

# Crowley County



## 2017 CEDS

Prepared by Southern Colorado Economic Development District

1104 N. Main Street

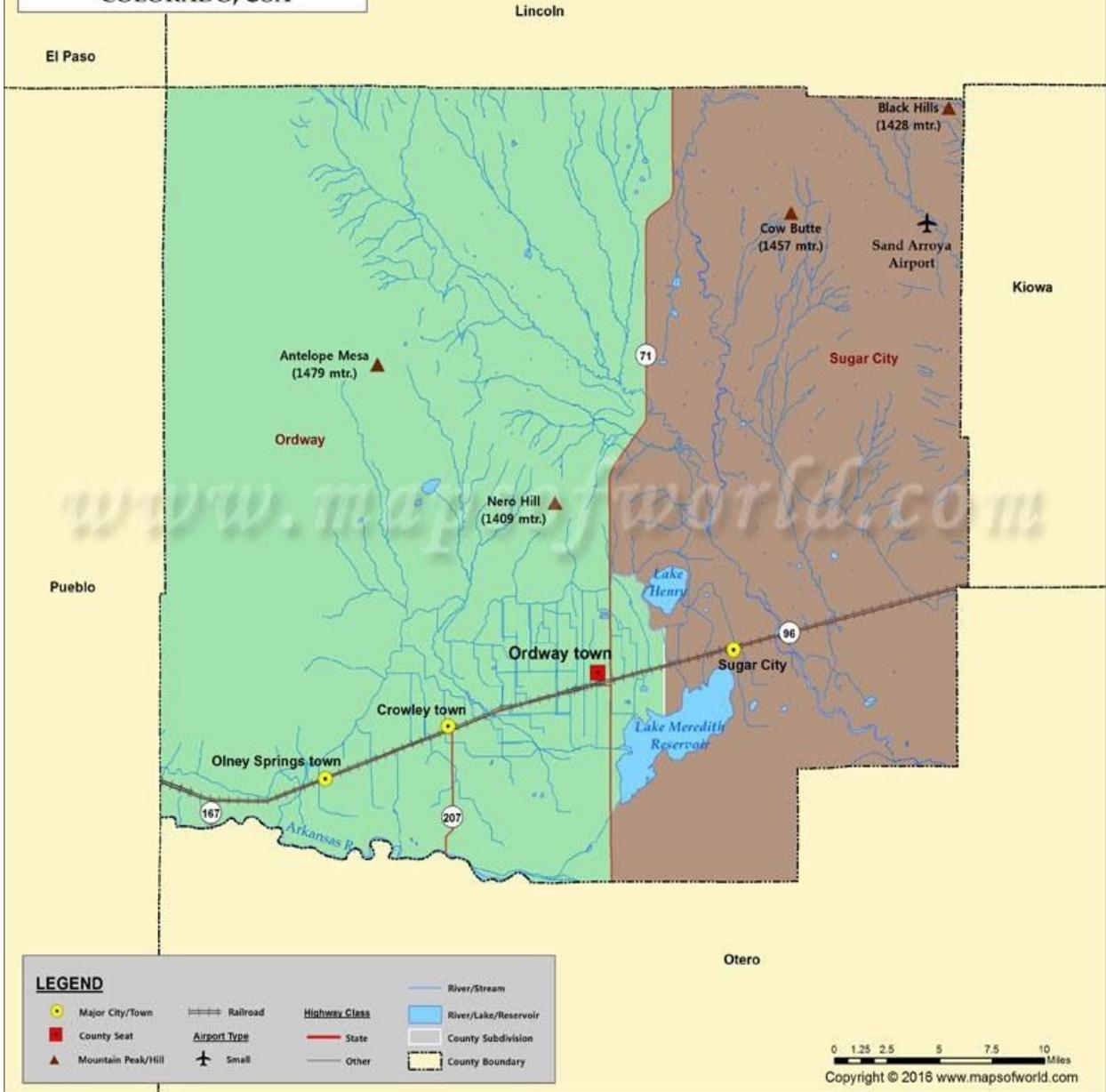
Pueblo, Colorado 81003

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**CROWLEY COUNTY MAP**  
**COLORADO, USA**



## SUMMARY BACKGROUND

Crowley County is located in the Southeastern region of Colorado. The county is 800 square miles with a population density of 8.2 per square mile. The average elevation is 4,300 feet.

Crowley County was established in 1911 when it split off from Otero and Bent Counties. The area features rolling prairies, farms and ranchlands. The county's open spaces appeal to visitors from around the region. Serene lakes, reservoirs and nearby grasslands attract water sports enthusiasts, fishermen, hunters, campers and bird watchers.

### County Commissioners:

Tobe Allumbaugh  
Frank Grant  
Gary Gibson

### Legislative Districts:

Congressional District 4  
Senate District 2  
House District 63

**County Seat:** Ordway

### Population

The population of Crowley County for 2015 was 5,562.

### Population by Age

5 to 9 years	213	10 to 14 years	446	15 to 19 years	424
20 to 24 years	507	25 to 34 years	762	35 to 44 years	658
45 to 54 years	845	55 to 59 years	272	60 to 64 years	350
65 to 74 years	428	75 to 84 years	198	85 years and over	49

### Population by Community

Crowley	164
Olney Springs	322
Ordway	1,011
Sugar City	240
Unincorporated Area	3,802

[www.dola.state.co.us](http://www.dola.state.co.us)

## **Poverty**

In 2014, Kids Count reported 71.7% of school age children qualified for free/reduced lunch and 38% of children under 18 years of age were living in poverty compared to 14% in the State.

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

## **Housing**

The average household size is 2.41 compared to an average family size of 2.64 for the State.

The homeownership vacancy rate is 2.9% and the rental vacancy rate is 14.5%.

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 Crowley County is \$658 for a two bedroom home. In order to afford rent at this amount, a household in Crowley County must earn \$26,320 annually. At the minimum wage of \$8.31 hour, one minimum wage earner would have to work 61 hours per week.

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

## **Education**

The rural nature of Crowley County warrants only one school district to provide K-12 education. Higher education is only available out of town in La Junta or Pueblo.

The 2014 Census American Community Survey estimates that 83.4% of the total population 25 years of age and older has attained a high school diploma or higher; 11.1% have attained a Bachelor's Degree or higher.

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

## **Agriculture**

In 2012, Crowley County had 500,066 acres of agricultural land. There are 228 farms, with an average of 2,193 acres. The market value of products sold was \$161,485,000 of which \$1,617,000 (1%) was crop sales and \$159,868,000 (99%) was livestock sales. The average per farm was \$708,267. Government payments in 2012 were \$2,044,000 with an average per farm of \$14,599.

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

## **Travel Impact**

Dean Runyon and Associates report that \$.9million dollars was spent by visitors to Crowley County in 2015. Not only does travel affect the revenues to a community, but jobs must be created to maintain services to visitors. Approximately 12 full and part time jobs were attributed to travel and tourism in Crowley County with \$201.4 million dollars in earnings, \$17,300 in local tax revenue and \$36,300 in state tax revenue.

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

## **Local Economy**

The current unemployment rate for Crowley County for October 2016 was 3.7%. The average earnings for Crowley County is \$31,151 in 2015.

## **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 Crowley County stakeholders the following was identified:

#### **Strengths**

- Good Schools
- Recreation opportunities
- Low cost of living
- Ample water
- Affordable land
- Highway access
- Climate
- Resiliency
- Core community of workers
- Conservation efforts
- Heritage of land governance
- Unspoiled assets ( spaces, lakes, ranching, cowboy lifestyles)
- Feed lot

- Prisons
- Opportunity for growth

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### **Weaknesses**

- Housing
- Reliance on prisons
- Hard feelings get in the way of collaboration/progress
- Limited workforce
- No supply of buildings suitable for small to medium businesses
- Limited doctors and hospitals
- Absence of volunteers
- Limited business base
- Lack of focus
- Lack of revitalization efforts
- No economic development official
- Aging population

### **Opportunities**

- Good climate and location for dairies
- Good place to retire
- Expanding broadband business
- Establishing ag-tourism ventures
- Land
- Tourism
- Internet remote business development

- SE tourism (CTO) initiatives
- New younger members – positivity
- Grant opportunities
- Focus to attract inventors

### **Threats**

- Closure of private prison
- Further consolidation of schools
- Continued drought
- Clash in cattle market
- Existing business owners retiring/dying and businesses close
- Water fights over shares
- Existing buildings aging and failing
- Infrastructure failures (wells, pumps)
- Lack of adequate housing

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

- Downtown Revitalization
- Housing
- Workforce
- Improve Telecommunications
- Diversification of local economy

### **Goal: Downtown Revitalization**

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

### **Goal: Housing**

Crowley County has several aging buildings with asbestos that are need of asbestos removal. 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.

**Goal: Workforce**

Providing a well-trained, skilled workforce is vital to the economy. Recruitment of skilled workers as well as education and training programs will enable a diverse workforce for businesses to draw from. Skilled workers also command higher wages.

**Goal: Improve Telecommunications**

Areas without adequate telecommunications such as broadband, cell service, etc., have fewer opportunities for businesses to start, grow and succeed, and are less desirable places to live for employees and families. Improved telecommunications would allow for home based businesses.

**Goal: Diversification of local economy**

One of the things that Crowley County is dependent on is the prison in the county. Diversification of the economy has been identified as a goal for the county. With a diverse economy as one industry declines it does not negatively affect the entire economy. By diversifying the local economy, Crowley County is less susceptible to fluctuations and economic cycles.

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**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.

**Crowley County Emergency Contact Information:**

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