

Communication Services  
5334 South Prince Street  
Littleton, Colorado 80166-0001  
Phone: 303-795-4630  
Fax: 303-738-7894  
[www.co.arapahoe.co.us](http://www.co.arapahoe.co.us)

**For release: July 11, 2007**

Contact:

**ANDREA RASIZER**

Communication Services Director

Direct: 303-795-4284

Mobile: 303-882-1909

E-mail: [arasizer@co.arapahoe.co.us](mailto:arasizer@co.arapahoe.co.us)

## **Arapahoe County Commissioners named Conservationists of the Year** *Conservation District recognizes Commissioners for Open Space projects*

Recognized for their foresight and leadership for preserving rangeland in eastern Arapahoe County, the West Arapahoe Conservation District recently presented the Board of County Commissioners with the non-profit organization's *Conservationist of the Year* award.

The Commissioners were honored June 28 for their work to preserve open space and for the purchase of two conservation easements on a working farm and ranch near Byers. The purchase of the conservation easements, which cost \$946,875 and was paid for using Open Space Sales and Use Tax revenue, permanently protects 1,363 acres on the eastern plains from future development.

"The value of easements for protecting private land from development is being recognized more and more by landowners and the public," said Gordon Tucker Jr., president of the West Arapahoe Conservation District, which was established in 1945 to preserve native grasslands, promote scientific research and advocate for conservation in Arapahoe County. "Thank you Arapahoe County Commissioners for protecting valuable rangeland while preserving a piece of the ranching heritage of Arapahoe County."

Working with the Trust for Public Land, Arapahoe County purchased the property from Ron and Ann Hasenbalg and Lawrence and Lois Hasenbalg, who will continue using the land as a working farm as it has been since 1949. The land is located along the West Bijou Creek in eastern Arapahoe County, an area teeming with wildlife and rich in agricultural history and will be protected from development, even if the Hasenbalg's choose to sell it.

The property is Arapahoe County's first significant Open Space purchase since voters approved the quarter-cent sales and use tax in 2003. During that time, the Board of County Commissioners has awarded more than \$33 million in sales tax revenue and worked alongside cities, towns and special districts to preserve open space and historic areas, and provide parks, trails and recreational amenities for residents and future generations to enjoy for years to come.

The Arapahoe County Board of County Commissioners consists of Susan Beckman, District 1; Jim Dyer, District 2; Rod Bockenfeld, District 3; Pat Noonan, District 4 and Frank Weddig, District 5, who also serves as Board Chair.

\* \* \*