

# A RENDEZVOUS HISTORY

The new prominence of Rendezvous in Grand County real estate sales—now a 1,100-acre expanse that's marking brisk sales in everything from custom homes to attainably priced cabins and townhomes—represents more than a successful land development project. According to Koelbel and Company President Buz Koelbel, Rendezvous speaks

to an intimate involvement with Grand County dating back more than 90 years. In 1915, long before a ski area or the Moffat Tunnel had taken shape, Koelbel's grandfather Carl Norgren moved into a log cabin near present-day Winter Park Ranch to escape tuberculosis that had plagued him from childhood. In the high mountain air Norgren not only recovered, but took on a lifetime love of Grand County's countryside: the trails and trout streams. He joined with friend Aksel Nielson, prominent Denver businessman, to purchase Byers Peak Ranch, a former children's camp along St. Louis Creek, as a family retreat. Dwight Eisenhower, who had yet to gain fame as commander of the Allies' 1943

campaigns in Africa and Sicily, joined the pair for trips to the ranch, where they escorted him fishing. Eisenhower returned with Norgren and Nielsen numbers of times after the war, but his visits took on serious import when he arrived in 1954 as President of the United States. Ike's fondness for Fraser led to a new kind of presidential vacation...an extended stay where visiting dignitaries could be entertained and a modicum of business carried out, all under the watchful eye of a press corps anxious for details. Norgren and Nielsen undertook an ambitious renovation of the ranch, widening the trout waters and expanding the accommodations. In 1949, Norgren's daughter Gene, who had once been a camper and later a counselor at Byers Peak Camp, married Walter Koelbel, who in 1952 founded Koelbel and Company. Growing up in the 1950s, Buz Koelbel fondly remembers spending time

President Eisenhower with Buz Koelbel's grandfather



## Carl Norgrenlke cooks a steak for former President Herbert Hoover at Byers Peak Ranch

each summer at the Ranch, playing in the meadows and learning to fly fish on St. Louis Creek under his father's tutelage. The family attended church in Maryvale, now site of the Cozens Ranch and Museum. Meanwhile, Koelbel and Company had embarked on a series of real estate successes, including Pinehurst Country Club, regarded as Colorado's first master planned golf community, and later The Preserve at Greenwood Village, long ranked as the Denver's area's fastest selling custom community.

As the Eisenhower Tunnel to Summit County grew congested and the State contemplated widening Berthoud Pass, Buz Koelbel kept an eye on the valley's majestic land parcels he had known from decades before. In 1999, Koelbel acquired the forested hillside above Maryvale and launched a master plan that would donate 67 acres to the Fraser River Trail open space...protect over 30% of the community as dedicated open space...and create permanent wildlife corridors within its attractive neighborhoods of resort-style homes. Last year, Koelbel and Company more than doubled Rendezvous' expanse with acquisition of the "Arrow Property" bordering downtown Winter Park, including the sites of Arrow ghost town and the former Ski Idlewild, where in the early 1960s Buz and his siblings had learned to ski. "We've always benefited from a

synergy created by our history here," Koelbel recounts. A critical moment arrived when Koelbel went before members of the Grand County Historical Association, whose support would be needed in approving Rendezvous' plan. "When I told them I wanted to call it 'Rendezvous' as

a place where families gather, they were thrilled and excited," he recalls. "One member said how perfect it was, since Billy Cozens always referred to his stagecoach stop as 'The Rendezvous.'" Now Rendezvous boasts a riverside park/picnic area dedicated to the City of Fraser...a successful bank that lures retail to U.S. 40 north of Winter Park...



and an event tent beside Mary's Pond that draws hundreds of visitors for the annual Plein Air Quick Draw competition, which Koelbel sponsors. With its new expansion now on the drawing board, Rendezvous will eventually provide for 1,800 resort-style homes with amenities. Rendezvous is on the web at [RendezvousColorado.com](http://RendezvousColorado.com).

Buz Koelbel in front of MooseHorn Cabins at Rendezvous

