

Colorado Ranching Legacy Program created for conservation

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

For more than 150 years, ranching has been a major contributor to Colorado's economy while at the same time, keeping millions of acres of Colorado's open space intact. However, the number of ranchers and ranches in Colorado is continually declining in the face of many challenges.

In order to assist in the development of the next generation of stewards vital for conserving family ranches and healthy, intact landscapes; the Colorado Cattlemen's Association, Colorado State University, and The Nature Conservancy have partnered to create the Colorado Ranching Legacy Program.

The Colorado Ranching Legacy Program is a two-year program which begins in August, 2009 and concludes in May, 2011. The Program is designed to equip young and beginning ranchers to be innovative leaders in land management and conservation.

In August 2009, four Ranching Legacy Fellows will be selected to complete a curriculum of coursework and a series of one to three-day modules covering topics such as ranch management and conservation, issues facing the cattle industry, beef production, innovative ranch business models, and accessing agency resources. Fellows will also visit ranches across the state and network with successful ranchers and industry leaders in order to learn about profitable management techniques.

In addition to this required curriculum, the Program will be tailored to meet individual needs; therefore, Fellows will receive targeted mentorship to assist them with a capstone project. The capstone project will consist of a proposal that will outline how personal, operational, and business goals are to be achieved.

The overall purpose of the capstone project is to provide Fellows with a comprehensive business and land management plan for a viable ranching operation.

Through the Ranching Legacy Program, Fellows will gain knowledge, networks and mentors, a business plan and all three partners' best efforts to assist them in their ranching goals. This three-tiered partnership between the industry, education, and conservation communities makes this program unique and opens doors to various financial tools, networks, and management opportunities.

Admission into the Colorado Ranching Legacy Program requires an applicant be an innovative self-starter who demonstrates a desire to carry on Colorado's ranching legacy. It is also encouraged that the individual have work experience prior to entering the program.

There is no educational requirement for this program. However, based on the individual's educational and work background, courses to be completed may vary for each Fellow. Thus, individual degree plans will be customized to strengthen areas of weakness.

For more information or an application form, visit www.coloradocattle.org and click on "Programs", or follow the direct link www.coloradocattle.org/ranchinglegacyprogram.aspx. Applications must be received by Friday, July 10 at the CCA office.

For further information and/or questions, please contact Beka Gill at 303-431-6422 or beka@coloradocattle.org.