

# Meyer Award for Historic Preservation: Jefferson County Open Space

**T**he Jefferson County Historical Commission is pleased to present this year's Norman and Ethel Meyer Award for Historic Preservation to the county's Open Space program, in recognition of the work done to restore Baehrden to public use, as well as for its previous efforts in managing its other historic structures for continued use. In addition to Baehrden, Jefferson County Open Space cares for the 1917 Hiwan Homestead Museum campus, which includes several log buildings. The county also manages Boettcher Mansion, which was carefully renovated in 2007 and is managed as an event facility. The Boettcher Mansion was built in 1917 as a summer home and seasonal hunting lodge for Charles Boettcher, and donated to Jefferson County in the 1970s as the centerpiece of a 110-acre estate that became

the Jefferson County Conference and Nature Center. In 1984, the Boettcher Mansion was listed on the National Register of Historic Places by the name that Charles Boettcher called it, Lorraine Lodge. Hiwan Homestead has been on the register since 1974.

JCHC initiated the Meyer award at the 2010 Hall of Fame ceremony to celebrate individuals and organizations active in preserving some aspect of the county's built history. Previous winners of the award are the Norman Meyer Family (2010), Golden Landmarks Association (2011), and the Pine-Elk Creek Improvement Association and Friends of the North Fork Historic District (joint award, 2012).

Nominations for the Meyer Award are accepted anytime and should be sent to the JCHC address in care of the Historic Preservation and Landmark Committee. The award is presented at the annual Hall of Fame ceremony.

## Baehrden Reopens to the Public

Baehrden, the 1928 J.J.B. Benedict-designed Colorado Alpine lodge, sometimes known as Pine Valley Lodge, reopened to the public on July 7, 2013, showcasing the restored front rooms. Closed for more than a quarter-century, this little known gem lay safe, half-hidden above Pine Valley Open Space Park, protected by fencing, the watchful eyes of a resident Jefferson County ranger, and perhaps more than a little luck. It miraculously escaped damage from the 2000 Hi Meadow Fire and the 2006 Pine Valley Fire, which burned to the south, west, and north of the structure.

Open Space has worked with other county departments, consultants, public interest groups, and volunteers to develop the restoration program and to bring the building back to life. Since July 2012 HistoriCorps, a volunteer group committed to hands-on preservation of our historic sites, has worked with Jefferson County to repair the front stairs and various pieces of the exterior of the building. Although some structural work was needed, overall the building weathered 85 years of mountain winters so well that reportedly not a single pane of glass in the front rooms required replacement.

The porch, front room, and dining room are breathtaking. Restoration included the removal of orange shag carpeting covering the wide-planked oak floors, which were sanded and re-stained. The accumulation of decades of soot was scrubbed from the giant fireplaces that dominate the rooms. On the west side, the 1970s-era swimming pool was removed and its exposed foundation has been backfilled to provide ADA access. The area will be replanted, recreating the original alpine garden that once graced this overlook. ☞



Reconstruction at Baehrden Lodge, still underway in 2013.

*Courtesy of Carbonfibrephoto.com.*