

# Business Connection

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### Vacation Accommodations of Durango • Hal Lott

written by Sara Lynn (Kuntz) Valentine

“Some years ago,” Hal tells me, “my wife, Marie, and I purchased a condo at the ski area. Marie was so disappointed with the property management that she ended up managing it herself.” Soon, neighboring condo owners were asking Marie to take care of renting and managing their condos, too. That ultimately led Hal, Marie and business partner Suzanne O’Nan to establish Vacation Accommodations of Durango, a property management company specializing in vacation rental property management in Southwest Colorado.

“We’re wrapping up our seventh year now,” Hal says. “We currently represent 67 properties, from studio condos at Purgatory to estate quality homes all over the Durango area.” The company has two missions related to two distinct sets of clients - homeowners being the first group and guests/visitors to the Durango area being the second group. Hal, Marie and Suzanne take care of their homeowner clients’ property while generating income for them through vacation rentals. These homeowners may live on the other side of the world - or may use their Durango home for only part of the year - or may reside locally full-time but in a different home.

“We can provide homeowners with estimated income projections,” Hal says. We take pride in representing our clients’ valuable asset with good communication and a high level of accountability, including precise financial records, and making vacation and second-home ownership as enjoyable and carefree as possible. We

write the marketing and advertising text, we make the calls, we collect the fees, sales and lodging taxes, and we make sure the home is ready for guest arrival. We also facilitate cleaning and follow up when guests depart.

Vacation Accommodations of Durango’s second set of clients are the guests - usually vacationers to the Durango area. “For guests and visitors,” Hal says, “we offer very customized service through rapid response to inquiries, matching guests with the right property, careful handling of deposits and pre-arrival inspections to ensure that each property is in top shape before guests check in.”

The company’s been a member of the Chamber for three years. “Networking with other small business people in Durango has been a great benefit. I mention the Chamber anytime I’m speaking with a client prospect, as part of our credibility. I use the Chamber in conversation every week. We have an ad in the Chamber Directory - if I’m talking to someone and they’ve heard our name, but don’t remember where, I know it might have been from thumbing through the Chamber Directory.”

You can reach Hal at 970.749.5893 and [hal@durango.net](mailto:hal@durango.net). Visit <http://www.vadDurango.com>



### Evenings Porch Assisted Living • Erin Youngblood

written by Sara Lynn (Kuntz) Valentine

“We’re like a big family,” Erin says. “You know there’s lots of love when you walk in the front door. It feels like home.”

Evening’s Porch IS home - to up to sixteen seniors from (currently) age 80 to 99. Residents care about and watch out for each other, expressing concern and offering encouragement, and have close relationships with staff members. They have spacious, private rooms (for both couples or singles) - but enjoy hanging out together in the shared living room. They gather around a large table in the dining room three times a day for home-cooked, family style meals.

“Fresh, yummy food with lots of fresh vegetables and herbs from our own garden!” Erin says.

Residents who enjoy gardening can help out in the garden. “And we have one man,” Erin tells me, “who loves to cook. He’s taken charge of preparing a big meal every week. Everyone loves it!”

Residents are also encouraged to make music. Last summer innovative Freenotes Harmony Park instruments were installed on the grounds. They are played with a mallet. Grammy Award winning musician and Durango resident Richard Cooke created the unique ensemble of percussion instruments to produce pure and soothing music regardless of how the notes are combined, enabling people of any age and musical ability, even those with physical or cognitive disabilities, to create beautiful music.

Evening Porch’s mission is to provide a home-like environment that allows residents to live as independently as possible. Erin was hired in January 2014 to open the new, state licensed assisted living community

in Bayfield. Help with dressing, bathing and med management is available when needed, and arrangements can be made for residents to get to doctor appointments. Staff is on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. A beauty salon, a massage room, exercise classes, yoga, movies, and games are provided on site. Favorite activities include scenic drives in the home’s 14 passenger van to see wildlife, autumn colors, etc. and regular ‘ice cream outings’.

“Being in the Chamber has been a big plus for us,” Erin says. “The community respects that. Networking opportunities help us get the word out and brings referrals. This year we were honored to be one of three businesses nominated by the Chamber for ‘Small Business of the Year.’”

Learn more at [eveningsporch.com](http://eveningsporch.com) or by visiting ‘Evenings Porch Assisted Living’ Facebook page. Contact Erin at 970.884.0101.

