

# WELD COUNTY HOME RULE

First Home Rule County in the State as of July 1, 1976.

Grew out of reform in mid 1970's. Too powerful of a county commissioner and county administrator. Commissioner was defeated in the 1976 election, and the administrator died before home rule went into effect.

## **FEATURES:**

1. Five Commissioners. Three districts and two at-large. Term limited to two full terms.
2. Original home rule charter eliminated the county surveyor. Effective January 1, 2003, the county treasurer and county coroner were made appointed officials. All other elected officials the same with same duties as general law county.
3. Created Weld County Council. Five elected non-partisans.
  - A. Conduct performance audits.
  - B. Ombudsman to public.
  - C. Report to the people.
  - D. Set elected officials salaries.
  - E. Approve exceeding 5% tax limit as long as mill levy not raised.
  - F. Appoint vacant County Commissioner positions.
  - G. Conflict of interest determination.
  - H. Non-compensated.
4. Central personnel system. All employees are part of the system, except Chief Deputies and County Attorney and Assistant County Attorneys. DA adopted county system, but not under the charter.
  - A. Biggest single advantage.
  - B. Stability in departments and offices.
  - C. Professionalism
  - D. Limits liability on employment cases.
5. Central Purchasing
  - A. All purchases go through central purchasing.
  - B. Any item over \$10,000 goes through 10 day waiting period, unless emergency.
  - C. Preference to local bidders.
6. Specifies budget process and responsibilities.
7. Five divisions of county with a county commissioner coordinating each division (must rotate each year).
  - A. Finance and Administration (Chair)
  - B. Planning/Land Use
  - C. Human Services
  - D. Health
  - E. Public Works

8. Clerk to Board is appointed by Commissioners, and is not Clerk and Recorder.
9. Special qualifications for Sheriff, Chief Deputy Assessor, Undersheriff, Chief Deputy Treasurer, and County Engineer.
10. Must meet with town officials at least three times per year. (32 towns).
11. Cumbersome ordinance process.
  - A. Must act by ordinance in many cases.
  - B. Three readings, publications, and waiting period (45-60 days).
12. Restricts nepotism.
13. Restrictions on capital expenditures. No project can be any larger than three mills for three years, except the hospital. (\$15 million).
14. Initiatives and referendums. Referendum can be for any resolution or ordinance. Both require signatures of registered voters totaling 5% of total votes at last election.
  - A. Jail
  - B. Union
  - C. Land use. (National Hog Farm and prison. Prison cost \$500,000 for taking).
15. Location of any correction facility must be approved by voters. (Amendment)
16. Added powers.
  - A. Higher debt limit. Three percent vs. one and one-half percent of assessed value.
  - B. Some added ordinance powers for health and safety.
  - C. Can be water utility.
17. Five percent property tax limitation. Most restrictive tax measure on any local government in the state. It was the "carrot" to pass the home rule charter. First vote failed, so charter commission added the 5% tax limit. Second vote 21% of the voters voted, barely passed. Therefore, 11% of the registered voters approved the home rule charter.