

Orchard Mesa: Businesses have formed the Orchard Mesa Business Impact Group

By PENNY STINE  
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"The No. 1 comment we've heard is, 'It's about time you guys got here.' They (Orchard Mesa residents) have been waiting for a fitness facility, and now they've got one," says Elari.

Members at the full-service gym are issued their own key, which they can use at the Orchard Mesa facility or at more than a thousand other Anytime Fitness facilities across the country 24 hours per day. The gym, which offers circuit training, weights, cardio-machines, massage, tanning, showers for both men and women and a personal trainer, is also staffed six days per week.

[ENLARGE & EXPAND MAP]

KODA THE SHELTY plays at the dog park at Spyglass Ridge.

Anytime Fitness is the first tenant in the Shoppes on Orchard Mesa, a new commercial area east of City Market off Highway 50. Supercuts will also be opening soon in the same building.

West of City Market, the Orchard Mesa library has found a new home at Meridian Park. The library, which used to share space with the Orchard Mesa Middle School, now has more than 3,000 square feet, with a children's area, six computer terminals and new programs for kids and teens.

"We've not had a single day go by that we haven't had someone come in and say how grateful they are that we're here," says Jennifer Murrell, branch manager. "This has really increased traffic over here. At our old location, we had five adults who showed up regularly. We now have about 170 people per day."

Murrell credits the visitor-friendly hours, which are during the daytime until 6 p.m. Monday through Friday, as well as seven hours on Saturday, for making the library more accessible. In its old location, the library could only open when school wasn't in session. Several businesses have formed the Orchard Mesa Business Impact Group to promote business opportunities in Orchard Mesa. The group, along with the Business Incubator, is promoting the Summer Outdoor Market on June 27.

THIS HOME IN HAWK'S NEST is 1,650 square feet, with three bedrooms and two baths. Price has yet to be determined, but it should be under \$300,000.

AN ANYTIME FITNESS FACILITY recently opened on Orchard Mesa, offering its members staffed hours during the day, as well as access to the gym 24 hours per day.

Partners Eddie Elari and Keith Simkins report that the business is a little ahead of where they expected it to be.

"We want to get the public down here and let them see what's going on," says Annalisa Pearson, program manager with the Business Incubator. Businesses all across Orchard Mesa may have sidewalk sales and other open house activities, while the incubator plans to have a band, a barbecue, booths and a car show to draw people to their site and let them know what types of businesses and services are available at the incubator.

"Most of the businesses are still doing well, even though the economy is struggling," says Pearson. The incubator has recently opened a new video lab that allows businesses to make short videos, upload them to YouTube and link to their websites. Like the commercial kitchen, the video lab is available to other local businesses, not just incubator clients.

**Colorado State University Tri-River Extension, which has long been a fixture on Orchard Mesa, has added new demonstration gardens to help both commercial growers and residents who enjoy seeing the possibilities, with both an herb garden and a lavender garden.**

**"We started a lavender association for those who are interested in growing lavender as a cash crop," says Kathy Kimbrough, the president of the lavender association. "Agri-tourism is what we're going for." With the help of the CSU extension office, the association is trying to determine which types of lavenders will grow best here, and is also exploring marketing possibilities.**

**THE DEMONSTRATION GARDENS at the Colorado State University Extension Office on Orchard Mesa are a great place to learn about the types of plants that will grow well in our climate and see what they look like when planted in a large area.**