

# Kiowa County



## 2017 CEDS

Prepared by Southern Colorado Economic Development District  
1104 N. Main Street  
Pueblo, Colorado 81003  
719-545-8680

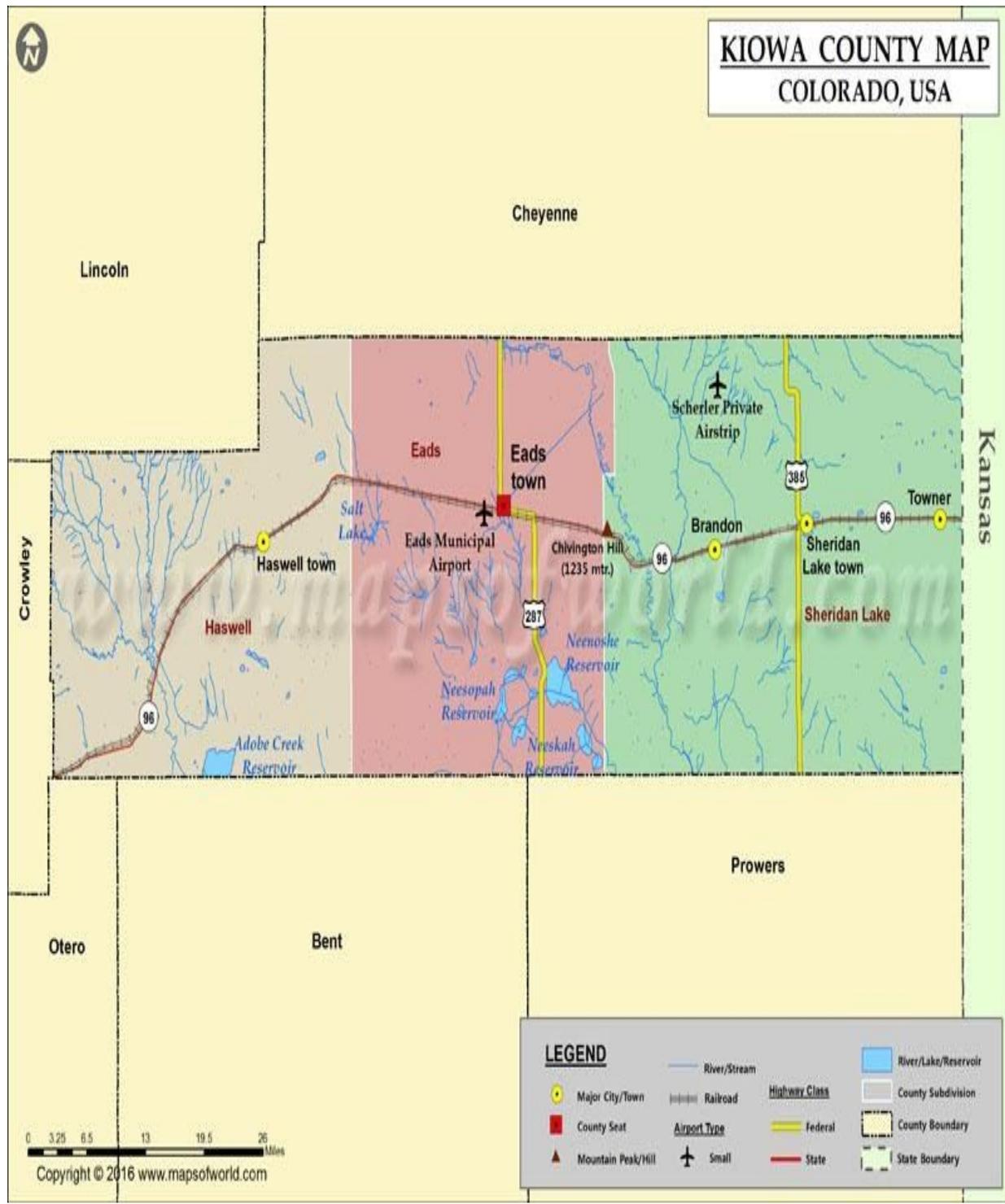
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# KIOWA COUNTY MAP

## COLORADO, USA



**LEGEND**

Major City/Town	River/Stream	River/Lake/Reservoir
County Seat	Railroad	County Subdivision
Mountain Peak/Hill	Airport Type	County Boundary
Small	Federal	State Boundary
	State	

## SUMMARY BACKGROUND

Kiowa County is located in the Southeastern edge of Colorado, bordered by Kansas. The county is 1,786 square miles with a population density of 0.7 per square mile. The average elevation is 4,300.

Established in 1889, Kiowa County took its name from the Kiowa Indians who lived in Eastern Colorado. The Great Plains Reservoirs are located nine miles south of Eads and provide several opportunities for hunting, fishing and wildlife watching. Historians will enjoy the Sand Creek Massacre site and the Eads Museum. The County is densely populated, with its mainstay in farming and ranching. Kiowa County is designated as a Ports to Plains trade corridor route.

### County Commissioners:

Donald Oswald

Richard Scott

Cindy McCloud

### Legislative Districts:

Congressional District: 4

Senate District: 1

House District: 63

**County Seat:** Eads

### Population

The population of Kiowa County for 2015 was 1,423.

### Population by Age

Under 5 years	85	5 to 9 years	99	10 to 14 years	109
15 to 19 years	141	20 to 24 years	78	25 to 34 years	115
35 to 44 years	174	45 to 54 years	208	55 to 59 years	70
60 to 64 years	75	65 to 74 years	135	75 to 84 years	72
85 years and over	46				

### Population by Community

Eads	597
Haswell	67
Sheridan Lake	86
Unincorporated	641

[www.factfinder.census.gov](http://www.factfinder.census.gov)

### **Poverty**

In 2015, Kids Count reported 41.6% of school age children qualified for free/reduced lunch and 19.6% of children under 18 years of age were living in poverty compared to 14.9% in the State.

[www.kidscount.org](http://www.kidscount.org)

### **Housing**

The average household size is 2 compared to an average family size of 2.64. The homeownership vacancy rate is 5.8% and the rental vacancy rate is 24.2%.

According to the National Low Income Coalition, affordable rent represents the generally accepted standard of not spending more than 30% of gross income on gross housing costs. The fair market rent in 2015 for Kiowa County is \$704 for a two bedroom home. In order to afford rent at this amount, a household in Kiowa County must earn \$28,160 annually. At the minimum wage of \$8.31 hour, one minimum wage earner would have to work 65 hours per week.

[www.nlihc.org](http://www.nlihc.org)

### **Education**

Kiowa County provides K-12 education through two school districts. Higher education is available in Otero, Prowers and Pueblo Counties.

The 2014 Census American Community Survey estimates that 91.2% of the total population 25 years of age and older has attained a high school diploma or higher; 19.4% have attained a Bachelor's Degree or higher.

[www.factfinder.census.gov](http://www.factfinder.census.gov)

### **Agriculture**

In 2012, Kiowa County had 1,113,160 acres of agricultural land. There are 395 farms, with an average of 2,818 acres. The market value of products sold was \$96,066,000 of which \$36,987,000 (39%) were crop sales and \$59,079,000 (61%) was livestock sales. The average per farm was \$243,205. Government payments were \$7,743,000 with an average per farm of \$22,574.

[www.agcensus.usda.gov](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov)

### **Travel Impact**

Dean Runyon and Associates report that \$976,600 were spent by visitors to Kiowa County in 2015. Not only does travel affect the revenues to a community, but jobs must be created to maintain services to visitors. Approximately 17 full and part time jobs were attributed to travel and tourism in Kiowa County in 2015 with \$290,300 in earnings, \$13,000 in local tax revenue and \$27,900 in state tax revenue.

[www.deanrunyon.com](http://www.deanrunyon.com)

### **Local Economy**

The current unemployment rate for Kiowa County in September 2016 was 2.2% compared to 3% for the state and 5% nationally. The average earnings for Kiowa County for 2015 was \$39,375.

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING**

### **SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis**

The starting point for a credible economic development strategic plan is a SWOT analysis. By working with Kiowa County stakeholders, the following was identified.

#### **Strengths**

- Low cost of living
- Excellent K-12 schools
- Quality of Life
- Agriculture
- Hospital
- Low crime
- Outdoor recreation
- Highway access
- Industrial Park
- Assisted living facility
- Available infrastructure
- Golf course
- Wind
- Railroad
- Sand Creek Massacre site

- Strong economic development organization

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### **Weaknesses**

- Economy dependent on agriculture
- Lack of economic diversification
- Lack of jobs
- Aging population
- Outmigration of population
- Retail leakage
- Old housing stock
- Undeveloped industrial park
- Inadequate infrastructure for commercial and manufacturers
- Grain elevators are not up to date
- Lack of transmission lines
- Lack of tourism
- Empty storefronts

### **Opportunities**

- Increase the value of agriculture
- Encourage ag co-ops
- Explore wind/solar energy
- Oil production/leases
- Increase use of the rail system
- Increase tourism
- Promote bird watching
- Develop industrial park
- Capitalize on Ports to Plains Corridor
- Promote “buying local”
- Update housing stock
- Preserve historic downtown
- Explore millet seed for renewable energy
- Develop south pond/fill Great Plains reservoirs

### **Threats**

- Outmigration
- Out of basin water sales
- Continued drought
- School closure

### **Threats Continued**

- Hospital closure
- Reduction of federal agriculture programs
- Post office closure

### **Kiowa County has identified a number of strategic priorities. These include:**

- Availability of affordable housing
- Main Street development
- Daycare
- Tourism

#### **Goal: Develop housing**

The lack of housing stymies economic growth and diversity when businesses can't recruit employees because there is no place for them and their families to live. Rising rents and aging housing have been identified as contributing factors to a housing crisis.

#### **Goal: Main Street Development**

Expanding on current resources and creating new jobs is a focus for Kiowa County. The development of Kiowa County's Main Streets will increase the viability of current businesses and put Kiowa County in a position to compete for employers.

#### **Goal: Childcare**

Lack of childcare has been identified as a strategic priority to focus resources.

#### **Tourism**

Tourism brings new money and visitors into the community. Kiowa County's natural resources makes outdoor recreation and tourism an industry that needs to be developed.

#### **Resiliency**

In the event of a disaster, the Southern Colorado Economic Development District (SCEDD) plays a support role to other partners in planning and recovery efforts following a disaster.

#### **Kiowa County Emergency Contact Information:**

Casey Sheridan  
719-438-5411

[csheridan@kiowasheriff.net](mailto:csheridan@kiowasheriff.net)