shut down, along with 2nd Avenue, from the intersection of Adams St., up to the alley ways both east and west. We're planning on having local art & craft vendors, food trucks, a beer garden and live music during the downtown festival.

This block party is a wrap up to the Draggin' Main event taking place all day Saturday. Upon return to Monte Vista, the downtown merchants, the City of Monte Vista, the OptiMystics Citizens Action Network, the Monte Vista Chamber of Commerce, the Mystic Valley Art Council, the LOR Foundation and SLV Fast Friends will welcome participants and everyone else to the fun!

Vendor registration and further information can be found
[here](#)



3rd Friday Art Walk

**Downtown Monte Vista
4-8PM**



**May 19th
June 16th
July 21st
August 18th
September 15th**

**Live
Entertainment**

Local Artists and Vendors

Hands on Art Activities

Music

Door Prizes

and more...

**Art
Demonstrations**



**Hosted by
The Mystic Valley Art Council
mysticvalleyartcouncil@hotmail.com**



Please join us downtown Monte Vista, Colorado every 3rd Friday for our community Art Walks.

Artists, entertainment, art demonstrations and art activities will be set up on the first block of Adams Street and in local businesses throughout town. Local businesses will be offering some amazing art walk specials and will be participating in a community scavenger hunt each month. This is a wonderful opportunity to get out and enjoy an evening of art, entertainment, local shopping and local dining in Monte Vista.

Find **Your Place**



Volunteers Wanted!

Ready for a weekend of impactful stewardship work?

Join approximately 40 volunteers (ages 16+) in building a single-track, multi-use trail.

WHEN:

Saturday, June 24 - Sunday, June 25

WHERE:

Greenie Mountain, CO (sign up for specific location info)

Outdoor recreation is a growing economy in the San Luis Valley and your work will play a critical role in establishing and extending a sustainable trail system for visitors and residents alike.

Perks of attending include:

- Free campsites with a fun and social camp setting
- A volunteer appreciation raffle
- Breakfast and dinner provided on Saturday as well as breakfast on Sunday.



Scan this QR code to learn more or register:



Or visit: <https://volunteer.voc.org>
Feel free to reach out to:
Abby at 303-715-1010 ext. 111 or
Abby@voc.org

Questions or seeking information? - Click the buttons on the right-hand side to view more information about Monte Vista as well as various local events in the San Luis Valley!

*Monte Vista Chamber of Commerce
Facebook*

*Monte Vista Chamber of Commerce
Instagram*

*Monte Vista Chamber of
Commerce*

The next Monte Vista Chamber board meeting Thursday, June 29th at 7 AM.

Member Updates



We hope you decide to move messages from the Monte Vista Chamber to your Primary tab from the Promotions tab. By doing so, all future emails from us should be delivered to the Primary tab. Thanks!

CHECK OUT
MEMBERSHIP
BENEFITS HERE!

New Members:

- Olivia Romero
- Golden Fleece Antiques and Sundries
- KSPK FM/TV Mainstreet Broadcasting Company Inc.

Renewing Members:

- Monte Vista COOP
- Monte Vista Historical Society
- Colorado State Uninversity Extension
- Del Norte Bank
- Eugene L. Farish, PC
- Roberts Real Estate Group
- San Luis Valley Federal Bank
- San Luis Valley Hazardous Substance Board
- Valley-Wide Health Services Inc.
- Weaver's Level Best

Do you have an event in the San Luis Valley that you would like to add to our website? Please click the button below to fill

out an Event Submission Form with as much information as possible. We will add the event to the Monte Vista Chamber of Commerce website as soon as possible and will contact you if we have any further questions about the event.
Thank you!

Event Submission Form