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Westward Ho: Forty-Acres of Ranch Land West of Albuquerque are Up for Sale

By **Barbara Armijo**

Journal Staff Writer

Albuquerque's West Side is stretching toward the frontier. Anyone who has ever wanted to own land, and lots of it, only has to look west of Albuquerque to find it for sale.

From Albuquerque, west of Paseo del Volcan and the Route 66 Casino off of I-40, are 1,600 acres awaiting new homesteaders, said agents Ava Bowers and Gwen Hill.

The sisters, both longtime Albuquerque real estate agents, are representing several land owners near the Laguna Indian Reservation. They are selling ranch land in 40-acre parcels.

The acreage can be subdivided by purchasers. However, the sellers want to make sure the land does not turn into high-density housing subdivisions, Bowers said.

"This land is meant to be for ranches," she said. "There are covenants in place that prohibit certain dwellings, such as mobile homes and manufactured housing. The idea behind this land is that people who want small ranchettes can have that here."

The starting price for the 40-acre tracts is \$3,000 an acre, she said. Some of the tracts sell for more than \$6,000 an acre.

"This land is priced so that people from New Mexico can afford it and Californians will think it is a down-right bargain," Bowers said while touring the open range Friday.

Bowers, who owns some of the land, operates Apache Canyon Ranch Bed and Breakfast, which sits on one of the 40-acre parcels. The inn and its land are listed for \$1.3 million.

While the inn and several of the 40-acre parcels have electricity, the area is still virtually raw. Bowers and Hill want to attract the attention of high-end ranch home builders who will buy the land and provide the necessary roads and utilities for the sites they purchase.

The inn is on a parcel closest to Exit 131 off of I-40 which leads to Laguna. It takes a good four-wheel-drive truck to see the rest of the land that's for sale.

"But this is what some people really want," she said. "We have a man from New York who built a custom home here and he just loves it. We're isolated, but not so much so that we can't get where we want to go easily."

The Albuquerque International Sunport and Downtown are 30 minutes from Apache Canyon, and Grants is an hour west.

The land for sale near Apache Canyon inn is bordered on the north by Cañoncito Navajo lands and on the south and west by the Laguna Indian Reservation.

Bowers said she's been told the canyon got its name because an Apache tribe used to winter in the area in the 1600s.

The couple's neighbors are mostly grazing cattle and wild horses. However, several people have purchased land and had custom homes constructed nearby over the past 10 years.

Hill said the land is prime for people working on the West Side of Albuquerque and for those planning to work there, she said.

Eclipse Aviation and other companies are being planned for a 300-acre Aerospace Technology Park near Double Eagle II Airport off of Paseo del Volcan.

Bowers, who lives at the inn with her husband, Theron Bowers, said leaving the city to move west worked for them.

“I’ve been able to climb a mesa out here,” she said. “The sunsets are captivating, and that’s not just a Realtor’s slogan. You have to see it to believe it.”

The Sandia and Manzano mountain ranges are visible in the distance to the east. The Red Rock Mesa provides the western backdrop.

Hill said the idea of having horses and cows, as well as other farm animals, appeals to some people— even those who have lived in the city all their lives.

“This is like the old West out here,” she said. “Of course, we’ve got nice houses planned, but these homeowners will be able to have it all— horses and sunsets and a 30-minute drive to the airport if they have to do business out of town. This is what people want.”

The two will hold an open land— like an open house— to show off the acreage to developers, builders and interested cowboys and cowgirls on June 11 and 12.

For more information on the land, contact Bowers or Hill at 836-7220.

There is another housing subdivision selling lots, even further west than Apache Canyon.

Bowers and Hill are representing another landowner who is selling 1.25-acre lots at Indian Hills at Highland Meadows. Indian Hills is off of N.M. 6, a highway connecting I-40 to Los Lunas and Belen.

Lots in this subdivision have views of Mt. Taylor to the west, Hill said.

These lots, which have water wells and electricity as well as roads, sell for between \$18,500 and \$24,500.

Commercial acreage is also being sold in the Indian Hills area. Hill said Highway 6 is being used more and more by truckers going to southern New Mexico who want to avoid the Coors and I-40 reconstruction.

The commercial lots start at \$10,000 an acre and are sold in large tracts, though there is one 2-acre tract available.

“It’s a good opportunity for someone who wants to start a strip mall with a restaurant or shops, maybe even a gas station,” Hill said. “A lot more people are using this road now.”