

2013 APA Colorado Presidents Award: Janet Bell



For 2013, Janet Bell is named as the recipient of The

President's Award for meritorious contributions to planning, including the recognition that good planning cannot be achieved without citizen involvement and stakeholder input; that to determine outcomes you first have to determine the component parts of an issue; and that planning is done with grace and integrity, which requires all planners to know their "bottom line."

I first met Janet Bell when I was a graduate student at the University of Colorado and signed up for her Community Development class. Janet came to the weekly class prepared to teach her students about the importance of understanding an issue and knowing all sides of an issue before formulating a plan or approach. More than that, though, she taught us about knowing people and the importance of getting and honoring stakeholder input. I am sure

she came to this point of view through many avenues, and certainly her work with the stakeholders of Jefferson County bore out this emphasis.

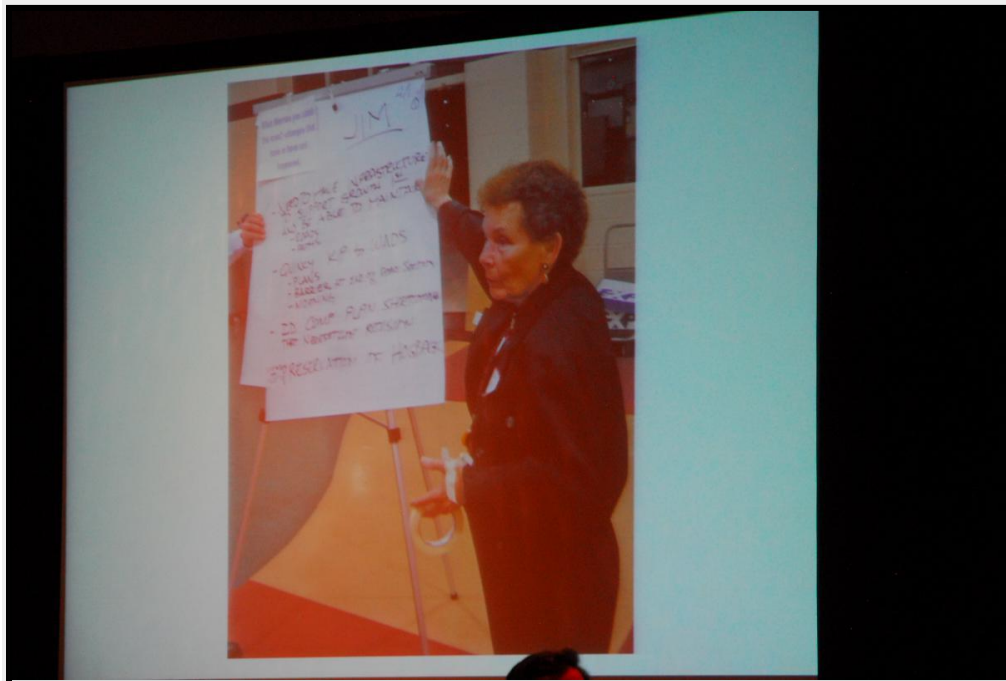
Janet was the Long Range Planning Manager for Jefferson County for twenty plus years. During that time, she held more citizen outreach events than I can even count. Through these efforts, she prepared numerous Sub-Area Community Plans, which recognized important planning principles, but also the uniqueness of different areas of the County. People from all over Jefferson County know Janet Bell and trust Janet Bell. The day she retired from Jefferson County was a dark day, but she left behind many good plans and good, well-trained planners and citizen planners. These plans and people are part of a great legacy

Janet's plan preparation efforts did not include the study of only people and community needs. She studied and inventoried whatever was warranted for a given area. This included grasses, minerals, wildlife, and even horses. In one area of Jefferson County, horses were so much a part of the lifestyle that Janet collected horse demographics.

All of these endeavors were successful, and perhaps one of Janet's greatest successes was the Mountain Groundwater Study that was conducted with the United States Geological Survey, with assistance from citizen groups. She found the funding and the expertise and together they determined the particulars (and difficulties) of getting groundwater from the fractured rock in the mountains. At the end of the day, they were able to speak to the need to consider the number of acres necessary to support a well (and consequently a residence) drilled in fractured rock in a sustainable manner.

Janet has not sat still in her "retirement," and has found numerous ways to continue the work of good planning. She serves on the board of the Jefferson County Conservation District; she is a participating member of the APA CO Legislative Committee where she is the committee expert on all planning matters having to do with water.

Speaking of water, after serving on water committees at DRCOG and completing the Mountain Groundwater Study, Janet has continued to champion the importance of water in planning, growth, and development. She serves on the Metro Water Roundtable as a voting member and worked on the Flaming Gorge Task Force and is currently starting to work on the implementation plans for Metro which is the prelude to the State Water Plan. In addition, she travels the State to attend meetings and share her knowledge of expertise in water and good planning. Too, there are still many Wednesday nights at DRCOG that you will find Janet front and center at the DRCOG Board meetings ready to offer comment or gain information.



In summary, Janet has walked the talk as a planner. She has advocated for good planning, saw to it that good planning happens not only locally, but state-wide; completed studies that provide the input necessary to do good planning and has shared her skills and knowledge with many, many planners young and old. Janet continues to make the Metro area and the State a better place to live.

Perhaps most important of all, Janet has done it with honesty and integrity. She clearly knows her “bottom line” and has a stellar legacy to show for it. For all of these contributions and her legacy, the 2013 President’s Award is given to Janet Bell.