

## EDITORIAL

### **Family Dollar looks for greener pastures**

*The Taos News, 11/03/2011*

Location. Location. Location.

For the Family Dollar, a new store on U.S. 64 in El Prado means accessibility for shoppers.

For the rest of us, a new store would waste one of the prettiest pastures in that stretch of road.

As its name implies, Family Dollar is a national chain whose specialty is offering house goods, clothing and groceries at inexpensive prices.

Taos already has one located in a storefront at the strip mall next to Albertson's.

Questa, Pe-asco and many communities from here through southern Colorado have the newer model — a big, metal building. Now, Family Dollar wants to do the same in Taos with an 8,000-square-foot store next to the Overland Ranch complex, one of 500 it plans for next year.

We understand why Family Dollar would ignore the slew of empty buildings in Taos for open land. It's cheaper to build new than renovate an existing building. Plus it looks as if the store has its model down to a science.

The current landowner told a reporter he is working with a developer and has no opinion on how the property will be used after it leaves his hands. The 1.78 acres are listed at \$500,000.

(The Taos Land Trust said conversations about conserving the land have not been fruitful).

But here is some good news: Family Dollar's proposal is in the early stages. Nothing has been filed yet with the county.

The land hasn't been bought; a county official says the sale is contingent on a successful permitting process. Family Dollar would have to get a special use permit for the agricultural zoning and a parking variance.

We are not opposed to Family Dollar building a bigger store. That's the kind of store many in Taos find affordable. It will likely mean more jobs.

We just question whether the appropriateness of using agricultural land for the store's construction.

There must be a better spot.

Concerned residents have already met. We hope they continue to organize.

But here is a suggestion for those who are not part of that circle of friends: let county officials know how you feel about Family Dollar's plans for that pastureland in El Prado.

We've listed contact info for county officials on the next page.

The Taos County Planning Commission meets next Nov. 9 and the Taos County Commission, Nov. 15.

Perhaps a group could get on those boards' agendas.

Also, to be kept in the loop, email county planner Rick Bellis at [richard.bellis@taoscounty.org](mailto:richard.bellis@taoscounty.org) or call him at (575) 737-6304.

Now is the time to be involved unless we want to see another piece of good land gone forever in the name of the almighty dollar.