

# Senior care center closer to becoming a reality

## County set to close deal on land in Eagle for new facility

### Daily staff report

NEWSROOM@VAILDAILY.COM

EAGLE — After years of looking for a way to provide extended care for older adults and others in need locally, Eagle County is closer than ever to making a local care community a reality. County officials are set to soon close on property in Eagle Ranch, while a capital campaign committee is being formed by community members to raise funds for the project.

“These are exciting steps toward the realization of a senior care project for residents who need assisted living, skilled nursing care, short-term rehabilitation and memory care services,” said Merv Lapin, the first person to volunteer as a capital campaign committee member. “There presently are no such services available in the Vail and Eagle County area.”

Lapin and Vail resident Dr. Tom Steinberg recently hosted an informational gathering about Castle Peak Senior Care Community. Presentations by Lapin, Eagle County Commissioner Jon Stavney and Augustana Care chief financial officer Craig Kittelson, among others, detailed the project’s history and development. The goal of the session was to inform and engage community leaders in building support for the project as it progresses.

The Castle Peak Senior Care Community was conceived to accommodate a growing number of older adults in Eagle County. Between 2010 and 2020, the number of older adults aged 65 and older is projected to grow by 159 percent and the number of adults aged 75 and older is projected to grow 222 percent. Without a care community to serve their needs, many older adults would have to leave the area. Research shows the cost of older adults leaving the county due to a lack of housing and health care is estimated to be \$43 million annually.

Eagle County chose Augustana Care to develop the Castle Peak Senior Care Community through a proposal and community interview process in 2010. The company’s stated priorities are to value older residents’ talents and experience; provide the care residents need when and where they

need it; and to connect residents to the people and things that mean the most to them.

“They really know what people need as their lives and requirements change,” Eagle County housing director Jill Klosterman said. The Castle Peak Senior Care Community will have 64 units and will include:

- 22 private skilled-nursing units.
- 20 assisted living rental apartments.
- 12 private memory-care suites.
- 10 private short-term rehabilitation suites.

The care community is projected to serve 90 people annually at all income levels. The community is also expected to create 100 jobs during construction and 65 permanent jobs when operating.

“After practicing here for years, it was obvious to me that all our senior citizens who had to have care had to go elsewhere and leave friends and families behind,” said Steinberg, who was the first full-time physician in Vail. Although it was not financially feasible to create a care community for older adults at that time, a study conducted by Steinberg planted a seed for the future. “That’s why it is so exciting to see the project proceeding now,” he said.

Castle Peak Senior Care Community is the result of a public-private partnership, and both Augustana Care and Eagle County are making significant financial investments, accounting for more than 40 percent of the project’s total development costs. Land costs are anticipated to be approximately \$1.6 million. Eagle County will retain ownership of the land and lease it to Augustana Care for \$1 per year. Financing will be structured to allow Castle Peak to be self-sustaining when fully occupied.

“Castle Peak is greatly needed by all the older adults who have lived here all their lives,” said Steinberg. “It’s also a good idea for people who live and work here who would love to have their parents join them here as they grow older. Right now, they have to live elsewhere.”

Roughly \$4 million remains to be raised for the project through the upcoming capital campaign to be led by Augustana Care. For more information about the Castle Peak Senior Care Community, call Lisa Pease at 970-471-4864 or email [lpease@augustanacare.org](mailto:lpease@augustanacare.org).