



SPARKS of Interest

Newsletter # 5

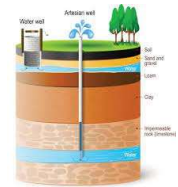


A COMMUNITY COMES TOGETHER

In order to discover the origin of the Sheridan Volunteer Fire Station, HOA Fire Safety Committee members, Macomber and Hoika, interviewed one of the original settlers of the Ojitos Frios Ranches Subdivision: Eugene and Gertrud Johe.

After retiring, the Johe's migrated from New York to Ojitos Frios Ranches in 1988. At this time the subdivision had only a handful of residents. Once settled in Eugene and Gertrude immediately became actively involved in the community.

There was a severe drought in 1989 that created dire consequences for Las Vegas, Ojitos Frios residents and surrounding areas as water levels plummeted. Wells in the valley were running dry. It was discovered that the need for water caused the City of Las Vegas to pump water from outside the city limits.



Action needed to be taken so residents of Sheridan, Romeroville, and the Ojitos Frios subdivision organized. Their intent was to obtain legal effort to stop the City of Las Vegas from continuing to pump wells south of their city limits. These grass roots organizers, including the Johe's, Jim Sandin, Mike Coca, Richard Reed, Littleton Scott and others, approached residents at their homes, gathering signatures and collecting contributions as folks could afford, to hire legal representation. Neighborhood planning meetings were held in an old schoolhouse. The legal effort was successful!. [NOTE: this water committee eventually evolved into El Creston.]

Since there were funds remaining from the water rights legal battle, Jim Sandin suggested a volunteer fire department be established with this seed money.

The forestry service donated a used jeep with a 300 gallon tank, A nearby resident stored this initial "fire fighting equipment" in an open shed. The donation of an old jeep without engine added to the inventory for parts. The Albuquerque Fire Department eventually donated a pumper, providing much needed improvement to fire suppression capabilities. The training of these early volunteer fire fighters consisted of just three days in Socorro.



Everyone remained motivated and committed to working together. Valley residents were dedicated, helping in every way possible, without being asked. When a fire broke out, **everyone became a firefighter**. These volunteers answered calls night and day, putting out fires with this limited equipment, shovels and their courage. Many times Gertrud would accompany Gene when no other assistants were available. Eventually, in 1996 a fire station with water was built. Mr. Parkinson donated both land and well water from his property near the I-25 intersection for this endeavor.



≠

The moral of this community story is that **NEIGHBORS MUST CONTINUE TO WORK COOPERATIVELY TO ACHIEVE COMMON GOALS. WE ARE IN THIS TOGETHER!!!** You are needed! Only then is SUCCESS ACHIEVED!

EPILOGUE

EL CRESTON

The Ojitos Frios Residents worked together to achieve additional infrastructure achievements. Water rights remained a priority.

The history of El Creston will sound familiar. Read the full history found on their website elcreston.org/background/history.html

The “El Creston Mutual Domestic Water Consumers Association has been in existence since 2004 but has evolved from a concerned citizens group hoping to stop the City of Las Vegas’ pumping of Taylor Well #4 to a government entity whose intent is to create a community water system.”