

Silent News



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ASL ranch proposed to meet needs of conventioners

Eye Festival project would provide total accessibility for conferences, tournaments, camping and retreats

By Diane Plassey Gutierrez

LOS ANGELES - The concept of a year-round conference and training center that is accessible to all deaf people sited just outside Los Angeles was announced at the November, 1994 ASL Festival held in Pomona, California.

Fund raising with a long-term goal of \$2 million to purchase the site began this year by the Eye Festival Training Center, Inc. A non-profit corporation founded in 1988, it was responsible for organizing the

largest Deaf exposition in the country, the ASL Festival. At this festival, EFTC outlined the features the ASL Ranch concept.

This would house deaf conferences, conventions, tournaments, camping, retreats and training sessions.

The design is to be barrier-free and totally visually accessible for all attendees. It will contain indoor and outdoor text messaging and telecommunications devices, situated in a semi-rural area accessible by freeway in Southern California.

As a permanent facility, it would also welcome participation by hearing people.

Presently, organizations of the deaf hold conventions in existing hotel and convention facilities. Although the Americans with Disabilities Act requires them to provide accommodations for the hearing

impaired, it only requires that a relatively few rooms or facilities be equipped with assistive aids. Most deaf attendees at large gatherings therefore find themselves without these devices as available supply runs out. Thus, a separate facility constructed with the aim of total accessibility was conceived.

The late Rick Rogers, vice-president of production at Eye Festival, was instrumental in planning the ASL Festival and developing the concept of the ASL Ranch. Donations are being accepted in his memory as well. Funds are being deposited in a designated interest-bearing account for the sole purpose of the ASL Ranch project.

For further information, please contact the EFTC, 4717 Laurel Canyon Blvd. Suite 210, North Hollywood, CA 91607-3944.