

# Southern Colorado Economic Development District



## 2010 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

*Submitted December 30, 2011*

## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Planning Organization .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<i>Organizational Structure.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Staff.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<b>Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<i>Stress Index.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<b>Regional Economy .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<i>Population.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Prison Population.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Population by Age.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Population by Race.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Unemployment.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Per Capita Personal Income.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Assessed Valuation.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Revenues.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<b>Regional Socio-Economic Characteristics.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<i>Geography.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Environment.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Climate.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Air Quality.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Farmland/Agriculture.....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Superfund Sites.....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Flood Zones.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Public Lands.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Threatened or Endangered Species.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Natural Resources.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Water.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Mining.....</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Energy Resources.....</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Historical Resources.....</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Transportation.....</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Highways.....</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Airports.....</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Railroads.....</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Buslines.....</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Infrastructure.....</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Telecommunications.....</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Broadband.....</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Industrial Parks.....</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Health Care.....</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Housing.....</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Education.....</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Workforce Development.....</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Cluster Development.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Financial Resources.....</i>	<i>27</i>
<b>Regional Strategic Planning .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<i>Values and Vision.....</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>Regional Goals and Actions.....</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>Implementation.....</i>	<i>36</i>
<i>Bottom Up Economic Development Strategy.....</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>Region 6.....</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>Region 7.....</i>	<i>40</i>
<i>Region 13.....</i>	<i>47</i>
<i>Region 14.....</i>	<i>51</i>

*\*Individual County CEDS follow the regional plan.*

## Introduction

---

Southern Colorado Economic Development District (SCEDD) is partially funded by a Planning Grant provided by the Economic Development Administration (EDA). As a requirement of the grant, the planning organization must submit a five year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). SCEDD is pleased to submit the 2010 CEDS to satisfy that requirement. The 2010 CEDS will provide a road map for coordinating economic activities, monitoring and evaluating long and short term economic goals and encouraging economic growth in the twelve county District. The overall goal is to diversify the regional economy, stabilize population in communities suffering out-migration and create a foundation for future growth and prosperity across the region.

SCEDD solicited public input by conducting town hall meetings in each of the twelve counties; a total of nineteen meetings were held. SCEDD utilized PowerPoint presentations and an audience response system to encourage participation both verbally and anonymously.

The Strategy Committee is comprised of public officials, business leaders, economic leaders and private individuals. The committee worked with public officials, local leaders, economic developers and planners to update the goals, record the progress of past projects, comment on county assets and update community programs.

In 2011, Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper's representatives visited individual counties in the region and solicited input for a state "Bottom Up" Economic Development Initiative. The purpose of the Bottom Up Plan (Colorado Blueprint) is to create a statewide blueprint for economic development. The blueprint will serve as a collaborative approach to increasing economic development and growth at the local and state levels. Due to the timing of the 2010 CEDS report and the Colorado Blueprint, SCEDD incorporated the counties' Bottom Up goals with the CEDS goals to provide a complete, overall cooperation between local, regional, State and Federal economic goals.

The 2010 CEDS for Southern Colorado Economic Development District includes:

- Demographic profile of the twelve counties in the District
- Analysis of the strengths and weaknesses
- Identification of opportunities
- Individual county economic analysis
- Progress of previous CEDS projects
- Regional and county Bottom Up Plans
- Goals for the next five years
- New projects for the region and individual counties
- Implementation of the plan

The intended purpose of the CEDS is to present a cooperative effort of the region to maintain a structured approach to their economic goals and act as a reliable source of information for private and governmental funding. The CEDS will provide a comprehensive plan for each county to implement their projects and evaluate the progress over the next five years. A successful CEDS will lead to the formulation and implementation of a program that creates higher-skill, higher wage jobs, raise income levels, diversify the economy and improve the quality of life, while protecting the environment. In addition, SCEDD will monitor the progress and provide an annual update of the regional plan to EDA.

## Planning Organization

---

Southern Colorado Economic Development District is a non-profit organization, established in 1968. SCEDD's mission is to stabilize and diversify the regional economy. Since 1980, SCEDD's service area consisted of thirteen southeastern counties. In 2007, Huerfano County withdrew their membership with the SCEDD District. The current authorized service area of the District encompasses the twelve southeastern counties, illustrated below.



The twelve counties are broke into four sub-state planning regions as follows:

Upper Arkansas: Chaffee, Custer, Fremont and Lake  
Southeast: Baca, Bent, Crowley, Kiowa, Otero and Prowers  
South Central: Las Animas  
Pueblo

This document will present an analysis of the District by sub-state planning regions. Each sub state planning region contributes its own unique attributes in the District. For this reason, when discussing the regional makeup of the District, data and demographics will be presented by the sub-state planning region; in some instances, Southeast Colorado refers to counties outside the Upper Arkansas region, unless otherwise specified. Just as each region is unique, so are the counties. Individual county attributes, demographics and projects will be presented later in the CEDS document.

The District is funded by an EDA Planning Grant, county membership dues and fee for services. Counties in the District pay a membership fee of seventeen cents per capita, which serves as the matching funds for the EDA Planning Grant. SCEDD provides planning and technical services at a below cost rate to its member counties; such as credit analysis and packaging of local and Business Loan Fund applications and the Pueblo Urban Renewal Façade program. In addition, SCEDD monitors and reports on economic trends in the District and prepares grant applications on behalf of local governments and businesses in support of economic development.

## Organizational Structure

Southern Colorado Economic Development District's Board of Directors is comprised of one director for each county, plus one director for every 25,000 residents (or fraction thereof) in the county. Based on the 2010 Census population counts, Pueblo County has seven directors, Fremont County has three directors and the remaining counties have two directors. The Directors are appointed by the Board of County Commissioners and serve until replaced. The Directors represent the private, business, governmental and community sectors as required by the Code of Federal Regulations. The officers of the board are a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and a Treasurer. The officers serve in the same capacity on the Executive Committee.

Responsibilities of the board are to:

- Determine District policies, goals and objectives.
- Adopt Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws and make amendments thereto.
- Resolve membership questions.
- Review actions of the Executive Committee.

### 1. GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES (51-65%)

*Elected officials and/or employees of a general purpose unit of state, local or Indian tribal government who have been appointed to represent the government.*

Name	Government	Position
Peter Dawson	Baca County Commissioners	Commissioner
Bill Long	Bent County Commissioners	Commissioner
Dennis Giese	Chaffee County Commissioners	Commissioner
Tobe Allumbaugh	Crowley County Commissioners	Commissioner
Lynn Attebery	Custer County Commissioners	Commissioner
Dana Angel	Fremont County Finance Director	Director
Judy Lohnes	UAACOG	Executive Director
Donald Oswald	Kiowa County Commissioners	Commissioner
Richard Scott	Kiowa County Commissioners	Commissioner
Dolores Semsack	Lake County Commissioners	Commissioner
Carl Schaefer	Lake County Commissioners	Commissioner
Jim Vigil	Las Animas County Commissioners	Commissioner
Louis Fineberg	City of Trinidad	City Planner
Kevin Karney	Otero County Commissioners	Commissioner
Henry Schnabel	Prowers County Commissioners	Commissioner
Anthony Nuñez	Pueblo County Commissioners	Director
David Valdez	Colorado City Metropolitan District	District Manager

**NON-GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES (35-49%)**

**Private Sector Representatives:** Any senior management official or executive holding a key decision-making position, with respect to any for-profit enterprise. (At least one required)

Name	Company / Enterprise	Position
Glen Ausmus	Rancher	Owner
Mark Cloer	Peerless Communiqué, LLC	Owner
Lisa Nolder	LawnCo of Lamar	Owner
Dave Abeyta	Wells Fargo	Vice President

**Stakeholder Organization Representatives:** Executive directors of chambers of commerce, or representatives of institutions of post-secondary education, workforce development groups or labor groups. (At least one required)

Name	Organization	Position
Lisa Trigilio	Bent County Development	Executive Director
Wendell Pryor	Chaffee County ED	Executive Director
Edie McLish	Fremont Economic Development	Director
Bryan Bryant	Otero County Economic Dev.	Director
Dee Hoag	Custer County Economic Dev.	Executive Director
Dan Centa	PEDCO	Executive Director
Caroline Parra	SBDC	Executive Director
Aimee Tihonovich	Pueblo County Economic Dev.	Director

**AT-LARGE REPRESENTATIVES (0-14%)-None**

Other individuals who represent the principal economic interests of the region. (No minimum required)

Name	Area of Interest	Background
Margaret Eichman	SCEDD	Chair

**CALCULATIONS**

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1. Government Representatives (51-65%)	<u>17</u>	<u>57%</u>
2. Non- Government Representatives (35-49%)	<u>12</u>	<u>40%</u>
A. Private Sector Representatives (at least 1)	<u>4</u>	
B. Stakeholder Organization Representatives (at least 1)	<u>8</u>	
3. At-Large Representatives (0-14%)	<u>1</u>	<u>3%</u>
<b>Total Board Membership</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>

The Executive Committee is elected by the Board of Directors, consisting of the officers of the Board plus four at large representatives. No sub-state planning District shall have more than two representatives on the committee.

Responsibilities of the executive committee are to:

- Review and recommend annual budget for Board approval.
- Review and recommend annual local financial support and its division among the membership for Board approval.
- Recommend the adoption of Articles of Incorporation, By-Laws, and Amendments thereto for Board approval.
- Review and recommend guidelines for carrying out the policies, programs and purposes of the District for Board approval.
- Recommend policies for Board approval.

Member	County
Spike Ausmus	Baca County
Lynn Attebery	Custer County
Edie McLish	Fremont County
Donald Oswald	Kiowa County
Jim Vigil	Las Animas County
Louis Fineberg	Las Animas County
Margaret Eichman	Pueblo County
Dan Centa	Pueblo County

The Strategy Committee consists of the Executive Committee and representatives of the District. The committee is tasked with overseeing the preparation and adoption of the CEDS.

**PRIVATE SECTOR REPRESENTATIVES (At least 51%)**

*Any senior management official or executive, holding a key decision-making position, with respect to any for-profit enterprise.*

Name	Company	Position
Lynn Attebery	Cross D Bar Ranches	Owner
Spike Ausmus	Rancher	Owner
Kevin Karney	Karney Cattle Company	Owner
Jim Vigil	One Stop Sewing Shop	Owner
Carole Lange	Carole Lange and Associates	President
Mark Cloer	Peerless Communiqué, LLC	Owner
Lisa Nolder	LawnCo of Lamar	Owner
Ken Olsen	Ken Olsen, CPA	Owner

**REPRESENTATIVES OF OTHER ECONOMIC INTERESTS (No more than 49%)**

*Persons who provide additional representation of the main economic interests of the region. These may include, but are not limited to: public officials, community leaders, representatives of workforce development boards, institutions of higher education, minority and labor groups, and private individuals.*

Name	Area of Interest	Position
Margaret Eichman	SCEDD	Chair
Edie McLish	Fremont County ED	Executive Director
Donald Oswald	Kiowa County Commissioner	Commissioner
Dan Centa	PEDCO	Executive Director
Lisa Trigilio	Bent County ED	Executive Director
Wendell Pryor	Chaffee County ED	Executive Director
Louis Fineberg	Trinidad Planning	City Planner

**CALCULATIONS**

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Private Sector Representatives (at least 51%)	8	<u>53%</u>
Representatives of Other Economic Interests (no more than 49%)	7	<u>47%</u>
<b>Total Committee Membership</b>	<b>15</b>	<b><u>100%</u></b>

## *Staff*

The Southern Colorado Economic Development District consists of five staff members: Executive Director, Assistant Director, Loan Officer, Loan Closer and Administrative Assistant. The responsibilities of each staff member vary on the needs of the District; main duties are highlighted below.

### ***Executive Director:***

- Oversees the day to day operations of the organization
- Maintains relationships with local, state and federal partners
- Maintain relationships with the public and private sectors
- Development and implementation of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
- Identifies and attracts businesses for community development
- Identifies funding and prepares applications for economic development projects
- Analyzes and reports on economic trends in the District

### ***Assistant Director:***

- Assists Executive Director with planning and administration of the District
- Research and maintain demographic information
- Maintain community profiles
- Prepare and submit grants
- Maintains compliance with federal requirements

### ***Loan Officer:***

- Provides technical support for local Business Loan Funds
- Prepares loan applications and submits to the program administrator for approval
- Markets available loan programs

### ***Loan Closer:***

- Assists Loan Officer with loan applications
- Research demographic information

### ***Administrative Assistant:***

- Performs clerical duties
- Assists staff with packaging loan applications
- Maintains office files

## Executive Summary

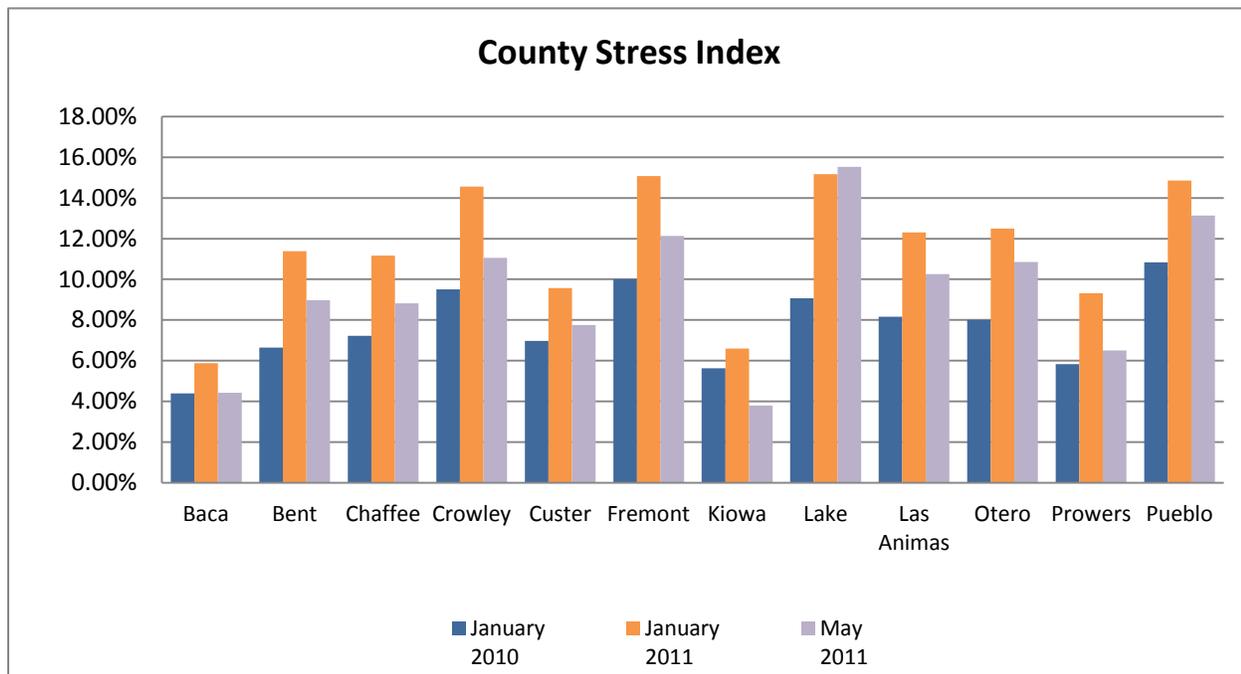
The SCEDD region encompasses four distinct but inter-related economies. In non-recession years the regional economy of the District is fairly stable. However, counties continued to experience out-migration and lacked the necessary tools to attract, retain and expand private sector employment. The recession, which began in late 2007, devastated a region that was already distressed and lagging in economic growth.

Economists report the “recession” ended in June, 2009. However, as evidenced throughout the CEDS document, the greatest impact of the recession was felt during 2009 and into 2011. The increase in gas prices and the lack of funding opportunities slowed progress and discouraged new business ventures across the nation. By the end of 2010, counties in the SCEDD District experienced substantial economic dislocation from lay-offs, high unemployment, plummeting school enrollments, and a decrease in tourism dollars.

### Stress Index

The stress index is a formula calculated by the Associated Press, which collectively measures unemployment, foreclosure and bankruptcy rates in a county. Under a rough rule of thumb, a county is considered stressed when its score exceeds 11; a higher score indicates more stress.

The beginning of 2010 showed all counties in the District under 11%, despite the increase in foreclosures and high unemployment rates. The stress index peaked for all counties in the District in the first quarter of 2011 and started showing some improvement in the second quarter. As of May, 2011 six counties in the District scored below the threshold. However, economic recovery will be slow if not stagnant as local governments are cutting budgets while trying to maintain services for its citizens.



## Regional Economy

### Population

The six southeastern counties continue to experience out-migration. **Baca County** saw the highest decrease in population of any county in the District. A comparison of the 2000 and 2010 Census shows three counties losing over 10% of their population and two counties showing over 5% growth. However, the growth can be explained by the increase in inmate populations in correctional facilities located in **Bent** and **Crowley Counties**.

Three of the Upper Arkansas Counties are experiencing growth. **Custer County** saw the highest growth of any county in the District. **Lake County** reports a 7% decrease in population in 2010 over 2000.

**Las Animas County** reported a 2% increase in population in 2010 over 2000.

**Pueblo County** has experienced modest population growth in the last decade. Compared to other metro counties outside the District, Pueblo's population growth is dwarfed by their double digit population increases.

### Prison Population

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
<b>Bent</b>	1,059	1,079	1,076	1,046	1,064	1,056
<b>Chaffee</b>	1,098	1,111	1,101	1,203	1,238	1,162
<b>Crowley</b>	1,551	2,203	2,538	2,477	2,673	2,649
<b>Fremont</b>	7,455	7,323	7,339	7,556	7,751	7,330
<b>Las Animas</b>	471	475	480	470	485	482
<b>Pueblo</b>	496	493	721	717	701	686

It is important to note the prison population when analyzing total population in each county. Six counties in the District have at least one facility. A trend that is severely impacting local governments' ability to provide basic services is the growth in the number of prisoners.

**Bent County** houses two facilities, **Chaffee County** houses two facilities, **Crowley County** houses two facilities, **Fremont County** houses ten facilities (including the Super Max), **Las Animas County** houses one facility and **Pueblo County** houses three facilities.

The Fort Lyon prison in **Bent County** is scheduled to close in 2011.

An estimate of the county's incarcerated population can be derived by using the current prison population as reported by the Colorado Department of Corrections and Federal Bureau of Prisons and the 2010 Census County population.

	% of 2010 Population
Bent	16.25%
Chaffee	6.52%
Crowley	45.49%
Fremont	15.65%
Las Animas	3.11%
Pueblo	0.43%

## Population by Age

The Department of Local Affairs reports the estimated median age of populations in the District ranges between thirty three and forty seven. However, the US Census reports the population is aging. In the last decade the population has shifted from a population under forty to a population ranging between forty five and eighty. The increased aging population has required leaders to take an active approach to providing services for the elderly. As discussed in individual County CEDS, several counties are increasing nursing home care and marketing the community as a place for retirees.

### Median Age

County	Age
Baca	47.8
Bent	42.0
Crowley	38.5
Kiowa	45.7
Otero	40.8
Prowers	36.7
Las Animas	40.8
Chaffee	45.1
Custer	46.1
Fremont	42.5
Lake	33.1
Pueblo	36.2
Colorado	36.5

## Population by Race

The US Census reports slightly over eighty five percent of the District population are white and less than fifteen percent are black or other races.

County	Baca	Bent	Chaffee	Crowley	Custer	Fremont	Kiowa	Lake	Las Animas	Otero	Prowers	Pueblo
White Alone or in Combination	92.6	79.2	93.2	77.4	95.3	90.2	96.3	80.7	83.6	78.5	81.0	79.4
Black or African American Alone or in Combination	0.6	7.6	1.5	9.6	1.0	3.9	0.3	0.4	1.4	0.8	0.5	2.0
American Indian & Alaska Native Alone or in Combination	1.3	2.4	1.1	2.4	0.7	1.7	0.5	1.3	2.4	1.8	0.9	1.9
Asian Alone or in Combination	0.2	1.0	0.6	1.0	0.4	0.6	0.0	0.5	0.7	0.8	0.3	0.8
Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander Alone or in Combination	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1
Some Other Race Alone or in combination with one or more races	3.7	7.8	1.9	7.8	0.9	1.6	1.4	13.5	8.4	14.3	14.7	12.1
Two or More Races	1.6	1.9	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.9	1.5	3.6	3.4	3.8	2.6	3.7

## Unemployment

Since the beginning of the recession, annual unemployment rates gradually increased and reached unprecedented levels by the end of 2010. The State rate also increased from 2007 to 2010. However, only five of the twelve counties in the District reported a lower unemployment rate than the state.

Year	Baca	Bent	Crowley	Kiowa	Otero	Prowers	Chaffee	Custer	Fremont	Lake	Las Animas	Pueblo	Colorado
2007	2.6%	5.0%	6.5%	2.7%	5.1%	3.6%	3.7%	4.1%	4.9%	3.7%	3.7%	4.9%	3.9%
2008	3.5%	6.4%	7.5%	3.9%	6.2%	4.5%	4.6%	5.1%	6.5%	4.6%	4.6%	6.2%	4.9%
2009	4.0%	6.6%	9.3%	4.7%	7.4%	6.3%	6.7%	6.6%	9.0%	9.0%	8.7%	8.7%	7.7%
2010	4.3%	8.1%	10.5%	5.1%	8.7%	6.6%	7.9%	6.9%	10.5%	12.6%	9.7%	10.4%	8.9%

### Per Capita Personal Income

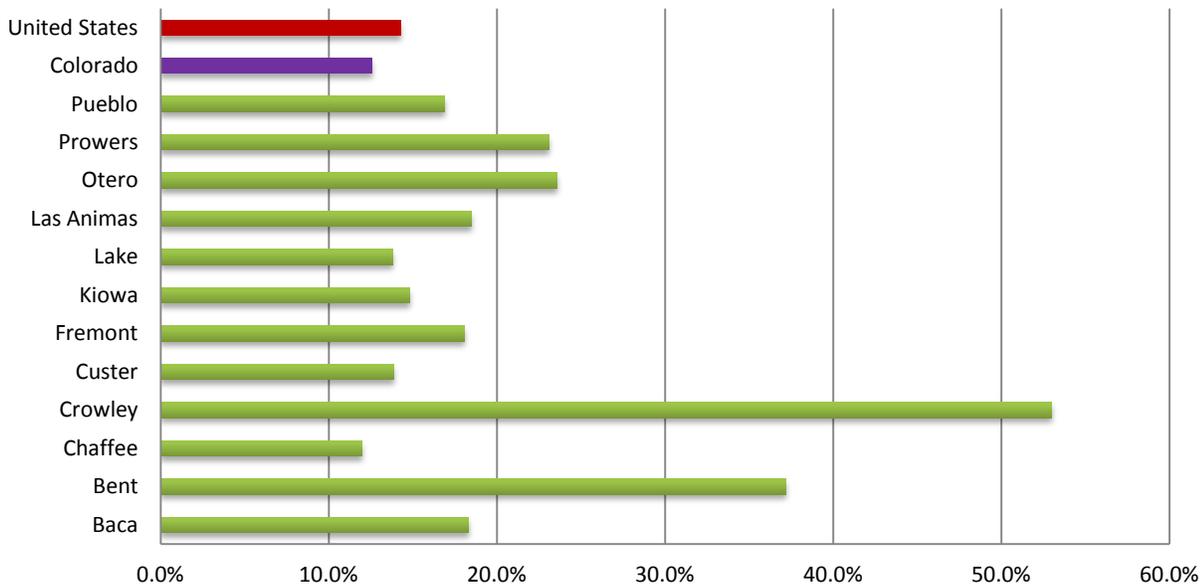
Counties in the District experienced an increase in per capita personal income between 2005 and 2009. However, in 2009, **Chaffee** and **Lake Counties** showed a slight decrease in income from 2008. The Bureau of Economic Analysis reports counties in the District showed growth rates between two and five percent from 1999; with the exception of **Crowley County**, which showed only a .1 percent increase from 1999. The State had a 3.1 percent growth rate and the Nation had a 3.4 percent growth rate.

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Chaffee	\$27,240	\$29,834	\$32,139	\$33,317	\$32,766
Custer	\$29,551	\$31,875	\$33,017	\$34,699	\$34,232
Fremont	\$21,933	\$23,148	\$24,718	\$26,077	\$26,032
Lake	\$24,294	\$25,826	\$26,966	\$28,126	\$26,504
Baca	\$29,707	\$25,493	\$32,121	\$31,362	\$34,990
Bent	\$19,950	\$19,890	\$22,854	\$23,820	\$22,777
Crowley	\$15,123	\$13,964	\$13,946	\$15,136	\$15,036
Kiowa	\$32,077	\$27,079	\$44,300	\$40,976	\$45,062
Otero	\$26,825	\$27,135	\$29,116	\$31,446	\$31,787
Prowers	\$26,396	\$26,315	\$29,348	\$30,958	\$31,026
Las Animas	\$26,176	\$27,524	\$29,194	\$30,591	\$29,819
Pueblo	\$26,792	\$27,636	\$29,529	\$31,023	\$31,613
Colorado	\$38,555	\$40,898	\$42,386	\$43,560	\$41,895

### Poverty

Eleven counties in the District have a higher poverty rate than the State and eight are higher than the Nation. The Upper Arkansas counties as a region have less poverty than other areas in the District. Over 50% of **Crowley County's** population is in poverty; the highest in the District.

2009 Percent of District Population in Poverty (All Ages)



### Assessed Valuation

Property taxes are an essential source of revenue for counties, cities and schools. If the county's assessed property value decreases, mill levies are increased to ensure there are enough funds to meet the demand.

In 2010, half of the counties in the District experienced an increase in assessed values compared to 2009. Out of the remaining six counties reporting a decrease in value, **Las Animas County** had the highest at almost 47%. The decline is largely due to the downturn in the oil and gas industry, which is a prevalent industry in Las Animas County. Slightly over 75% of **Las Animas County's** 2009 valuation was related to the oil and gas industry.

	2009	2010	% Change
Chaffee	\$388,484,165	\$395,843,069	1.89%
Custer	\$95,862,700	\$96,259,200	0.41%
Fremont	\$454,154,390	\$451,751,609	-0.53%
Lake	\$106,383,457	\$108,260,409	1.76%
Baca	\$76,223,242	\$71,479,260	-6.22%
Bent	\$73,626,384	\$72,466,383	-1.58%
Crowley	\$34,568,857	\$35,023,460	1.32%
Kiowa	\$39,183,380	\$32,419,340	-17.26%
Otero	\$121,603,376	\$124,184,371	2.12%
Prowers	\$125,228,840	\$122,015,320	-2.57%
Las Animas	\$845,630,620	\$450,476,710	-46.73%
Pueblo	\$1,319,439,132	\$1,398,822,150	6.02%

### Revenues

A direct result of the assessed valuation is the amount of revenues generated for the general funds. The chart below illustrates the 2010 general funds and net sales taxes. Counties saw a decrease in retail sales and tax revenues between 2008 and 2009, but counties started realizing slight increases in 2010.

	2010 Levy General Funds	2010 Net Sales Tax (in thousands)
Baca	\$1,394,775	\$499
Bent	\$1,629,116	\$464
Chaffee	\$1,796,732	\$6,008
Crowley	\$1,473,882	\$333
Custer	\$1,005,452	\$576
Fremont	\$4,036,852	\$7,665
Kiowa	\$10,828,760	\$128
Lake	\$3,888,064	\$1,266
Las Animas	\$3,974,106	\$3,755
Otero	\$1,712,999	\$3,846
Prowers	\$2,412,459	\$3,090
Pueblo	\$44,310,489	\$45,866

**Sources:**

1. Economic Stress Index: Associated Press, [http://hosted.ap.org/specials/interactives/national/stress\\_index/](http://hosted.ap.org/specials/interactives/national/stress_index/)
2. Population: Census, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).
3. Prison Population: Colorado Department of Corrections, <http://www.doc.state.co.us/opa-publications/97> and Federal Bureau of Prisons, <http://www.bop.gov/locations/index.jsp>
4. Unemployment: Colorado Workforce/LMI Gateway, <http://lmigateway.coworkforce.com>
5. Per Capita Personal Income: Bureau of Economic Analysis, County Profile, [www.bea.gov](http://www.bea.gov)
6. Poverty: US Census SAIPE, [www.census.gov/cgi/bin/saipe/saipe.cgi](http://www.census.gov/cgi/bin/saipe/saipe.cgi)
7. Assessed Valuation and General Funds: Department of Local Affairs Assessor's Annual Reports, [www.colorado.gov](http://www.colorado.gov)
8. Sales Tax Revenues: Colorado Department of Revenue, [www.colorado.gov](http://www.colorado.gov)

## *Regional Socio-Economic Characteristics*

---

### *Geography*

The Southern Colorado Economic Development District covers a large area consisting of different and unique geographical points. The District contains the lowest point in Colorado (Holly-**Prowers County**) and the highest point in Colorado (Leadville-**Lake County**). The District ranges from the mountains in the Upper Arkansas to the plains in the Southeast.

The wide range of geographical features in the District gives way to very unique and different economies. The Upper Arkansas region's economies are dependent on tourism and natural resources; while the Southeastern portion of the District depends on agriculture. As will be discussed later in this document, counties in the District are developing strategies which will diversify their economies and move past the reliance on one source of revenue and jobs.

### *Environment*

Those seeking a healthy lifestyle will find communities in the District appealing. The rural nature of the District spares residents from issues common to urban areas. Residents throughout the District value the quality of life provided in their communities.

### *Climate*

The climate varies between the Upper Arkansas and Southeastern Colorado, with each area being highly seasonal. In the Upper Arkansas, snow falls early and temperatures remain cold for most of the winter season. During this time it is not surprising to see road closures. However, the snow is a welcome site for skiers and farmers. During the spring and summer, temperatures become warmer and the snow begins to melt and the river begins to flow. While the river brings in rafters to these communities, the Lower Arkansas region depends on the water for irrigation. In the Southeast counties, seasons follow the calendar and tend to be mild. The Southeast enjoys a very mild climate, with over three hundred days of sunshine a year. While the winter brings snow, it is unusual to see heavy snowfall or road closures. Temperatures reach above 100 degrees during summer months.

It is important to note that while the climate is generally mild, Southeast Colorado has experienced a couple unusual events. The lack of snowfall in recent years has caused severe drought conditions in Southeast Colorado since 2002. In 2006, two blizzards devastated the cattle ranching community. Both situations have caused farmers and ranchers to look for other means of sustaining a living or possibly selling the land.

### *Air Quality*

With the increase of heavy manufacturers, air quality has become an important factor in determining a location to live and work. The general quality of air in communities within the District is good, with the exception of **Lake County**. In 2005, the county was ranked #41 out of 101 counties as having the highest lead air pollution. In an effort to maintain clean air, the EPA has raised standards on projects that could diminish air quality by implementing a permitting process. In addition, for those seeking funds for such projects a clean environmental report is required prior to approval.

## Farmland/Agriculture

Agriculture plays an important role in all of the counties in the District. As previously mentioned, severe drought conditions have caused some farmers and ranchers to look for other means to support their families and have either sold or are considering selling their land. One such result is the sale of open land for development, due to Urban sprawl. Conservation easements have been implemented to preserve these lands; however, abuse of the program has resulted in tighter regulations and halted new easements.

The biggest threat to farmlands is out of basin water transfers to the Front Range. The practice of “buy and dry” has devastated communities. **Crowley County** is a prime example of this practice. The sale of water rights from the county resulted in slow economic growth and out migration of its population. County leaders have taken an active approach to protect the water for irrigation of farmlands by creating water Conservation Districts. The Conservation Districts have been highly active in protecting the water in rural Colorado.



Another threat affecting the Southeast counties is the expansion of private land at Pinon Canyon. The Department of the Army proposed expanding its military training site in Southern Colorado. The District and locals have unanimously opposed the expansion. *Not One More Acre* and the *Pinon Canyon Expansion Opposition Coalition* are active organizations opposing the expansion. In addition, many signs, stickers and pamphlets are spread through Colorado opposing the expansion. The result of those efforts has

stopped further expansion, for the time being. Opposition of further development of Pinon Canyon by the Army will remain a high priority for the District.

Communities in the District are taking an active approach to protecting the agriculture community and lands. A nationwide movement is encouraging residents to buy agricultural products as close to home as possible to support this effort. **Chaffee County** and others in the Upper Arkansas are also working on an initiative to preserve family ranches. The Land Trust of the Upper Arkansas works to protect farmland, water and natural habitats.

## Superfund Sites

The largest hazardous site located in the District was in **Lake County**. Due to the mining industry, leakage was detected, which contaminated the water and soil. In 2011, after significant cleanup, the EPA cleared the last area of the California Gulf Superfund Site.

Although not listed as a Superfund site, an area in **Chaffee County** was identified in 2005 as a mine waste area. Further investigation and studies should be conducted to determine the impact of this area on the county and future developments.

There is one Superfund site located in Lincoln Park in **Fremont County**. The contamination is a result of the Cotter Uranium Mill. Uranium was found in the soils and groundwater and was placed on the Superfund list in 1984. Clean up of the soil and groundwater has been undertaken. In 2002, EPA stated all work to clean up the soil has been completed. However, EPA has not made a final decision on the groundwater.

Identifying hazardous waste sites has become common practice when applying for financial assistance. The requirement of a clean Phase I is an important step to determining the impact certain businesses which store or use hazardous materials has on surrounding areas. Regulations for disposal of the hazardous materials are also important to protecting the environment.

### *Flood Zones*

Flood zones can have a significant impact on development. Several communities in the District have experienced some level of flooding, which is not unexpected as the Arkansas River flows through the District. **Pueblo and Otero Counties** have suffered significant losses due to floods; most recently was in **Otero County** in 1999.

### *Public Lands*

The large area of National Forests in the Upper Arkansas significantly contributes to tourism revenues. Over sixty-five percent of **Lake County's** land consists of forests. The Upper Arkansas regions consist of the San Isabel, Arapaho-Roosevelt and White River National Forests, to name a few.

In the Southeast, grasslands and canyons exist. The Comanche National Grasslands span **Otero and Baca Counties**, offering a quiet "off the beaten path" camping and hiking experience. Pinon Canyon spans across the southeast to **Las Animas County**.

### *Threatened or Endangered Species*

The only known endangered species in the District is the Pinnated Grouse, more commonly known as the Prairie Chicken, in **Otero County**. These birds do not migrate and tend to be very territorial. The conversion of prairie land to cropland has contributed to the decline of population. Efforts are underway to protect the bird.



### *Natural Resources*

Natural resources vary considerably between the Upper Arkansas and the Southeast regions of the District. The Upper Arkansas consists of minerals, agriculture, energy resources and forests; the Southeast Counties consist of agriculture, energy resources and open land. **Las Animas County's** economy is dependent on the natural gas and coal industries. The most important natural resource, common to the District as a whole is water.

### *Water*

Everyone is aware of the value of water to their community. This is becoming increasingly important to counties in the District as water is being sold to the Front Range. The recent drought conditions have also added to the importance of protecting this scarce and very valuable resource. Land Trusts and Conservation Districts have been created throughout the District to protect the water.

The out of basin water transfers to the Front Range poses a huge threat to the agriculture communities in Southeastern Colorado. This area is highly dependent on its agriculture community, without the water, remaining land is being turned into undevelopable land full of weeds. When the water is sold, the

remaining farmland is reseeded as native grass. However, without water the end result is weeds. **Otero County** has formed Land Trusts to protect the water by tying the water rights to the land.

Water in the Upper Arkansas is important to the tourism industry. Rafting and fishing are popular sports and mostly enjoyed in the mountainous section of the District. Water transfers also threaten counties in the Upper Arkansas region. The Land Trust of the Upper Arkansas works to protect the water and other natural resources in the area.

The quality of water is also an important aspect to development. Recent changes in regulations have forced communities to upgrade their systems, as radium levels are now above legal limits. One problem with this is that the rural communities lack the funds to provide the needed upgrades. As demonstrated in the individual county goals, upgrades of water and waste water systems are a high priority.

Another threat to the water is the proliferation of individual septic tanks in the Upper Arkansas region. The Upper Arkansas Area Council of Governments is currently working on a project to protect the quality of water from the Arkansas River. The protection of water will remain a high priority for the District; both quality and quantity.

### *Mining*

Extraction of coal bed methane gas and coal are critical components of **Las Animas County's** economy. There are over 3,000 active gas wells in the county providing millions of dollars in revenues and thousands of jobs each year. However, this type of industry is subject to increased regulations and the "boom and bust" cycle. This threat was evident in 2008 when Pioneer Natural Resources Company shut down all of its drill rigs; the re-opening of the New Elk Mine in 2011 was encouraging.

The Upper Arkansas region is known for silver and gold in the early years of mining. While these industries are no longer active, there has been activity in other areas. The reopening of the Climax Mine in **Lake County** will create jobs and revenues from the extraction of molybdenum. Discussions of opening the Northfield Coal Mine in **Fremont County** are also underway. Additional minerals available in the Upper Arkansas are uranium, oil and lead. A survey of residents in **Lake** and **Fremont Counties** revealed there is support for expanding the mining industry. However, open pit mining threatens the community and a master plan to regulate in situ mining is needed.

### *Energy Resources*



Counties in the District are well positioned for growth in alternative energy. Almost every county in the District is pursuing renewable energy opportunities; as evidenced in the individual County CEDS. **Prowers** and **Bent Counties** have constructed wind farms in the area, further establishing the region as a leader in large scale wind generation.

Wind is available in all counties in the District, but is a focus of **Baca, Bent, Chaffee, Kiowa, Las Animas** and **Prowers Counties**; solar is also abundant in the District, but a prime resource in **Crowley, Otero** and **Pueblo Counties** and geothermal energy is a focus of **Fremont** and **Chaffee Counties**. Biofuels are also being explored as options for some agricultural crops.

Although renewable energy resources are abundant throughout the District, inadequate transmission capacity prevents further development. The cost for new transmission is beyond the ability of local governments and funding is being sought through the bond market or low-interest loans through USDA Rural Development. The need to provide renewable energy to the consumer is the top priority of all Counties in the District.

### *Historical Resources*

The District contains a vast inventory of historical resources. Historians can observe dinosaur tracks, follow the wagon trail through Southeast Colorado, view petro glyphs and visit Victorian homes and mining sites.

The history of Southeastern Colorado dates back to the days of dinosaurs to that of cowboys and Indians. Southeastern Colorado is home of the Comanche National Grasslands and several Canyons. Those looking for dinosaur tracks and wagon trails can find them here. The Santa Fe Trail has recently been marked through the southeast, encouraging tourist traffic to the area. **Kiowa County** is home of the Sand Creek Massacre site, **Bent County** houses the Fort Lyon cemetery, Bent's Old Fort is located in **Otero County**, the Minnequa Steel Works office building and dispensary is located in **Pueblo County** and **Las Animas County** provides a scenic route along the Highway of Legends. Several homes, monuments and facilities provide a look into the past, with many of them listed on the National Historical Registry.

The Upper Arkansas provides a glimpse into the old west, with its inventory of ranches, mining sites and homesteads. While much of the region boasts several historical homes some notable facilities are the South Park & Pacific Railroad Depot in **Chaffee County**, Beckwith Ranch in **Custer County**, Holy Cross Abbey in **Fremont County** and the Matchless Mine in **Lake County**. As with the Southeastern Counties, the Upper Arkansas has several homes and facilities listed on the National Historical Registry.

Preservation of historical sites is vital to the tourism industry and becoming increasingly important as new developments arise. Most counties in the District have formed active heritage tourism organizations to help with this effort. In addition, regulations for funding require an assessment to ensure historical sites are not destroyed.

### *Transportation*

Transportation is always a priority of counties in the District. Highway systems provide a main line through communities in the District, but improvements are needed as traffic increases. At the local level, streets are in a state of disrepair and in need of major improvements. With the exception of **Pueblo County**, there are no commercial airlines in the District. Several counties provide general aviation services, but commercial services are two to four hours away from most of the communities. Rail service is lacking in most areas and Amtrak provides limited service in the Southeastern Counties.

### *Highways*

The most common and widely used highways are US Highway 50/Colorado 96, which runs east/west through the District and Interstate 25, which runs north/south. US Highway 287 runs north/south through the Southeastern portion of the District. The designation of US Highway 287 as the "Ports to Plains" route has led to increased travel along this route. Additional access east/west is provided by State Highways 194, 115, 82, 160 and 350; north/south access by State Highways 101, 196, 285, and 69. Although it

appears highway access is adequate, the highways need repaired and much of the system would be improved if the highways were four-laned.

### *Airports*

General aviation services are provided *in Bent, Chaffee, Custer, Fremont, Lake, Las Animas, Otero, and Prowers Counties; Pueblo County* provides commercial services. Denver International Airport provides commercial services, but is located two to four hours from most communities in the District. Located approximately two to three hours from communities in the District is the Colorado Springs Airport, which provides jet service. While development is slow, many County leaders are taking an active approach to improving their airports and expanding services.

### *Railroads*

Consolidation in the railroad industry has had a negative effect on communities where rail service was once a major component to the economy. Mergers have resulted in abandonment of tracks, stagnant service and trains being stored on the tracks, hindering the scenic views across the District. Although tracks have been abandoned, many spurs are still available.

The main line rail service in Southeastern Colorado remains active. Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad provides service through the southeastern portion of the District. Major switching points are available in *Las Animas, Otero* and *Pueblo Counties*.

Amtrak provides limited commuter service through Southeast Colorado. Two stops are made daily in *Las Animas, Otero* and *Pueblo Counties*.

### *Buslines*

Limited busline services are available in *Bent, Chaffee* and *Otero Counties* through TNM&O. Development of buslines has not been a priority in the District, as the demand for this service is not as high. Local services are provided in *Bent, Chaffee, Fremont, Otero* and *Pueblo Counties*. As the age of the population in the District rises, the need for local transportation services will grow.

### *Infrastructure*

Services in the District are well provided for. However, improvements are needed to bring infrastructure to code and update old systems. In particular are the water and sewer systems. As demonstrated in individual County CEDS, several communities continue with improvements, upgrades and new water/sewer systems.

Water is provided by the cities and counties, as well as Water Districts. Some areas, mostly in the Southeast, are served by public wells and septic systems. As stated earlier, upgrades are desperately needed to these systems and remain a high priority.

Electric services are provided by public or investor owned utilities. The Upper Arkansas Counties are served by Sangre de Cristo and San Isabel Electric Companies, Southeast Colorado Power Association provides service in the eastern counties, Black Hills Energy and Xcel provide services throughout the District.

Natural gas is provided in most of the District through SourceGas, Black Hills Energy and locally owned companies. Atmos Energy provides service in **Fremont County** and Interstate Gas Company provides service in **Prowers County**. Propane is necessary in some areas of the Upper Arkansas region.

### *Telecommunications*

While telephone and cellular services are provided through most of the District, improvements and additional services are needed in many of the rural communities. Cellular towers provide adequate service in the county seats; however, surrounding communities lack service or have intermittent service. Increased cellular service will be a priority for the District.

### *Broadband*

Broadband service has become the hot topic throughout the whole District. Broadband is the foundation for economic growth, job creation and quality of life. The evolution of broadband is changing rapidly. Local leaders recognize the need for broadband service to be competitive in today's market and are taking an active approach to providing high speed services in their County.

Efforts to provide broadband services to all communities in Colorado have been productive; however, changing needs for high speed internet has left many communities behind. The ability to provide "last mile" connectivity has prevented service in areas outside of the county seats. Providing this service is a high priority for the entire District and detailed in individual County CEDS.

In an effort to increase broadband services in **Chaffee County**, the Chaffee County Economic Development is working with the Upper Arkansas Area COG to create a regional broadband system within the Upper Arkansas Counties. Participation and support for this program have been phenomenal. Once the system is in place, **Chaffee** and the surrounding counties will be well positioned to compete for technology based businesses and become the leader in creating a regional broadband system in the District.

### *Industrial Parks*

Dedicated industrial parks are available in **Baca, Chaffee, Custer, Kiowa, Las Animas, Otero, Prowers** and **Pueblo Counties**. Development in these areas is active; however, further infrastructure such as water lines, road access and utilities is needed. Individual needs are addressed in the County CEDS. Other counties in the District have available land, which could be used for development.

### *Health Care*

Health Care is provided by hospitals, clinics, EmergiCare, nursing homes or assisted living facilities. Although these services are available, some counties still lack quality care and continue to pursue opportunities to expand. Health care remains a high priority in the District.

Quality health care is also a major component of quality of life. **Bent, Crowley** and **Custer Counties** do not have a hospital facility. However, a hospital is available within sixty miles of the areas. **Pueblo County** is the major hub for health care in the District, providing specialized services.

As the age of populations is increasing, so is the need for nursing homes or assisted living facilities. Counties in the District are moving toward providing these facilities to its residents. Funding for such projects is limited, therefore limiting development. Individual County CEDS demonstrate this need.

### *Housing*

Several issues plague the housing industry throughout the District. The Southern Colorado housing market is struggling to stay abreast of foreclosures, many homes are well over fifty years old and in need of major repair and the lack of affordable housing/rentals is slowing development.

In the last few years, foreclosures have been high, forcing lenders to write off millions of dollars of bad loans. Since the recession, all but three counties in the District have reported an increase in foreclosures.

	Chaffee	Custer	Fremont	Lake	Baca	Bent	Crowley	Kiowa	Otero	Prowers	Las Animas	Pueblo
2007	62	27	307	24	8	13	7	NA	124	53	52	1,504
2008	45	17	295	31	4	12	20	0	95	33	70	1,311
2009	78	26	362	45	11	28	16	3	95	32	104	1,569
2010	78	34	349	56	10	19	12	7	120	43	127	1,382

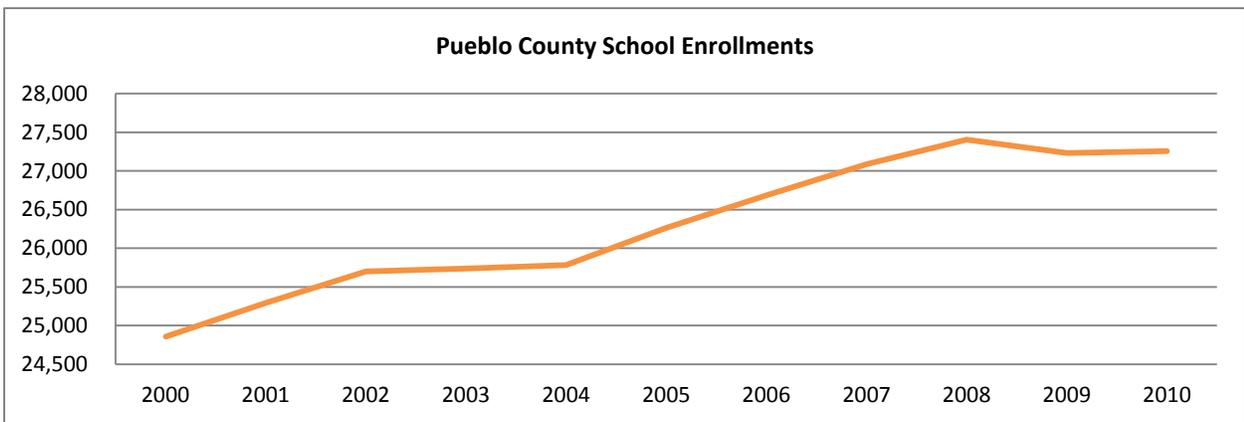
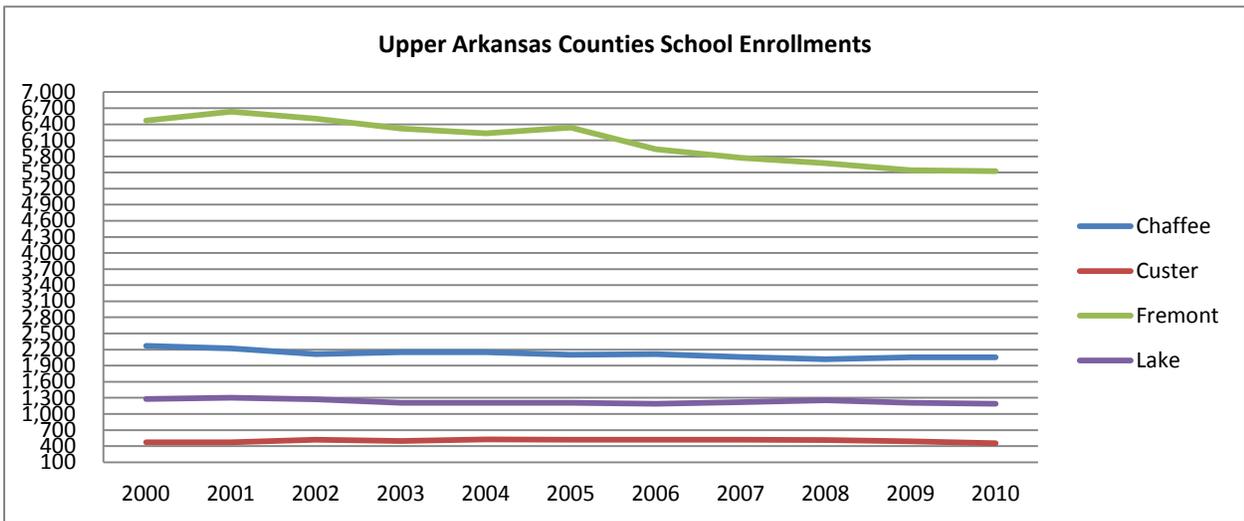
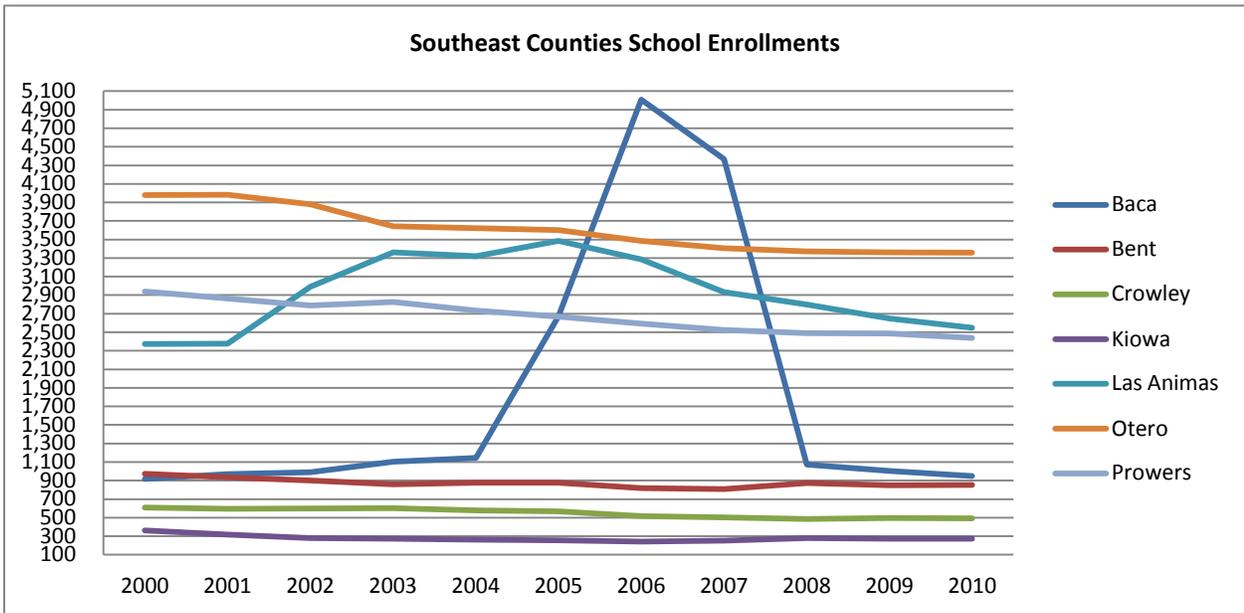
The need for affordable housing is echoed throughout the District. **Fremont** and **Otero Counties** have established successful self help programs to encourage home ownership. Additional efforts are being undertaken in the Southeast to provide housing for farm workers. Although home ownership is encouraged, many families are looking for affordable rental homes. HUD provides a program to assist low income families with rent; however the lack of rental housing prevents further growth. Development of rental housing is a high priority in the District, as well as increasing and improving the overall housing stock.

The US Census reports the majority of housing in the District is well past its prime. At least fifty percent of houses in the District are at least fifty years or older; most notably in the Southeast. This poses a problem, as houses deteriorate so does the value of the property. This also affects valuations in the County.

### *Education*

Quality education plays an important role in sustaining a community's economy. All counties in the District provide quality K-12 education to its residents. Surveys of residents in the twelve counties revealed the education system is a valued asset to the community.

A concerning trend seen throughout much of the District is a decline in school enrollments; **Baca, Las Animas** and **Pueblo Counties** report a slight increase over 2000, while the rest of the District is experiencing a large decrease. The large increase in school enrollments for **Baca County** is contributed to online school. In addition to the decrease of enrollments, population data shows there are school age children living in the county; however, school enrollments do not reflect those students attending public school. Residents believe this trend is due to the increase of students turning to online or home schooling. The decline of school enrollments has resulted in less funding and prompted some areas to consolidate and close some schools.



Higher education is provided in some localities, but available to all communities in the District. Two-year Colleges are available in **Chaffee, Fremont, Lake, Las Animas, Otero, Prowers** and **Pueblo Counties**. Colorado State University in **Pueblo County** also provides four year degree programs.

The US Census Bureau reports the education attainment of residents in the County. The following chart shows at least eighty percent of the population has attained a High School Diploma or higher, with the exception of **Crowley, Fremont, Otero** and **Prowers Counties**. Most of the counties in the District report less than twenty percent of the population has attained a Bachelor’s Degree or higher; **Chaffee, Custer, Lake** and **Pueblo Counties** report just over twenty percent.

	Baca	Bent	Chaffee	Crowley	Custer	Fremont	Kiowa	Lake	Las Animas	Otero	Prowers	Pueblo
HS Diploma or higher	84.6%	81.4%	90.9%	72.9%	93.9%	79.7%	88.6%	80.6%	83.3%	79.9%	79.1%	85.0%
Bachelor's Degree or higher	17.1%	14.5%	29.5%	14.6%	29.6%	16.6%	19.9%	20.0%	18.9%	16.1%	17.0%	21.0%

### *Workforce Development*

The District has experienced high unemployment, a decreasing population and loss of revenues. While each of these is devastating to the communities, they also create opportunities. County leaders recognize the importance of job creation and retention of business and population. The result has been a collaborative effort toward workforce development within each county and regionally.

Development of communities begins with education. Every county in the District has excellent K-12 coverage. Four Junior Colleges and one University provide higher education in the District. In collaboration with the Junior Colleges, students entering high school have the opportunity to earn college credits, prior to entering college. This has offered many students the ability to take a fast track on their path to earning a college degree. In addition, internships are offered for certain college programs. A few programs offered at the colleges include: auto mechanics, business development, cosmetology, nursing, solar and wind technology, culinary arts and engineering.

The Colorado Workforce Center provides free employment and training services for job seekers and employers. Employers use the service to screen, train and hire employees. Centers are located in **Chaffee, Fremont, Lake, Las Animas, Otero, Prowers** and **Pueblo Counties**. Online registration and job searches are also available. The Upper Arkansas has also created a workforce board to provide services to the Upper Arkansas Counties.

Councils of Governments (COG) are created to address regional issues such as economic and community development, planning and business development. COGs also provide financial assistance through business loan funds. The District contains four COGs: The Upper Arkansas Area COG provides services to **Chaffee, Custer, Fremont** and **Lake Counties**, The South Central COG provides services in **Las Animas County**, The Pueblo Area COG provides services in **Pueblo County** and The Southeast Colorado COG provides services to **Baca, Bent, Crowley, Kiowa** and **Prowers Counties**.

At the top of the priority list for the District is the creation of jobs and business retention. Most counties in the District have an economic development organization; some are county-wide organizations and others are local. These organizations are tasked with recruiting primary employers to their area, creating higher wage jobs and retaining business. In addition, business incubators operated by these organizations are available in **Fremont, Otero** and **Pueblo Counties**. Business retention programs are also in place in several communities.

Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) provide free training, counseling and assistance to start up businesses and existing businesses. The SBDCs work with economic development organizations to create jobs through small business development. Centers are located in **Chaffee, Otero, Lake and Pueblo Counties**.

The development process for the CEDS utilized resources provided from each of the above mentioned entities to create regional and individual county goals. The goals and objectives set forth in the CEDS are consistent with city and county comprehensive plans, workforce goals and economic development missions.

### *Cluster Development*

Cluster development is a key component to job growth, new business creation and innovation. The diverse economies in the district give way to a varying mix of clusters consisting of agribusiness, manufacturing, tourism, mining, forestry and renewable energy. Counties in the district have begun the process of identifying clusters and developing strategies to attract businesses complimentary to each other to create a niche and become competitive in the global market.

There is potential for growth within several clusters in the Upper Arkansas region. A common component in all of the counties in the Upper Arkansas is tourism. Individual CEDS for counties in the Upper Arkansas region demonstrate the need to expand on businesses related to tourism, which includes improving accommodations, services, transportation and marketing. The large territory covered by forests in **Lake and Chaffee Counties** creates potential for growth in industries related to forest products. While many mines were previously shut down, recent developments have created opportunities for mining industries in **Fremont and Lake Counties**. As the region moves forward with economic development plans, businesses related to agriculture in **Custer County** and renewable energy throughout the region will be important to economic growth in the Upper Arkansas region.

In **Las Animas County** there are over three thousand active gas wells. Extraction of coal bed methane gas is a natural for the South Central region. Efforts to support businesses and developments which utilize natural gas will be a top priority. The revitalization of coal mining is another important component to business growth in the county. Renewable energy development is also underway.

**Pueblo County** is the largest county in the district. It's central location and available resources provide a unique opportunity for development of several clusters. The county evolved from an economy dependent on the steel mill, to one consisting of manufacturing, agriculture and tourism. In addition, the recent development of an industrial park at the south end of town will create an opportunity for renewable energy related businesses.

The Southeast region is highly dependent on agriculture, which includes ranches and farmlands. Businesses involved in agriculture production and processing is a high priority for all of the counties in the region. **Otero and Prowers Counties** have active industrial parks, which accommodate manufacturing businesses. Tourism opportunities are available in **Bent, Kiowa and Otero Counties**. The potential for natural gas extraction is being explored in **Baca County** and would provide a niche for the community to expand. The recent development of wind farms in **Bent and Prowers Counties** provides potential for growth in renewable energy opportunities. **Crowley County** is currently exploring options for tourist/recreational opportunities which utilize the natural resources in the community.

The potential for cluster development is strong in the district. Counties have identified targeted industries and business sectors which drive their individual economies. Specific projects relating to those industries and sectors are included in the individual County's CEDS. The availability of funds and the current economy will play an important role in further development and growth of business clusters.

### *Financial Resources*

Financing for small businesses has become an issue the District is aggressively trying to combat. The bank failures in 2009, combined with increased federal regulations have made it increasingly difficult for a small business to borrow funds. While some banking institutions have rebounded from the recession and increased regulations, local banks in rural communities saw little improvement, if any.

The State of Colorado receives an allocation of funds from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to foster economic development. The Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT) uses those funds to capitalize local Business Loan Funds (previously called Revolved Loan Funds) in rural Colorado. The funds are then used to provide financial assistance to small businesses. Participation in the program requires one job be created for every \$20,000 loaned and at least fifty one percent of full time employees meet the low-moderate income guidelines. There are four Business Loan Funds (BLF) operating within the District: The Upper Arkansas Area COG serves **Chaffee, Custer, Fremont** and **Lake Counties**, The Otero/Las Animas BLF serves **Otero** and **Las Animas Counties**, The Pueblo County BLF serves **Pueblo County** and The Southeast Colorado COG provides services to **Baca, Bent, Crowley, Kiowa** and **Prowers Counties**. SCEDD provides credit analysis, loan packaging and marketing assistance to the Otero/Las Animas and Pueblo County BLFs.

SCEDD Development Company, a subsidiary of SCEDD, provides financing through the US Small Business Administration's (SBA) 504 Loan Program. The program is designed to provide thirty five to forty percent of the financing for hard assets. The loan provides a ten or twenty year amortization at a low fixed interest rate. Assistance through the program requires fifty percent of the financing come from a financial institution. In addition, the borrower is required to create or retain one job for every \$65,000 loaned through SBA and collateral is usually a second lien position on real estate and equipment. The program is enticing to financial institutions because it minimizes their risk and borrowers enjoy a low interest rate.

SBA also provides a 7(a) Loan Program for working capital and inventory. The SBA 7(a) Loan Program is a guaranty loan and requires a lending institution. SBA and the financial institution share the risk on the loan, with SBA guaranteeing up to eighty five percent of the loan. The loan provides up to twenty five years amortization and may be a fixed or variable interest rate. The program is most commonly used to finance working capital and inventory, but can be used to purchase equipment as well.

**Pueblo County** provides additional business assistance through the Pueblo Urban Renewal Authority Façade Program. The program provides assistance to businesses making improvements to the appearance of their property. Assistance comes in the form of a low interest loan and a grant. SCEDD assists the Authority in providing credit analysis, packaging and marketing of the program.

Additional resources are available through State, Federal and local agencies. SCEDD utilizes each of these resources to provide grants to communities in the District and assistance to small businesses. Financing for small business and job creation will remain a priority of the District.

## *Regional Strategic Planning*

---

### *Values and Vision*

The large area covered by SCEDD poses a series of complex issues. Each county in the District has their own set of goals and values, as stated in the individual County CEDS. However, several common goals and values are evident.

In the process of preparing the CEDS, town hall meetings were held in each community. During the meetings, SCEDD asked participants to list assets of their community. A compilation of each of these lists revealed similar values in each community, listed below:

- Strong education system
- Retirement community
- Industrial parks
- Available land
- Strong agricultural community
- Location
- Quality of life
- Low cost of living
- Historical/cultural resources
- Renewable energy/natural resources
- Scenic beauty
- Recreational opportunities
- Health care system
- Transportation
- Mining industry
- Economic Development Organizations

SCEDD's vision is to build on these values, by creating a CEDS which protects the assets of the communities, creates jobs and improves the quality of life. Specific goals and actions of the District are listed in the regional CEDS to accomplish this vision.

### *Regional Goals and Actions*

SCEDD's goals, as set forth in this CEDS, reflect the goals, values and needs of the District as a whole. While it is impossible to predict the range of activities to be proposed for assistance, SCEDD's umbrella activity ensures every project is included. The activity was created to: identify and prepare grant applications to address specific needs in the community, assist in community planning activities for specific events/activities/problems, strategize with communities to regionalize response to opportunities and risks and integrate multiple agency funding opportunities to achieve county objectives.

**Goal:** **Economic Development**-Improve job creation opportunities, retention of business, increase support to local economic organizations and build regional partnerships. This is a high priority for the District.

**Partners:** Cities, counties, State and Federal governments and local leaders

**Actions:**

- Support local economic development organizations by providing organizational, technical and financial assistance;
- Encourage cooperation between regional, State and Federal partners to attract business to the regions;
- Provide planning tools to assist communities with business recruitment by maintaining a regional website and updated community profiles;
- Support and encourage training and assistance for small businesses through the creation of business incubators, business retention programs and existing partners;
- Implement programs to reduce retail leakage;
- Encourage creation and marketing of local, State and Federal business incentives to recruit and assist business;
- Promote industrial and commercial activities which utilize community assets and create employment opportunities;
- Assist with development of industrial parks and infrastructure, including increased broadband;
- Encourage and support downtown revitalization efforts;
- Promote agriculture to provide value added commodities;
- Promote job opportunities within the mining industry;
- Reduce regulatory and legislative barriers which hinder development and
- Work with counties to implement the CEDS and State Bottom Up plans

**Time Frame:** This will be an ongoing project over the next five years.

**Funding**

**Sources:** Cities, counties, EDA, OEDIT, SBA, business loan funds and USDA

**Performance**

**Measures:** SCEDD will work with local leaders and utilize labor force data to monitor the number of jobs created/retained and amount of investment for completed projects.

**Goal:** **Energy and Natural Resource Development**-Ensure natural resources are protected as new development occurs and maximize renewable energy opportunities. This is a mid-range priority in the District.

**Partners:** Cities, counties, and Governor's Energy Office

**Actions:**

- Foster development utilizing available resources in the District;
- Assist in efforts to assess the feasibility of renewable energy projects;
- Complete an inventory of renewable energy resources in the District;
- Provide technical assistance to local governments with renewable energy projects;
- Explore options to renewable energy utilizing agriculture and agricultural waste;
- Work with communities to prepare for the possible effects of the mining industry;
- Continue efforts opposing expansion of Pinon Canyon;
- Work with Southeastern Counties to determine the impact of the proposed Air Force Low Altitude Training Area;
- Research and evaluate regional opportunities for biodiesel and ethanol plants, wind energy, geothermal energy and solar energy;
- Explore funding options for increasing transmission availability in the District;
- Work with communities in preserving the scenic beauty of the areas, while creating opportunities which utilize natural resources and increase economic activity and
- Assist with efforts for the Browns Canyon National Monument designation

**Time Frame:** This will be an ongoing project over the next five years. Research and feasibility studies will be the first priority over the next two to three years. Transmission availability will be a key factor in moving forward with renewable energy projects.

**Funding**

**Sources:** Cities, counties, Governor's Energy Office, DOLA, EDA, USDA, GOCO and Historical Society

**Performance**

**Measures:** SCEDD will work with county leaders to monitor the number and amount of investments in the region and the change in the economic environment.

**Goal:** **Workforce Development**-Continue to improve workforce development, facilitate access to capital and maintain a network of resources. This is a high priority in the District.

**Partners:** School Districts, city and county leaders, SBDC, workforce centers, business loan fund administrators, Chambers of Commerce and economic development organizations

**Actions:**

- Continue to work with colleges to provide technical training;
- Work with regional partners to provide small business assistance;
- Continue to provide assistance through local Business Loan Funds and the Pueblo Urban Renewal Façade Program;
- Encourage expansion of business programs;
- Create business incubators and facilities which encourage entrepreneurship and
- Continue to support and work with local economic development organizations

**Time Frame:** This is a continuing project over the next five years in the District. Emphasis will be placed on strengthening regional partnerships to provide assistance to small businesses.

**Funding**

**Sources:** USDA, CDBG, EDA, Colorado First, SBA, Workforce Investment Act, Workforce Centers and local loan funds

**Performance**

**Measures:** SCEDD will work with local leaders and utilize labor force data to monitor the number of jobs created/retained and changes in the economic environment.

**Goal:** **Protect Water Resources**-Ensure the quality and quantity of water is sufficient to support the community's needs and meets all regulatory standards. This is a high priority in the District.

**Partners:** City and county leaders, State of Colorado Department of Health Water Division and water conservancy districts

**Actions:**

- Work with Water Conservation Districts and local governments to protect water resources;
- Oppose proposed water transfers to the Front Range and prevent buy and dry practices of water transfers;

- Work with the Arkansas Valley Conduit to provide water to Southeast Colorado Counties;
- Implement programs which preserve water and provide quality water to residents and
- Work with local governments to ensure the quality of water meets standards

**Time Frame:** This is a continuing project over the next five years in the District. An immediate priority will be opposing out of basin water transfers.

**Funding**

**Sources:** USDA, EDA, EPA, cities and counties, Water Conservation Boards, Colorado Department of Health Water Division and DOLA

**Performance**

**Measures:** SCEDD will work with local leaders and conservation districts to monitor the number and amount of investment and changes in the economic environment.

**Goal:** **Infrastructure**-Ensure water, roads, utilities and telecommunications infrastructure are adequate to promote and encourage development and allow communities an opportunity to compete in the global marketplace. This is a mid-range priority for the District.

**Partners:** City and county leaders, planners, utility departments, County technology teams and water boards

**Actions:**

- Identify potential grants for development and upgrades for infrastructure;
- Encourage development of industrial parks by providing grant assistance for needed infrastructure;
- Support local governments in determining infrastructure needs as new development occurs;
- Provide assistance for needed infrastructure upgrades within the counties;
- Support local and regional efforts to increase broadband availability in all communities and
- Ensure adequate training is available to support new technologies

**Time Frame:** This will be a continuing project over the next five years based on availability of funds and the needs in each community. Increasing broadband availability is top priority over the next three years.

**Funding**

**Sources:** EDA, cities and counties, DOLA and USDA

**Performance**

**Measures:** SCEDD will monitor the number and amount of investment and changes in the economic environment.

---

**Goal:** **Transportation**-Improve the transportation system to ensure safety and efficient flow of goods within the District. This is a mid-range priority in the District.

**Partners:** City and county leaders, CDOT and FAA

**Actions:**

- Provide technical assistance with improving air transportation;
- Encourage development of local transit systems for the community, with a focus on elderly services;
- Work with communities to improve access to the business districts from major highways;
- Encourage development and improvement of local roads and
- Assist with efforts to maintain local roads

**Time Frame:** This is an ongoing, long-term project within the District. Over the next five years, emphasis will be placed on improving and maintaining local roads and improving air transportation.

**Funding**

**Sources:** CDOT, FAA, CDOA, cities and counties

**Performance**

**Measures:** SCEDD will monitor the number and amount of investments and changes in the economic environment.

---

**Goal:** **Housing**-Improve housing stock and provide homes for moderate to low income families, elderly and farm workers. This is a mid-range priority in the District.

**Partners:** Housing Authority, city and county leaders and local housing agencies

**Actions:**

- Assist with and expand local housing programs;
- Encourage development of low income/farm working housing;
- Encourage development of elderly housing;

- Assist with and research opportunities to increase the housing stock and prepare for future business development;
- Promote efforts and programs encouraging homeowners to improve aging homes and
- Support programs which foster homeownership

**Time Frame:** This will be an ongoing project over the next five years.

**Funding**

**Sources:** HUD, cities and counties, USDA, CDBG, DOLA and CHFA

**Performance**

**Measures:** SCEDD will monitor the number and amount of investment and changes in the economic environment.

**Goal:** **Community Facilities**-Ensure facilities are adequate to maintain a positive quality of life for residents and businesses and improve the overall look of the community to encourage tourism and retention of populations. This is a mid-range priority in the District.

**Partners:** City and county leaders, economic development organizations, SBDC, school districts, utility departments, community development organizations and recreation departments

**Actions:**

- Promote and encourage collaboration of programs available through local colleges for job training and entrepreneurship;
- Encourage and support expansion of colleges to provide service in all communities in the District;
- Provide assistance to the District and encourage regional collaboration to expand health, child and elderly care services;
- Assist communities in ensuring emergency and protective services are adequate;
- Provide technical and grant assistance to improve water and sewer systems;
- Assist communities with upgrades to fairgrounds, parks and community centers and
- Support rehabilitation of public buildings

**Time Frame:** This will be an ongoing project over the next five years. Improving water and sewer systems will be priority over the next five years.

**Funding**

**Sources:** Cities and counties, DOLA, Department of Education, Colorado First, EPA, private funding, historical society and USDA

**Performance**

**Measures:** SCEDD will monitor the number and amount of investments and changes in the economic environment.

---

**Goal:** **Recreation and Tourism**-Improve recreation opportunities for residents and encourage development of resources to encourage tourism. This is a mid-range priority in the District.

**Partners:** Tourism boards, city and county leaders

**Actions:**

- Assist communities with historical, recreational and cultural preservation projects;
- Provide technical assistance to the District for recreational planning;
- Encourage development of recreational facilities, as well as upgrades to current facilities;
- Be advocates for local and regional heritage tourism projects;
- Market historical and recreational opportunities and
- Encourage regional cooperation to increase tourism

**Time Frame:** This is a long term goal. It will be an ongoing project over the next five years.

**Funding**

**Sources:** Cities and counties, private/local funds, historical society, GOCO and State tourism office

**Performance**

**Measures:** SCEDD will monitor the impact of tourism in the district, number and amount of investments and changes in the economic environment.

## *Implementation*

Strategic planning and implementation is an ongoing process of the CEDS document. Goals and actions have been listed to provide objectives for SCEDD as each county in the District works on individual projects. While some projects may be completed in the next few years, others are contingent on available funds and may take longer than five years to complete. For this reason, SCEDD will work with each county to implement their plans and provide annual updates to monitor progress. Implementation and monitoring of projects will include the following:

SCEDD will work with local leaders and economic development organizations to research new opportunities and funding sources. Some identified resources for funding may include: EDA, USDA, DOLA, SBA, HUD, Private Foundations and grants through the Governor's office. Additional sources will be utilized as they become available.

County leaders will report their progress during quarterly board meetings, local meetings and discussions with SCEDD. Projects completed will be documented and reported by SCEDD in the annual CEDS updates and reported in full in the five year update. Depending on available information, documentation may include: type of project, number of jobs created, number and types of investment and changes in the economic condition of the region.

In some cases, a regional approach may be more feasible for certain projects. The lack of ability for counties to provide matching funds for grants is one instance where a collaborative effort could be beneficial. In those instances, SCEDD will work with regional planners to ensure continuity between all organizations. Such projects will be reported as a regional effort in the CEDS and in the individual county's CEDS.

SCEDD will continually monitor progress of each county and provide assistance as needed. Progress will be reported annually to EDA in the CEDS update. Adjustments will be made as county resources, funding and needs change. Every five years, SCEDD will work with the community and local leaders to evaluate the progress of the previous CEDS and prepare a new CEDS document.

SCEDD will also monitor progress and the overall economic condition of the District by utilizing available data and documenting trends. Data will include: population, labor force, unemployment, poverty, agriculture, wages and income, education and housing.

The State Bottom Up Economic Development Strategy for the regions and each county is included as a supplement to the CEDS. SCEDD will work with each county to implement and maintain continuity between the CEDS, State Economic Development Strategy, county comprehensive plans and workforce development objectives. All of these strategies are vital to the economic growth of the District and should be considered complimentary to each other.

Region 6: Baca, Bent, Crowley, Otero, Prowers and Kiowa Counties

Priority(ies)	<u>Retention and expansion of Ft Lyon or repurposing to highest and best use</u>	<u>Retain and Expand Jobs and Population</u>	<u>Expand and Promote Tourism</u>	<u>Development of energy resources</u>	<u>Improve the housing quality and supply in the region.</u>
<b>Strategy(ies)</b>	<p>Continue with re-purposing committee with governor</p> <p>Re-purposing and/or retaining as DOC or Federal corrections facility, office facilities, multi-functional property, etc</p> <p>Ensure that the state does not lose focus on this project</p> <p>Work with DOC regarding current employees that choose not to transfer and keep them in the jobs for 6-9months (moved from August 31 to March 1)</p> <p>Identify additional potential uses: - Bureau of Indian Affairs (Drug Abuse facility)</p>	<p>Need Governor to pressure lending institutions to modify lending practices</p> <p>Implement incentive programs for jobs</p> <p>Promote telecommuter job creation with quality of life</p> <p>Implement preference for local broadband</p> <p>Market and increase use of SBDC in each county</p> <p>Provide incentives for skilled labor training</p> <p>Market and increase community's amenities</p> <p>Remove the Army's waiver regarding Pinon Canyon</p>	<p>Better promotion and representation of Eastern Plains tourism opportunities and culture</p> <p>Provide capacity building opportunities of the tourism industry: - Concentration of Nationally significant Heritage Sites: Santa Fe Trails, Bent's Fort, Boggsville, Sand Creek, Camp Amache, Dust Bowl, Prehistoric Rock Art, fossils and petrified wood - Wildlife including Birding, hunting - Recreation: Camping, boating, fishing, biking, winter hiking, hunting, lakes. - Film</p> <p>Enhance and increase awareness and visibility of the region.</p>	<p>Develop transmission lines</p> <p>Develop manufacturing for renewable energy and its component parts</p> <p>Expand definition of Renewable Energy Standard to include waste-to-energy and other sources</p>	<p>Replicate Fresh start program for financing ownership and renovation of housing.</p> <p>Use Enterprise Zone credits to incentivize ownership and renovation (Dan Tate, SEDC)</p> <p>Streamline asbestos permitting and abatement process.</p> <p>Renovate existing single and multi-family to meet housing needs.</p> <p>Incorporate mixed-uses as a strategy to meet housing needs.</p> <p>Expand SEBREA's role to address housing</p> <p>Create a locally based weatherization program.</p>

<p>- ICE offenders - National or regional substance abuse rehab facility</p>	<p>Develop water supply alternatives to Buy &amp; Dry</p>	<p>Diversify the Colorado Tourism Board to represent the region. (red tape issue)</p> <p>Work to promote Eastern Plains during one season designated, recognized and promoted by the state.</p> <p>More prominently promote regional websites on state tourism website.</p> <p>Engage CTO to increase visibility and photos of Region in paid advertisements. (Specifically Autobon Publication)</p> <p>Build a regional film database for Colorado Film Commission.</p> <p>Work with CDOT and CTO to increase signage to improve ways of finding and interpreting the region.</p> <p>Develop relationship with CDOT and legislature in working to change signage regulations to create regional specific signage that meets the needs of the region. (red tape issue)</p> <p>Have rural specific transportation enhancement funds where rural defined as county population of 20K or less.</p> <p>Expand and continue efforts with heritage and agri-tourism and the creative industries initiative.</p> <p>Governor visit with media to experience tourism in Southeast Colorado twice per year.</p>	<p>Data collection (e.g., solar radiance)</p> <p>Continue regional collaboration through SEBREA to create a renewable energy zone</p>	<p>Develop a plan that addresses housing revitalization, ownership, rental and financing.</p> <p>Work with SECD on funding opportunities. Research other local government housing programs.</p> <p>Market and advertise low-cost of housing of the region.</p> <p>Implement fresh start program in banks throughout the region.</p> <p>Discuss with State the possibility of creating a partnership/funding program to assist with property clean- up and maintenance once all local government voluntary and enforcement actions have been exhausted (this address a region</p>
<p><b>Action(s)</b></p>	<p>Define ownership: State or federal</p> <p>Lobbyists – State and federal</p> <p>Continue discussion with DOC federal correctional facilities</p> <p>Marketing/ real estate consultant – DoLA putting that together(video, etc)</p> <p>Look at national models of similar situations</p> <p>Strategize use - multipurpose v. one big entity (economies of scale)</p> <p>Ensure that local counties have capacity and desire to make sure that inmates move to local private facility rather than getting pulled by DOC to another State facility</p>	<p>Send Letter to Governor through SEBREA to modify lending</p> <p>Identify incentives for jobs that explain their application</p> <p>Modify incentive programs for rural job creation</p> <p>Analyze home-based job demand</p> <p>Inventory/evaluate store fronts in downtown</p> <p>Implement marketing plan for home-based job resources and assets</p> <p>Create connections for SBDC</p> <p>Request letter from Congressional Delegation requesting Army to remove waiver</p> <p>Better notification of</p>	<p>Develop water supply alternatives to Buy &amp; Dry</p>	<p>Develop a plan that addresses housing revitalization, ownership, rental and financing.</p> <p>Work with SECD on funding opportunities. Research other local government housing programs.</p> <p>Market and advertise low-cost of housing of the region.</p> <p>Implement fresh start program in banks throughout the region.</p> <p>Discuss with State the possibility of creating a partnership/funding program to assist with property clean- up and maintenance once all local government voluntary and enforcement actions have been exhausted (this address a region</p>

		<p>grant cycles to local governments</p> <p>Enhance schools' entrepreneurship programs</p>	<p>Creation of a hospitality training program through CTO to assist hotels, restaurants, and other travel services.</p> <p>Creation of region specific film commissioner to promote film opportunities in the region.</p> <p>Increase visibility with Governor to gain his support in making Boggsville part of National Parks Service (NPS) and to designate Southeast Colorado National Heritage Area through NPS.</p> <p>Reinstate DOLA funding for community projects.</p>		<p>wide public nuisance issue that exists with residential properties).</p>
<p><b>Expected Outcome(s), i.e., Measurable Results</b></p>	<p>Retention and expansion of facility or repurposing to highest and best use</p> <p>Mitigating the economic impact</p>		<p>Increase tourist activity</p> <p>Job retention and creation</p> <p>Increase sales tax</p> <p>Creation of emerging tourism activities</p> <p>Increase of movies and related media filmed in Southeast Colorado.</p> <p>Increase visibility and awareness of our communities statewide and nationwide.</p> <p>Increase visitation to local National Parks and other historical sites.</p> <p>Boggsville and SE National Heritage area apart of NPS.</p>	<p>Job creation (number of jobs)</p> <p>Tax revenues</p> <p>Increased transmission (visible poles)</p> <p>Finalize definition of Renewable Energy Standard to include waste-to-energy and other sources</p>	

Region 7: Pueblo County

Goal(s)	#1 Increase Primary Jobs with an emphasis on manufacturing	#2 Increase Tourism Spending	#3 Expand existing industry and small business opportunities	#4 Promote Pueblo as a Regional Health Care destination	#5 Develop a Leadership Council to guide and focus projects to enhance the Ag economy	#6 Grow CSU-Pueblo and Pueblo Community College to become regional leaders in higher education, partnering to provide a skilled, educated workforce, in alignment with Regional Economic Development Goals
<b>Strategy(ies)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote Pueblo County area proven competitive advantages to national &amp; International manufacturing companies and other industrial sectors.</li> <li>Implement both virtual and physical presence for the Manufacturing Center of Excellence.</li> <li>Develop a cluster industry focus around medical manufacturing opportunities.</li> <li>Capitalize upon the abundant water resources of Pueblo County</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and target leisure travel markets that increase Pueblo County's tourism market share.</li> <li>Identify and target future conventions and meetings and retain existing businesses.</li> <li>Identify and target military reunions and veteran activities that increase visitors to Pueblo County.</li> <li>Identify and target indoor and outdoor sporting events that increase visitors to Pueblo County.</li> <li>Continue to develop and grow the community events and festivals.</li> <li>Develop strategies that increase group tour/motor coach tour business to Pueblo</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase awareness and marketing of business resources</li> <li>Streamline cumbersome licensing and permitting processes</li> <li>Create entrepreneur education programs</li> <li>Increase small business capital access</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create Centers of Excellence for selected areas of community need Replacement</li> <li>Create systems of care which make Pueblo the "front door" for regional systems of care</li> <li>Obtain national certifications</li> <li>Monitor outcomes data &amp; benchmark against regional data</li> <li>Create easier</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase agricultural exports from Pueblo County.</li> <li>Establish a temporary Action Task force to define, recruit and educate the Leadership Group and the areas of focus using a facilitator.</li> <li>Develop incentives to keep water on the land.</li> <li>Define the minimum level of agriculture and water needed to</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Modify mission to develop additional opportunities at CSU-Pueblo</li> <li>Capitalize on the flexibility of Pueblo Community College to provide customized training and/or degree programs Incorporating critical thinking and ethics into the rigor of academics</li> <li>Expand the Engineering department at CSU-Pueblo to become a School of Engineering</li> <li>Expand Ag related research programs and/or create entry level degree programs via Pueblo Community College</li> <li>Develop Entrepreneurial studies program within the Hassan School of Business with</li> </ol>

	<p>5. Capture chemical Demil assets for future manufacturing opportunities.</p>	<p>County. 12. Incorporate additional training....</p>		<p>access to all levels of care consistent with the reform-based models. 3. Collaborate with other providers in the area to eliminate duplication and improve quality and efficiency of care. 4. Actively recruit physicians, dentists, and all health care professionals 5. improve the economic health of the community 6. Providing exceptional service to the outreach areas 7. Create a mechanism for a health care cluster focused on medical manufacturin</p>	<p>sustain food production. 5. Promote rural living for people in the cities – move the people to the water. 6. Have an Ag Philanthropy Day where the major foundations and agencies would come to the farm and ranch areas for a tour and to meet the folks who need grants. 7. Develop a Marketing plan for raising awareness of Pueblo County ag assets.</p>	<p>articulation agreement (s) and ease in transferability with two year degree programs available at Pueblo Community College • Broaden outreach and programs specifically targeted at Veterans 6. Create Hospitality Management program at CSU-Pueblo to support tourism production efforts in the region with articulation agreement (s) and ease in transferability with two year degree programs available at Pueblo Community College 7. Support and Outreach for Developmental Education needs.</p>
--	---	--	--	--	---	---

<b>Action(s)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be active participant in states promotion of Pueblo County Region as a hub for Manufacturing in state recruitment efforts through publications and all other forms of prospect recruiting.</li> <li>2. Enhance regional partnerships with collaborative organizations as well as major employers who can provide expansion opportunities through supply chain and corporate management divisional relationships.</li> <li>3. Work with state and associated organizations to complete asset mapping project.</li> <li>4. Create a foundation and infrastructure to recruit health care</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue and expand the strategic marketing and PR plan, develop and enhance our social media , blogs and editorial in magazine and travel publications that feature: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outdoor recreational activities including fishing, boating, mountain biking, golf, etc..</li> <li>• Cultural, heritage, Industrial, medical and agri tourism.</li> <li>• Food tourism.</li> <li>• Visual and performing arts.</li> <li>• Motor Coach tours.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Develop a PR plan that allows participants in our target markets to communicate to other potential visitors.</li> <li>3. Continue to establish contacts and educate partners in tourism opportunities in all of our target markets.</li> <li>4. Identify and participate in travel shows related to our target markets.</li> <li>5. Encourage visitor industry partners to create packages/travel specials</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify and inventory existing resources  Create central hub for resources that can be updated by all resource partners and promote the hub as the primary source for all partners  Create small business consortium tasked with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Streamlining partner referral process</li> <li>• Facilitate information sharing among financial and resource partners and entrepreneurs</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Create business kits by industry to assist with the licensing process  Improve web links between government departments  Training for state and local government workers</li> <li>3. Identify existing programs</li> </ol>	<p>8 opportunities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support loan repayment incentives.</li> <li>2. Support medical scholarship programs.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work with CSU Extension office to define opportunities for exporting</li> <li>2. Research the Land Link programs in the State and in other states to assist young people interested in farming or ranching to work with older farmers to get into the business.</li> <li>3. Specify how conservation easements can be used to encourage young people to get into ag.</li> <li>4. Research the infrastructure needs for smaller famers and put together a coordinated plan to make available a</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modify mission to include providing selected graduate level programs at CSU-Pueblo</li> <li>• Create additional engineering program degrees working toward an accredited School of Engineering to support manufacturing in the region <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Electrical Engineering</li> <li>○ Industrial Engineering</li> <li>○ Robotics Engineering</li> <li>○ Chemical Engineering</li> <li>○ Mechatronics</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Expand programs around <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Water management and conservation</li> <li>○ Alternative farming methods</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Create closer cooperative efforts with CSU to further develop research opportunities</li> <li>• Create Dual Credit Programs between the two institutions of higher educations  Engineering Entrepreneurship</li> </ul>
------------------	---	--	--	--	--	--

	<p>related manufacturing opportunities.</p> <p>5. Explore and capture Reuse possibilities with Bechtel and the Pueblo County Army depot.</p> <p>6. Promote, expand and privatize VINS project with defense related companies.</p> <p>7. Promote Pueblo County area as transportation and logistical hub and continue to implement infrastructure improvements including but not limited to: Rail, I-25 corridor, Broadband and building inventory</p> <p>8. Attract and place companies in areas that capitalize on existing infrastructure of water system.</p>	<p>6. Fulfill all visitor requests by providing appropriate information.</p> <p>7. Maintain a database that tracks visitor requests and visitors to Pueblo County.</p> <p>8. Maintain and operate a visitor center 7 days a week.</p> <p>9. Continue to develop and distribute promotional materials that feature our target markets.</p> <p>10. Conduct FAM tour for travel writers.</p> <p>11. Maintain and enhance our web site.</p> <p>12. Continue to develop and expand our social media programs.</p> <p>13. Continue and expand our front line training program.</p> <p>14. Reevaluate current strategic marketing plan for convention and meeting planners and organizations</p> <p>15. Continue use of Sales person in Denver market to develop and maintain relationships with new and existing customers.</p> <p>16. Continue to add to our data base of targeted market prospects.</p>	<p>Develop financial and entrepreneur programs within school systems, after-school and summer programs</p> <p>Create foundation funded by the regions banks and partner businesses for the purpose of chartering a bank to make micro-loans to students to teach financial literacy.</p> <p>4. Identify and inventory alternative funding sources in the region</p> <p>Improve marketing of alternative funding sources such as microloan and grant programs</p> <p>Create small business financial literacy program</p> <p>Offer technical support to assist small business with grant and loan application processes</p>	<p>commercial kitchen, frozen storage, seed cleaning, a service center, etc.</p> <p>5. Discover what is necessary to have a Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food program in Pueblo County.</p> <p>6. Research the potential for a mobile slaughter facility.</p> <p>7. Identify the State and federal laws that cause problems with growing and selling, ex. Zoning laws, tax laws, estate tax.</p> <p>8. Commission supply chain asset mapping.</p> <p>9. Identify additional "value added" opportunities – aquaculture,</p>	<p>Hospitality &amp; Tourism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ag. Management and Music Programs by enhancing marketing and hospitality programs to include specific courses relating to the promotion of the arts at both institutions of higher education.</li> <li>Partner with business and industry to identify additional areas of academic concentration</li> <li>Pueblo Community College will develop a more robust outreach program for veterans</li> </ul>
--	--	---	--	---	--




<p><b>Expected Outcome(s), i.e., Measurable Results</b></p>	<p>Using a baseline of existing manufacturing jobs we will track the increase in primary employment over a four year period</p>	<p>Establish visitor bench market with industry partners.  Increase sales tax revenue by 20 % from visitors outside of Pueblo County over next 3 years.  Increase lodging tax receipts by 8 % from leisure travel activities.  Increase total lodging tax by 15% over this year.  Increase the number of Conventions and meetings by 5 % over the next 2 years  Bring 6 military reunions to Pueblo County in the next 2 years.  Add 3 new amateur sporting events by 2013.  Host 2 Motor Coach groups in the next year.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional inventory project completed</li> <li>• Small business consortium established</li> <li>• Online decision engine to guide entrepreneurs through the permitting and licensing process</li> <li>• Quick-links between government departments added to government sites</li> <li>• Entrepreneurship program implemented in K-12 education</li> <li>• Youth Bank established to enhance financial literacy among regions youth</li> <li>• Increase microloan lending by 10% annually</li> <li>• Small business liaison program established</li> </ul>	<p>Measurable increase in patient volume from the region  Increase in job creation at existing facilities and any new related health care industry companies.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increased opportunities for ag exports.</li> <li>2. Training schedule set up for a variety of ag issues.</li> <li>3. Leadership Group will be formed and funded.</li> <li>4. Action Groups will prepare reports and will begin implementation of above issues. Ex. Super Ditch.</li> <li>5. There will be a central point of contact for ag projects</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revised mission at CSU-Pueblo</li> <li>• Additional Masters Level Degree programs</li> <li>• School of Engineering on Campus at CSU-Pueblo</li> <li>• Water Management programs implemented at both institutions</li> <li>• CSU partnership to create concerted research efforts</li> <li>• Dual Credit Programs offered between CSU-Pueblo and Pueblo Community College</li> <li>• Entrepreneurship minor established at CSU-Pueblo in conjunction with existing programs at Pueblo Community College</li> <li>• Hospitality management degree established at CSU-Pueblo in conjunction with existing programs at Pueblo Community College</li> <li>• Increased revenue generated through local Arts and Music programs</li> <li>• Narrow the gap of the Colorado Paradigm – increase the number of degrees awarded per household</li> </ul>
---	---	--	---	---	---	--

Region 13: Chaffee, Fremont, Custer and Lake Counties

Priority(ies)	Strengthen the economic base	Optimize existing and developing tourism	Supporting existing community amenities to enhance quality of life	Assure key infrastructure (telecommunication, transportation and water) is maintained/expanded to enhance current and attract new businesses for economic growth	Downtown Revitalization
<b>Strategy(ies)</b>	<p>Support expansion and retention of existing industries and business (Economic Gardening)</p> <p>Better communicate local regulatory process for business development</p> <p>Support the effort of the Regional Workforce Center, OEDIT and higher education in developing and implementing a regional business marketing plan</p> <p>Enhance the communication and coordination of State, Federal and local resources to support strengthening the economic base</p> <p>Encourage</p>	<p>Create internal/external awareness promoting traffic</p> <p>Collaboration of branding process efforts which will consistently brand all areas related to tourism.</p> <p>Promote heritage/historic tourism</p> <p>Implement strategic signage</p> <p>Expand marketing between regions</p> <p>Identify protégés and mentors</p> <p>Create more recreational opportunities</p> <p>Short term rental inventory</p> <p>Co-op Advertising</p> <p>Regional Branding: "Gold Dust Trail"</p> <p>Want to create a statewide interactive statewide web based and mobile application map that identifies</p>	<p>Identify and develop amenities critical to draw services in the region in order to attract Economic Development / Business.</p> <p>Amenities: hospital, education, prisons, cemeteries, natural resources, utilities, workforce, airport and libraries.</p> <p>Enhance and protect natural resources.</p> <p>Identify alliances / stakeholders in the community.</p> <p>Develop comprehensive plan to support service for the entire region.</p>	<p>Telecommunications is a major strategy</p> <p>Retain and expand current businesses</p> <p>Enhance existing businesses and attract new businesses looking for relocation</p> <p>Use infrastructure to attract and keep young people home for diversity</p> <p>Be demonstration area for new technologies (e.g., satellite connections for mountains, etc.)</p> <p>Identify new strategies to fund local infrastructure projects.</p>	<p>Maintain &amp; market Downtown designation</p> <p>Occupy storefronts</p> <p>Encourage practical enforcement on P&amp;Z codes</p> <p>Easier improvements of Historic Buildings</p> <p>Downtown design and circulation to encourage alternative traffic</p>

	<p>opportunities throughout the state such as: hiking ,biking, birding, snowshoeing, high elevation training, fishing and other recreational opportunities.</p> <p>State Veterans Cemetery is one of many issues that would be a regional assets and attractions.</p> <p>Create and establish a regional tourism board supported by the CTO holding voting board positions representing the regions</p> <p>Establish a community and regional events task force</p>	<p>entrepreneurial opportunities by developing a tool kit of financial strategies</p> <p>Develop an inventory of existing buildings and resources by community and county</p> <p>Support efforts to expand local sale of agricultural products</p> <p>Support mechanisms for home-operated businesses</p> <p>Develop strategies for affordable housing improvements</p>	<p>Develop local and regional approach to conservation, quality, and availability of water (utilize examples from elsewhere)</p>	
<p><b>Action(s)</b></p> <p>Assist municipalities and counties improve their websites to be able to provide information on regulatory processes</p> <p>Develop a “fast track” process for business development regulations</p> <p>Support CDBG and Brownfield grant applications for communities and businesses</p>	<p>Determine impact of the event</p> <p>Facilitate cooperation among sponsors, participants and community</p> <p>Expand the vision of Colorado Tourism</p> <p>To increase the statewide visibility throughout the state and make sure that it has equal geographic representation.</p> <p>A better working relationship between the state office</p> <p>Website and social networking</p>	<p>Develop alliances regionally to work to enhance regional amenities/services</p> <p>Rotate regional face to face quarterly meetings throughout region</p> <p>Develop resource map of each regional amenity</p> <p>Expand educational and training opportunities in the region</p>	<p>Telecommunications: Establish a think tank/task force on telecommunication solutions - Participants should include scientists on the leading edge of technology, current users and targeted future users - Identify emerging technology on a 3-5 year horizon - Identify regional and state resources available to</p>	<p>Window dressing for vacant buildings. Convert to mixed use (residential &amp; retail or office). Identify underutilized and not utilized properties in district. Chamber of Commerce unified outreach Cooperation between EDC and empty downtown buildings as</p>

<p>incubation space</p> <p>Chamber of Commerce educating businesses about process to website sales</p> <p>Create an inventory of downtown businesses and available properties</p> <p>Empower Chamber of Commerce to work on retail business attraction</p> <p>City &amp; county partnership for easier navigation of licenses and regulations</p> <p>Community vitalization task force</p> <p>Establish community ambassadors to welcome &amp; greet visitors</p> <p>Enhance curb appeal and aesthetic look of downtown</p>	<p>implement emerging technology in 3-5 year horizon</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work plan to implement strategies identified by think tank/task force</li> </ul> <p>Highway:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Road maintenance (plowing snows)</li> <li>- Assure set-asides of funding from state and federal agencies for small county regional highways</li> <li>- Coordinate and support regional airport efforts</li> </ul> <p>Water:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- River improvements</li> <li>- Improve water treatment and delivery systems</li> <li>- Firm up support for regional water conservation (consolidate regional efforts – reuse, water education)</li> <li>- Collectively advocate a regional voice to partner with state agencies-- conservation downstream, will impact the headwaters</li> </ul>	<p>Publicly recognize protégés and mentors</p> <p>Establish designated bike routes (like Fort Collins)</p> <p>Develop a website illustrating links relationships among amenities and alliances</p> <p>Identify potential for beneficial alliances not already in place.</p> <p>Convene summits for groups that may benefit from collaborative efforts that are not already doing so.</p> <p>Convene meetings with prison heads to see how they can encourage their employees to be more involved in their community.</p> <p>Schedule opportunity for relationship building both existing and potential.</p> <p>A free day for servers, hotel desk clerks, etc. at local tourist attractions.</p> <p>A tasting event for the local people who deal with tourists to all the local eateries.</p> <p>Identify restrictions to accessing key natural resources that hinder tourism</p> <p>Identify target tourism audiences (ie, young families; 40+; small business conferences; destination weddings; family reunions)</p> <p>Attend trade shows outside area to recruit these targeted audiences</p>	<p>Work in concert with State agencies to develop a “tool kit” for local businesses</p> <p>Maximize use of State Planning and Management Regions by all State agencies and all State resources</p>	
---	--	---	--	--

		<p>Evaluate the effectiveness of existing strategic partnerships and the formation of new strategic partnerships</p> <p>Develop passion among citizens and businesses for promoting</p> <p>Develop activities/events September through May that encourage overnight stay</p> <p>Ensure that all entities who provide lodging pay "pillow tax"</p> <p>Off season events: Mining Comm Summit; XC skiing; Snowmobile events; Hut tours; snowshoe events</p> <p>Red Carpet Training (Workforce Center)</p>			
<p><b>Expected Outcome(s), i.e., Measurable Results</b></p>	<p>Decrease vacant storefronts by 30%</p> <p>Increased city/county sales and property tax revenues</p> <p>Increased employment</p>	<p>Increase 3 season tourism, business and tax revenue</p> <p>Governor's office to work with legislature to modify the bed tax.</p> <p>Establish a State Veterans Cemetery that would provide a proper resting place for our veterans while strengthening the community through its contribution to the round economy for the region.</p>	<p>Build and strengthen regional relationships</p> <p>Collaborative network of stakeholders working together to enhance economic vitality of the region</p> <p>More efficient use of resources</p>		<p>Increased foot traffic downtown</p> <p>More storefronts filled</p> <p>Increased property values</p> <p>Increased tax dollars</p> <p>More jobs</p> <p>Improved community pride</p>

Region 14: Las Animas and Huerfano Counties

Priority(ies)	Create Jobs	Increase Tourism Activity	Increase education and job training programs	Increase Access to Healthcare	Increase Access to Capital
Strategy(ies)	<p>Go after small to medium distribution centers</p> <p>Grow Gunsmithing Business</p> <p>Improve infrastructure</p> <p>Work with existing businesses to increase capacity</p> <p>Develop functioning Economic Development entity in Huerfano County</p>	<p>Increase Marketing efforts of both counties focused on collaborating around Heritage Tourism, building on the fledgling Five County Heritage Tourism Group formed around the steel, rail, and coal industries' history in Huerfano/Las Animas/Pueblo/Fremont/Custer Counties since the 1870s.</p> <p>Gain recognition at the state level for the heritage tourism resources in the region</p> <p>Growing the use of the Santa Fe Trail and Highway of Legends Byways by organizing the formal tours of the areas, with experiential learning fueled by the local community colleges, chambers of commerce, and economic development groups in the region.</p> <p>Improving trail systems linking available heritage tourism sites and resources.</p>	<p>Assess current available training opportunities</p> <p>Analyze types of job training needs to compete in global economy</p> <p>Capture specialized training funds</p> <p>Capture funds to continue support of current training programs</p> <p>Integrate job training into K-12 to capture development of work-readiness soft skills</p> <p>Market existing training opportunities</p>	<p>Expand primary care resources in Walsenburg</p> <p>Build a new nursing home in Walsenburg</p> <p>Build a new hospital in Trinidad</p> <p>Collaborate on recruitment as possible</p> <p>Promote importance of healthcare to economic development</p>	<p>Regional effort for access to capital</p> <p>Increase participation of banks in community economic development activities</p> <p>Establish state capital access ombudsman for region</p> <p>Establish regional contact for state ombudsman. Secdd may become the access to capital ombudsman to interface with state SBDC to work in both counties</p> <p>Market access to capital programs to businesses to existing and potential business</p> <p>Implement Incubator by enhancing existing incubator in Las Animas potentially serving both counties or use as model</p> <p>Collaborate with foundations in</p>

Action(s)	PTAC Certifications Networking Marketing of gunsmith tradeshow Public/Private Partnerships for business development Identify companies that would fit with region "Light up" existing fiber optic cable to provide true broadband access Develop business incubator – look to TLAC for model Identify and develop economic clusters around existing businesses Keep I-25 and other highways in region	Establish a Visitors' & Convention Bureau to provide services for group and visitor travel (sharing resources between both counties – "cross-germination!") Increase Huerfano County tourism tax (lodging) to provide needed funding for tourism marketing. Collaborate, implement, and continue with sharing hospitality training resources. Identify inventory of existing walking, riding, and motorized trails in both counties. Develop infrastructure around all tourist activities (i.e. RESTROOMS!!!) Market the byways (materials, podcasts, and other creative resources) Support development of local tourism projects (Chuchara	Establish mentoring/ apprenticeship programs recruit consultant to identify job market trends Businesses and workforce center work together to market available training programs and services for short-term demands build stronger relationships with PCC and TSJC re: distance learning Identify programs with available training funds and partner with program providers Work with program providers to develop market strategies to get students to attend Work with school districts to	respective counties Describe bad experience and red tape in working with federal Economic Development Agency Governor and/or designee such as the Bank Commissioner co-sponsor region lender meeting to create a regional lender strategy Implement small business loan training Inventory of vacant buildings or commercial and industrial property Region formally requests via letter to the Governor to designate a capital access ombudsman Governor to facilitate state wide meeting with EDA and representatives of Regions to overcome barriers and roadblocks. Counties establish task force for incubators and use of SBDC in

	open and in good repair	Mountain Resort in Huerfano County and Purgatorie River in Las Animas County)	incorporate work-readiness soft skills training in K-12  Regional periodic face-to-face meetings with primary partners at least twice per year		both counties  Implement access to capital marketing campaign
<b>Expected Outcome(s), i.e., Measurable Results</b>	Business that depends on broadband access will grow – new businesses will be developed With improved transportation infrastructure small-medium distribution centers will be encouraged to locate in region Business incubator will encourage and support the growth of new businesses	Increased sales and lodging tax revenue Increase ancillary businesses More exposure in tourism marketing	Develop at least two mentoring/apprenticeship programs Increase number of market-ready workers in the region Increase training opportunities within the region Increase employment		Increase Lender attendance at strategic economic development meetings Develop data base on business contacting ombudsman Less vacant building Increased tax revenue Reduced unemployment Reduced foreclosure on commercial property Growth in number of new businesses or number of business expanding