

# Economic Development Action Plan: West End of Montrose County, Colorado



## Colorado

Office of Economic  
Development and  
International  
Trade

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## ***BACKGROUND -2013 WEST END ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN***

The Colorado towns of Nucla and Naturita, often referred to as the “West End,” face economic challenges that are large but not insurmountable. The Tri-State Generation Plant and related coal mine are the community’s primary economic drivers today. But the future is uncertain for this local industry. The predominance of public lands, roads and trails combined with the visible history of the area makes the West End rich with recreational opportunities, but capitalizing on these assets has proven to be a challenge.

This document summarizes the strategic actions needed to begin to brighten the economic outlook of the West End. It’s important to note that this is a living document and should evolve as the West End builds capacity within its community. Updates to this report will be made as new issues and/or opportunities are identified. The recommended action steps are grouped into three main topics:

- **Economic Development Capacity Building** – The organizational capacity needed for deliberate economic action.
- **Building Base Industries** – Base industries that have the potential to employ people living in or around the West End.
- **Infrastructure and Public Services** – The investments in core infrastructure and public services that are needed to support and attract economic growth.

## **2012 WEST END GAP ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY – CIVIC AFFAIRS ADVISORY PROJECT**

In the summer of 2012, Montrose County initiated the West End Civic Advisory project with the help of the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) energy impact funding. There were four central components of this project all aligned to help the West End prepare to capitalize on economic opportunities: 1) Service and Facilities Gap Analysis, 2) Economic Development Strategy, 3) Town Development Guidelines, Regulations and Processes, and 4) Coordinated Nucla and Naturita Peripheries Master Plan.

## **2013 WEST END ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN PROCESS**

The Economic Development Action is the next step, building from the economic, land use and infrastructure planning outlined during the West End Gap Analysis and Economic Development Strategy. Building from the community's momentum, a team of economic development professionals convened with the community and its leaders to initiate action.

## ACTION PLAN SUMMIT

The team held a two-day summit in Nucla and Naturita, which began with an orientation and familiarity tour of the community, including Tri-State’s coal plant, Nucla and Naturita, and nearby oil fields. After the tour, the team held a series of public meetings/focus groups to listen to the concerns of the residents. On day two, the team presented initial observations and recommendations to the West End’s stakeholders.

## TEAM MEMBERS

- Tom Binet - Business Development Manager, OEDIT
- Ken Charles - Regional Manager, DOLA
- Kari Linker – Director, Regional Development, OEDIT
- Gabe Preston - Company Owner, RPI Consulting
- Stephanie Troller - Main Street Coordinator, DOLA

## COMMUNITY CONCERNS –“WHAT WE HEARD”

- “Are there things we can do to help support the coal industry? Uranium mines?”
- “How can we streamline the permitting process to make it easier for the energy industry?”
- “What can we do to lobby against 252?”
- “How can we get more funding for urgent care?”
- “How do we attract investment?”
- “We feel attacked by Washington and Denver with over regulated industry standards.”
- “What other industry can we attract?”
- “What can the towns do to create an incentive plan?”
- “How do we go about economic development?”
- “We need more restaurants, motels/hotels, and jobs!”
- “How can we educate our consumers on shopping local?”
- “How can we influence the regulations guiding public land resources and development for recreational uses?”

## BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT CENTER

Community leaders and business owners agree on the need for a "one-stop-shop" business development and support center staffed by a professional economic development coordinator. A business development and support center would ideally operate as a non-profit organization under management of a board of directors or through the chamber of commerce. The center would offer several services including:

- Start-up assistance and business mentoring
- Business site selection and planning/regulatory assistance
- Financing/funding assistance
- Business to business networking
- Business recruitment
- Advocacy for West End businesses at local, state and federal governments and organizations
- Professional support, coordination and funding assistance for infrastructure and public service improvements
- Stakeholder support and coordination ensuring that stakeholders are working on common goals

### ROLES OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

- Creates and implements programs to retain, expand, attract, and grow compatible businesses and industries both independently and in collaborative efforts with county, regional, and State departments, divisions, and agencies.
- Represents the West End's economic development interests by direct, proactive involvement with local, regional, and State governmental entities, organizations, committees, and task forces.
- Promotes value, importance, and organizes the implementation of this action plan and the 2012 West End Gap Analysis Economic Development Strategy.
- Responsibly manages and accurately reports the finances, sources and applications of funds relative to the operations of the business development and support center.

### EXAMPLE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT CENTER

The La Plata County Economic Development Alliance is a professionally staffed one-stop-shop business services center, funded by the county, municipalities, and over 100 hundred private and non-profit investors. The Alliance focuses on job retention and business expansion and offers several services including site selection, business development, economic data, and networking with other economic development entities and funders. The La Plata County Economic Development

Alliance couples this suite of business services with a lifestyle and asset promotion business recruitment strategy. <http://www.yeslpc.com/>

#### EXISTING RESOURCES FOR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

**Montrose Economic Development Corporation's (MEDC)** mission is "to strengthen Montrose County's economic base and increase the standard of living for all of its residents through the retention, expansion, attraction and development of [direct industries] and capital investments." It offers several services that could be useful on the West End, but most of the projects it has worked on in recent years center on the City of Montrose and surrounding area. It is the task of West End business leaders, the chamber of commerce and local governments to engage the services of this organization and initiate economic development efforts. To be effective at the local level, West End leaders need to work in partnership with MEDC to enhance indirect and induced industries as well as supporting natural resource direct industry businesses. <http://www.montroseedc.org/index.aspx>  
MEDC offers the following services:

- Retention/expansion of existing companies
- Start-up assistance and entrepreneurial job development
- Attraction of targeted companies
- Point of contact and advocate for businesses seeking to relocate or start
- Agriculture/timber industry development
- Work force enhancement
- Business site location assistance

**Colorado Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Network** - The Colorado SBDC network consists of 14 community based centers that provide free one-on-one counseling services in the areas of business research and marketing, new business feasibility analysis, business plan preparation, finance packaging, valuing a business, and other small business concerns. <https://www.coloradosbdc.org/default.aspx>

**Colorado Small Business Development Center (SBDC)** The SBDC offers training workshops and online courses aimed at developing small businesses and helping start-ups. <https://www.coloradosbdc.org/default.aspx>  
CSBDC offers training on several topics:

- Business development training
- Start-up assistance
- Financing
- Managing a business
- Customer relations
- Business accounting and budget

- Tax planning
- Marketing and sales
- Government contracting

The **Economic Development Council of Colorado** offers annual training courses for economic development and an economic development profession mentoring program designed to train locals to lead economic development efforts. <http://www.edcconline.org/>

The **Colorado Workforce Center** in Montrose specializes in connecting qualified job seekers and employers. They provide job posing services and assistance in gathering and screening applications. The Workforce Center will also provide applicant pre-testing for jobs with special qualifications. The main mission of the Workforce Center is to help job seekers find employment, and provide technical support for the unemployment program.

The Workforce Center also administers the Workforce Investment Act which is a program that provides grant resources to job seekers that need additional training and who have lower incomes that warrant the need. The Workforce Center often works in partnership with employers to get workers the training they need to qualify for vacant jobs. <http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/CDLE-CRWC/CDLE/1251629173522>

**Region 10 League for Economic Assistance and Planning** is a non-profit offering programs and support for small business in 18 local communities in western Colorado. <http://www.region10.net>

## ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association's (Tri-State) coal mine and power plant are the primary economic engines for the community. Tri-State faces challenges to keeping these operations up and running over the long term.

## REGULATORY ISSUES

**Issue:** Complex permitting and regulatory compliance processes and standards for natural resource development add uncertainty and challenges to an already challenging industry.

**Action Step:** The Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT) will work with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) and Colorado Energy Office (CEO) to assess the feasibility of streamlining state, local, and federal permitting processes in partnership with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and other relevant organizations.

**Issue:** There is a perception that Senate Bill 13-252 will impact Tri-State's ability to continue operating the coal plant, which could potentially impact the jobs at the plant and the related mining jobs.

**Action Step:**

- If the West End's coal power plant were to close, then it would most likely not be caused by Senate Bill 13- 252. Instead, it would likely be due to the potential expense of upgrading the relatively old plant to comply with the EPA's forthcoming air quality regulations for existing coal plants.
- On September 30<sup>th</sup>, the 252 Advisory Committee a report that concluded their transparent, comprehensive investigation into the implementation of SB13-252's requirements. The clarity of the report is testament to the value of gathering informed stakeholders and getting down to the facts of the matter.
- The 252 Advisory Committee identified that the provisions in SB13-252 provide protections to consumers. The cost cap contained within the bill is firm, non-compounding, provides an off-ramp from high consumer costs, and is calculated by the utilities implementing the bill – the groups best positioned to do so.
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- The committee identified that it is feasible to implement this bill on the 2020 timeline it establishes. They agreed that the committee's role was not to undertake resource planning, but even without examining specific renewable energy scenarios the implementation of SB13-252 is possible assuming the use of renewable energy credits.

- It is also important to note that Tri-State would not be penalized by the State of Colorado should they prove unable to comply with SB13-252 as the law is currently drafted. The law does not include any language that would provide for legal or other punitive actions by the State of Colorado against Tri-State. Lastly, it may also be possible for the coal plant to begin using waste streams instead of coal to generate electricity at the plant.

## ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCE GROWTH STRATEGIES

**Goal:** Explore the feasibility and potential return on investment of developing a compressed natural gas (CNG) fueling station in the West End.

**Action Steps:** The Colorado Energy Office will work with the relevant stakeholders in the West End to quantify the community's current and potential commercial fleet traffic that may justify the construction of a CNG fueling station.

**Goal:** Utilize Irrigation Pipeline and Mustang Water Authority's water transmission lines for hydroelectric plant.

**Action Step:** Colorado Energy Office in partnership with the West End to investigate possibility of extending renewable energy incentives to hydroelectric generation.

**Goal:** Capitalize on incentives that could help energy and natural resource development

**Action Steps:** OEDIT will work with the West End to help increase the awareness and use of the following incentives available to companies considering expanding or locating in the West End:

### **Job Growth Tax Incentive**

The Job Growth Incentive Tax Credit provides a state income tax credit to businesses undertaking job creation projects that would not occur in Colorado without this program. To get the funds, businesses must apply to enroll in the program and will need to then create at least 20 net-new full time jobs and maintain them for at least a year. Please note that in order to remain eligible for this incentive, a company's incentive application must be approved before any material expenditures are made on the proposed project, including hiring new employees, purchasing or leasing property, etc.

### **Strategic Cash Fund Incentive**

The Strategic Fund Cash Incentive program supports and encourages new business development, business expansions and relocations that have generated new jobs throughout the state. A business may receive funding consideration if it proposes to create 20+ net new full-time permanent jobs (jobs) in Colorado that are maintained for at least one year. In addition, a business must materially meet the circumstances noted below:

- Strong level of local matching commitments (\$1:\$1 requested)

- Potential for economic “spinoff” benefits, such as attracting suppliers, generating tourism/travel activity, high prestige, or a large expansion initiative
- Significant capital Investment, relative to the number of jobs (significant capital investment is \$100,000 or > per employee)
- Responds to a special local economic event, such as replacing recent lay offs
- Inter-state competitive factors
- Headquarters in Colorado
- Other unique conditions
- The business will need to demonstrate feasibility and financial capability along with the ability to create the number of jobs committed

Please note that in order to remain eligible for this incentive, a company's incentive application must be approved before any material expenditures are made on the proposed project, including hiring new employees, purchasing or leasing property, etc.

**Enterprise Zone Tax Credits**

Colorado's Enterprise Zone (EZ) program provides tax incentives to encourage businesses to locate and expand in designated economically distressed areas of the state, such as the West End. A business must get pre-certified before any activity is performed to earn a credit. Here's an overview of the many tax credits that would be available to a company if located inside of an Enterprise Zone (EZ):

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|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Investment Tax Credit (ITC)</b><br/>           3% of equipment purchases<br/>           Application: <a href="#">Online</a><br/>           FYI: <a href="#">FYI Income 11</a><br/>           Regulation: <a href="#">Reg. 39-30-104</a><br/>           Statute: <a href="#">C.R.S. 39-30-104</a><br/>           Process: <a href="#">Business Tax Credit Process</a></p>                             | <p><b>Job Training Tax Credit</b><br/>           10% of qualified training expenses<br/>           Application: <a href="#">Online</a><br/>           FYI: <a href="#">FYI Income 31</a><br/>           Regulation: <a href="#">Reg. 39-30-104(4)</a><br/>           Statute: <a href="#">C.R.S. 39-30-104(4)</a><br/>           Process: <a href="#">Business Tax Credit Process</a></p>     |
| <p><b>Jobs Credit</b><br/>           \$500 per new job<br/>           Application: <a href="#">Online</a><br/>           FYI: <a href="#">FYI Income 10</a><br/>           Regulation: <a href="#">Reg. 39-30-105</a><br/>           Statute: <a href="#">C.R.S. 39-30-105</a><br/>           Process: <a href="#">Business Tax Credit Process</a></p>                                                     | <p><b>Agricultural Processing Jobs Credit</b><br/>           \$1,000 total per new a.p. job<br/>           Application: <a href="#">Online</a><br/>           FYI: <a href="#">FYI Income 10</a><br/>           Regulation: <a href="#">Reg. 39-30-105</a><br/>           Statute: <a href="#">C.R.S. 39-30-105</a><br/>           Process: <a href="#">Business Tax Credit Process</a></p>   |
| <p><b>Health Insurance Credit</b><br/>           \$200 per insured job per year for first 2 years in an EZ<br/>           Application: <a href="#">Online</a><br/>           Statute: <a href="#">C.R.S. 39-30-105</a><br/>           Regulation: <a href="#">Reg. 39-30-105</a><br/>           FYI: <a href="#">FYI Income 10</a><br/>           Process: <a href="#">Business Tax Credit Process</a></p> | <p><b>R&amp;D Increase Tax Credit</b><br/>           3% of increased R&amp;D expenditures<br/>           Application: <a href="#">Online</a><br/>           Statute: <a href="#">C.R.S. 39-30-105.5</a><br/>           Regulation: <a href="#">Reg. 39-30-105.5</a><br/>           FYI: <a href="#">FYI Income 22</a><br/>           Process: <a href="#">Business Tax Credit Process</a></p> |

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| <p><b>Vacant Building Rehabilitation Tax Credit</b><br/> 25% of rehabilitation expenditures<br/> Application: <a href="#">Online</a><br/> FYI: <a href="#">FYI Income 24</a><br/> Regulation: <a href="#">Reg. 39-30-105.6</a><br/> Statute: <a href="#">C.R.S. 39-30-105.6</a><br/> Process: <a href="#">Business Tax Credit Process</a></p> | <p><b>Manufacturing/Mining Sales &amp; Use Tax Exemption</b><br/> Expanded S&amp;U tax exemption in EZ<br/> Application: <a href="#">Form DR1191</a> or for 100+ <a href="#">Form DR1192</a><br/> FYI: <a href="#">FYI Sales 10</a> (statewide details)<br/> FYI: <a href="#">FYI Sales 69</a> (in EZ details)<br/> Regulation: <a href="#">Reg. 39-30-106</a><br/> Statute: <a href="#">C.R.S. 39-30-106</a><br/> Process: No Pre-cert. or Certification needed. See form.</p> |
| <p><b>Commercial Vehicle Investment Tax Credit</b><br/> 1.5% of comm. vehicle purchases<br/> Application: <a href="#">CVITC Application</a><br/> FYI: <a href="#">FYI Income 11</a><br/> Regulation: <a href="#">Reg. 39-30-104</a><br/> Statute: <a href="#">C.R.S. 39-30-104</a><br/> Process: <a href="#">CVITC Process</a></p>            | <p><b>Contribution Tax Credit</b><br/> 1.5% of comm. vehicle purchases<br/> Application: DR0075 form provided by project. See list <a href="#">here</a>.<br/> FYI: <a href="#">FYI Income 23</a><br/> Regulation: <a href="#">Reg. 39-30-103.5</a><br/> Statute: <a href="#">C.R.S. 39-30-103.5</a><br/> Process: <a href="#">Contribution Tax Credit Process</a></p>                                                                                                           |

### **Job Training Grant Programs**

The Colorado First and Existing Industry grants are jointly administered by OEDIT and the Colorado Community College System. The state may be able to provide specific support to retain jobs or offers business-friendly tools that assist in retaining jobs (such as the Enterprise Zone Program) for this grant.

### **Public Infrastructure Grants**

The Infrastructure Assistance program is designed to create new permanent jobs and retain existing jobs, primarily for low- and moderate-income persons. This federally-funded program encourages new business development, expansions, and retentions of businesses located in non-entitlement cities and counties. Typically, eligible improvements are owned and/or maintained by a public or quasi-public entity. Funds may be provided for the construction and/or improvement of:

- Water Lines & Wastewater Facilities
- Sewer Lines, Sewage Treatment Facilities
- Roadways
- Natural Gas-Line Services
- Electric Power Services
- Railroad Spurs
- Lighting
- Sidewalks
- Alternative Power Sources such as Solar

### **Manufacturing Sales and Use Tax Exemption**

Colorado encourages manufacturers to locate their manufacturing operations in Colorado recognizing their importance in Colorado's economy. Colorado provides an exemption from state sales and use tax on purchases of manufacturing machinery, machine tools and parts.

### **Venture Capital Authority (VCA)**

The Colorado Venture Capital Authority (VCA) was established in 2004 to make seed- and early-stage capital investments in businesses. The VCA was allocated \$50 million in premium tax credits, which it subsequently sold to insurance companies. The VCA selected fund manager High Country Venture, LLC, and established Colorado Fund I and Colorado Fund II, each with approximately \$25 million. High Country Venture is independently operated and generally makes funding decisions. State approval is limited to ensuring that businesses receiving funding meet minimum specified requirements. The minimum and maximum investment size generally ranges from \$250,000 - \$3.375 million.

### **Business Loan Funds**

Every year, the State of Colorado receives an allocation of federal funds to use for both community and economic development efforts within the state. OEDIT receives approximately one-third of the state's annual allocation of funds to use specifically for economic development efforts statewide. Specifically, we use this funding to aid the state's Business Loan Funds. The loan program is locally driven, with each loan fund having its own local loan review committee and local Board of Directors. Your local contact for this program is as follows:

Delta, Gunnison, Montrose, Ouray, San Miguel and Hinsdale Counties  
Region 10 League for Economic Assistance & Planning  
Michelle Haynes, Vince Fandel  
[mhaynes@region10.net](mailto:mhaynes@region10.net); [vince@region10.net](mailto:vince@region10.net)  
(970) 249-2436 ext. 17  
[www.region10.net](http://www.region10.net)

### **Community Development Feasibility Study Grants**

The federally-funded CDBG planning and feasibility study grant program provides funding to determine the feasibility of a project or to plan for a project to be located in Colorado. These projects need to meet an economic development objective, and create or retain permanent jobs primarily for low- and moderate-income persons. OEDIT has \$75,000 available annually to fund requests.

### **Certified Capital Companies Program (CAPCOS)**

The CAPCOs make venture capital funds available to new or expanding small businesses throughout Colorado. The program encourages new business development and expansions of businesses by making a \$75 million statewide pool available for investment throughout Colorado, and a \$25 million rural pool available for investment in designated rural counties in Colorado. The CAPCO Program is anticipated to create new employment opportunities within the state and to stimulate economic growth.

### **Incentives for Colorado's Advanced Industries (including Energy)**

The Advanced Industries (AI) Accelerator Programs were created in 2013 to promote growth and sustainability in our economy by helping drive innovation, accelerate commercialization,

encourage public-private partnerships, increase access to early stage capital and create a strong ecosystem that increases the state's global competitiveness. Colorado's advanced industries include: Aerospace, Advanced Manufacturing, Bioscience, Electronics, *Energy and Natural Resources (including Cleantech)*, Infrastructure Engineering, and Technology and Information.

As part of the statewide strategy to support these critical industries in their various phases of growth, OEDIT offers four types of grants and two global business programs. Grants are available for proof of concept, early-stage capital & retention, infrastructure funding and advanced industries exports.

**Proof-of-Concept Grant (up to \$150,000):** Grant funding is used to identify and pull technologies from research institutions where they were discovered and connect them to the private sector where they can be developed into commercialize-able products. These grants should provide significant economic impact or competitive advantage for Colorado and the advanced industries by accelerating the pace of applied research and leading to the rapid commercialization of products and services. Grants support the commercialization of technologies at research institutions at two distinct stages along the commercialization pathway: Pre-Commercial Research (Phase I) and Commercialization Preparation (Phase II).

**Early-Stage Capital & Retention Grant (up to \$250,000):** Grant funding is used to fund companies using technologies developed in proof of concept grants and other early stage start-ups that have created viable products that meet a market need and that can be created or manufactured in Colorado and exported globally. These grants should enhance the commercialization of advanced industry products or services in Colorado. Grant funding will not compete with existing marketplace funding opportunities but rather is meant to supplement and fill an existing void or capital market's tendency to under-invest in early stage technologies.

**Infrastructure Funding (up to \$500,000)**

Grant funding is used to accelerate commercialization and innovation of AI products and services by building capacity and workforce for the AI ecosystem. This program aligns private industry and research institutions to create public goods for the development of the advanced industries in Colorado. Infrastructure Grants Projects may include manufacturing demonstration facilities, workforce training facilities or programs, or other services meeting a demonstrated need. Projects fill important gaps in the advanced industry ecosystem or supply chain and provide public goods that support advanced industry researchers and companies in commercializing products. Projects substantially increase alignment between private companies within an advanced industry and research institutions to accelerate commercialization and innovation in Colorado

**Advanced Industries Export Grant Program - Available December 1, 2013**

This program funds businesses that are new to exporting or expanding into new export markets. Grant size limited to \$15,000. Matching funds shall be 1 (state) to 1 (participant) for specific export-related needs. Eligible events/activities include obtaining international certifications, attending international trade shows, designing and producing international market marketing materials, and following export compliance regulations. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until funding expires. For more information, contact the

International Division's Export Grants Manager, Jorge Diaz at 303-892-3858 or [Jorge.diaz@state.co.us](mailto:Jorge.diaz@state.co.us).

**Global Network of Consultants** - Available December 1, 2013 OEDIT has assembled a network of international consultants that will connect the advanced industries to global opportunities. Colorado companies have access to international consultants in major markets that provide valuable in-country market research specific to the advanced industries. Consultants can help Colorado companies learn how to:

- Gain local knowledge quickly
- Realize competitive advantages
- Understand country regulations
- Open new doors to export success
- Global locations of consultants include: Brazil, Canada, Mexico, France, Germany, Scandinavia, UK, China and Japan.

**Export Training Program** - Available January, 2014.

OEDIT will provide export training and acceleration program for businesses to learn the fundamentals of exporting and international marketing specific to the advanced industries. For more information about the export training opportunities, please contact Sandi Moilanen at 303-892-3857 or [sandi.moilanen@state.co.us](mailto:sandi.moilanen@state.co.us).

## INCREASE THE APPEAL OF THE COMMUNITY AND AWARENESS TO TOURISTS

**Goal:** Because tourism brings in outside dollars, it functions like an export industry in the economy. Therefore tourism has the potential to diversify and expand the economic base of the West End. Some pass-through tourism is already generated, mostly by motorist touring the scenic byway. Building on this industry is an important component of the economic development strategy.

**Action Step 1** - Engage in Implementation of the Unaweep Tabaguach Scenic Byway Corridor Plan – (Currently in Draft)

West End leaders can provide crucial guidance to help implement the Unaweep Tabaguach Scenic Byway Corridor Plan, so as to maximize the local positive benefits. The Corridor Management plan was led by Rich Smith of Advanced Resource Management.

<http://www.armglobal.com/>

The Byway Corridor Management Plan (CMP) is an inventory of current byway conditions and intrinsic qualities. It identifies the vision for the byway corridor, as developed by byway communities and stakeholders. It specifies the actions and strategies needed to maintain a byway's designation, protect its intrinsic qualities, and promote tourism and economic development along the byway corridor. It contains recommendations on enhancing byway safety and promoting alternate modes of transportation. It provides recommendations on enhancing byway interpretation, wayfinding and marketing. While there is some need for the formal management and administration of a byway

(particularly regarding funding), the specifics of how communities use the byway are unique and varied.

**Action Step 2 – Develop Coordinated Way-finding for the West End**

User-friendliness can be an attraction, especially when combined with well distributed visitor information. The real payback will come when first-time visitors, who had great experiences, become repeat visitors. The West End is rich with recreational assets, but they are not always visible to visitors that are unfamiliar with the area. With some relatively affordable investments in roadside directional signage and way-finding collateral, the West End can become much more visitor-friendly. The ease of navigating to the attractions offered by the valley can add to the quality of visitor experience leading to longer stays and more return visitors. Roadside way-finding that is also tied to a comprehensive set of easily accessible way-finding collateral (maps, web info, guides, apps, brochures) can add to the visitor-friendliness and overall appeal of the valley as a destination for new visitors.

The Federal Transportation Enhancements Program administered by CDOT is one source of funding for way finding, but it typically needs to be combined with a larger improvement project to get funding. The Transportation Enhancement project on Highway 141 through Naturita is an opportunity to begin building the way finding infrastructure. Way finding improvements can be incorporated by relating them to improving pedestrian safety, streetscape, traffic management and improvements. It is best to involve CDOT in the planning stages of project to insure that plans align with funding requirements. <http://www.coloradodot.info/business/grants/safetygrants>

The Colorado Scenic Byways program also funds way finding programs, which is appropriate given the scenic byway status of Highway 141. Funding varies under this program, but way finding aligns with the program mission and scenic byways have funded it for other communities in the past. <http://www.coloradodot.info/travel/scenic-byways>

**Action Step 3 – Continue to Expand Tourism Marketing**

Marketing yields both short term gains from specific ads and long term gains by attracting repeat visitors. The following action steps are recommended:

- The Chamber of Commerce takes the lead on tourism marketing, coordinating with the Rimrocker Historical Society, the Colorado Plateau Mountain Bike Trail Association, Montrose West Recreation District, and other recreation and tourism advocates.
- Advertise to target markets. For example: motor sports, mountain bikers, river recreation, hunters, scenic byway touring, and heritage tourism.
- Establish branding that is tailored to the target markets, creating a unified look/feel for each targeted market with a brand/logo that is ideally integrated with way finding. “Frontier Recreation” was the slogan developed during the 2013 Action Planning Summit.

The Colorado Tourism Office's Marketing Matching Grant Program provides funding to non-profit organizations in the State of Colorado for the purpose of promoting the state or a region as a tourism destination. The Colorado Tourism Office will award grants up to \$15,000 this year. Funds will be awarded to organizations whose objective is to promote the state or the defined region. For every \$1 the organization allocates to the program, the Colorado Tourism Office will provide \$1 in matching funds. <http://www.colorado.com/colorado-tourism-office-0>

**Action Step 4 – Expand and Improve Special Events and Competitions**

It is difficult to actively recruit new events, but key investments in event and competition facilities can attract and inspire events. Well-sequenced and appealing events add tremendously to the community by making it more interesting and exciting and by attracting visitors to the valley. Whether a weekend outing or part of a longer trip, event-goers are 'on vacation' and contribute to the economy, particularly if they are visiting overnight. There is not a specific grant or loan funding source for recruiting special events.

**Action Step 5 – Expand Trails System and Improve Access and Visibility**

Trails can be tremendous assets and add recreational options at a low cost, particularly for dirt single tracks. The extensive jeep trails and the Paradox Trail all form a sound basis for expanding access and improving visibility of the trail system. It is important to include trail access way finding in the overall way finding program. Several funding sources exist for expanding trails:

Colorado State Trails Program <http://parks.state.co.us/Trails/Grants/>

Up to \$20,000 with a 25% minimum cash match.

Great Outdoors Colorado <http://www.goco.org/grant-programs/local-government/applications-forms> Provides \$350,000 max, not to exceed 70% of total project costs, 10% minimum cash & in-kind match, greater improves chances of award.

Federal Highway Trust Fund <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrails/>

\$10,000 - \$30,000, money may be spent on design & construction for trail and trail related facilities, including maintenance.

**Action Step 6 – Establish a Quality Campground on the West End**

One of the most pressing needs is a high-quality campground offering tent and RV camping near Nucla and Naturita in an easily accessible but scenic/attractive location. This would add tremendously to the overnight options for potential campers. Great Outdoors Colorado may be a potential funding source for a public campground

<http://www.goco.org/grant-programs/local-government/applications-forms>

**Action Step 7 – Explore the Colorado Main Street Program to Provide Structure to all Efforts.**

The Colorado Main Street Program provides resources, training and technical services in the four areas of the Main Street Approach (economic restructuring, design, organization, and promotion) to communities that are working in historically relevant business district settings and that meet certain threshold criteria. Main Street's principles provide a comprehensive approach to district and downtown revitalization. <http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/DOLA-Main/CBON/1251594477385> or [Stephanie.troller@state.co.us](mailto:Stephanie.troller@state.co.us)

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## *INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC SERVICES*

There are several infrastructure improvements and service needs outlined in the 2012 West End Gap Analysis and Economic Development Strategy. It is important to address these infrastructure needs for not only the current residents and business but also for potential business attraction. During the 2013 Action Planning Summit, three areas of need rose to the top as priorities:

- Wastewater treatment and collection
- Healthcare and emergency response
- School facilities

### WASTEWATER COLLECTION AND TREATMENT

Both towns face expensive new plant construction or major upgrades to their treatment plants to maintain compliance with state and federal regulations. If a growth period were to occur this problem would immediately rise to the forefront and the communities could lose an opportunity to grow.

**Goal:** Upgrade the Nucla and Naturita wastewater treatment facilities. The most pressing infrastructure needs for both communities are upgrades or replacement of their lagoon systems. Both Naturita and Nucla face some very expensive improvements to their sewer treatment systems that are mandated by state/federal water quality standards, priced at about \$1 million for each town. Both systems will require field pre-testing due to the temperature sensitivity of the proposed systems.

**Action Step:** Plan for the eventual development of a single mechanical wastewater treatment plant that serves both Naturita and Nucla. A 2012 report by SJCE Consulting recommends a joint mechanical treatment as a long term solution, with a cost of \$5.5 million (\$2.25 million for each town, evenly split). An individual mechanical treatment system for each town is estimated at \$3.8 million apiece.

### WASTEWATER TREATMENT FUNDING GOALS

Because state and federal agencies are directed by law to protect water quality and public health, there are many grant and financing programs available to help local water and sewer providers maintain compliance with requirements and standards. Most grant programs require a cash and/or in-kind match. The best way to accomplish large-scale improvements to the water and sewer system is to leverage monthly rate revenues to get loans for cash match on grants. Here are some readily accessible grant options:

### **DOLA Energy and Mineral Impact Assistance program**

<http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/DOLA-Main/CBON/1251594715231>

- Up to \$200,000
- 25% minimum cash match
- Applications due December 3, April 1 and August 1

### **DOLA administrative grants for planning & design**

<http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/DOLA-Main/CBON/1251594715231>

- 50% cash match, up to \$25,000 in grant funding
- Applications due December 3, April 1 and August 1

### **HUD Community Development Block Grants (administered by DOLA)**

<http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/DOLA-Main/CBON/1251592177272>

- Grants from \$10,000 to several million
- Priority given to low-income communities
- Grant covers building improvements and related civic / civil infrastructure
- Applications Due December 1

### **Colorado Water Resources and Power Development Authority State Revolving Loan Funds**

<http://www.cwrpda.com/programs/state-revolving-funds>

- Loans to upgrade water and sewer infrastructure
- \$2 million max loan amount
- Applications Due March 15, June 15, September 15, December 15

### **USDA Rural Development grants**

<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ProgramsAndOpportunities.html>

- Low-interest loans for infrastructure
- Planning and design grants of \$15,000 or 75% of the project costs, whichever is less
- \$10,000 loans for small projects

## **HEALTHCARE AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE**

The Basin Clinic is a small medical clinic located in Naturita that serves the West End of Montrose County, which includes the communities of Nucla, Naturita, Redvale, Bedrock, and Paradox as well as unincorporated areas. The clinic opened in 1981 and is operated by Montrose Memorial Hospital.

The clinic has a service area of approximately a 100-mile radius from the clinic. The clinic provides family care Monday through Friday during regular working hours but has recently lost funding for urgent care 24/7 and no longer has personnel “on call” for after-hours coverage. The clinic employs one full-time physician and one full-time physician assistant, appropriate nursing and reception personnel to meet the needs of the patients. The clinic has a heliport in Naturita adjacent to the Clinic to transport patients to hospitals in Montrose or Grand Junction.

The Basin Clinic serves a population, which is up to 50% uninsured. In addition, Medicaid or Medicare covers a large number of individuals that come to the clinic. These programs cover approximately 40% of health care costs. The Basin clinic is subsidized by Montrose Memorial Hospital.

The next available emergency health services are located in Norwood, approximately 20 miles away. The nearest full service hospitals are in Montrose and Grand Junction. Both cities are approximately 1.5 hours by road from the clinic.

- Montrose Memorial Hospital in Montrose, Colorado is a 75 bed Regional Medical Center, approximately 85 miles from the clinic.
- St. Mary’s Hospital in Grand Junction, approximately 115 miles from the Site, has over 350 beds and is also available for medical treatment.
- Community Hospital, also in Grand Junction (115 miles from the Site) is a full-service, acute care facility with 78 beds available.
- Allen Memorial hospital in Moab, Utah is a 25-bed critical care facility, approximately 80 miles from the site that provides a medical care alternative that is not as affected by inclement weather as facilities in Montrose and Grand Junction.

**Issue:** Adequate healthcare is critical to economic development. The community has suffered a setback in healthcare by losing 24 hour emergency care and there is a sense of being underserved and vulnerable. The loss of 24 hour urgent care puts more strain on the Nucla-Naturita Fire Protection District and the Paradox Fire Protection District because many emergencies require ground transport when helicopter transport is not available due to weather and other logistics.

**Action Steps:**

- CDPHE Health Facilities and Emergency Medical Services Division to provide more detail about what options might work best for the community at the lowest cost to them but still provide the best patient safety.
- Identify other state agencies that can provide expertise such as paramedic training and public financing options.
- Working with the Basin Clinic staff and board of directors, develop a strategic plan for all aspects of healthcare for the West End. Work with DOLA and CDPHE to help fund and guide the plan. Build on the Montrose County Healthcare Needs Assessment to isolate West End issues.

- Using information generated by activities mentioned above, develop goals and financing options for healthcare in the West End.

## WEST END SCHOOL FACILITIES: DISTRICT RE-2

The West End School District RE-2 serves the west side of Montrose County, which includes the communities of Nucla, Naturita, Redvale, Bedrock and Paradox as well as the unincorporated areas of this area of Montrose County. The District consists of three schools:

- Naturita Elementary School
- Nucla Jr. / Sr. High School
- Paradox Valley Charter School

**Issue:** The most troubling aspect of the West End School District is the condition of the schools. A recent condition assessment by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) documented numerous structure and system issues at both the Naturita Elementary School and the Nucla Jr/Sr High School. Many of the issues involved structure and systems that were identified as health and safety risks requiring immediate action to correct. Based on estimated costs by CDE, Naturita Elementary School requires repairs and replacements of \$4.7 million. Nucla Jr/Sr High School requires repairs and replacements of \$10.5 million.

### **Action Steps:**

- Engage the Colorado Department of Education and revisit the BEST Grant Program-60% grant offer on the \$22 million school construction project. This will require a local cash match and another bond election.
- Use lessons learned from the previous failed bond election to educate the voters and word the ballot language more carefully.
- The West End School board should consider forming a local committee to spearhead the task.