Fremont County

2010 CEDS

Prepared by Southern Colorado Economic Development District
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Fremont County

Fremont County is located in south central Colorado at the foot of the Rocky Mountains. The county is 1,533 square miles with a population density of 31 per square mile. The average elevation is 4,600 feet.

The county was established in 1862, which included Custer County and a portion of Teller County. The county is named for explorer and presidential candidate John C. Fremont.

Fremont County houses ten prisons, including the only Federal Supermax facility in the United States. The Arkansas River runs through Fremont County, making it a popular tourist destination. The county is known for the Royal Gorge, hot springs and scenic canyons.

County Commissioners:

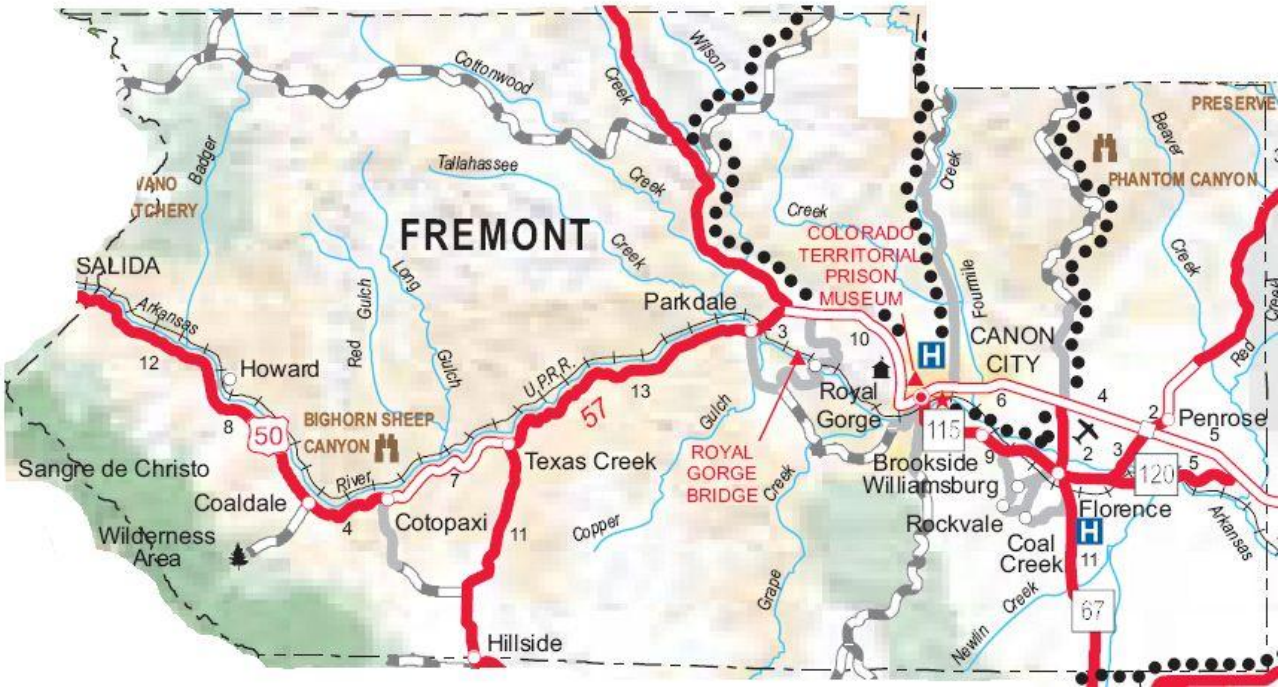
Mike Stiehl
Debbie Bell
Ed Norden

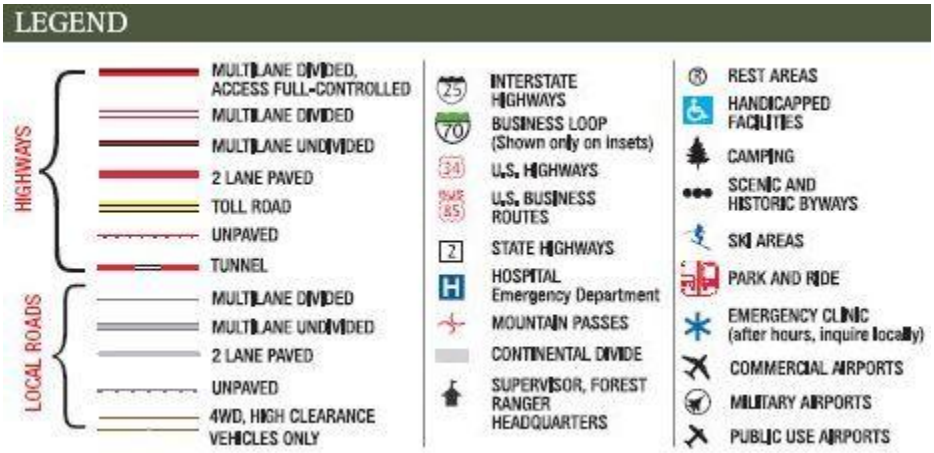
County Seat: Canon City

Legislative Districts:

Congressional District:	5
Senate District:	2
House District:	21, 47 & 60

Transportation

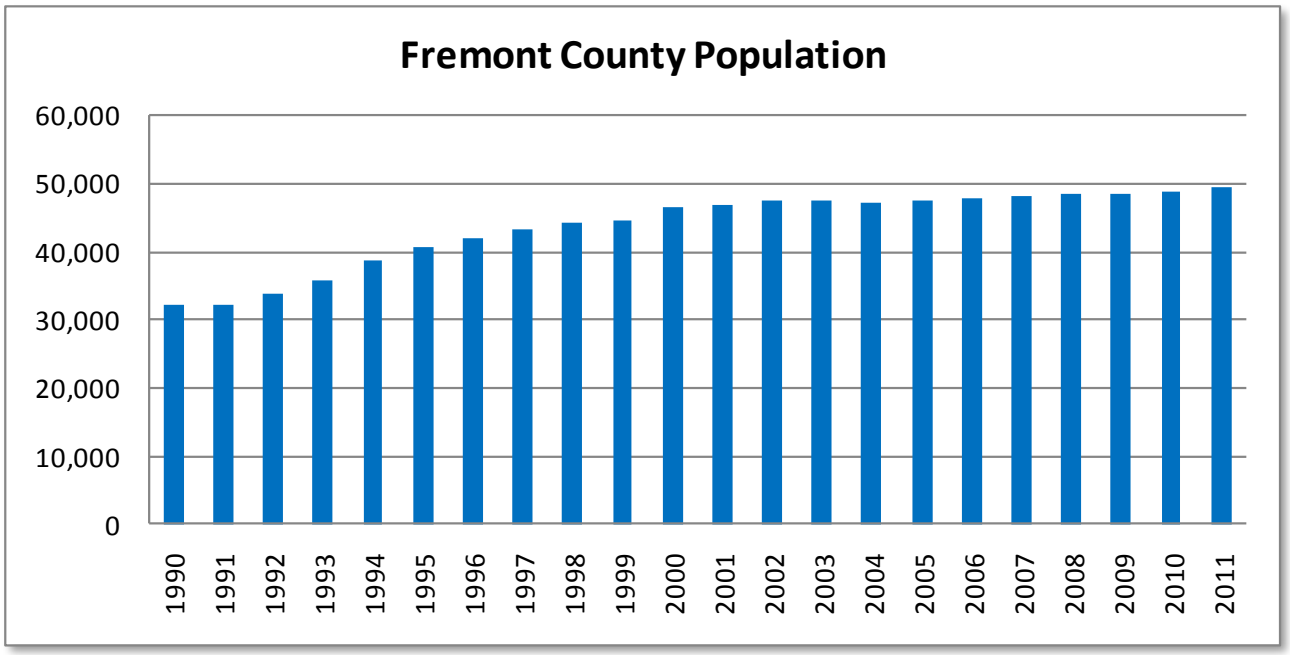




CDOT State Travel Map

Population Trends

The Department of Local Affairs estimates the 2011 population of Fremont County at 49,504, which is approximately 1% of the State's population. In the last decade, Fremont County's population has increased approximately 5%, while the state saw an 18% increase.



Data retrieved from State Demography Office-DOLA
http://www.dola.state.co.us
5/18/2011

In 2010, the US Census reports gradual population growth since 1950. The population has almost tripled between 1950 and 2010.

1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
9,156	15,638	18,181	17,883	18,896	19,742	18,366	20,196	21,942	28,676	32,273	46,145	46,824

Population by Race

The 2010 Census reports 90.2% of Fremont County's population is White, 3.9% African American, 1.7% American Indian and 4.1% reporting other or two or more races.

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
White Alone or in Combination	43,682	43,045	42,836	43,272	42,225
Black or African American Alone or in Combination	2,516	2,600	2,563	2,670	1,843
American Indian & Alaska Native Alone or in Combination	756	761	781	786	810
Asian Alone or in Combination	258	287	288	285	282
Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander Alone or in Combination	32	33	26	28	22
Some Other Race Alone or in combination with one or more races	766	663	789	774	761
Two or More Races	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	881

Fremont County Prison Population

As we review population statistics, it is important to remember that prison populations are included in the data. The prison census can distort the assessment because prisoners rarely require the same community services as residents. In 2010, almost 15% of the population was incarcerated.

Public Prisons	Dec-01	Dec-02	Dec-03	Dec-04	Jan-05	Jan-06	Jan-07	Jan-08	Jan-09	Jan-10
Colorado State Penitentiary	742	732	749	751	753	751	752	747	758	750
Centennial Correctional Facility	336	334	319	306	306	328	324	299	306	306
Colorado Territorial Correctional Facility	737	789	780	770	780	809	794	904	939	920
Fremont Correctional Facility	1,382	1,451	1,463	1,462	1,459	1,452	1,435	1,644	1,654	1,656
Arrowhead Correctional Center	480	491	491	489	487	490	488	488	496	492
Four Mile Correctional Center	478	495	495	496	495	495	496	494	498	502
Skyline Correctional Center	248	249	424	245	244	239	243	248	246	246
Colorado Women's Correctional Facility (closed)	218	221	219	218	220	224	208	211	214	0
Total	**4,621**	**4,762**	**4,940**	**4,737**	**4,744**	**4,788**	**4,740**	**5,035**	**5,111**	**4,872**

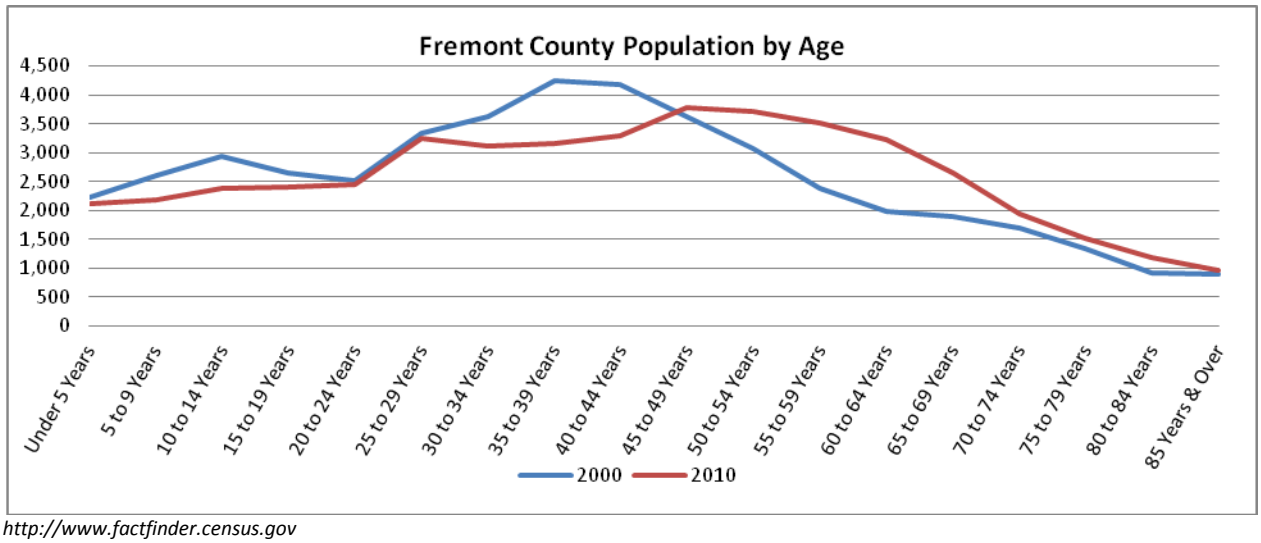
Colorado Dept. of Corrections
http://www.doc.state.co.us
8/4/2010

Federal Prisons	Jul-00	Jul-01	Jul-02	Jul-03	Jul-04	Jul-05	Jul-06	Jul-07	Jul-08	Jul-09	Jul-10
Florence ADMAX	337	375	400	384	375	377	414	464	469	456	429
Florence FCI	1,185	1,248	1,279	1,285	1,312	1,294	1,118	1,120	1,107	1,213	1,197
Florence High	1,028	933	990	930	952	1,040	1,003	1,015	945	971	832
Total	**2,550**	**2,556**	**2,669**	**2,599**	**2,639**	**2,711**	**2,535**	**2,599**	**2,521**	**2,640**	**2,458**

Federal Bureau of Prisons
8/30/2010

Population by Age

DOLA estimates the median age for Fremont County at 42.5, with an average life expectancy at age 76.4. The chart below represents the age distribution as reported by the Census. Fremont County's population reflects an aging population. The 2010 Census shows an increase in the age group of 45 and above compared to 2000 when the largest population was between the ages of 25 and 44.



http://www.factfinder.census.gov
6/29/2011

Population by Community

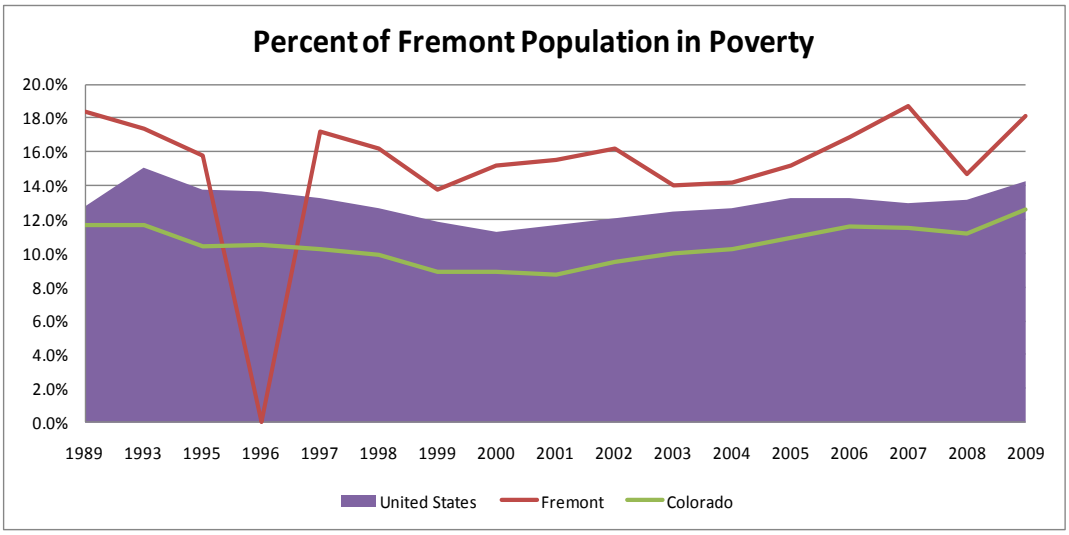
The 2010 Census reports 53% of Fremont County's population is located in unincorporated areas. The second most populated area is Canon City, the County seat.

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Brookside	219	221	223	227	225	227	228	227	227	228	233
Canon City	15,431	15,931	16,095	16,188	16,169	16,164	16,349	16,374	16,467	16,372	16,400
Coal Creek	303	340	357	367	365	357	357	349	351	343	343
Florence	3,653	3,759	3,828	3,849	3,820	3,839	3,866	3,869	3,874	3,862	3,881
Rockvale	426	436	437	435	437	460	472	473	477	481	487
Williamsburg	714	702	708	712	695	690	688	695	685	667	662
Unincorporated Area	25,399	25,344	25,321	25,050	24,829	24,710	24,743	24,667	24,693	24,682	24,818
Total	**46,145**	**46,733**	**46,969**	**46,828**	**46,540**	**46,447**	**46,703**	**46,654**	**46,774**	**46,635**	**46,824**

2000 & 2010 Data from Census Bureau
http://factfinder.census.gov
2001 - 2009 DOLA Estimates
http://dola.state.co.us
8/17/2011

Poverty

A survey of Fremont County residents reveals the low cost of living and affordable housing as assets to the community. However, poverty is high compared to the State. In 2009, Kids Count reported 47.7% of school age children qualified for free/reduced lunch compared to 38.4% in the State and 24.6% of children under 18 years of age were living in poverty compared to 16.6% in the State.

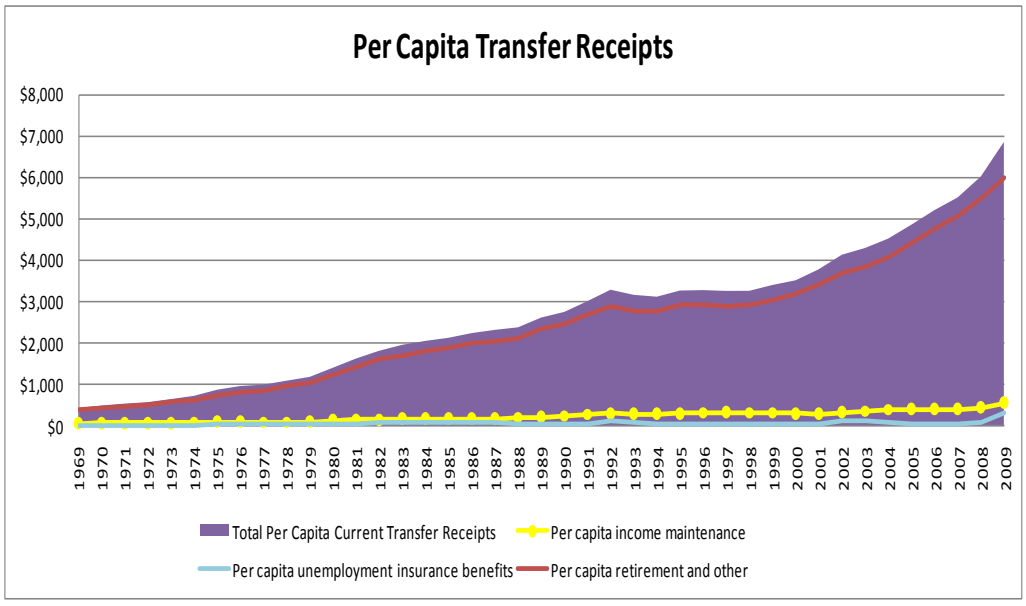


The US Census Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates report 18.1% of Fremont County's population lives in poverty compared to 12.6% in the State and 14.3% in the Nation.

US Census-Data for 1996 is not available
5/16/2011

Personal Transfer Receipts

Federal programs attempt to alleviate poverty and are tracked as transfer payments. In 2009, federal transfer payments were almost $7,000 for every man, woman and child in Fremont County. Slightly over 87% of the total transfer payments are from retirement programs like Social Security. Income maintenance (TANF) accounts for approximately 8% of total payments.



Bureau of Economic Analysis
8/18/2011

Additional reports affecting poverty reveal:

- Food assistance program participation in 2010 is slightly under 9%
- In 2007, 15.8% of the population was uninsured, compared to the State at 18%
- Teen births are lower than the State, with 16.5/1,000 reported in 2009

Housing

The average household size is 2.43 compared to an average family size of 2.93.

Household Type	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Household Population (July)	38,187	38,663	38,825	38,992	39,082	38,120
Housing Vacancy Rate	14.26	14.52	15.42	16.29	17.11	13.80
Total Households	15,728	15,922	15,986	16,050	16,081	16,582
Total Housing Units	18,343	18,626	18,900	19,174	19,401	19,242
Vacant Housing Units	2,615	2,704	2,914	3,124	3,320	2,660

http://www.dola.state.co.us
11/8/2010
2010 data from - http://factfinder2.census.gov
7/28/2011

Housing Statistics

The 2000 housing affordability index as reported by Headwaters states, in order to purchase the average house a person in Fremont County needed to earn a little over $29,000; the median household income was approximately $34,000. Approximately 60% of housing is valued between $100,000 and $300,000; almost 80% of rental housing costs between $300 and $1,000. Approximately 50% of housing is less than 40 years old.

Year Structure Built	Total	Percent
2005 or Later	444	2.3
2000 to 2004	1,695	8.8
1990 to 1999	3,618	18.9
1980 to 1989	2,349	12.2
1970 to 1979	3,655	19
1960 to 1969	1,797	9.4
1950 to 1959	1,558	8.1
1940 to 1949	577	3
1939 or earlier	3,497	18.2

2005- 2009 American Community Survey
http://factfinder.census.gov
8/12/2011

Building permit requests were down 81% from 2009, with only 53 requests reported by the US Census in 2010.

According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, affordable rent represents the generally accepted standard of not spending more than 30% of gross income on gross housing costs. The fair market rent in 2011 for Fremont County is $649 for a two bedroom home. In order to afford rent at this amount, a household in Fremont County must earn $12.48 per hour or $25,960 annually; at minimum wage, it would take 1.7 wage earners in the household.

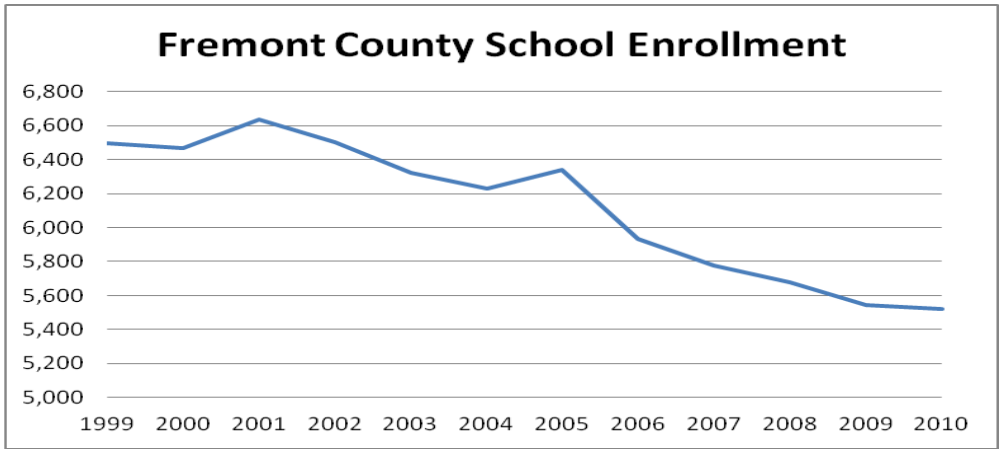
Foreclosure

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Filings	NA	307	295	362	349
Sales	N/A	100	125	200	225

http://www.dola.state.co.us
7/19/2011

Education

Three school districts provide K-12 education in Fremont County. Higher education is available locally at Pueblo Community College (Junior College), which offers two year programs and the University of Southern Colorado in Pueblo provides four year programs.



School enrollment peaked in 2001 with over 6,600 enrollments reported. However, total enrollment has decreased approximately 17% over the last decade.

A noticeable trend seen throughout many counties in the SCEDD region is the decline in school enrollments, compared to the number of school age children living in the County. The 2010 Census reports there are 6,969 school age children (5-19 years of age) living in the county and the Department of Education reports there are 5,524 students enrolled in Fremont County schools. County residents believe one reason for the decline is an increase in the number of students being home schooled or attending online schools, while others believe out migration has caused a decrease in school enrollments.

Enrollment

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Canon City RE-1	4,239	4,312	4,215	4,114	4,025	4,236	3,878	3,800	3,810	3,699	3,702
Florence RE-2	1,863	1,959	1,915	1,856	1,843	1,779	1,739	1,701	1,631	1,623	1,600
Cotopaxi RE-3	366	365	374	350	361	324	316	273	235	224	222
Total	**6,468**	**6,636**	**6,504**	**6,320**	**6,229**	**6,339**	**5,933**	**5,774**	**5,676**	**5,546**	**5,524**

The 2005-2009 Census American Community Survey estimates 79.7% of the total population 25 years of age and older has attained a high school diploma or higher; 16.6% have attained a Bachelor's Degree or higher.

Graduation Rate

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Canon City RE-1	83.6	83.6	83.0	85.5	78.6	86.3	79.4	74.2	68.8	74.5	69.5
Florence RE-2	86.4	82.3	80.6	82.2	75.0	77.9	65.4	78.7	76.8	90.4	83.7
Cotopaxi RE-3	100.0	92.6	96.4	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	92.9	96.4	87.0	76.9

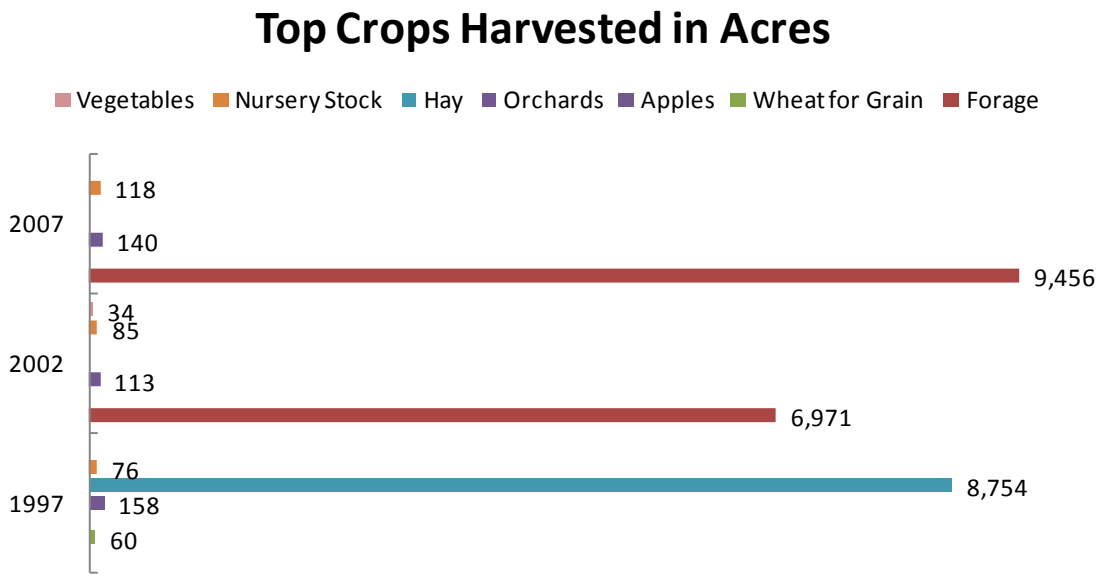
Drop Out Rate

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Canon City RE-1	2.5	2.1	1.4	1.2	1.1	2.2	2.2	3.6	2.1	3.1	3.8
Florence RE-2	0.7	1.7	2.5	3.1	4.7	6.1	3.4	2.5	1.7	2.1	1.4
Cotopaxi RE-3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	1.9	1.5

www.cde.state.co.us
5/26/2011

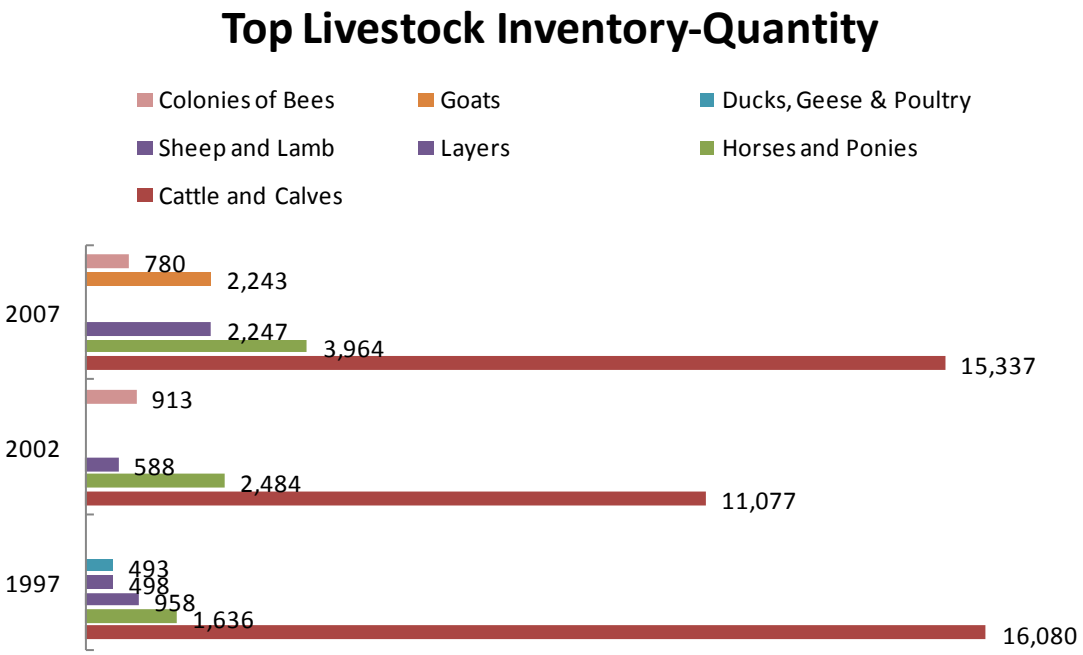
Agriculture

In 2007, Fremont County had 295,893 acres of agricultural land. There are 924 farms, with an average of 320 acres. According to the 2007 Agricultural Census, Fremont County's largest crop harvested is forage and top livestock is cattle and calves.



www.agcensus.usda.gov
10/1/2009

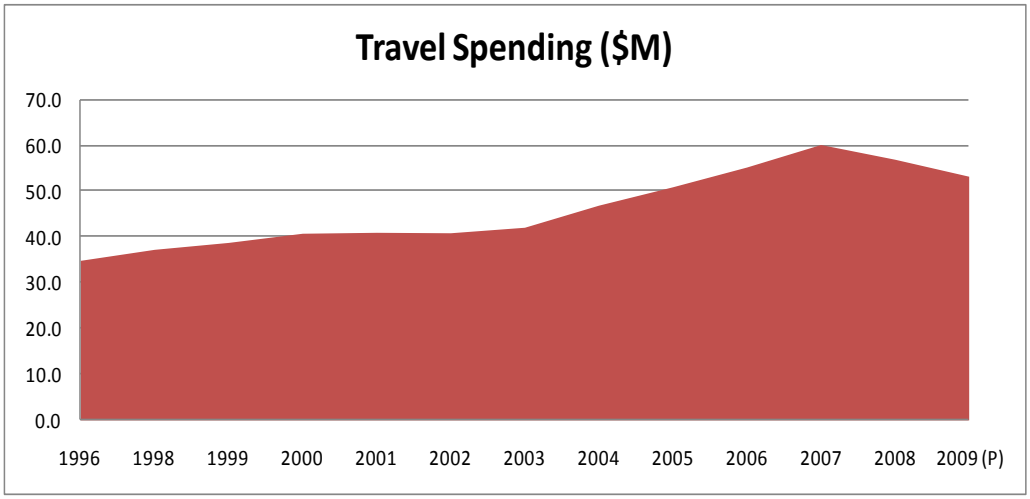
Out of sixty four counties in Colorado, Fremont County ranked third in apples.



Out of sixty four counties in Colorado, Fremont County ranked fourth in goats and tenth in horses and ponies.

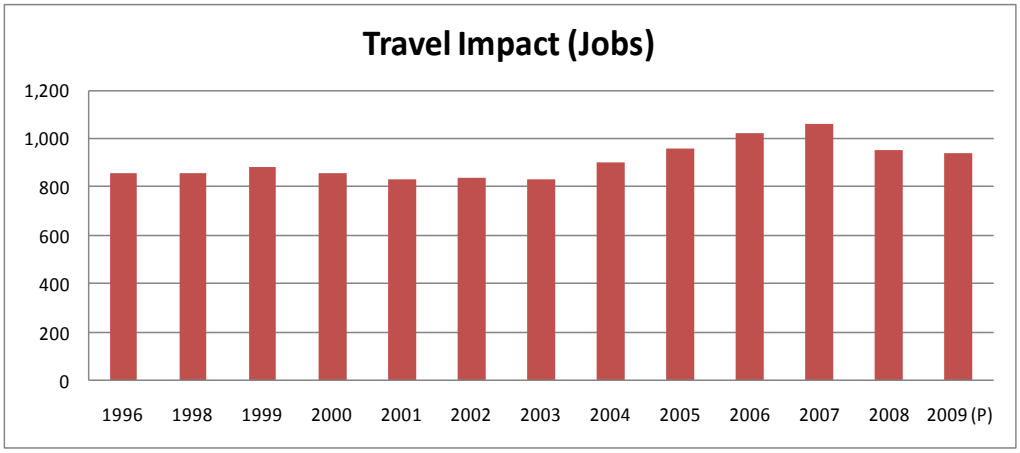
Travel Impact

Travel and tourism is a $13 billion industry in the State of Colorado.



The Office of Economic Development and International Trade and Dean Runyon Associates report fifty three million dollars was spent by visitors to Fremont County in 2009.

Not only does travel affect the revenues to a community, but jobs must be created to maintain services to visitors. Approximately 940 full and part time jobs were attributed to travel and tourism in Fremont County in 2009.



	1996	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009 (P)
Travel Spending ($M)	34.7	37.1	38.6	40.6	40.8	40.7	41.9	46.7	50.7	55.0	59.9	56.7	53.0
Earnings ($M)	9.6	10.5	10.9	11.2	11.4	11.4	11.6	12.8	13.9	14.8	16.3	15.4	15.6
Employment (Jobs)	860	860	880	860	830	840	830	900	960	1,020	1,060	950	940
Local Taxes ($M)	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.3	1.3
State Taxes ($M)	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.7	1.8	1.7	1.6

Dean Runyan Associates *P= Preliminary*
http://www.deanrunyan.com
8/10/2010

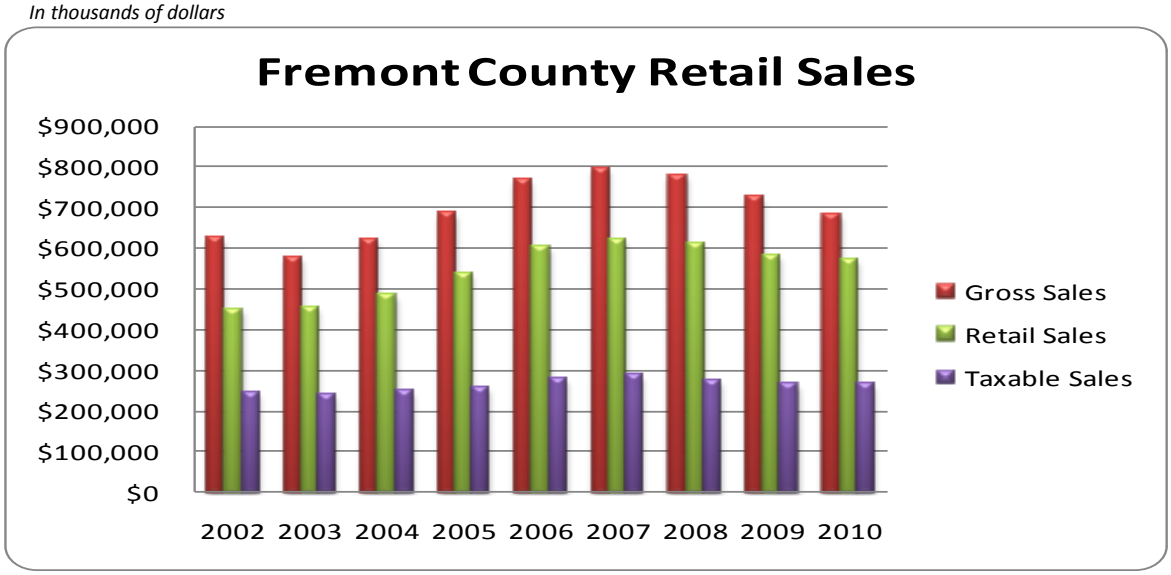
County Government

Fremont County has a 1.5% sales tax and a 2% lodging tax; Colorado has a 2.9% sales and use tax.

Retail Sales

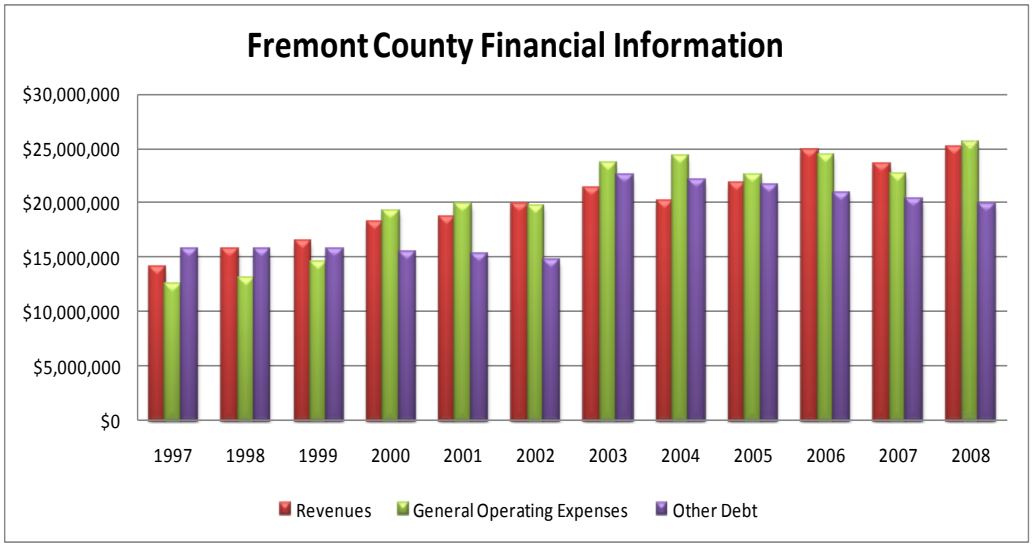
As illustrated below, gross sales and retail sales remained fairly steady, with a peak in 2007. Although sales have decreased since the recession, it is important to note sales are above the 2002 figures.

In thousands of dollars



Dept. of Revenue
http://www.colorado.gov
7/12/2011

General Revenue and Expenses

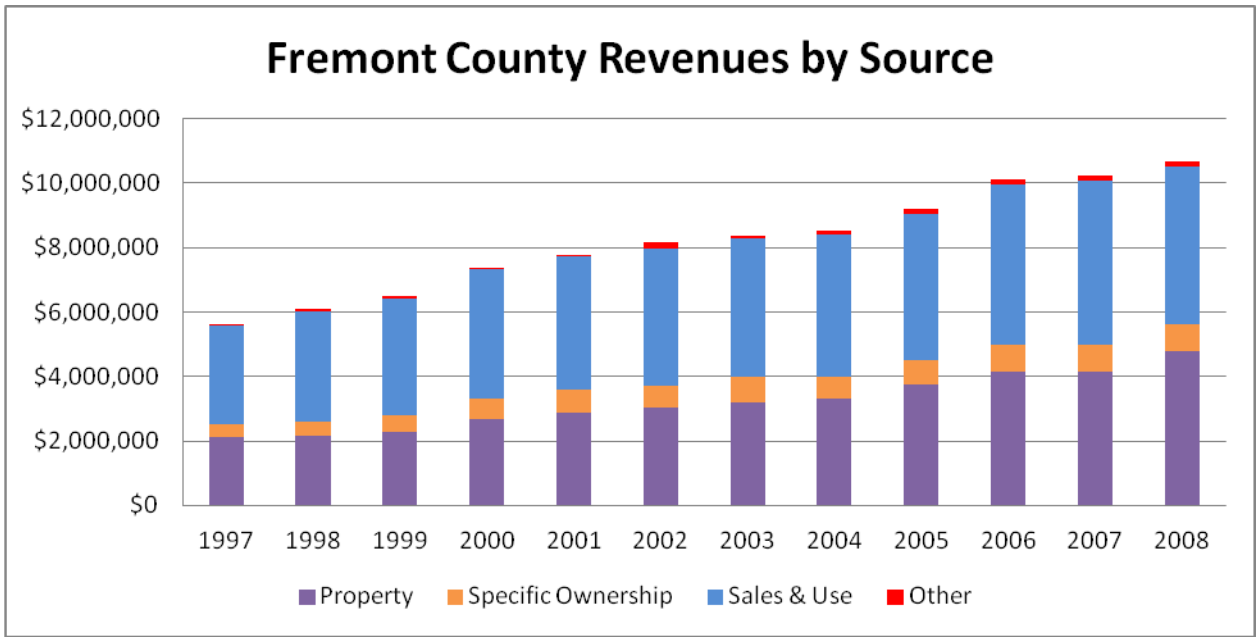


The financial trend for Fremont County shows expenses exceed revenues in most years between 1997 and 2008 and an increase in "other debt".

Colorado Division of Local Government
http://www.dola.state.co.us/cedis.html
10/19/2010

Revenues by Source

Approximately 19% of Fremont County's revenues are derived from sales and use taxes, with 18% derived from property taxes.

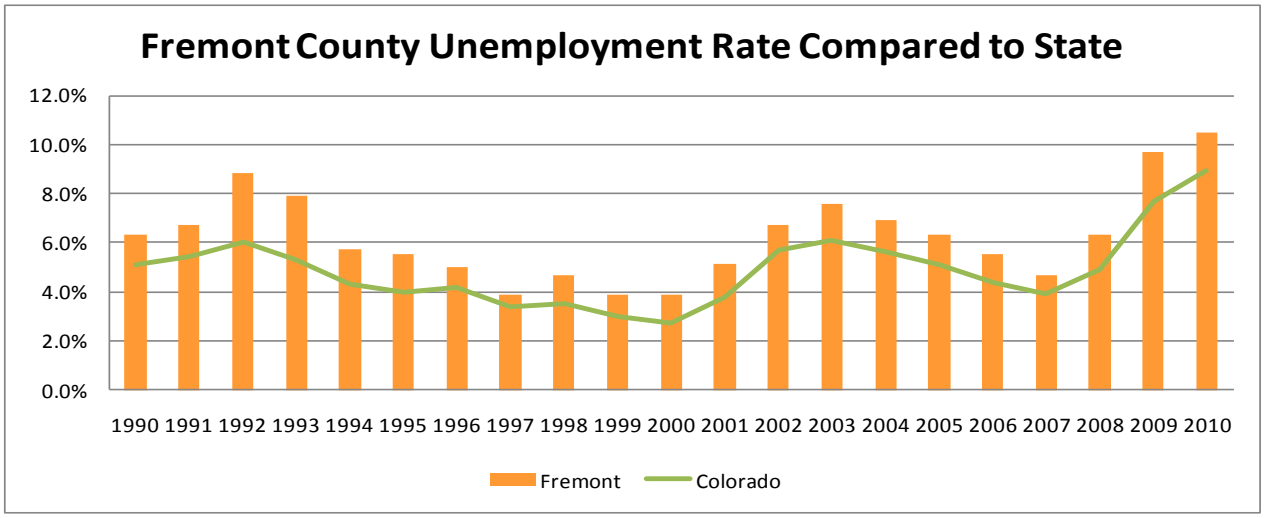


DOLA reports the 2010 assessed value of Fremont County is $451,751,609, providing $4,036,852 in revenues with an 8.936 mill levy.

Local Economy

Labor Force

Fremont County's unemployment rate trends with the State, but has spiked over 6% in the last decade. Colorado's 2010 unemployment rate was 8.9%, while Fremont County was 10.5%; the highest unemployment rate in over two decades.



Colorado Workforce/LMI Gateway
http://lmigateway.coworkforce.com
8/23/2011

Employment by Sector

Industry	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Agriculture	N/A	488	517	N/A	511	518	500	507	517
Mining	183	N/A	N/A	N/A	164	123	102	93	83
Utilities	79	75	74	76	86	85	84	81	84
Construction	1,762	1,371	1,412	1,328	1,449	1,530	1,525	1,349	1,109
Manufacturing	923	810	768	802	804	857	873	834	692
Wholesale trade	204	176	189	210	196	N/A	184	179	181
Retail Trade	N/A	N/A	1,840	N/A	N/A	1,884	1,867	1,909	1,866
Transportation and warehousing	343	349	362	389	410	424	420	427	407
Information	N/A	198	184	194	206	194	191	196	161
Finance activities	399	386	398	423	398	394	406	391	336
Real estate	354	361	372	406	444	455	437	431	420
Professional and business services	467	485	491	525	510	539	555	547	534
Management of companies and enterprise	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	17	N/A	13	N/A	N/A
Admin and waste	320	381	358	436	442	N/A	419	425	407
Education	N/A	N/A	50	49	58	122	136	133	129
Health Services	2,102	2,206	2,230	2,146	2,260	2,338	2,600	2,312	N/A
Arts	381	344	413	389	418	376	397	443	462
Accommodation and food	1,161	1,200	1,130	1,218	1,230	1,241	1,296	1,217	1,174
Other services, except public administration	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1,150	1,160	1,095	1,148	1,145
Government	5,277	5,258	5,159	5,103	5,092	5,054	5,211	5,361	5,341

Department of Local Affairs
1/7/2011

Wages

Wages in Fremont County are lower than the State average. In 2010, average weekly wages, as reported by the Colorado Workforce, for Fremont County were 29% below the State; with Fremont County at $706 and the State at $1,001. The Bureau of Economic Analysis reports average annual wages for Fremont County in 2009 were 25% below the State; with Fremont County at $35,934 and the State at $47,622.

Average Weekly Wages by Sector

Industry	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	$369	$352	$361	$382	$394
Mining	$668	$740	$766	$805	$787
Utilities	$962	$1,002	$1,030	$1,067	$1,070
Construction	$543	$589	$649	$712	$737
Manufacturing	$746	$776	$811	$836	$873
Wholesale Trade	$632	$673	$668	$704	$698
Retail Trade	$426	$417	$422	$443	$448
Transportation & Warehousing	$609	$618	$674	$647	$657
Information	$471	$519	$507	$520	$556
Finance and Insurance	$594	$637	$634	$623	$635
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	$350	$377	$416	$417	$403
Professional & Technical Services	$596	$622	$604	$664	$688
Administrative and Waste Services	$330	$337	$348	$436	$412
Educational Services	$513	$542	$551	$557	$573
Health Care and Social Assistance	$466	$503	$527	$561	$570
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	$252	$278	$293	$311	$300
Accommodation and Food Services	$180	$186	$208	$219	$224
Other Services, Ex. Public Admin	$317	$366	$374	$393	$383
Public Administration	$921	$928	$910	$993	$985

Colorado Work Force/ LMI Gateway
http://lmigateway.coworkforce.com
1/11/2011

Average Annual Wages by Sector

Industry	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Natural Resources & Mining	$30,920	$31,422	$31,184	$32,197	$31,316
Construction	$28,129	$30,578	$33,711	$36,994	$38,211
Manufacturing	$38,811	$40,333	$42,202	$43,477	$45,305
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	$25,185	$25,130	$25,714	$26,441	$26,686
Information	$24,826	$27,690	$27,214	$27,577	$29,558
Financial Activities	$26,422	$28,541	$29,314	$29,355	$29,025
Professional & Business Services	$23,681	$24,616	$25,563	$29,550	$29,155
Education & Health Services	$23,110	$25,483	$26,439	$28,176	$28,677
Leisure & Hospitality	$10,271	$10,719	$11,765	$12,511	$12,620
Other Services	$16,528	$19,037	$19,497	$20,438	$19,977
Public Administration	$28,678	$30,099	$31,082	$32,532	$33,607

Bureau of Labor Statistics
www.bls.gov
1/13/2011

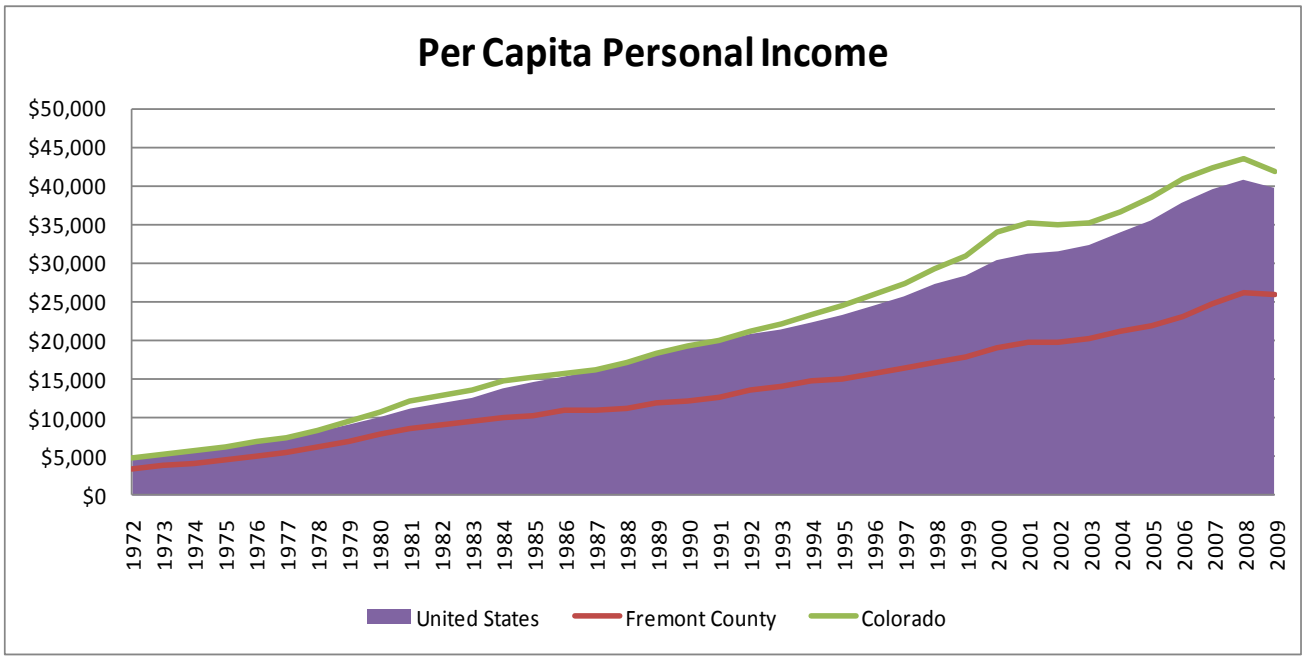
Median Household Income

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Fremont County	$34,504	$33,517	$33,548	$33,837	$35,129	$36,403	$37,831	$34,630	$39,155	$39,714
Colorado	$47,505	$48,483	$48,060	$49,248	$50,105	$50,841	$52,265	$55,517	$57,184	$55,735

http://www.census.gov-SAIPE
1/11/2011

Per Capita Personal Income

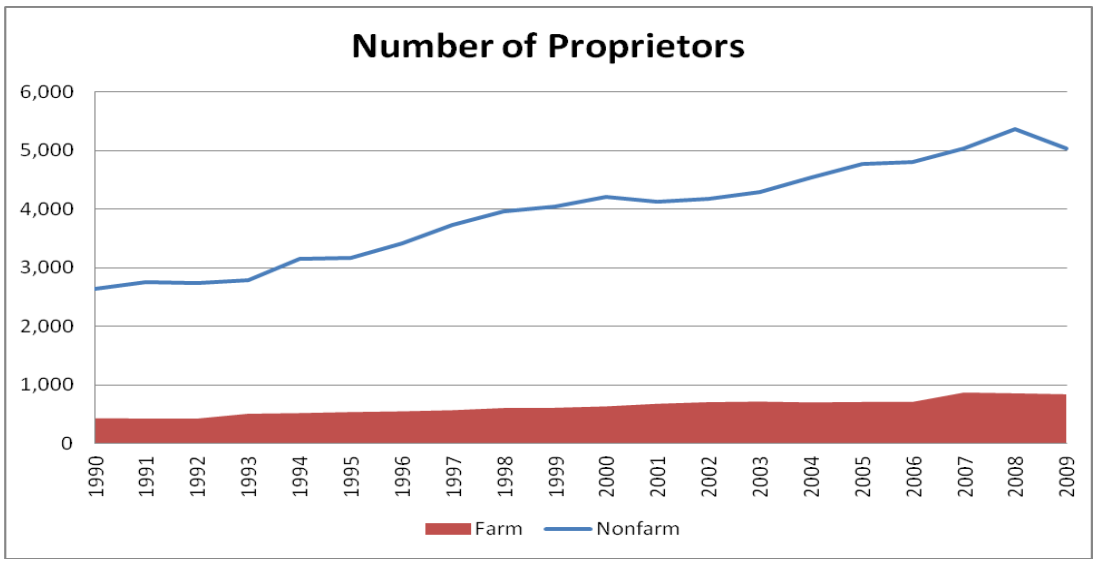
The per capita income for Fremont County is 38% below the State average. Per capita income for Fremont County in 2009 was $26,032 compared to the State average of $41,895.



Bureau of Economic Analysis
www.bea.gov
8/17/2011

Proprietors

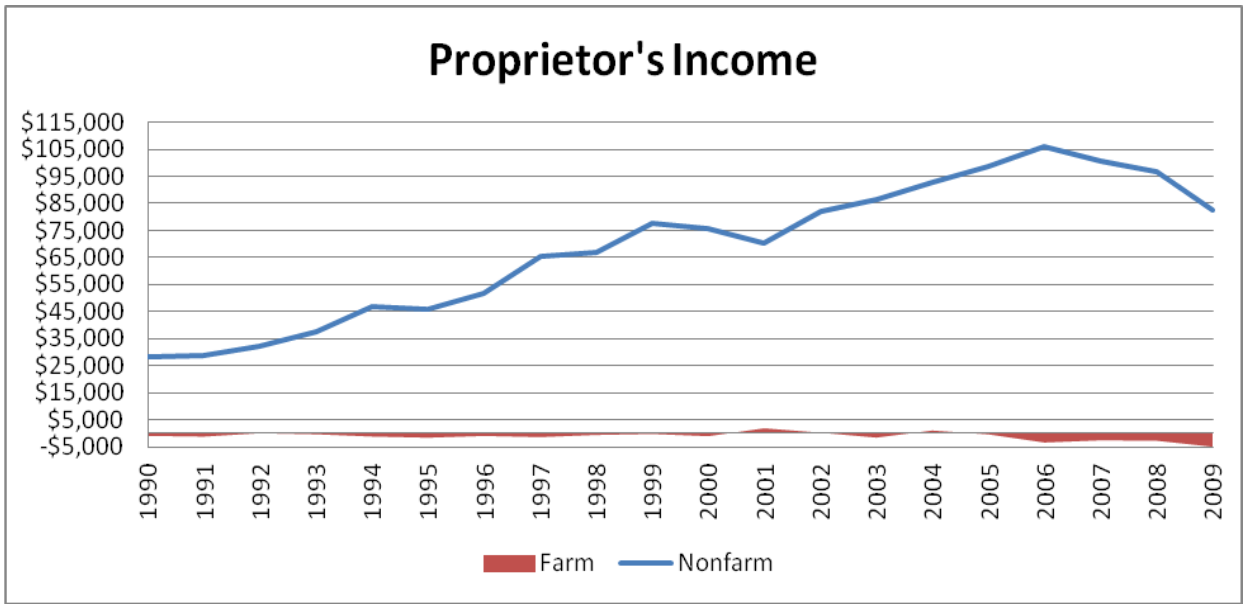
In the last two decades, Fremont County has seen an increase of nonfarm proprietors and proprietor's income.



The number of both farm and nonfarm proprietors has almost doubled since 1990.

Bureau of Economic Analysis
8/17/2011

Although the number of farm proprietor's has increased, the income has remained in the negative over the last two decades, with 2009 showing the largest loss. Nonfarm income peaked in 2006 and started showing a decrease at the beginning of the recession.



Strategic Planning

The 2010 CEDS has been created to provide a road map for coordinating economic activities, monitoring and evaluating long and short term economic goals and encouraging economic growth in Fremont County over the next five years and beyond. The plan is based on the data and analysis of the county's economy, community needs and input, local government input and the Colorado State Governor's Bottom Up Plan. The overall goal is to diversify the economy while supporting local businesses, stabilize the population and create a foundation for future growth and prosperity in the County.

Community Assessment

The first step in creating the plan is to assess the community's strengths and weaknesses. Information gathered from town hall meetings, local leaders and the Bottom Up Plan was utilized to create the list below. Three town hall meetings were held in Fremont County; results from the meetings have been combined for the purpose of this CEDS.

Strengths

- Low cost of living
- Mild climate
- Beauty
- Rural atmosphere
- Central location
- Low taxes
- Affordable housing
- Mineral resources/mining industry
- Diverse economy/communities
- Strong education system
- Airport
- Prisons
- Hospital
- Nursing home
- Local economic groups
- Available workforce
- Strong senior community
- Outdoor recreation/Arkansas River
- Strong volunteerism
- Historical amenities
- Strong and approachable local government
- Industrial park
- Tourist attractions
- Large employers
- Strong early childhood/child care community

Weaknesses

- Growing aging population
- Perception that it is hard to do business in Fremont County (Improvements have been made to regulations and processes within the County and Canon City)
- Lack of youth activities
- Access to broadband
- Leakage of out of town sales
- Low wages
- Lack of funding opportunities
- Economy dependent on prisons

Opportunities

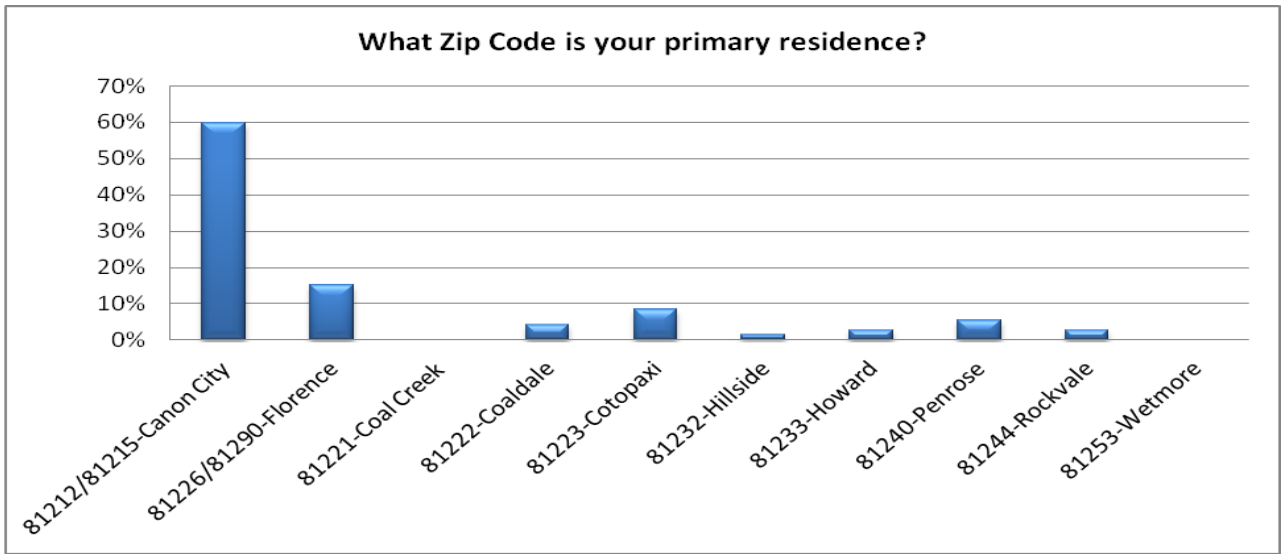
- Explore renewable energy options
- Expand broadband availability
- Improver higher education
- Improve infrastructure at the airport and industrial park
- Identify and market available buildings and land
- Revitalization of historic downtown
- Create a dedicated sales tax for economic development
- Encourage new businesses and entrepreneurs/offer incentives
- Create youth activities
- Educate businesses and community to promote the area
- Create business retention and expansion programs
- Streamline regulations and permit processes
- Create a master plan to regulate in situ mining
- Encourage tourism and retain tourists for longer periods of time
- Create a convention center
- Improve technology
- Expand mining and oil industry
- Improve the appearance of the community
- Develop a tool kit of financial strategies
- Maximize benefits of Over the River project

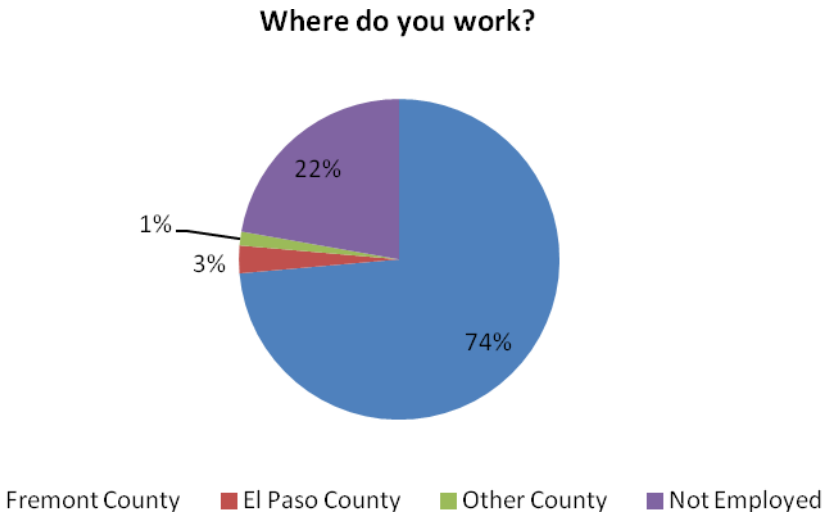
Threats

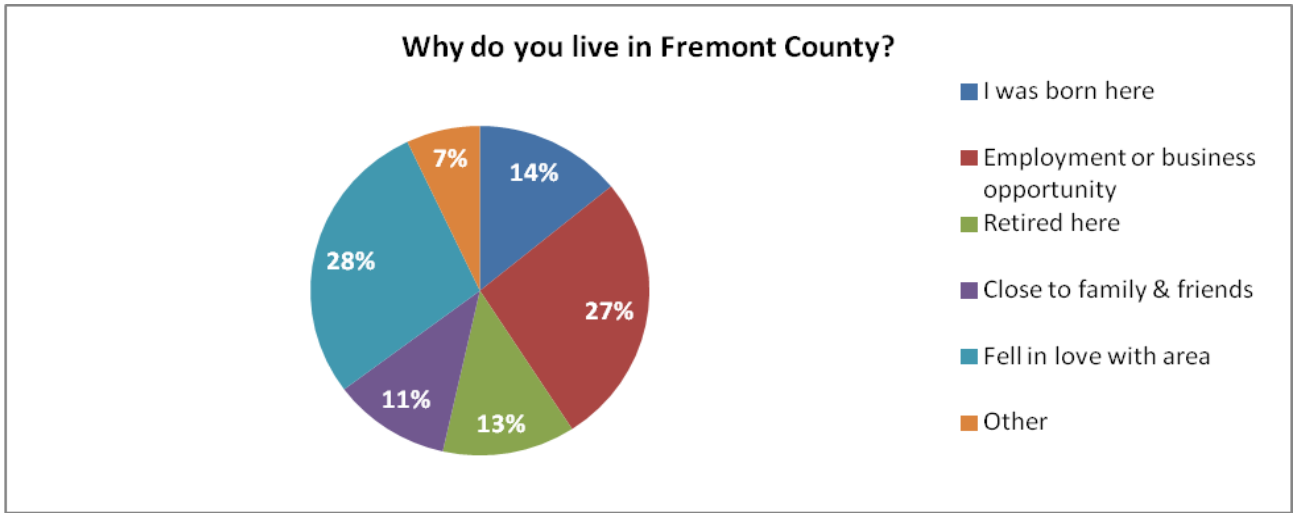
- Rising fuel costs
- Prison closure/outbreak/releases
- Aging population
- Hospital closure
- School/college closure
- Out of basin water transfers
- Loss of energy impact funds
- Open pit mining
- Major business layoffs/closures
- River contamination
- Continued drought conditions
- Uranium mining
- Realignment of US Hwy 50 around Florence
- Closure of Black Hills
- Closure of cement plant (listed only as a threat, should it occur)

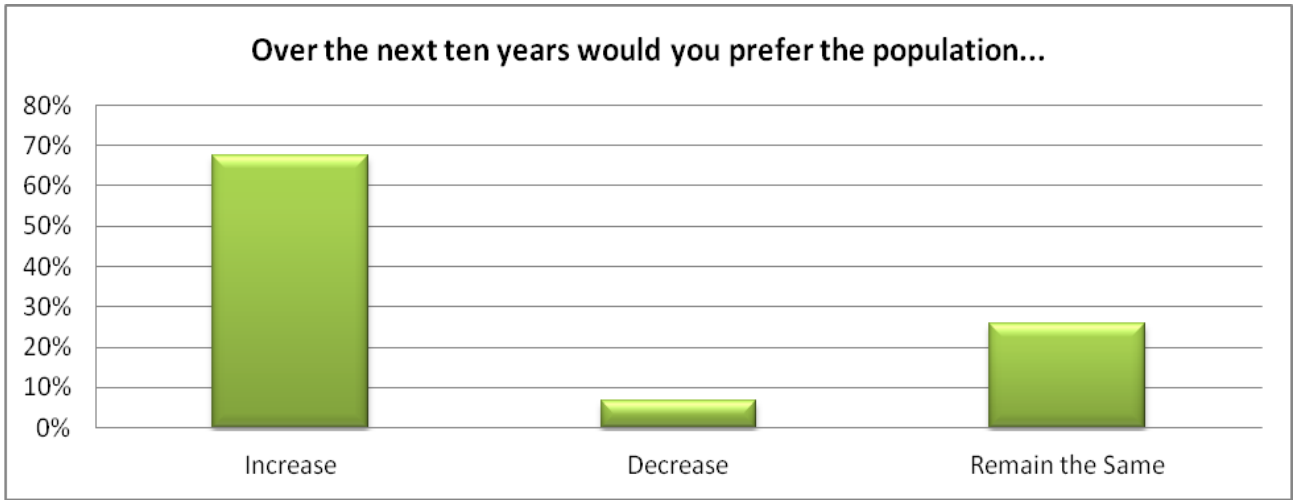
Community Survey

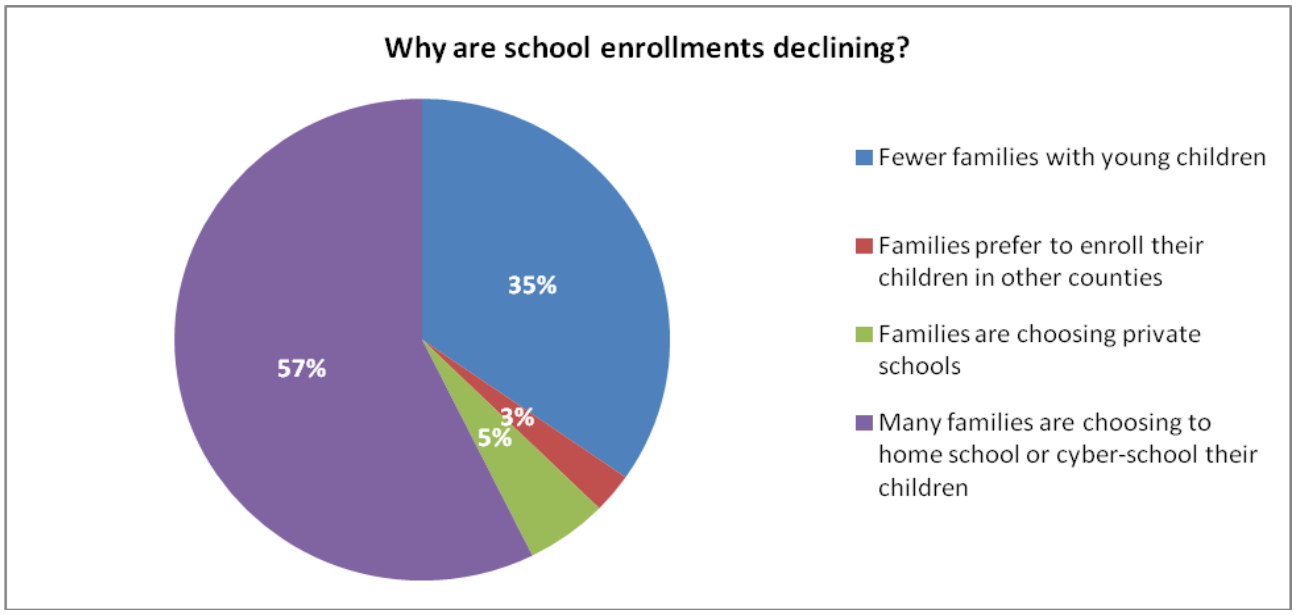
SCEDD solicited community participation during the town hall meetings utilizing the Audience Response System. A Power Point presentation provided demographic data and analysis, with questions to poll the audience on various issues. Three meetings were held in Fremont County in Cotopaxi, Florence and Canon City. Results from each of the town hall meetings have been combined and presented in aggregate below.

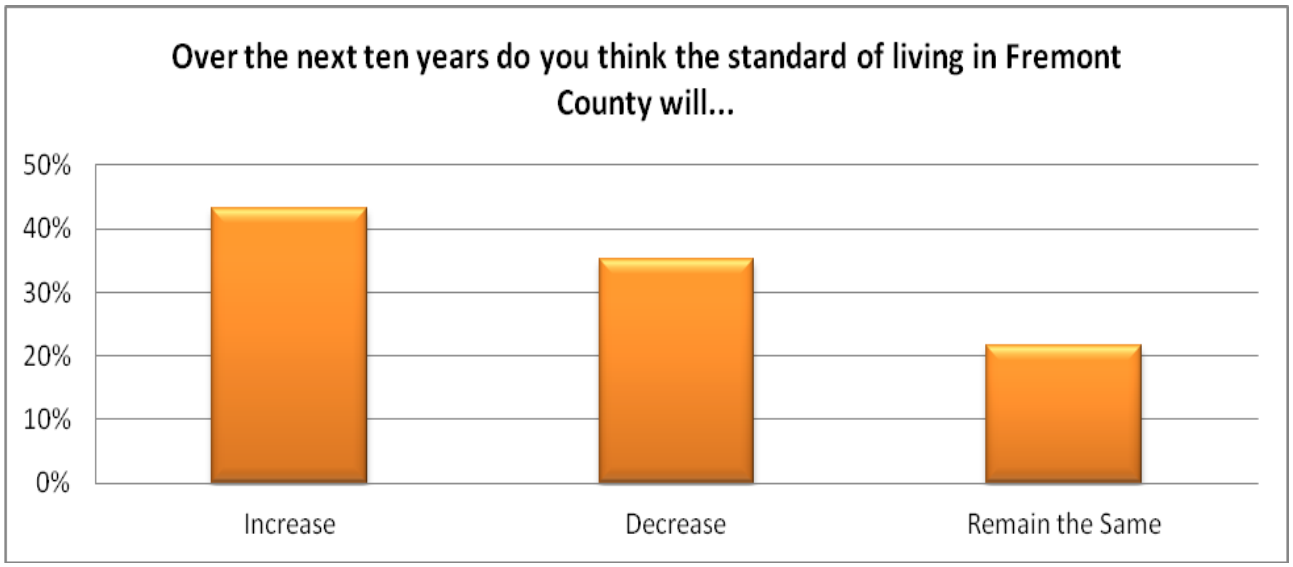


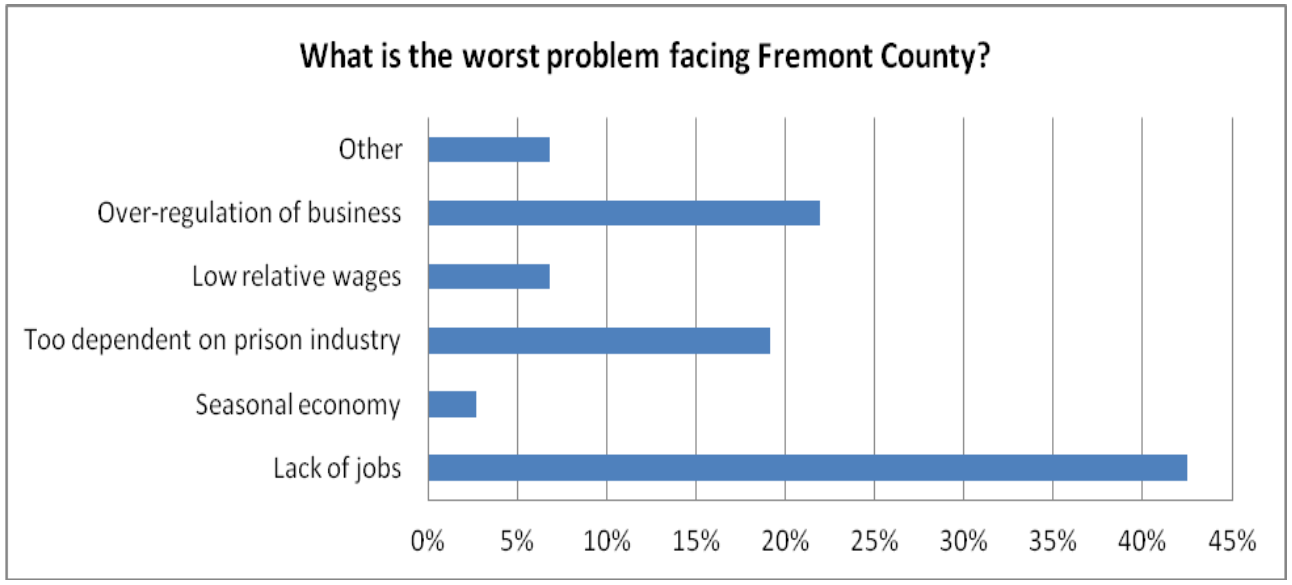


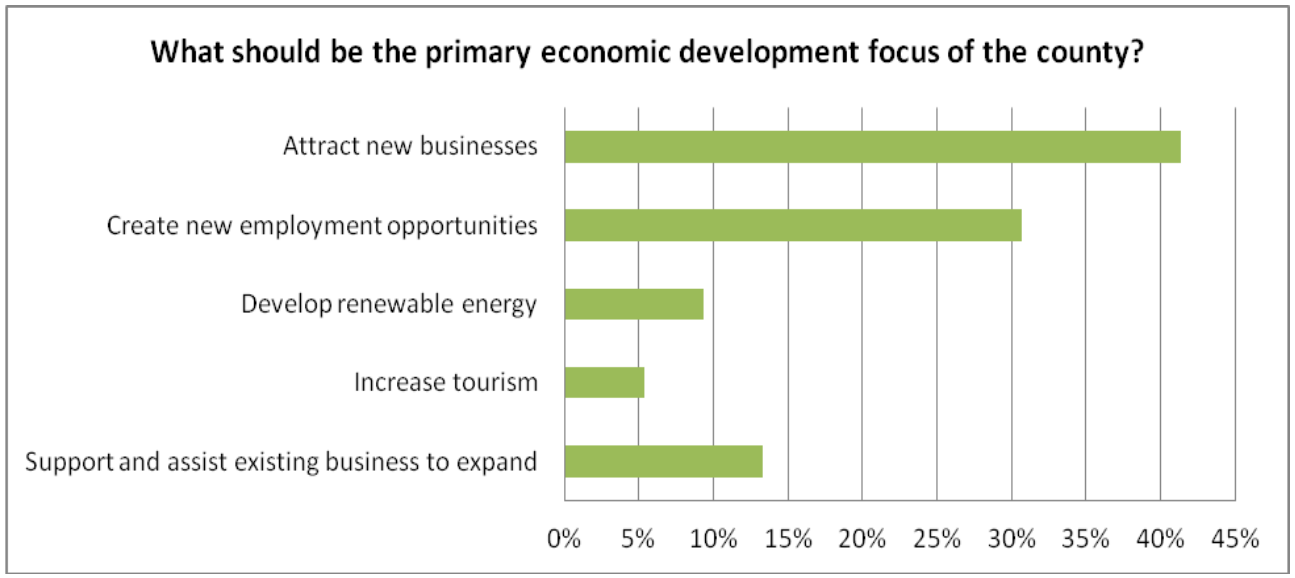


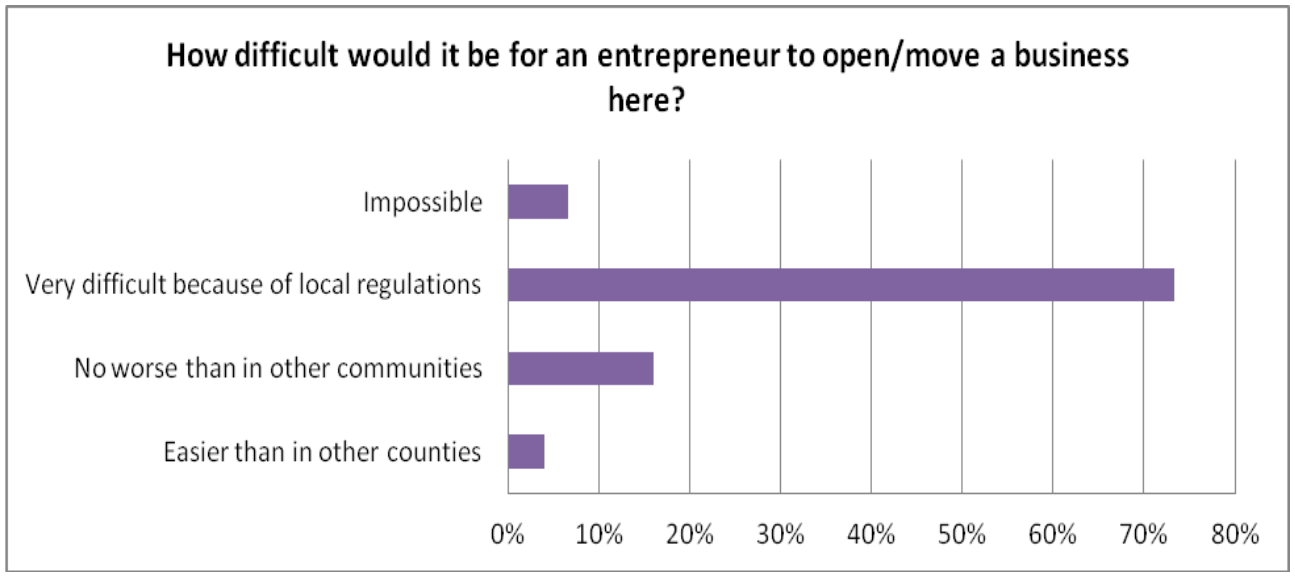

Over the next ten years would you prefer the population...
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
Increase
Decrease
Remain the Same

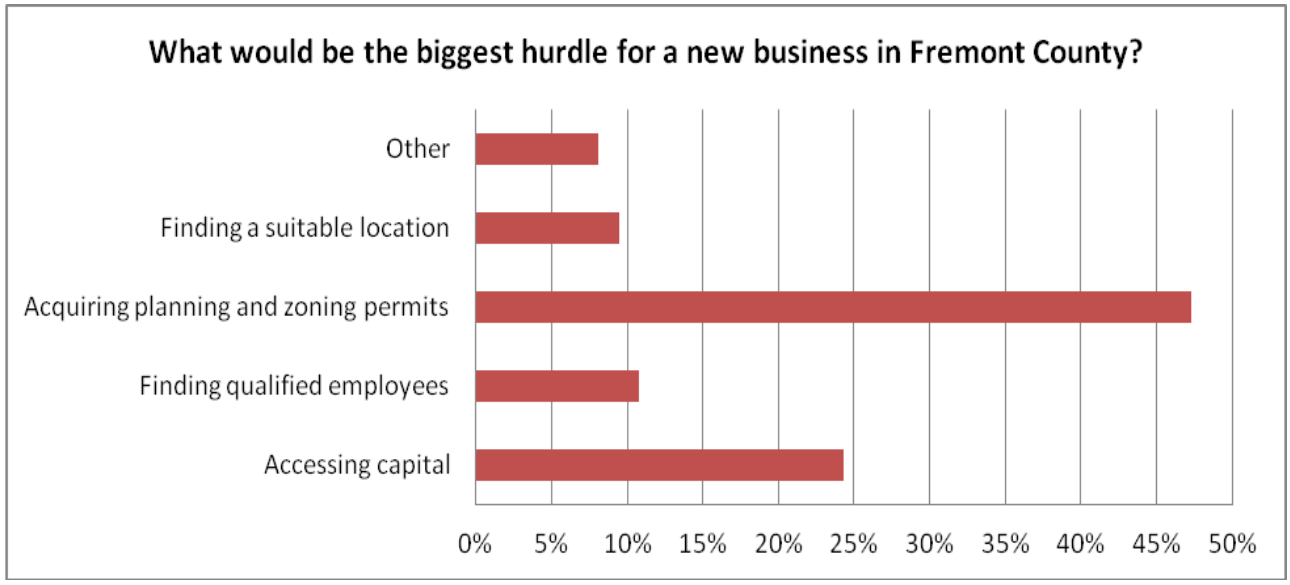

Why are school enrollments declining?
35%
3%
5%
57%
Fewer families with young children
Families prefer to enroll their children in other counties
Families are choosing private schools
Many families are choosing to home school or cyber-school their children

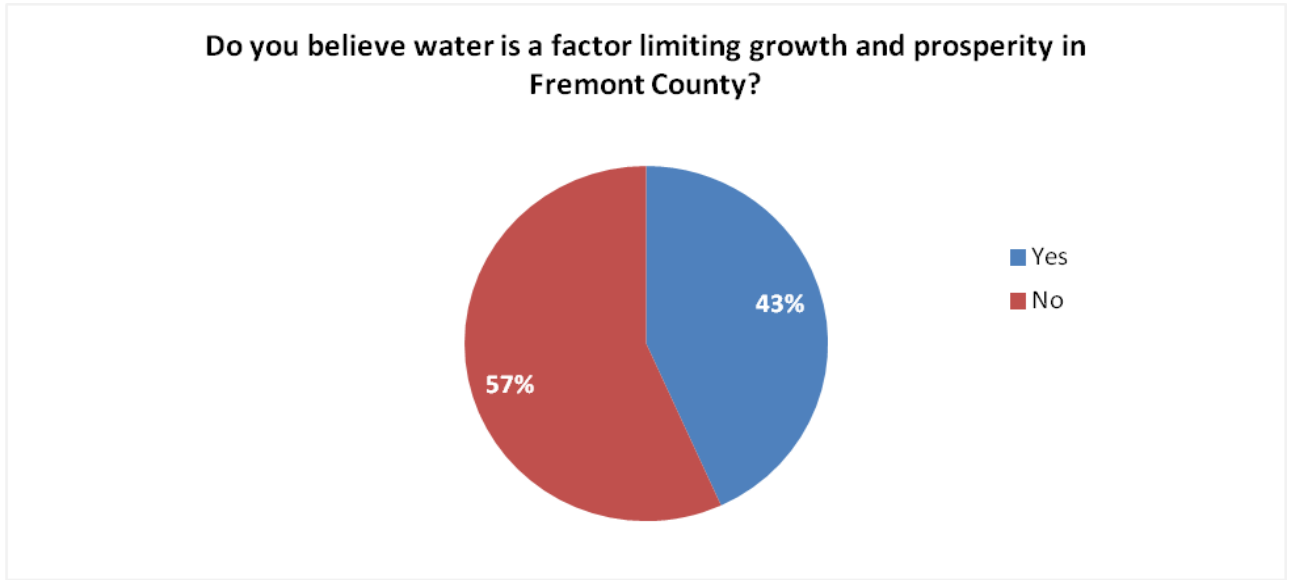

Over the next ten years do you think the standard of living in Fremont County will...
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
Increase
Decrease
Remain the Same

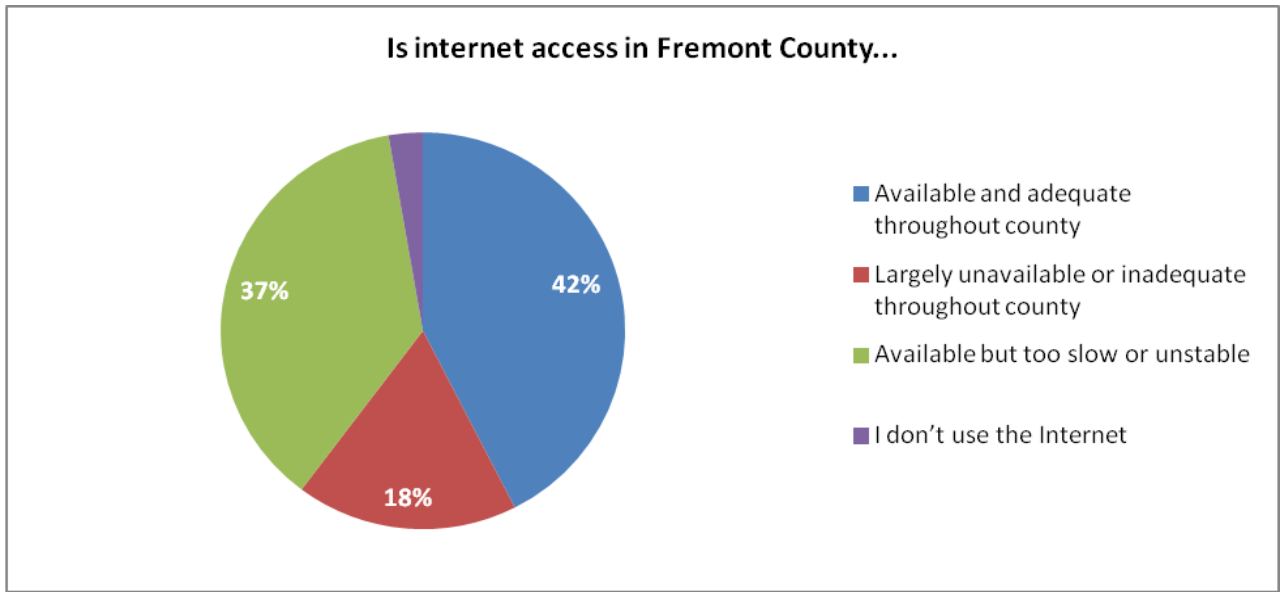

What is the worst problem facing Fremont County?
Other
Over-regulation of business
Low relative wages
Too dependent on prison industry
Seasonal economy
Lack of jobs
0%
5%
10%
15%
20%
25%
30%
35%
40%
45%

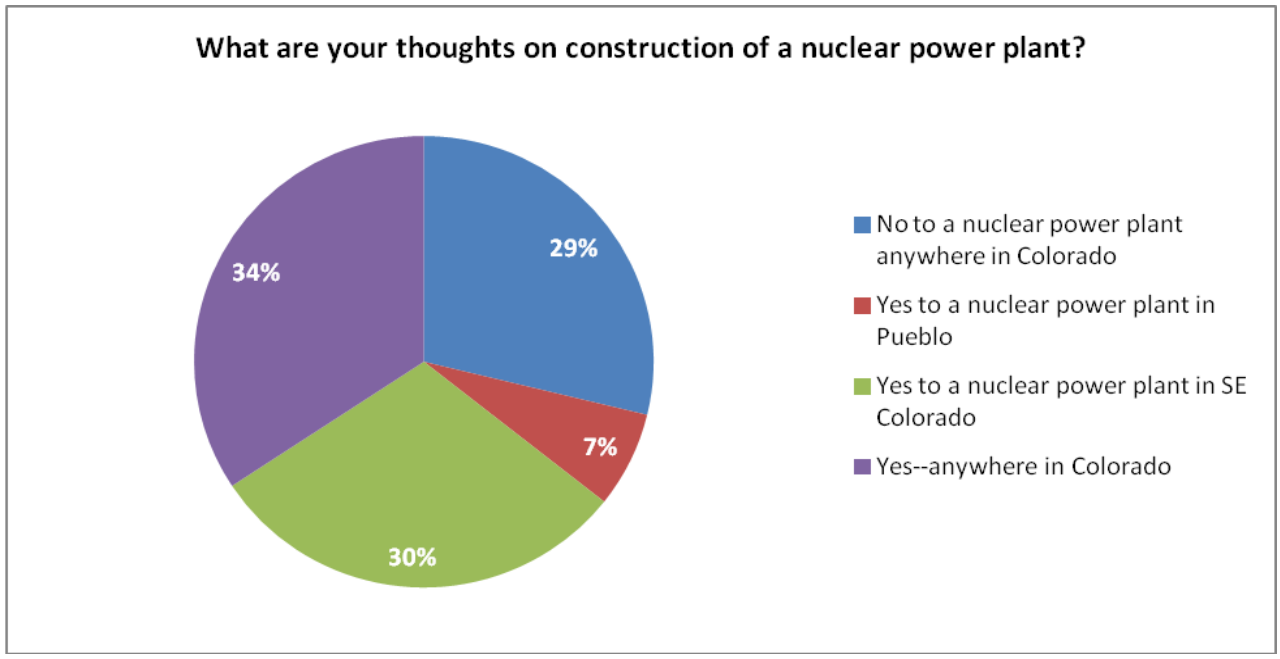

What should be the primary economic development focus of the county?
Attract new businesses
Create new employment opportunities
Develop renewable energy
Increase tourism
Support and assist existing business to expand
0%
5%
10%
15%
20%
25%
30%
35%
40%
45%

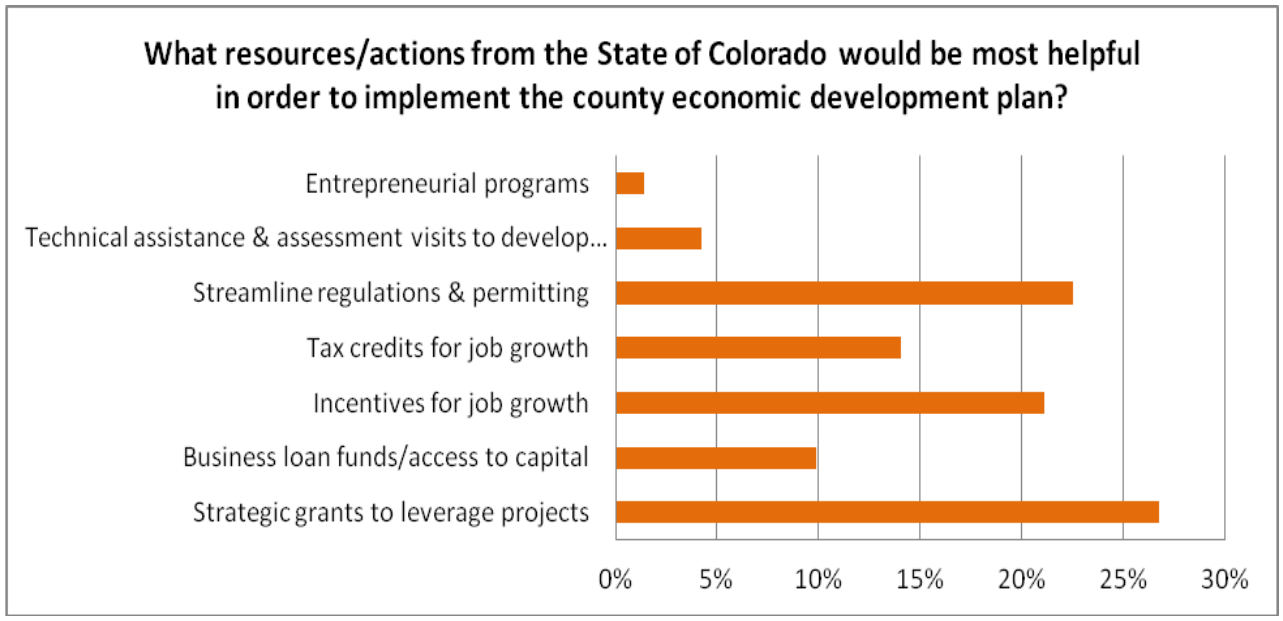

How difficult would it be for an entrepreneur to open/move a business here?
Impossible
Very difficult because of local regulations
No worse than in other communities
Easier than in other counties
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%
70%
80%


What would be the biggest hurdle for a new business in Fremont County?
Other
Finding a suitable location
Acquiring planning and zoning permits
Finding qualified employees
Accessing capital
0%
5%
10%
15%
20%
25%
30%
35%
40%
45%
50%


Do you believe water is a factor limiting growth and prosperity in Fremont County?
43%
57%
Yes
No


Is internet access in Fremont County...
42%
37%
18%
Available and adequate throughout county
Largely unavailable or inadequate throughout county
Available but too slow or unstable
I don't use the Internet


What are your thoughts on construction of a nuclear power plant?
29%
7%
30%
34%
No to a nuclear power plant anywhere in Colorado
Yes to a nuclear power plant in Pueblo
Yes to a nuclear power plant in SE Colorado
Yes--anywhere in Colorado


What resources/actions from the State of Colorado would be most helpful in order to implement the county economic development plan?
Entrepreneurial programs
Technical assistance & assessment visits to develop...
Streamline regulations & permitting
Tax credits for job growth
Incentives for job growth
Business loan funds/access to capital
Strategic grants to leverage projects
0%
5%
10%
15%
20%
25%
30%

County Development Strategy

Fremont County's economy relies heavily on tourism and the prisons. However, local leaders have taken an active approach toward recruiting primary employers and utilizing available resources to diversify the economy. In addition to the tourist attractions, Fremont County has an extensive transportation system, natural resources, industrial park, health services and an excellent education system.

Located at the foot of the Rocky Mountains and along the Arkansas River Valley, Fremont County has much to offer in recreation for locals and tourists alike. The phrase, "A river runs through it" certainly fits Fremont County as the Arkansas River runs East to West through the county. The river provides opportunities for fishermen and river rafters, while the mountains provide a place for hikers. Tourists can take a ride on the train through the Royal Gorge or visit many of the museums, art galleries and outfitters.

The prison system is undoubtedly the largest employer in Fremont County; there are seven state prisons and three federal prisons in the county. Although the prisons offer higher paying jobs and employ a broad range of positions, several issues arise with such a large incarcerated population. Census data includes the prison population, approximately 15%, which distorts other data and analysis. Fremont County officials recognize this issue and continue to work on a solution that will accurately reflect the county's population and demographics.

The highway system in Fremont County includes several Federal Highways and State Highways 115, 96, 69 and 9. The highways provide excellent access from all directions, in and out of the county. The railroad provides rail access from Canon City east. The Golden Age Center provides local transit services in Canon City. The Fremont County Airport provides commercial, corporate, private and military services.

Natural resources are abundant in Fremont County. Local leaders are exploring options to utilize uranium, coal, geothermal and oil resources to create new job opportunities. The opening of the Northfield Coal Mine will provide 60 new jobs in the community. Geothermal energy is also being explored as the need for renewable energy continues to grow.

Fremont County, in conjunction with other counties in the Upper Arkansas, is taking an aggressive approach to increasing broadband services in the community. As technology becomes more and more important, the need for adequate broadband will become a major determining factor for major employers locating in a community. The Upper Arkansas Area COG is working with Chaffee County to create a regional broadband system. Participation and support for this program have been phenomenal. Once the system is in place, Fremont County and the Upper Arkansas Area will be well positioned to compete for technology based businesses.

Fremont County is well positioned to accommodate new businesses. The Airport Industrial Park provides space for major businesses looking to locate in the community, while the business incubator provides space for new and emerging entrepreneurs.

Since the 2002 CEDS, Fremont County has completed the following projects:

- Utility improvements at the industrial park
- New schools have been built in Florence and Canon City
- Upgrades have been made to schools
- Recycling program was created
- Fremont Heritage Commission was created and recognized by Colorado Preservation Inc.

Growth in Fremont County has been steady and is expected to continue. As with any community, growth spurs new developments and projects. As the County continues to improve and expand on available resources, the following projects will be a priority during the next five years and beyond.

Goal: **Economic Development**-Leaders are focusing efforts towards creating jobs by utilizing available resources and becoming marketable in today's technological economy. These efforts will include improving broadband services, expanding infrastructure, support for downtown development and exploring renewable energy.

Priority 1: **Airport Industrial Park**

A dedicated industrial park is vital to business and industrial development. Sanitary sewer must be expanded from Florence High School to airport industrial lots and an additional water tank is needed on the north side of U.S. 50 to adequately expand water supply. Private ownership and development is key.

Project 2: **Increase broadband availability and connectivity**

Much of Fremont County already is suffering from lack of adequate broadband for high-speed Internet, wireless communications and other applications. High-tech companies cannot locate in the county because current broadband is not adequate for their needs, stifling local economic development. Fremont County is working with other Upper Arkansas counties to create a regional approach to improving broadband in the Upper Arkansas. This is a high priority project, expected to be completed in the near future.

Project 3: **Canon City downtown revitalization**

Revitalization of the downtown will create opportunities for existing and emerging business.

Project 4: **Retrofit Clark Power Plant**

Black Hills Energy announced the closing of the local power plant as of Jan. 1, 2012. A local energy committee from FEDC immediately began work to save the plant through retrofitting and modification to create an energy-efficient, affordable gasification plant. Such a move would save jobs and help avoid increases in power costs.

Project 5: **Aircrete America Company**

Aircrete America has purchased and renovated a 138,000 square-foot manufacturing facility in Fremont County. The $25 million project will be financed, in part, by the EB-5 program. The EB-5 modeling program credits the project with creating 589 permanent direct and indirect jobs and an additional 110 construction jobs during the construction phase of the project.

Project 6: **Brush Hollow hydroelectric plant**

TransCanada and private developers are considering building a pumped hydroelectric storage plant near Brush Hollow Reservoir in Penrose. The proposed plant would have the capacity to generate 432 megawatts (one megawatt powers 750 to 1,000 homes at any given time), and employ 300 workers during construction. It would provide 25 to 30 permanent jobs.

Goal: **Improve Community Facilities and Services**

Project 1: **Water storage tank**

Water is an important asset to the community. Improvements and additions for storage are needed.

Project 2: **Expansion of Pueblo Community College Campus**

The PCC campus is struggling to continue meeting the demands of its ever-increasing student body. A fund drive is under way to enlarge the campus, especially classroom size to accommodate its growing student body. This project would dramatically enhance the affordable post-high school education opportunities for the citizens of Fremont County.

Goal: **Improve Transportation**

Project 1: **County road improvements**

Despite the work being done by the Fremont County Department of Transportation, many of the county's roads are in danger of deterioration because of the high cost of maintenance. Driver safety must be kept at the forefront, which means roads must be well maintained.

Project 2: **Airport runway improvements**

Fremont County has outgrown its 5,400 foot runway and is seeking to upgrade it to a higher standard at 7,000 feet in length. Such a runway would allow larger and heavier aircraft to take off and land, bringing untold additional business to the county. The county recently approved a contract for a new Airport Master Plan to design the future of the airport.

Project 3: **Public transit**

Affordable public transit has been on improvement agendas for years. The recent addition of the Golden Age Shuttle has somewhat eased the situation, but its hours and services are very limited. Continued growth is needed in public transit for the entire county. Plans are underway to expand hours, services and coverage.

Project 4: **Highways, entrances and major arterials**

CDOT is currently working on a roundabout at the intersection of Highway 115 and Elm Avenue. Another roundabout is under consideration as part of the Downtown Initiative. Entrances into the county on Highway 50 and Highway 115 should be refreshed and renewed. Also, another major arterial through north Canon City, perhaps including a bypass, is needed.

Goal: **Renewable Energy**

Project 1: **Geothermal development strategy**

Significant geothermal resources throughout eastern Fremont County are a hidden gem. This strategic planning project would determine how best to utilize those resources.

Goal: **Water Resource Development**

Project 1: **Weed control in waterways**

The Fremont County Department of Weed Control works to educate the public concerning noxious weeds and to exercise the necessary authority to obtain effective control of noxious weeds throughout the county. This mission is especially important in waterways to improve water availability and transmission and to conserve natural resources.

Goal: **Improve Housing**

Project 1: **Housing rehabilitation**

Affordable housing continues to be a need throughout Fremont County. The recent recession has left many families with inadequate housing.

Goal: **Increase Recreation and Tourism**

Project 1: **Arkansas Riverwalk trail extension**

The Riverwalk follows the Arkansas River as it winds through wetlands, groves of cottonwoods and the John Griffin Regional Park, a nature area located in central Canon City. The crushed gravel path is open for biking, hiking, strolling and horseback riding. Leashed dogs are welcome. Short-term plans are to extend the Riverwalk to Pueblo Community College Fremont Campus, and long-term plans are to continue extension of the path as a whole.

Project 2: **Motor Sports Park**

The closure of the Hogbacks area to motorized vehicles meant riders have few spaces left to enjoy their sport. Many residents are seeking a park where they can safely ride. One family has suggested establishing a new nonprofit organization to fund and construct such a course, beginning with procurement of land for the private development.

Project 3: **Arkansas River improvements**

The Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area, in cooperation with the Colorado Department of Transportation, has several projects planned for improving the Arkansas River corridor.

Project 4: **Historic preservation tourism**

Heritage tourism is traveling to experience the places, artifacts and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present, including cultural, historic and natural resources. Historic preservation creates jobs, increases property values, spurs further economic development and revitalization, and is a major force toward a thriving economy.

Project 5: **Pathfinder Park Development**

This is a joint project between Fremont County and Canon City Parks and Recreation. The park is seen as the future of the 4-H program and the Fremont County Fair. Continued development includes an events center, indoor arena, barns and stalls.

Goals continued

Strategic planning in Fremont County will be an ongoing process. An immediate project to be addressed will be retrofitting of the Clark Power Plant and saving the jobs currently in place. Infrastructure to accommodate the AirCrete America Company will also be a high priority in the community. Other projects identified in the CEDS are long term, unless otherwise noted, and contingent on available funds. As projects are under taken and available funds are identified, adjustments may be necessary.

Local leaders will work with their local economic development organizations as well as SCEDD, State and Federal sources to implement the plan and make adjustments as needed. Funding sources will be identified and pursued for individual projects. While some projects may not be eligible for EDA funds, USDA, DOLA, SBA, HUD, Private Foundations and Grants through the Governor's office will be researched.

In some cases, a regional approach may be more feasible. Most counties in Southeastern Colorado lack the funds for matching grants; therefore, a collaborative effort could be beneficial. In those instances, Fremont County will work with other counties and regional planners to ensure continuity between all organizations.

Fremont County will report its progress to SCEDD to be included in the annual CEDS updates. As new opportunities arise, projects or adjustments will also be included in the updated CEDS.

The State Bottom Up Economic Development Strategy is included as a supplement to the CEDS. Fremont County will continue to work on the Bottom Up Strategy at the State level, while working on CEDS projects at a Federal level. In any case, both strategies are vital to the economic growth of Fremont County and should be considered complimentary to each other.

Colorado
Office of Economic Development and International Trade

"Bottom-Up" 2011 County Economic Development Summary
Top Five Economic Development Goals & Strategies
For Fremont County, Colorado

As part of Governor Hickenlooper's Bottom Up Economic Development strategy, we are requesting that each county develop or update its economic development plan based on current input from local citizens, businesses and other interested stakeholders. The objective of the county plan is to identify **up to five** economic development goals and strategies of the county, utilizing information gathered from the online public survey, the public county meetings and comments, and the most current economic development plans in the county (town, city, or county). These county plans will be rolled up and incorporated into fourteen regional plans that together will assist in developing an overall statewide economic development plan.

Goal(s)[i]	#1 Increase opportunity for primary jobs and diversified economy	#2 Take advantage of both long and short term benefits of regional events	#3 Optimize existing and developing tourism	#4 Encourage entrepreneurial opportunity	#5 Support existing community amenities to enhance quality of life
Strategy(ies)[ii]	• Address local regulatory concerns • Craft and finance strong, ongoing major marketing promotions • Develop "Business Friendly" community • Promote Clean Energy Projects	• Determine impact of the event • Facilitate cooperation among sponsors, participants and community	• Expand marketing beyond current audiences • Establish mentoring relationships between experienced and novice attraction operators • Encourage year-round bicycling opportunities	• Address local regulatory concerns • Partner with SBDC • Create networking opportunity • Develop a tool kit of financial strategies	• Identify amenities critical to the ability to draw and keep business and workers in the county. • Identify informal alliances in the community that coordinate/cooperate to deliver needed services. • Strengthen/develop relationships among amenities organizations to increase efficiencies. • Enlist participation from prison wardens and workers in local organizations.
Action(s)[iii]	• Empower FEDC • Educate community on local gov'tgovts jurisdiction • Improve website and links • Showcase FEDC	• Establish community event task force • Network task force results with appropriate community	• Website and social networking • Identify protégés and mentors • Publicly recognize protégés and	• Open and friendly dialogue between business owners and regulators/gov'ts • Promote benefits of Enterprise Zone	• Develop a webwebsite illustrating linksrelationships among amenities and alliances

	• Network with business organizations and FEDC • Partner with Work Force center • Support Penrose Hydro-Electric Plant. • Support effort to maintain Clark Plant as local power • Assist proposed projects like Northfield Coal Mine, Aircrete, Mississippi Company	organizations • Enhance existing tourism awareness • Empower tourism board	mentors • Establish designated bike routes (like Fort Collins)	• Promote Leading Edge program • Educate community on local gov't jurisdiction • Encourage membership in chambers, FEDC and downtown organizations • Fremont County Managers Mtg publishes monthly report in newspapers	• Identify potential for beneficial alliances not already in place. • Convene summits for groups that may benefit from collaborative efforts that are not already doing so. • Convene meetings with prison heads to see how they can encourage their employees to be more involved in their community. • Schedule opportunity for relationship building both existing and potential. • A free day for servers, hotel desk clerks, etc. at local tourist attractions. • A tasting event for the local people who deal with tourists to all the local eateries.
Expected Outcome(s), i.e., Measurable Results[iv] hr	• Applicable and appropriate regulatory structure • Increase business hosting opportunity • More jobs and reduced unemployment • Regular FEDC reports to local gov'tgovts and chambers	• Increase and/or expand tourism attractions • More tourism related jobs • Increase business revenue and tax revenue • Increase patronage of Main Street and tourism events	• Open new Dinosaur Museum at Royal Gorge • Increase tourism visitation • Increase tourism, business revenue and tax revenue • More tourism	• Fewer empty buildings • Regulatory common sense and flexibility • Encourage utilization of local businesses both goods and professional services • Increased longevity of new businesses • Cohesive business community with stronger partners • Community will see gov't cooperation and	• More efficient use of resources • Additional and visible partnerships • Better local information to tourists

				projects	
Primary Partners[v]	• City and county gov'tsgovts and ad hoc committee • FEDC/Chambers/Work Force/Main Street • Northfield • Aercrete • Mississippi Company • Clark Plant Effort • Other FEDC prospects • SECWDC • SCEDD • DOLA • OEDIT	• Tourism Board • Chambers • FCA • Heritage Coalition • Over The River Team • Local event steering committees	• Tourism Board • Royal Gorge Bridge • GPPS • City • FEDC • Recreation District • Bike Clubs	• Chambers • FEDC • Downtown organizations • Local gov'tsgovts and agencies • Work force center • Newspapers and radio • SECWDC • SCEDD • DOLA	• Human services organizations • Local gov'tsgovts • Hospital • PCC • Fire Departments • Airport • Prisons • Community Organizations • Restaurants • Attractions • businesses
Available Resources[vi]	• Information from ad hoc committee • Economic Vitality Report (CNB) • Demographic information • Available real estate	• Information on prior projects and planning documents	• Economic Vitality Report (CNB) • Demographic information • Fort Collins' plan from how they did it years ago	• Incubator • Enterprise zone tax credits • Networking thru chamber and FEDC events • Available real estate • Business assistance thru FEDC • State funds available through revolving loan funds,	• Regular interagency meetings • Regular intergovernmental meetings • Fremont managers group • Chambers • Business Associations • Prison Employee Councils (both federal and state)
Needed Resources & identified issues or barriers[vii]	• Government flexibility and regulatory common sense • Overt effort to use local businesses when appropriate - incentives • Intergovernmental/agency cooperation	• Encourage visionary planning • Cooperative event team responsive to all aspects of diverse economy	• Cooperative networking within tourism industry • Equitable distribution of state tourism funds • Costs to study traffic; painting costs on streets; signage; maps	• Opportunity for candid dialogue between gov't and business owners • Local gov't and agencies give local businesses priority for goods and services • For projects with small business utilization goals, weight contract dollars awarded to rural businesses by	• Timely response to agencies' budget requests • Organizational Issues • Share information in a positive way • Funds to cover costs associated with organizing and putting on events

				primes. • Establish grant dollars for FEDC confidential counseling of businesses in crisis. • Organize area small business support group • Cooperative attitude among gov'ts and agencies	
Timeline[viii]	• Current: Active Ad Hoc Committee. Formal alliances in place. • 30 days: Organize public education of FEDC benefits.	• 30 days: Establish community event task force. Cooperate in advertising and other community outreach efforts to help events grow. • 60 days: Task force networks with community organizations	• 30 days: Establish tourism ambassador program with liaisons between attractions and visitor services. • 60 days: Organize protégé-mentor program.	• Current: Schedule gov't/business meeting. Local gov'ts adopt resolutions to optimize utilization of local business. State agencies weight bid dollars awarded to rural based smalls. • 90 days: Smalls group support organized. FEDC business crisis counseling.	• Current: Formal alliances in place. • 90 days: Identify new alliances that need created. Convene summits. • 180 days: Website development

A few more questions…. When completing this template, please provide a written response to these questions, as applicable

1. What current federal, state and local programs or initiatives hinder your local economic development efforts?

- State tourism dollars are channeled to resort mountain communities like Aspen.
- CDPHE rules by intimidation with nonsense and inflexible application of regulations.
- State agencies need to apply common sense and NOT a one size fits all to projects, especially in rural communities
- Business starts do not have the revenue typical of metro business starts. Especially true of CDOT and CDPHE.
- Local gov't is inflexible and lacks common sense regarding flood plain regulations, ADA requirements, energy code.
- PUC acts on behalf of big utility and cities rather than small community. PUC should be required to proportionately weight impact of decision on rural communities.
- Provide opportunity for rural communities to provide information to PUC, CDOT and CDPHE. Often rural communities are left out of the decision making process that immediately impacts the community.
- Assist appeals boards that are backlogged with cases so that decisions are not onerously detrimental to communities.

- Deny subdivisions that do not have water.

2. What resources/actions do you need from the State of Colorado to assist your effort in implementing a county economic development plan?

- Keep water in drainage basins rather than building conduits into metro areas. This will entice migration from metro to rural communities.
- Reward project managers of rural projects that use local/rural businesses by weighting small business dollars awarded to rural businesses.
- Redefine small business to benefit business with < 5 employees and gross revenues <$500K.
- Allow Enterprise Zone tax credit to be applicable to other business structures than C Corporations.
- Grant local gov't and agencies flexibility to apply common sense
- Channel tourism dollars beyond ski areas.
- Weight grant and state dollars that support rural economic development. 23 jobs in rural areas has bigger economic impact than 23 jobs in metro areas.

3. **Identify innovative economic development programs and partners in the county or region that can be replicated across the state?**
   - Clark Plant Effort includes burner technology, alternative fuel gasifier and coal mine.
   - FEDC Ad Hoc Committee cooperating with local gov't for business friendly regulations
   - Fremont Managers Meeting of govt agencies meets monthly
   - Active UAACOG serves as community liaison in four county region – Lake, Custer, Chaffee, Fremont
   - City councils and County commissioners meet monthly

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[i] Goals are expressions of the desires of the community; a future condition or state that it's aiming for – a concise statement that articulates the desired future. For example: "Update and expand marketing efforts for economic development in _____County"

[ii] Strategies provide direction and framework for how to go about achieving the goal. For example, "Craft and finance strong, ongoing major marketing promotions."

[iii] Actions or implementation steps will carry out the strategy in a systematic way. For example, "Brand _____County and its communities through the use of an agreed-upon economic development logo and slogan" or "Develop a focused marketing program which consists of email, social networks, and blogs to promote the county."

[iv] Expected outcomes and measurable results should reflect a realistic feedback of how well the strategy is working. How do we know we're making progress? This includes building results into the action plans – relating back to the goal. For example, for marketing efforts, "Number of inquiries stating they saw our ad/website/news release/story, etc. etc."

[v] Identify partners with something to contribute/gain from involvement in this effort – e.g. Chambers, trade associations, non-profits, etc. etc

[vi] Available resources can, and should, include more than funding. Students, volunteers, business sponsorships, strategic grants, can all be considered. Also, ways to leverage resources.

[vii] Needed resources should be based on gaps existing after all available resources have been considered. The more innovative, creative use of resources without requiring additional funding will be the most expeditious in the short run. Issues or barriers are items that need to be addressed in order to realize goal.

[viii] Timeline-some goals may be long-term. Thse may be broken down into intermediate steps with identified timelines for each action step. Short-term goals or specific projects may yhave a definite timeline. This is a way of keeping the process on track and reinvigorating efforts if a timeline slips, so that it doesn't get forgotten.

This County Plan was submitted on April 29, 2011 by the county team (please list the county team members below):

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2. Edie McLish, Fremont Economic Development Corporation

3. Debbie Bell, Fremont County Commissioner

4. Angela Bellantoni, Private Sector Small Business

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