

## **Set the bar high: Teton Valley is worth it**

Mark your calendars! Tuesday April 8<sup>th</sup> is the day for citizens to give input on Canyon Creek, the first of three very large PUDs (planned unit developments), seeking development approval from the county over the next several months. Canyon Creek, Mahogany Ridge, and J Lazy H Ranch will total over 2,590 units on 12,547 acres in some of the most remote corners of this valley.

2,590 units translate into 7,511 people. National and local statistics reveal that 7,511 people will create an additional 24,605 vehicle trips a day on our roads and require 18 additional police officers. These are just two examples of the numerous valley-changing impacts that developments of this size have on our local infrastructure and resources. Just as the valley is now dealing with the consequences of poor planning in the past, if we don't manage this new growth effectively we will be paying for it (literally) for years to come.

As the first of these three PUDs to go through the approval process, it is important that the county set the bar high when reviewing Canyon Creek. The P&Z needs to ensure that development pays its own way and preserves our clean water, abundant wildlife and signature open spaces.

Even the most well-designed and well-intentioned PUDs raise some important community issues. Therefore we believe that requiring the following is paramount:

- **Environmentally and financially sustainable open space management** : There are many positive attributes to large PUDs, such as the ability to set aside and manage large contiguous tracts of open space. The catch is that the county must *require* good open space design and financially sustainable open space management plans. It is impossible to talk about open space design without talking about density – the number of houses planned for a development always affects the design of the open space.
- **Independent impact studies**: The following studies, conducted by independent consultants, should be required as a baseline. The more specific the county is about what they are looking for in these studies, the easier it is for the developer to comply and the easier it is for the P&Z to make determinations that are consistent from application to application.
  - **A fiscal impact analysis** that takes into account a PUD's projected tax revenues and all long-term costs for providing county services will help ensure that taxpayers don't end up paying for these developments.
  - **A natural resources inventory** should include mapping of wildlife migration routes and sensitive areas and will help decision makers determine when developments are doing enough to preserve our unique natural resources.

- Traffic and roads are of increasing concern to citizens. A **traffic impact analysis** should match the criteria provided by Clarion & Associates.
- To preserve water quality, **nutrient pathogen studies** should be required for all large developments and the developer must demonstrate adequate water supply.

The Canyon Creek hearing is scheduled for April 8th in the second floor courtroom at the County Courthouse in Driggs. Plan on being there by 9pm.