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Mary and George Jeffries  
of Lincoln City, OR



# BEST NEIGHBORHOODS

## Battlement Mesa

By Judy Wade

**B**attlement Mesa may seem like a discordant name for such a serene place. But, situated on a Colorado mesa surrounded by mountains that are shaped like battlements, this development takes its name from the very scenery that attracts new residents.

Jim and Nancy Scott, 65 and 63, retired to Battlement Mesa from New York and Connecticut and have been in their 3,400-square-foot custom home less than a year. The single-story ranch home, built in the prairie style made popular by Frank Lloyd Wright, has arched windows and a distinctive deep-red roof.

"I feel we were divinely directed. We have no family here, and I had never been to Colorado," says Nancy, "but we knew we didn't like heat, and we do like four seasons. So when Jim became a casualty of career downsizing in the Wall Street



*Above: In western Colorado, Battlement Mesa features an 18-hole championship golf course, 53,000-square-foot activities center and surrounding views of the mountains. Top: Residents enjoy cool summers and clean, crisp air at Battlement Mesa, which sits at an elevation of 5,000-plus feet. Far right: Homes come in many sizes and styles, and a variety of architects and builders are used, giving the community a diverse look.*

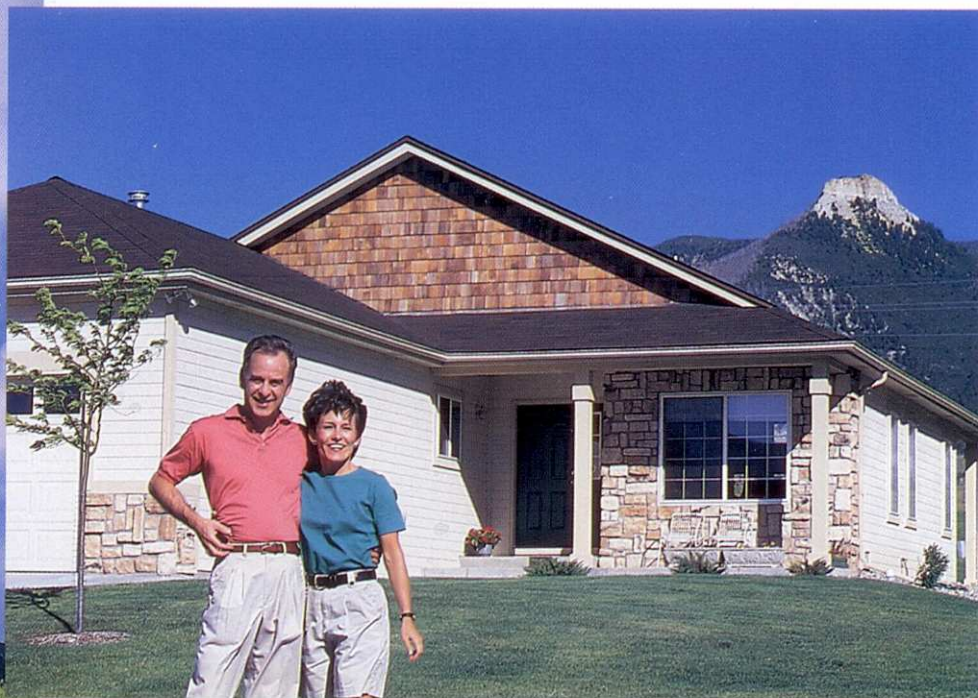
banking business, we left our large colonial home and took a Colorado vacation."

The state's scenic beauty immediately appealed to the Scotts. Once they found Battlement Mesa, they chose a wooded lot of more than an acre that resembled their East Coast property, then established a relationship with a builder and went back East to sell their home.

Battlement Mesa has a true small-town ambiance that is likely to prevail as it grows. Residences of many styles and sizes designed by different architects and constructed on varying lot sizes by a variety of builders create a community of neighborhoods. Wood-frame, brick-faced, stucco, contemporary and Southwestern-style homes mix in eclectic groupings.

Manufactured homes, townhous-





BILL SUMNER/BATTLEMENT MESA PHOTOS

es and single-family detached dwellings in a range of styles accommodate different retirement budgets. Some estate homes are set on expansive acreages, while more modest patio homes on smaller lots include exterior maintenance in a monthly fee.

The Scotts' home is in The Reserve, an area of custom homes 2,200 square feet and larger surrounded by Battlement Mesa's 18-hole golf course. The Scotts enjoy the mix of lifestyles and ages, including children, in their neighborhood.

At an elevation of more than 5,000 feet, the community has mild winters and cool summers, and snow doesn't last long on the ground. Air is crisp and clean, and the state of Colorado is helping to keep it that

way by prohibiting construction of new wood-burning fireplaces (although homes can include other types of fireplaces).

Because Battlement Mesa is set off by itself, with only 430 of 5,000 projected homes built so far, some services are lacking. But the community's location, 40 miles west of Glenwood Springs and 40 miles east of Grand Junction, means that the malls and services not yet established in this new area still are within reach. The basics, however, are in place.

Battlement Mesa Plaza has a large grocery store, and St. Mary's Medical Clinic includes an eye clinic and dentist with twice-a-week office hours. Emergency care is handled by the hospital at Rifle, 15 minutes away, and more seriously ill or injured patients can be airlifted or taken by ambulance to St. Mary's Hospital in Grand Junction. Eight churches represent major denominations.

The Scotts welcomed the recent opening of a fine restaurant and hope for more, but for now they often drive 45 minutes to Grand Junction for dinner. "We're spoiled,"

## Battlement Mesa

**Location:** On 3,200 acres located on the western slope of the Rocky Mountains, 40 miles west of Glenwood Springs and 40 miles east of Grand Junction.

**Home prices:** \$80,000-\$500,000

**Home sizes:** 1,100-5,000 square feet

**Homes completed:** About 430 (population 2,700)

**Additional homes planned:** 4,570

**Resident age restrictions:** None

**Resident average age:** 60

**Children:** Allowed as residents

**Mix of residents:** 50 percent from Colorado, 15 percent from the Eastern seaboard, 10 percent from Minnesota and Wisconsin and a smattering from Arkansas, Florida and Arizona.

**Visitor arrangements:** Three-day, two-night trial retirement in private apartments with dishes, linens and cookware, \$99, (800) 545-6372.

**Information:** Battlement Mesa, 0401 Arroyo Drive, P.O. Box 6000, Battlement Mesa, CO 81636, (800) 545-6372.



laughs Nancy. "We miss a dry cleaners, and there are no automatic car washes yet. But it's no great hardship to wash your own car, and we know more services are coming soon."

She likes the community's activities center, which she says has all the features of a big YMCA but is more plush and luxurious. The 53,000-square-foot complex offers tennis, racquetball, basketball and volleyball courts, a pool, hot tub and sauna, and workout room. Water aerobics and classes in painting, acting and woodcarving are scheduled regularly.

Hans and Elizabeth Bieber, 68 and 65, retired from Denver, where Hans was a house painter. They enjoy activities at the senior center, where Hans is a member of the board of directors. "Lunch is served on Wednesdays, we have bingo on Saturday nights, and there are card parties as well," he says. Elizabeth plays duplicate bridge twice a week.

As with the Scotts, the Biebers' decision to make Battlement Mesa their home came easily and quickly. "In 1993 we came here to look, saw a home and made the decision that fast," says Hans, who chose a low-maintenance patio home, frame with siding and brick trim, a two-car garage and small yard. Because they travel frequently, it was important to the couple that exterior maintenance be provided. "For \$140 per month, our lawn, shrubbery, snow and trash removal are handled for us. We can just lock the door and take off," he says.

The Biebers also lament the current lack of restaurants, but they say Rifle has two good ones, and at least once a week they drive to Grand



Neighbors meet for a game at the community's tennis courts.

Junction for dinner. And there are benefits to the small-town ambiance. Because Battlement Mesa is not near a major city, crime is practically nonexistent, say residents. Their few law enforcement needs are provided by the Garfield County Sheriff's Department.

The 18-hole championship golf course designed by Ken Dye and Joe Finger is widely considered one of Colorado's finest. Golfers say it's difficult to keep an eye on the ball because of the beautiful scenery provided by the surrounding Rocky Mountains.

Battlement Mesa, the world's largest flattop mountain, also is popular among cross-country and downhill skiers. And Hans Bieber fishes several times a week in a pond in

Parachute, a town across the Colorado River and five miles to the south. Nearby reservoirs also are angler venues, where Hans says he regularly lands 14- to 15-inch rainbow trout "just perfect for eating."

He also enjoys the rural setting within a mile of the Colorado River. In wintertime, he says deer and elk come down from higher elevations and can be seen from the windows of his home. Bald eagles are in residence, and in summer the hummingbirds seek out blossoming flower gardens.

Day trips are popular with Battlement Mesa residents. Aspen and Vail are two hours by car, and Colorado Springs, a vacation resort at the foot of Pikes Peak, is convenient for weekend getaways. The lakes, forests and picnic areas of Grand Mesa are about

an hour away. For a true big-city fix, the galleries, shopping, dining and concerts in Denver are 200 miles away.

With the best of nature as a backdrop, there seems little not to like about Battlement Mesa. "We like everything about the place, but we like the people here best of all," says Nancy Scott. "They are so open and friendly. Many of them are from the Midwest, which is where we are from originally. And I love our home and the views of the Parachute and the Bookcliff mountains to the north of us. They seem so close that we can almost reach out and touch them."

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*Judy Wade of Phoenix, is a contributing editor at Where to Retire.*