

Governor Ritter Joins CCI to Celebrate 100 Years While Looking to Colorado's Future

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

CCI DISTRICT MEETINGS	2
OPENING SESSION	5
CCI BUSINESS MEETING RECAP	6
CONCURRENT ISSUE SESSIONS	7
CONFERENCE PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS	10
CONCURRENT ISSUE SESSIONS CONT.	12
NACO UPDATES	19

Counties Profiles Featured

Baca County	14
Eagle County	15
Montrose County	16
Phillips County	17
Weld County	18

Governor Bill Ritter was welcomed by attendees of CCI's 100th Annual Winter Conference. The Governor was joined by members of his staff, department directors and First Lady Jeannie Lewis Ritter in this meeting of county officials and staff. In keeping with his previous addresses to the county governments, he spoke of his experience as the District Attorney of Denver that allows him to understand the local government perspective.

The Governor began his keynote address by discussing his Climate Action Plan. The Climate Action Plan sets the goal of 20 percent carbon reduction by the year 2020 and 80 percent by 2050. This plan emphasizes the need to govern with the future in mind and not just present political solutions. He pointed out that the overall unemployment for Colorado is 3.7 percent

and reached a historic low in May of 2007. He added that the lowest unemployment rate was in Rio Blanco County (1.2 percent) and the highest in Crowley County (5.7 percent). The energy boom in Colorado is driving employment. With this boom comes the responsibility to address impacts on counties. The Severance Tax & Federal Mineral Lease Revenue Allocation Interim Committee was unable to come to consensus about how to proceed. It is important to continue to dialogue with counties on this matter. Renewable energy has been important in parts of the state such as wind energy in the Eastern Plains and solar energy in the San Luis Valley.

He turned to plans for education, mental health

and recidivism. The P-20 Education Coordinating Council recommended investments in full day kindergarten and preschool, looking into dual degree programs and cutting drop-out rates by half. The overall goal is to prepare children for the workforce. It has been shown that children who stay in school are less likely to need government assistance later in life. Mental health was an overarching issue that impacts other specific issues in counties.

The governor plans on providing \$3 million to care for the indigent with no mental health resources. Addressing the mental health needs of the jail population with wrap around services would greatly reduce recidivism. Currently, 50 percent of inmates in Colorado return within 3 years.

Other upcoming important conversations that the governor foresees include transportation funding and health care. The Highway Users

Tax Fund will not be as reliable as it has in the past and the 22 cent gas tax has not kept pace with current needs. Both declining funding sources have significant impact on transportation funding. The 208 Commission as established by SB 208 will have recommendations to the legislature by 2008 about how best to proceed with health care reform. The governor wants one ballot issue to go the voters in 2008, so they do not have to choose between important issues of higher education, transportation funding and health care. Before fielding questions from the delegates, Governor Ritter concluded with a call for collaboration in solutions that will make a difference to the future generations. Some questions included voting machines, the mentally ill in jails, carbon credits and biomass from beetle kill.



Governor Bill Ritter addresses conference delegates at the CCI Winter Conference Opening Session.

District Meetings

Eastern District Meeting

The Eastern District meeting in Colorado Springs was well attended this year with twenty six county commissioners. Eastern District President and Morgan County Commissioner Tony Carlson led the discussion on everything from the Governor's Climate Change Initiative to the Colorado County Officials and Employees Retirement Association (CCOERA). Greg Etl, DoLA Regional Manager for Northeastern Colorado, updated



Phillips County Commissioner Susan Roll Walters and Washington County Commissioner David Foy listen during the Eastern district meeting.

commissioners on some of the proposed changes the Department may make to the Energy and Mineral Impact Assistance Program. Mr. Etl explained that many of these proposed changes stem from a recent state audit report. The report, for example, highlighted the Department's inconsistent policies on required matches and project timeframes. While the Department is still contemplating how best to respond to the audit and while balancing the needs of local governments, the Department is aiming for 50% matches and emphasizing that projects should be completed within one year from when the project is awarded funding.

Dennis Kaan, CSU Area Extension Director, explained that CSU Extension, in conjunction with 4H, is applying for a USDA NRI grant. The grant proposal targets youth development by offering a range of clinics and workshops that will cover topics like animal nutrition and animal husbandry. If the proposal is accepted, funding will be available by October 2008 and will last for four years. No match is required.

Yuma County Commissioner Robin Wiley updated the district on the status of the Republican River Compact and Colorado's efforts to comply with the compact agreement. Commissioner Wiley explained that one of the preferred solutions is to build a pipeline which would convey pumped groundwater to a tributary of the Republican River. Earlier this year, the Republican River Water Conservation District considered draining the Bonnie Reservoir to fulfill the compact's terms. This, however, is no longer an option.

Front Range District Meeting

All Front Range District counties were represented at the meeting. Larimer County Commissioner Kathay Rennels was re-elected as the 2008 District Board Representative. Arapahoe County Commissioner Frank Weddig presented the issue of agricultural zoning. Commissioner Weddig is concerned with fairness in agriculture assessments of properties. Commissioners spoke of their own experiences with the issue, while raising questions. The motion for Commissioner Weddig to take it to the CCI Board of Directors passed for approval. Department of Local Affairs Director Susan Kirkpatrick joined the meeting and introduced herself. She expressed delight at the opportunity for the department to have conversations with counties.

The rest of the meeting was spent sharing updates from each of the counties. Multiple counties passed tax increases in the last elections. Adams County passed a sales tax extension. Boulder County voters passed an open space tax, as well as a transportation sales tax extension. Denver voters approved a mill levy for basic maintenance. Some counties are finding ways to accommodate new judges. Arapahoe County won the Eagle Award for their TREX construction. Boulder County is being considered for the Community Sustainability Award from NACo. Douglas County has a new town in the Castle Pines North area. El Paso County is seeing great results in citizen outreach with their Citizens Academy program. Jefferson County is facing budget challenges. Broomfield County has a new Northwest Parkway Authority. Newly appointed Larimer County Commissioner Randy Eubanks introduced himself to the rest of the counties. Weld County is concerned with the drying up of water wells for their farmers.



Commissioners Doug Rademacher (Weld), Frank Weddig (Arapahoe) and Jack Hilbert (Douglas), observe during the Front Range District Meeting.

Mountain District Meeting

The Mountain District meeting focused on reports from individual counties concerning cost savings measures and county priorities for CCI and NACo. Clear Creek noted cost saving efforts related to health insurance and the use of medical savings accounts, the development of mapping and HR systems for the county and the use of jail trustees for jobs throughout the county (Lake also uses this strategy). Teller reported savings associated with its new health plan option that includes a high deductible policy and health savings accounts. Gilpin discussed the use of waste oil for heating in its road and bridge department leading to a savings. Eagle reported fuel cost savings in its use of a state grant for the purchase of hybrid vehicles for the county. Pitkin related that they hope to see savings in training and recruitment costs through the use of an employee housing program that provides interest free mortgage loans to county employees. Fremont, in addition to a time out on the TABOR property tax limits, hopes a new compliance officer will generate better compliance (and additional revenue) from their special mobile machinery permit requirements. Custer County is seeing some FTE reductions resulting from efficiencies that county employees were able to achieve. Lake has made some staffing reductions, including eliminating the county administrator position and is trying to better manage how they hire workers, who have left work at the mines.



Pitkin County Commissioner Dorothea Farris discusses agenda items during the Mountain District Meeting along with Pitkin Administrator Hilary Fletcher and Teller County Commissioner Bob Campbell.

Several counties indicated that they offset some of their county costs by renting out jail bed space. Teller markets about 50% of their jail beds, Clear Creek said they get a good rate when doing jail holds for the U.S. Marshall. Park, which also leases out significant jail bed space, asked what steps can be taken to facilitate better use of these beds.

For NACo and CCI priorities, a number of issues were raised, including: HAVA implementation, HUTF allocations and sustainable transportation, delaying implementation of the USFS travel management plan, forest health, campaign finance, PILT, notice procedures for BLM land sales, the need for separate USFS appropriations so firefighting expenditures do not come at the expense of forest management and other efforts, and concern about contamination of the Arkansas River because of a collapsed federal drainage tunnel. There was also a desire to develop better working relationships with federal agencies.

Southern District Meeting



Alamosa County Commissioner George Wilkinson speaks during the Southern District Meeting.

Southern District President, Commissioner Gene Millbrand, Prowers County, called the meeting to order. All fifteen counties were present. The District unanimously elected incumbent Commissioner John Sandoval, Conejos County, to the

Colorado Counties, Inc. Board of Directors. There was also an official welcome to the new Pueblo County Commissioner, John Cordova, Sr.

Commissioner Bill Long, Bent County, gave an update on tamarisk eradication efforts in the southern counties. There have been more than 500 acres treated in Southern counties and 350 more are under contract. Tamarisk continues to concern counties throughout Colorado because of the extraordinary amount of water it consumes and how quickly it spreads. The Colorado Department of Local Affairs approved, but has not allocated, a \$50,000 grant for a tamarisk control study in the region.

Commissioner Matt Heimerich, Crowley County, gave an update on water issues in the Arkansas River Basin. The Arkansas River Compact Administration (ARCA) has met with the state of Kansas, an annual event, to discuss the state's compliance with the Kansas lawsuit. Settlement may be nearing with a financial settlement going to Kansas and with Colorado winning the right to store water in the Arkansas River Basin.

Commissioner Heimerich also updated the District on Action 22's issues for the upcoming legislative session. Commissioners discussed the severance tax/federal mineral lease issue, the SB208 committee and the Blue Ribbon Transportation Panel. Action 22 will hold its Legislative Day on January 23, 2008 at the Capitol in Denver.

Las Animas County Commissioners discussed the latest news concerning the Piñon Canyon expansion. Currently the US Army is going through an environmental impact statement review process. The Southern Colorado Economic District is studying what the economic impacts will be if the base is expanded. So far the military has not visited or consulted with any of the affected counties.

Western District Meeting

Fifteen of the sixteen Western District Counties and 50 commissioners and administrators attended. Commissioners Kellie Hotter and Craig Meis provided an update on the Federal Mineral Lease and Severance Tax proposed changes. As co-chairperson of the working group Commissioner Meis briefly outlined the five potential bills that were discussed in detail in the session on Wednesday. The greatest concerns expressed were about the potential changes in the federal mineral lease revenue processes.

The COGCC update was an emphasis on the need for local input in the new rules being drafted by the commission.



Discussion at the Western District Meeting at the 100th Annual CCI Winter Conference in Colorado Springs.

The Western District's letter to Governor Ritter, in opposition to the Desert Rock Power Plant, did receive a response. The Governor said the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment was investigating the impact of mercury dispersion from the plant. A preliminary report was completed and the Governor asked the department to forward a copy to the district president. Staff will contact State Department to again request a copy of the report.

Counties provided updates of significant issues in their counties. Some issues of note are:

- Archuleta's budget crisis is being solved by dramatic cuts. The county appointed an expert panel of eight professionals to oversee the audit and budget.
- Garfield's boom impact list was expansive: water lines, airport, new commercial, and housing.
- Mesa described the boom's impact on the county, for example their job center has 2,000 job orders.
- Montrose was pleased to announce the passage of two sales taxes questions.
- Rio Blanco lamented the loss of the use tax battle with Exxon Mobile on building materials. They are working on legislation to authorize the building material use tax for the next General Assembly session.
- San Juan described their IGA among four counties and two federal agencies, to manage and regulate off highway vehicles.

Openings – Energy and Mineral Impact Assistance Advisory Committee

The Governor's Office of Boards and Commissions is accepting applicants who wish to be considered for the two openings on The Energy and Mineral Impact Assistance Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee is responsible for advising the Executive Director of the Department of Local Affairs on the impacts of energy and mineral development on local governments and provides guidance on grant and loan funding requests submitted by local governments. The Advisory Committee meets three times each year and members serve four year terms. If you are interested in serving on this Advisory Committee, please contact the Governor's Office of Boards and Commissions at 303.866.6368 shaylisa.hurte@state.co.us.

Cook Political Report Editor Speaks to Delegates

Following the Governor's Opening Address, Ms. Jennifer Duffy, Senior Editor and political analyst for *The Cook Political Report*, shared her thoughts with commissioners about the national political landscape. Tapping into her twenty years of experience in campaign politics which ranges from serving as the Press Secretary for the National Republican Senatorial Committee to devising legislative strategies for the lobbying firm of Cassidy & Associates, Ms. Duffy gave an overview of the presidential candidates and fielded a series of questions from county commissioners.

Ms. Duffy began by stating that recent polls show the electorate to be both angry and pessimistic. Voters have a low opinion of both the president and congress. And, for the first time in years, the economy is trumping Iraq as



Jennifer Duffy presents to conference delegates as Larimer County Commissioner Kathay Rennels looks on.

the most important issue on the minds of voters. As for the presidential race, Ms. Duffy shared her views on the candidates for both the Republican and Democratic Parties. She compared the Republican presidential race to *The Dating Game*, a show that aired in the 1970's where three young men would vie for a date with a young woman. Ms. Duffy explained that in *The Dating Game*, the young woman ultimately would chose one person to date but really wasn't ready to commit to any of the three men. Ms. Duffy explained that voters are feeling the same way towards the five most viable Republican candidates – Rudy Giuliani, Mitt Romney, Fred Thompson, John McCain and Mike Huckabee. She then highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate.

Ms. Duffy then turned her attention to the candidates for the Democratic Party. She opined that the three most viable Democratic candidates are Hilary Rodham Clinton, Barack Obama and John Edwards. While likely democratic voters appear to be more decisive about who they

will vote for, many view the Democratic presidential candidates as polarizing and unauthentic. As with the Republican presidential candidates, Ms. Duffy highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate.

Ms. Duffy's commentary was followed by a series of questions from commissioners. She was asked to comment on the likelihood that Hillary Rodham Clinton would receive the female vote in 2008. Ms. Duffy explained that unmarried women have a tendency not to vote and that Clinton's harshest critics tend to be well-educated, middle-aged women. When asked to speculate on which party would win the Hispanic and Latino vote, Ms. Duffy explained that the Democrats think they own this vote but the Republicans have made great strides among these voters.

Commissioner Comments

"Having someone of Jennifer's quality come and talk about the "big picture politics" is critical for all State organizations. We are always reacting to what happens at the National and State levels and to be able to be up to speed with people of Jennifer's caliber is so informative...she was great."

CCI President-Elect and Larimer County Commissioner Kathay Rennels

"Her perspective was very enlightening. As a local official I often don't have as much time as I'd like to to focus on the details of federal politics so I enjoyed hearing what she had to say."

Teller County Commissioner Jim Ignatius

"I thought it was slanted and a knock on Republicans. I was not impressed with her talk. I thought she would be more informative but I didn't think she was."

Grand County Commissioner Nancy Stuart

"I thought she was pretty much on target. I thought her projections were interesting and that it was one of the more entertaining sessions at the conference."

Weld County Commissioner Doug Rademacher

CCI Business Meeting

County commissioners had a full agenda for the business meeting of November 27, 2007. The proposed budget and assessment schedule (dues) were presented and were passed unanimously by the membership. CCI was requested to review the assessment schedule, specifically as it relates to smaller counties and their rate of increased dues.

For the past several years, county commissioners have generously donated money to support young 4-H participants in the Junior Livestock Show and Sale. Taylor Blanchard, a Douglas County 4-H participant spoke to the membership about the benefits of this program and encouraged continued participation.

A presentation was made on the Regional Emergency Trauma Advisory Councils (RETAC). Commissioners are encouraged to participate in a needs assessment meeting on January 17, 2008, 2:30-4 p.m. at the CCI offices.

President Doug Monger introduced the 2008 CCI Board. Officers for the Board of Directors are Dorothea Farris, President; Kathay Rennels, President-elect, Frank Weddig, Treasurer; Melanie Worley, Secretary; Doug Monger, Past President and board members David Foy, Trési Houpt and John Sandoval.

The membership considered nine NACo resolutions as well as one platform change. The resolutions, amendments and their status are available by contacting Gini Pingnot at gpingnot@ccionline.org or 303.861.4076.

The membership was provided with a summary of the "customer satisfaction survey" which CCI conducted this fall. The results are available on CCI's webpage at www.ccionline.org under members only publications or by contacting Kristin Dunn at kdunn@ccioline.org or 303.861.4076.



In honor of celebrating CCI's 100 year anniversary, past Presidents of CCI were invited to enjoy the celebration. Above is a photo of some of the past Presidents who joined CCI for the celebration. Attendees included (from top left) Marsha Osborn (Summit County, 1996), Mark Arndt (Morgan County, 1999), Johnnette Phillips (Eagle County, 2000), Leroy Mauch (Prowers County, 2001), Marianna Raftopoulos (Moffat County, 2003), Dennis Everhart (Washington County, 2004), Glenn Vaad (Weld County, 2006), Vern Rominger (Rio Grande County, 1991), Loren Whittemore (El Paso County, 1989), Elda Lousberg (Logan County, 1988), Lewis Entz (Alamosa County, 1978) and Stan Shafer (Yuma County, 1995). Not pictured include Matt Heimerich (Crowley County, 2005) and Jake Klein (Otero County, 1994).

Governor's Transportation Finance and Implementation Panel Recommendations

Despite the inclement weather, State Treasurer Cary Kennedy and Colorado Department of Transportation Director Russ George were on hand to update commissioners on the Transportation Panel's recently completed work.



Russ George, Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Transportation, addresses conference delegates updating them on the Transportation Finance & Implementation Panel recommendations.

Director George opened the session by stating that a conversation about transportation isn't all about money. Instead, it's more about service and that it is an appropriate role for government to provide transportation services. He explained that while the thirty-two panel members and nineteen technical advisory committee members grappled with how to fund the statewide transportation system in the future, ultimately,

the conversation focused on service levels. To this end, panel members agreed that the state needed to invest in five areas. These areas include:

- 1.) 7th Pot Projects - finish the outstanding strategic statewide projects;
- 2.) "Fix it First" - maintain what we already have in good condition. This includes shoulder improvements, safety and surface treatment projects;
- 3.) Mobility – address congestion through urban, rural and interregional transit options and additional lanes;
- 4.) Bike and Pedestrian Enhancements – includes safe routes to school and encourages reduction in vehicle use; and
- 5.) Local Roads and Streets – provide local governments flexible transportation funding.



Colorado State Treasurer Cary Kennedy answered numerous questions during the session.

Treasurer Cary Kennedy helped illustrate the need for additional transportation funding by citing a series of statistics. She explained that, on average, roads, bridges and tunnels in Colorado have a useful life of 50 years. Sixty percent of our statewide transportation system, however, has exhausted its useful life

and the remaining forty percent is in poor condition. In addition to this, Colorado is expecting another 1.5 million people by 2020. Under existing conditions, this population growth will increase commuting time from today's average commute of 22 minutes/day to 70 minutes/day.

Treasurer Kennedy commented on how the state finances its roads. She explained that in 1919, Colorado enacted its first one cent/gallon gas tax. Over the years, the state legislature gradually increased the gas tax to its current level of \$0.22/gallon. Since this tax has not been adjusted since 1992, its purchasing power has eroded over the years in the face of higher construction costs and greater fuel efficiency.



Routt County Commissioner Diane Mitsch Bush and Jackson County Commissioner John Rich jot down notes during the transportation session.

Housing Issues: Does everybody have a place to stay?

The discussion of housing issues opened with a presentation by Kathi Williams, Director of the state Division of Housing. She said that there is a great need for affordable housing in Colorado right now. Ms. Williams indicated that Colorado is one of 13 states that are “severely housing cost burdened”, where over half of low-income households pay more than 50% of their income in housing costs. This is based, at least in part, on the way that the housing market responds to market pressures. For example, economic development and the creation of new higher-paying jobs drive local housing prices up, making it less affordable for the new workers and exacerbating affordability problems for workers in existing service and entry-level jobs. Ms. Williams mentioned new approaches to affordable housing, including incorporation of affordable units in mixed use developments to preserve healthy neighborhoods. Ms. Williams also discussed the need for regional cooperation since so few Coloradans work, live, and recreate in the same neighborhood. She suggested that Colorado is lagging behind other states in its support for housing needs and that more resources need to be devoted to this area.



Kathi Williams (right), Director of the Colorado Division of Housing, presents to conference delegates as Pitkin County Commissioner Dorothea Farris and Summit County Commissioner and presenter Thomas Davidson look on.

The second presenter was Ken Hoagland, a board member of Housing Colorado and participant with the Colorado housing investment fund coalition. Mr. Hoagland discussed the fact that Colorado is one of only 12 states that does not have a permanent housing investment fund. He said that Housing Colorado has looked at lots of models for this and continues to lobby for general fund appropriations in support of affordable

housing. Last year, the appropriation was \$1.1 million and that is what the Governor has proposed again this year. Housing Colorado would like to see that number go up to something closer to the historic high of \$4.5 million but is currently asking for an increase up to \$2.5 million. Housing Colorado also supported the legislation allowing the creation of multi-jurisdictional housing authorities. However, Housing Colorado’s number one priority continues to be the creation of a dedicated, sustained funding stream for housing. Mr. Hoagland passed out a fact sheet on the creation of a fiduciary housing fund that would receive money from the interest on certain accounts held by title companies. It is estimated to generate in excess of \$10 million annually (of \$25 million in annual need). They are also discussing the implementation of a document fee as an additional funding source. These funds would be used for loans and grants using the private activity bond model for a wide variety of activities.

Summit County Commissioner Thomas Davidson rounded out the panel with a discussion of the county’s recently-formed combined housing authority, which he hopes will find success where other efforts have failed. The goal is to build a stronger community by creating housing opportunities that keep neighbors living in the area (and prevent housing costs from causing residents to move away). Commissioner Davidson reviewed the history of the issue in Summit County, leading up to voter approval in November, 2006, of a new sales tax and impact fee structure. The current program includes down payment assistance, rehabilitation of existing units, an education program for first time buyers, and the use of deed-restricted units but is still only meeting 20% of the recognized need. Commissioner Davidson asked the audience not to let their constituents talk about “those people” who need assistance and recognize that they are teachers, firefighters, retail workers and other neighbors – the county’s middle class. Commissioner Davidson concluded with the point that regional approaches are interesting but that affordable housing is fundamentally a land use decision and that in some cases it may not be appropriate or workable to cede this authority to a regional entity.



Conference delegates listen & take notes during the housing session.

Blue Ribbon Commission for Health Care Reform Recommendations

Addressing another key issue for the upcoming legislative session, Representative Ann McGihon and Dr. Mark Wallace spoke about the work of the Health Care Reform Commission. Sen. Shawn Mitchell was scheduled to participate on the panel but ultimately was unable to join commissioners because of inclement weather.

Dr. Mark Wallace began the session by stating that the



Gilpin County Commissioner Jeanne Nicholson acted as the moderator for the health care reform session.

Commission's purpose is to study and establish health care reform models for expanding coverage, especially for the underinsured and uninsured and to decrease health care costs for Colorado residents. To that end, the commission evaluated and modeled four of the thirty-one submitted proposals and developed their own fifth proposal.

Dr. Wallace detailed key features of each proposal and explained that as you move from the first proposal to the fifth proposal, the proposals look less and less like our current system. For example, key features of the first proposal include expanding Medicaid services and increasing access to home/community based services. Key features of proposal five, on the other hand, include, not only expanding Medicaid, but also mandates that all legal residents have health insurance and includes measures to reform the current insurance market. Dr. Wallace explained that the Commission is completing its work and will forward thirty-one recommendations, ranging from increasing Medicaid provider rates to requiring health plans to cover everyone regardless of health status, to the General Assembly by the end of January.

Representative McGihon responded to Dr. Wallace's presentation by commenting that she is not surprised by the Commission's recommendations. She believes people are ready for change. Representative McGihon has been speaking with people throughout the state about rising health care costs and many are saying that they do not want to increase

coverage with public financing if the end result will be to subsidize private companies. She then highlighted two recommendations that resonated strongly with her. These were: 1) enhancing coordination of care by providing medical homes for all Coloradans; and 2) enhancing quality by supporting the adoption of health information technology and paying providers based on quality of care.



Crowley Commissioner Matt Heimerich observes during the health care reform session.



Colorado State Representative Anne McGihon presents at the CCI Winter Conference discussing the Blue Ribbon Commission for Health Care Reform discussion.



Conference delegates attending the session on health care reform.

2007 Annual Winter Conference Celebrating 100 Years



Jefferson County Commissioner Kathy Hartmann smiles as she learns that she received the Freshman Commissioner of the Year award.



Mesa County Commissioner Craig Meis (center) helps present the Administrator of the Year Award along with Routt County Administrator Tom Sullivan (left) to Mesa County Administrator Jon Peacock (right).



Historian Tom Noel humors conference delegates during the CCI 100 Year Dinner.



Park County Commissioner Leni Walker accepts the Commissioner of the Year Award from CCI President and Routt County Commissioner Doug Monger.



Crowley County Commissioner Matt Heimerich accepts his Distinguished Service Award as his wife Karen Tomky is by his side.



Routt County Commissioner Doug Monger and Pitkin County Commissioner Dorothea Farris share a laugh. Commissioner Farris presented a special gift and award to Commissioner Monger for his service as the 2007 CCI President.



Kara Edin, wife of the late Boulder County Commissioner Tom Mayer, accepts a Special Distinguished Service Award on behalf of her husband.



Crowley County Commissioner Kathy Medina is greeted at CCI registration.



Clear Creek Commissioner Kevin O'Malley and Gilpin County Commissioner Forrest Whitman converse during the reception.



Otero County Commissioner Jake Klein (center) jokes with Clarke Becker (left) and Saguache County Commissioner Sam Pace (right).



Montrose County Commissioner Bill Patterson, Douglas County Commissioner Melanie Worley and Alamosa County Commissioner Darius Allen take time to smile at the reception.



Former Commissioners and Past Presidents Johnnette Phillips and Leroy Mauch catch up.



Garfield County Commissioner Trésí Houpt is excited for the conference.



Costilla County Commissioner Ed Vigil and Crestina Martinez enjoy themselves at the reception.

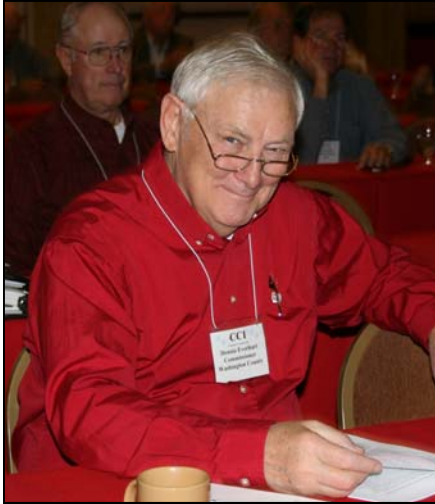


Fellow San Miguel Commissioners Elaine Fisher and Art Goodtimes talk between sessions.



Women Commissioners, Councilmembers and Mayors gather for breakfast during the conference. First Lady Jannie Ritter spoke with them that morning.

Colorado Oil & Gas Conservation Commission



Washington County Commissioner Dennis Everhart takes a moment to smile for the camera during the COGCC session.

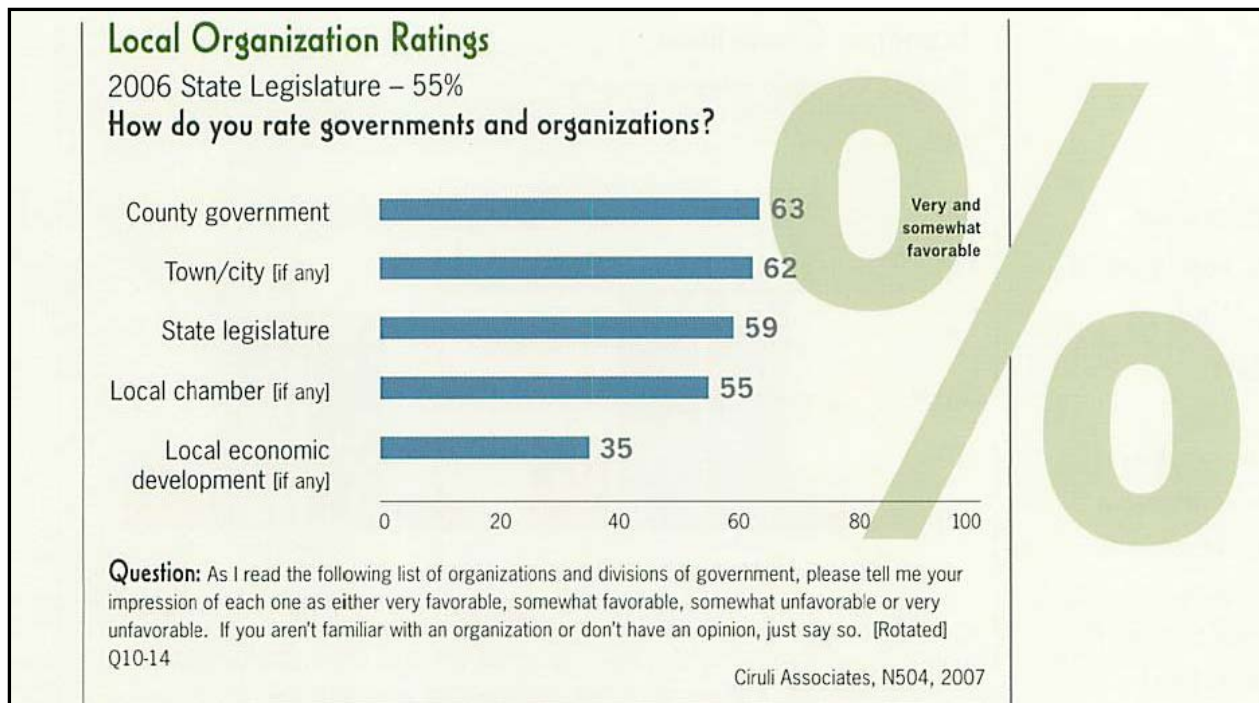
Representatives of the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (COGCC) presented the pre-draft version of proposed rules implementing HB07-1298 and HB07-1341. HB1298 requires the COGCC to address the adverse impacts on wildlife resources affected by the oil and gas industry. HB1341 added two new ex-officio members to the OGCC, one from the Colorado Department of Wildlife (CDOW) and another from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE). COGCC is continuing to collect comments and input on these rules throughout the state from elected officials and the public sector.

Garfield County Commissioner and COGCC board member Trési Houpt and Thom Kerr, staff for the COGCC, explained the pre-draft rules to a group of more than 50 county commissioners. Both emphasized that the pre-draft rules are meant to generate discussion and are not in final form. The public comment on the rules will continue through March 2008.

Some highlights of the pre-draft rules include a more comprehensive Form 34 permit process. This permit process will help minimize the surface impacts of oil and gas development by consolidating information about proposed locations in one application, apply a set of minimum operating standards to protect public welfare and wildlife, and provide for consultation with COGCC, CDPHE, CDOW, local governments and property owners in certain circumstances.

Another way the COGCC is looking to implement new rules is to have operators submit a Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP). These CDPs would not be part of the regulatory process, but an opportunity for operators to identify all of their anticipated development and infrastructure in an area. The operator could then work with COGCC, CDOW and CDPHE to identify potential cumulative impacts and develop avoidance or mitigation measures that address these impacts. This would be a voluntary process.

Please go to the COGCC website at <http://www.oil-gas.state.co.us/> to view proposed rules, or contact CCI with questions.



Severance Tax & Mineral Lease Revenues

What does the future look like?

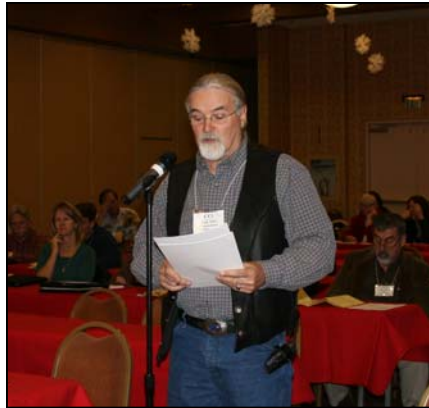
The final session of the conference concerned the ongoing discussions about allocation of severance tax and federal mineral lease revenues. The opening speaker was Sen. Gail Schwartz, who chaired the legislative interim committee. Senator Schwartz noted that the interim committee was not charged with analyzing whether to raise taxes above existing levels. Sen. Schwartz reviewed the committee's focus on mitigating local impacts, making collection more fair and accurate, and distributing funds in a fair and prudent manner. She said the committee identified both positive and negative impacts of mineral development but recognized that there is a net cost to government associated with mineral development.

Sen. Schwartz reviewed the problems identified and some potential solutions: (1) Localities need capital improvements before revenues actually come in. One solution is to create a bonding authority to provide up front relief for local governments. (2) The current taxation scheme is too complex, including exemptions, deductions and credits against tax. A taskforce would probably be beneficial for studying this issue in depth. (3) The current collection mechanism is obscure, unaccountable and difficult to audit – 27% of companies that should have filed a return did not. A taskforce could also look at this issue but the Dept. of Revenue's authority to impose penalties need to be strengthened. (4) The grant program would be better suited to local needs and the direct distribution formula accounts for some impacts but not others. One of the interim committee's recommended bills makes the grant process more transparent and includes additional factors in the direct distribution formula. (5) Severance tax revenues will eventually taper off or end altogether. Options here include the creation of a permanent fund and prioritizing investment in long-lasting regional and statewide assets (including schools and higher education).

Finally, Sen. Schwartz turned to federal mineral lease revenues and a consensus simplification proposal that is being developed. This proposal freezes the current allocations at a base level but allows some inflation. Revenues in excess of these amounts would be allocated to a new enterprise that would maintain higher education and local government permanent funds, as well as, similar capital construction funds that could be used to pay the debt service on bonds, issued to fund needed projects.

Mesa County Commissioner Craig Meis spoke next. He was co-chair of the working group advising the legislative interim committee and provided a brief review of the working group's

activities and recommendations with respect to impacts, revenues, and allocation methodologies. Commissioner Meis said that the working group found that impacts cover a broad spectrum of issues and that quantification of the impacts is very difficult. On revenues, the working group recommended no reduction in local shares, simplification of severance tax collection and distribution, considered changing the point of taxation and elimination of net back deductions, and that any proposed changes should not decrease overall collections. Regarding allocations, the working group recommended modifying the impact assistance credit, adding production and permit-based factors to the direct distribution formula, supporting the administrative changes to the grant program that DoLA has proposed and creating a financing option that would allow acceleration of revenues. Commissioner Meis indicated his belief that the bonding and financing proposals will have the biggest impact all around and are the bills that will merit the closest attention by county commissioners.



La Plata County Commissioner Wally White poses a question during the Severance Tax session.

Susan Kirkpatrick, Executive Director of the Department of Local Affairs, made the final presentation concerning both direct distributions and the grant program. After quickly reviewing the current allocation flow charts, Ms. Kirkpatrick said that the current conversations were arising from

the recent audits of the program, the interim committee work, and the recent dramatic increase in revenues. DoLA spent a significant amount of time assisting the working group in developing the new, recommended direct distribution methodology which considers employee residence, as well as production volume and number of permits. Ms. Kirkpatrick said they are considering several changes to the grant program, some of which can be done administratively. The statutory changes relate to membership of the grant advisory committee and giving the committee formal statutory authorization. DoLA will also be pursuing the creation of small and large-scale grant alternatives, as well as changing the current grant match requirements to reflect the real financial condition of applicant local governments, to account for the inability of some projects to generate matching dollars, and to reduce or eliminate match requirements for immediate, direct needs in heavily-impacted areas. Ms. Kirkpatrick indicated that they will be trying to allow videoconference presentations by applicants and holding hearings in central locations in order to ease the travel burdens on applicants. Ms. Kirkpatrick reiterated the department's commitment to being responsive, accountable and transparent in its administration of the program.

Baca County

Once known as the “broomcorn capital of the world,” Baca County continues to carry on agricultural traditions as it moves with the times. Broomcorn was first raised in the county as a crop in 1887. The tradition of farming has since continued, although very little broomcorn is grown now. The farming now includes both dry land and irrigated, producing wheat, corn, sunflowers, sorghum and alfalfa. Most of the farmland was homesteaded between 1900 and 1926, and much of it is still owned by the original homestead families. The present economy is based primarily on ranching and farming. Baca County was formerly a part of Las Animas County and became its own county in 1889 by an act of the Colorado Legislature. It was named after the Felipe Baca family of Trinidad, who was the first to settle on Two Buttes Creek.

Baca County’s famous attractions include: Picture Canyon which is located in the southern part of the county. It is not only scenic, but has ancient Indian writings and drawings that are believed to be over 1,500 years old. People come from all over the country to experience Crack Cave during the Fall and Spring Equinox festivals. This is the only time that certain writings and drawings can be seen. They are only visible for eight to twelve minutes as the sun’s rays hit the eastern canyon wall at dawn during Fall and Spring Equinoxes.

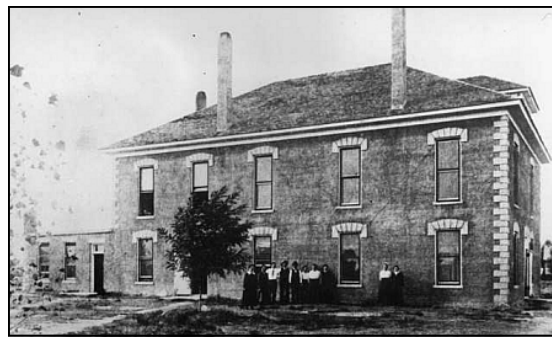
Baca County consists of vast prairies, farmland and hidden canyons. The population is a mix of traditional cowboys, modern day farmers, doctors, lawyers and business people. The prairie wildlife rivals the abundance of the domestic cattle. Good ol’ fashioned, neighborly hospitality is everywhere, as well as hard work, dedication to families and strong traditions.

In the spirit of preserving county history, the county has applied for a grant from the Historical Fund to completely renovate the county courthouse. The county courthouse is composed of an interesting variety of styles and materials. It was originally built in 1916, with additions constructed in 1929, 1935 and 1985. The courthouse is a part of the county’s history that the county would like to see preserved and maintained.

Baca County was recently designated a “Preserve America” county. Preserve America is a White House initiative to encourage and support community efforts for the preservation and enjoyment of the priceless natural and cultural heritage in local communities. Mrs. Laura Bush is currently the honorary chair of Preserve America. Through this designation, grants are becoming available to locate and preserve

historical sites throughout the United States.

Part of the county heritage is its architecture. The Southeast Colorado Regional Tourism Cultural Heritage Program recently published a brochure containing a map with descriptions of nine Works Progress Administration (WPA) sites in Baca County. WPA was a federal program that provided employment to individuals, for construction of schools, bridges and other civic structures, using local materials, largely sandstone in the case of Baca County. The current day self-guided tour directs persons to interesting architectural examples of public facilities



The Baca County Courthouse originally built in 1916, is currently awaiting grant money for renovation.

constructed during the height of the 1930s depression and Dust Bowl.

While preserving vital traditions, Baca County is also keeping

pace with the innovations of the twenty-first century. Wind power has great potential in the county. At least five companies are leasing land from Baca County land owners for the development of wind energy. If electric transmission lines can be developed, the future of renewable energy in Baca County looks very promising. There is currently one wind tower in the county owned by the Town of Springfield and ARPA. It is one of the most efficient wind turbines in the continental United States. Through wind studies, it was shown that Baca County has the some of the most viable wind potential in the state. The challenge has been the lack of transmission lines to move the energy from Baca County to open grids in the rest of the country.

Economic growth efforts are just as important to the county as preserving its history. Through the continuing efforts of wind energy development and tax incentives to attract new businesses, the county is hoping to gain economic growth. There is an economic development board who is actively seeking ways to attract business.

Residents of the county are worried about the possibility of another 46 inches of snow this winter! Snow storms such as those of the past winter have devastating impacts on the economy and budgets, on a community that is already struggling with issues of economic growth. It was extremely difficult to try to reach people and livestock because of the storms. Aside from plans to escape to Cancun in the preparation for possible, future storms, the county has developed a better emergency preparedness plan and updated shelters for stranded people.



CCI District: Southern

Commissioners:
Glen R. “Spike” Ausmus
Troy Crane
Peter Dawson

Location: Southeastern
Colorado on New Mexico,
Oklahoma and Kansas
Borders

Square Miles: 2,558

Population: 4,069

Assessed Value:
60,680,629

Eagle County

Eagle County's 500 employees are constantly working towards making the county a model mountain community by 2010. With all the natural and community amenities that are available in the county, no wonder the employees take great pride in their service. From Basalt to Gypsum, Eagle to Avon or Minturn to Vail, Eagle County is a place for year-round festivals, concerts, rodeos, special events and family fun. This county truly has something for everyone.



Eagle County, like many counties with ski resorts, is working on providing affordable housing to their residents.

The Ute Indians claimed Eagle County lands for summer hunting and fishing grounds before Europeans explored the area. The first reliable account of European presence in the Eagle River Valley was in 1840, when Kit Carson guided the Fremont party through the region.

Fortune hunters and settlers scoured the state, striking lead carbonate ore in Leadville in 1874. Eagle County was carved from Summit County in 1883, and the county seat moved west to the town of Eagle in 1921, where it sits now.

Eagle County is home to some of the



Airplanes await departure at the Eagle County airport which provides residences access to the world.

spectacular wildlife.

Most of all, the residents are proud to call Eagle County home, and they stay for a reason. This is a place not only of unrivaled natural beauty, but also of economic vitality and opportunity. The small-town atmosphere makes this the perfect community to raise a family and know the neighbors, while the Eagle County Regional Airport offers unlimited access to the world. The distinctive western heritage gives a definite sense of individuality, and one only has to drive a relatively short distance for the big-city experience of Denver.

Eagle County is currently booming with growth. The population has grown from just more than 40,000 in 2000 to 50,000 today, and is expected to double by 2035. The substantial population growth has repercussions throughout the county. The Board of County Commissioners manages a \$100 million budget, and has set ambitious goals to tackle growth issues in order to preserve the quality of life for which the county is known. Affordable housing is a chief concern for the residents. Nearly half the property owners are second homeowners, and the Board is striving to keep the community

whole by helping working families stay in the county. Strategies include working with the towns to provide 3,500 workforce-housing units, and adopting new housing regulations that require increased mitigation by developers.

Over the past year, Eagle County's elected officials and employees have embarked on a strategic visioning and leadership process to make county government more productive, more efficient and more responsive to the community.

The county has come a

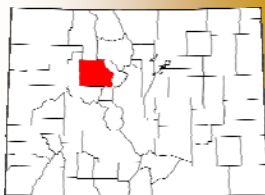
long way in setting the stage for a great future. It developed an internal program for major cultural change and enhancement, including methods for measuring progress toward new goals and objectives.

A draft strategic business plan was produced for the entire organization with long term goals for every department including the commissioners and specific new-product objectives for each department. Eagle County diligently works to remain a viable choice to live, work and play in this majestic setting.



A beautiful shot of Eagle County known for its fantastic powder.

best resorts in the world. While Vail and Beaver Creek are known for their world-class skiing and snowboarding in the winter, they also offer recreational opportunities for all seasons. Rafters and kayakers flock here in the spring and summer to run the challenging whitewater of the Colorado, Eagle, Roaring Fork and Frying Pan Rivers. These pristine waterways also feature some of the best fly fishing anywhere. The mountains burst with color during the fall season. The premier trail system, state park and national forest land offer endless recreation from hiking and camping, to biking and climbing. All while sharing the unsurpassed mountain views with



CCI District: Mountain

Commissioners:
Sara Fisher
Arn Menconi
Peter Runyon

Location: Central Mountains

Square Miles: 1,701

Population: 47,530

Assessed Value:
2,008,920,160

Montrose County

Once the domain of the Ute Indians, Montrose County is home to vast acres of productive agricultural lands, rivers teeming with trout, and woodlands and valleys populated by various game species. After the arrival of white settlers in 1881 the Utes were relocated to reservations. Soon thereafter, the town of Montrose was incorporated in 1882. In February of 1883 Montrose County was created by a division of Gunnison County. The town of Montrose became, and remains the county



L to R: Commissioner Allan Belt; Rick Costanza, EnCana; Sheriff Rick Dunlap; Commissioners Gary Ellis and Bill Patterson at a tour of EnCana operations in a neighboring county.

seat. Other principle municipalities include Nucla, Naturita and Olathe.

In 1909 the high desert of the Uncompahgre Valley was transformed into rich farmland with the opening of the Gunnison Tunnel, bringing water from the Gunnison River. Even today agriculture remains a staple. Along with agrarian pursuits, the West End of Montrose County, which extends to the Utah

border, became nationally known for uranium production from the early to mid 1900's.

Today we find Montrose County increasing in diversity and population (38,000) as people from all over the country are attracted by a blend of natural resources, a healthy economic base and western down-home friendliness. A beautiful geographic location also serves as a magnet for growth. Our community's culture is a mixture of traditional ranching and farming values, and the sometimes conflicting views of newcomers from highly populated areas. The County continues to work diligently to minimize these philosophical differences

with inclusive visioning and planning.

Some of the current hot topics in Montrose County include the efforts to update the master plan which provides a "blueprint" for growth. In addition, county regulatory documents on subdivisions and Planning and Zoning are being revised. In the 2006 General Election voters gave the county partial TABOR relief. The County is now in the process of ensuring "growth helps pay its own way" through implementation of impact fees on new development. Other challenges include: the need for an improved transportation system to move traffic in the most populated areas of our county and eventually to an intra county transit system; a resolution to



Montrose Citizens for Funding our Future present two ballot initiatives at a BOCC meeting. This inspiring grass roots group was key in helping convince voters of the need for the new sales taxes.

development and the apparent resurrection of the uranium industry on the West End of Montrose County.

Growth and development often seek the same lands. Many farmers opt for selling their land to developers for large sums of money rather than continue the annual struggle with fickle markets. Growth has also greatly accelerated the needs for improved and expanded infrastructure in the form of roads, utilities, fire protection, etc. Another fairly recent change has been the arrival of big companies backing large, upscale developments with amenities far beyond what this county has ever experienced. A very positive change is a larger cross-section of the county population seems willing to engage and discuss important issues.

An ongoing goal is to positively influence the direction and type of growth into areas compatible with the particular development while maintaining a rural character to the extent possible. Also, working with federal agencies to help maintain the health and productivity of our adjacent public lands remains a critical goal.



L to R: Hank Holtze, Friends of the River; Commissioners Bill Patterson and Allan Belt float the River Uncompahgre.

Preserving the natural resources: establishing river corridors with riparian buffer zones; achieving the balance of preservation and growth remain a challenge. Another concern in Montrose County is the recent, explosive increased use of methamphetamines and other controlled substances. The County has reached out to the City, representatives of law enforcement and treatment providers in its effort to educate the public and help combat this growing community problem.

The future for Montrose County is bright as we prepare to celebrate our 125th anniversary in 2008. One of the major accomplishments this year was voter approval of a permanent funding source in the form of a 1% sales tax for road and bridge and a 0.75% for public safety. Our voters overwhelmingly supported these sales tax initiatives which will allow us to continue improving our community. For more information kindly visit www.co.montrose.co.us.



CCI District: Western

Commissioners:
Allan Belt
Gary Ellis
Bill Patterson

Location: Southwestern Colorado on the Utah border

Square Miles: 2,246

Population: 37,482

Assessed Value:
330,769,761

Phillips County



Phillips County Courthouse in Holyoke, Colorado.

Phillips County, population 4,500, is a small rural county in northeastern Colorado bordering Nebraska. Communities include Haxtun, Paoli, Holyoke and Amherst. With an economy based on agriculture, farmers produce corn, wheat, sugar beets, beans, alfalfa, potatoes, millet, beef, hogs and dairy products.

The county has one of the largest commercial grain storage elevator capacities west of the Mississippi—17,929,000 bushels. That figure rises to 24,695,000 bushels with two facilities just east of the state line in Nebraska.

Seaboard Foods, a major hog producer located in Phillips, Sedgwick and Yuma counties, brought about 300 jobs to the area in the early 1990s.

Pheasant and deer hunting, as well as gun club shoots, are a part of the outdoor recreation. Many hunters from the Front Range hunt pheasants during November, December and January.

The High Plains area that is now Phillips County has had many previous names. Up to 1889, the county was part of Logan County. Earlier maps show the area as part of Weld County, the Louisiana Purchase, Nebraska Territory and Jefferson Territory, as well as part of the Great American Desert.

Phillips County was settled as the railroad developed and pioneers homesteaded their 160 acres of the Great American Dream. From the top of a grain elevator, one can almost see the whole county.

The Lions Clubs in Holyoke and Haxtun have developed two fishing ponds to compensate for no live water in the county. Frenchman Creek, the major drainage, does not become a flowing stream until it enters Nebraska. Fossil sea shells have been found, indicating that the area was once under water.

Sometimes, parts of the county still become submerged. The eastern edge of Phillips County was flooded in June of 2007 with 9 to 11 inches of rain in two days, a downpour that washed out train tracks and damaged roadways and other structures.

The whole county is over the Ogallala Groundwater Basin, resulting in 67,000 irrigated acres. One of the greatest challenges facing the county is the Republican River Compact Settlement between Kansas, Nebraska and Colorado, which may have major negative impact in terms of lack of water for the county.

Two hospital facilities, the Haxtun Hospital District and Holyoke's Melissa Memorial Hospital, serve the surrounding area, each with clinics staffed with local doctors and visiting specialists. Completion of the new Melissa Memorial Hospital facility is anticipated in February 2008.

Ballyneal, a links golf course in the Scottish-Highland style, opened in 2006. Touted as one of the top 10 new private courses in America, it is located in the sand hills south of the county line. It features a world-class restaurant manned by Chef Jim Dotch. Designed by Tom Doak, the course is the fulfillment of the dream of Phillips County natives, brothers Rupert and Jim O'Neal. Small private jets often land at the Holyoke Municipal Airport

as golfers from around the country and around the world come to play a round or two.

The five-day Phillips County Fair in Holyoke in late July celebrates 4-H and FFA, community creativity and agriculture. It features a combined derby and youth rodeo. Haxtun's Corn Festival, on the last Saturday in September, offers another chance to gather with friends and family. Stock car races are scheduled throughout the summer at the fairgrounds in Holyoke, while Haxtun's gymkhana ropes in cowgirls and cowboys.

A \$3.1 million Phillips County Event Center is planned at the fairgrounds, with ongoing fundraising and ground-breaking planned for March 2008. It will house a conference center for 600-plus people, the Dragon's Wagon Preschool, CSU Extension, Phillips County Arts Council, Family Education Services, a commercial kitchen and a conference room for 100 to 150 people.

There's no place like Phillips County to raise a family or to retire. The county seal says it all: *"Come to see; stay to live."*

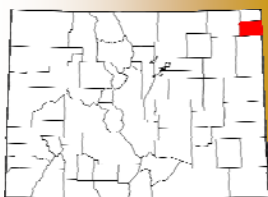
Reference materials used for this article: Centennial History of Phillips County Colorado 1889-1989



Above is a blueprint of the Phillips County Event Center that is planned at the fairgrounds and that should start being built in March 2008.



"THOSE WERE THE DAYS...when fertile soil provided sod for new homes, grass for cattle and horses, a seed bed for grain, and food for the table."
Centennial History of Phillips County, Colorado 1889-1989



CCI District: Eastern

Commissioners:

Jerry Beavers
Bud Bieseimer
Susan Roll Walters

Location: Northeast Corner of Colorado on the Nebraska border

Square Miles: 688

Population: 4,586

Assessed Value: 42,200,630

Weld County

The third largest county in Colorado, Weld County has an area greater than that of Rhode Island, Delaware and the District of Columbia combined. Thirty-two (32) incorporated municipalities are located within Weld County. The county seat and principal city, Greeley, is located in the west central part of the county and contains almost half the county's population.

Generally, most of the remaining population resides within a 20 to 30 miles radius of Greeley; the northeastern part of the county is sparsely populated. The fastest growing section of Weld is located along the Interstate twenty-five (I-25) corridor and commingles the boundaries of numerous towns and cities. The area projected for the largest increase in growth is located along the Interstate Seventy-six (I-76) corridor.

Major Stephen H. Long made an expedition to the area now known as Weld County in 1821. He reportedly said that the region would never be fit for human habitation and should remain forever the unmolested haunt of the native hunter for bison and jackal. In 1835, a government expedition came through the general area; the next year a member of that party, Lt. Lancaster Lupton, returned to establish a trading post located just north of the present town of Fort Lupton. In about 1837, Colonel Ceran St. Vrain established Fort St. Vrain. Fort Vasquez was built south of Platteville about 1840. The latter was rebuilt in the 1930's by the State Historical Society. These early trading posts marked the beginnings of the county.

The U.S. Congress took parts of the Territories of Nebraska, Kansas, New Mexico and Utah to create the Territory of Colorado in 1861. All parts of Colorado lying east of Larimer County and north of the present Adams County were in the original Weld County, one of 17 counties established by the first territorial legislature in September, 1861. Weld County was named for Lucius Weld, the first territorial secretary. St. Vrain became the first county seat, and in 1877, the county seat was established in Greeley.

The sugar beet industry has been a stable industry in Weld County. The industry began with the building of sugar factories in Greeley and Eaton in 1902. In 1903, another was built in Windsor, followed in 1920 by one at Fort Lupton and another at Johnstown in 1926.

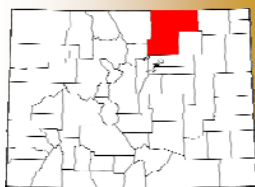
Education has always been an important part of life in Weld County. Twelve school districts offer quality educational opportunities. Greeley is the home of the University of Northern Colorado offering bachelors, masters and doctorate degrees to 12,000 students. Aims Community College is a two year community college serving the needs of 4,500 students on two campuses in Weld County.

During the past year, Weld County has been working with local communities, land owners and community leaders to rewrite the Weld County Comprehensive Plan. The first comprehensive plan was written in 1974 and has been rewritten over the years to reflect the changing environment and needs of Weld County. The county has recently seen a decrease in the number of residential building permits issued. However, planning for the future and preparing for future growth remains critical to the county. Weld continues to struggle with the balance of property rights and building a community of the future. The findings of the current Comprehensive Plan update will be presented for public hearings in early 2009.

Fertile fields of green can be found in every part of the county, which is part of the reason that it ranks as the third leading agricultural county in the United States. Weld County is Colorado's leading producer of cattle, grain and sugar beets. Recently, Weld County has become home to many expanded and new agricultural operations. During the past two years, two ethanol plants have started production of corn based fuel products. The countryside is being enhanced by the numerous new and expanded dairies who are taking advantage of feed products produced in Weld. An abundance of water has been important to not only the agricultural community, but also to industrial development. Greeley's supply, for example, includes reserves estimated at 100% capacity. Future supply is equally impressive with such developments as the Windy Gap Project, which supplies the Front Range with water.

Weld County continues to provide a critical corridor for energy development for both the state and the nation. Weld ranks first in the state in oil production and third in natural gas exploration. Private facilities such as Rocky Mountain Energy Resources (Calpine), Cedar Creek Windfarm and Vestas provide critical links to this developing resource. Resource development, agricultural production, and general business are enhanced by the numerous large businesses such as Hensel-Phelps Company, KODAK, Owens-Illinois, JBS Swift and Company, CareStream Medical and State Farm Insurance, to name a few, plus the hundreds of small businesses located throughout Weld County.

Weld County is leading the way from a community of a once isolated small agricultural communities to a county challenged with maintaining a present course of economic diversification, embracing population growth and, at the same time, maintaining a quality of life for current and future residents.



CCI District: Front Range

Commissioners:

Bill Garcia
Bill Jerke
Dave Long
Rob Masden
Doug Rademacher

Location: North Central
Colorado on the Wyoming
and Nebraska borders

Square Miles: 4,014

Population: 228,943

Assessed Value:
2,993,418,390

NACo Updates

Collective bargaining mandate legislation

Congress is attempting, but has not yet finalized, the Public Safety Employer-Employee cooperation Act of 2007 (H.R. 980/S. 2123). This legislation would mandate that local and state governments enter into collective bargaining agreements with their public safety employees (police, fire and emergency medical technicians).

It overwhelmingly passed in the House, and the Senate has plans to act this session. NACo has joined with the National League of Cities, the National Sheriffs' Association, the International Association of Chiefs of Police and other organizations to oppose this legislation.

NACo does not oppose collective bargaining generally, but maintains that such decisions should be made by states and localities without federal interference.

PILT and Secure Rural Schools

This Congress has failed to come to agreement on the FY08 Interior Appropriations bill—the legislation that provides annual funding for the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program. The house did pass its version of the funding bill, which included \$253 million (a \$20 million increase) for PILT; however, the Senate has yet to take up the Interior bill on the floor.

Even at current funding levels, this program remains under-funded by more than \$100 million. Both chambers have attempted to find legislative solutions that would provide mandatory spending that would fund PILT at its full authorized levels and have yet to act on them.

The Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act expired in September 2006. While Congress was able to secure a one-year fix that provided funding through the end of FY07, neither a short-term fix for FY08 nor a longer-term solution (H.R. 3058 have been passed in the first session of the 100th Congress.

Without reauthorization of this act, forested public land counties across the country will be forced to lay-off thousands of employees and reduce vital services to communities.

3 Percent Withholding

The House has passed, but the Senate has not yet proceeded with, legislation to extend for one year (from 2010 to 2011) the requirement for many counties, as well as states and the federal government, to being withholding federal taxes from vendor payments.

More than 230 members of Congress have cosponsored legislation (H.R. 1023) introduced by Reps. Kendrick Meek (D-Fla.) and Wally Herger (R-Calif.) to repeal the requirement. Sen. Norm Coleman (R-Minn.) is preparing legislation to repeal the requirement and substitute alternative measures to ensure that federal contractors pay their tax debt.

Source: NACo County News, Vol. 39, NO. 22



Public Lands Partnership Receives Prestigious USDA Award

Delta, CO (October 15, 2007) - The Public Lands Partnership (PLP) has received a second national level award. Recently PLP received an award from the Chief of the Forest Service for their work in fostering collaboration and partnerships with public land management. This week PLP was selected from nominations across the country to receive the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary's Award and was honored for "Protecting and Enhancing the Nation's Resource Base and Environment." The Honor Awards are the most prestigious awards given by USDA.

The Forest Service Chief's Honor Award ceremony was held in September. Representatives Nancy Fishing and Art Goodtimes received the award on behalf of PLP. Also named were fellow executive committee members Mary Chapman (Delta), Stu Krebs (Montrose), Ralph Files (Montrose), Jan McCracken (Delta), Alan Belt (Montrose) and Alan Staehle (Ouray).

CCI

Colorado Counties, Inc.

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Check out our website:
www.ccionline.org

CCI Legislative Reception

Colorado Counties, Inc.
Legislative Reception
Thursday, January 17, 2008
5-7 p.m.

CCI's Office Building
800 Grant Street
Suite 500 (5th Floor)
Denver, Colorado 80203

Please plan to attend this informal reception for Legislators,
County Commissioners, Councilmembers and Mayors.

RSVP to Annie Wadas, CCI
303.861.4076
awadas@ccionline.org