

Chaffee County Economic Development Profile

Information & Data Sources

November 4, 2009



Prepared for:
Chaffee County
Board of County Commissioners

In conjunction with:
City of Salida
Town of Buena Vista
Town of Poncha Springs

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Contracted Scope of Work:

Chaffee County contracted with an outside consultant to assist in establishing an Economic Development Corporation (EDC) and prepare an existing data/development profile of Chaffee County. The following scope of work was completed for this document to give the newly established EDC president and Board a snapshot of the County's current condition or what the County has to offer.

Economic Profile Phase 1 – Existing Data/Development Profile

Exhibit A

Chaffee County Economic Opportunities Plan Scope of Work – Phase 1

Overall Economic Opportunities Plan

Identify all governing bodies, agencies and service providers – local, state and federal – as well as community and business groups that may have a vested interest in either the EDC creation or the profile development or both.

Formation of Economic Development Corporation

Meet with the governing bodies of Salida, Buena Vista and Poncha Springs to hear concerns and secure support for the economic opportunities plan.

Meet with major business leaders of Salida, Buena Vista and Poncha Springs to hear concerns and secure support for the economic opportunities plan.

With assistance from the formation team (Wayne Lovejoy and Thomas Warren) and Commissioner Dennis Giese, propose a new intergovernmental agreement that details responsibilities of all participating jurisdictions with respect to the Economic Opportunities Plan and their representation on the new EDC Board.

With input garnered from stakeholder meetings, provide conceptual model for the organization and operation of an economic development corporation to include membership guidelines, membership fee structure, board composition, initial operating structure and preliminary budget.

With assistance from the Chaffee County Attorney, generate and file documents and bylaws to create a 501(c) 6 corporation by the end of the second quarter, 2009.

Identify existing and research creation of additional economic funding mechanisms to support the economic development activities.

Profile Development

Compile and review current regulatory conditions based on existing comprehensive plans, zoning codes, subdivision regulations, intergovernmental agreements and permitting processes.

Compile available data on land use and land availability.

Conduct a photo survey of the County to document key images that represent the character of Chaffee County.

Evaluate the potential for using GIS resources for economic development.

Compile and review existing reports on the current economic base and demographics.

Research and compile all information and data related to existing and currently proposed infrastructure.

Research and compile all relevant information and data on current services areas along with current and/or growth boundaries.

Review existing infrastructure plans to support current land use and any current targeted growth areas and identify capacity.

Collect additional data through meeting with planning/public works authorities in Chaffee County, Salida, Buena Vista, and Poncha Springs.

Collect additional data through meeting with service providers in Chaffee County, Salida, Buena Vista, and Poncha Springs

Identify/understand/clarify the entitlement/development process for each jurisdiction for the various land use applications.

Prepare a preliminary report of findings to identify opportunities/strengths and constraints/weaknesses to economic development based on review of this available data.

Prepare draft budget and scope for Phase 2 for County Commissioners use by the end of Phase 1 for planning purposes.

Exclusions

This existing data profile does not include any attempt to rewrite or revise and existing comprehensive plans, land use code, zoning, subdivision regulations, etc. The objective of the Scope of Work is to provide the EDC and County with a current profile of existing conditions.

This above work is only the first phase of a two phase process. The attached document is Phase 1 and is intended for the EDC as a starting point in understanding, as mentioned before, what the County's current state is and what the County has to offer to future businesses wanting to relocate. Phase 2 will analyze the existing data profile and recommendations to complete the following scope:

The following scope is intended for information purposes only to give the reader an understanding of the 1st Phase and how this 1st phase moves forward to obtain the goals and objectives of the EDC.

Economic Profile Phase 2 – Analysis, Assessment, and Strategies

- 1) Analysis - Analyze and assess the information compiled in the Phase One Economic Profile. Summarizing trends, strengths, and weaknesses as they relate to economic development. Interview key business leaders and organizations to identify business trends and opportunities.
- 2) Procedures - Review and recommend strategies for clarifying Municipal entitlement/development processes by establishing a standardized clearing house of information from one jurisdiction to another. This task will involve a review of planning, zoning, and development regulations and procedures and second, the creation of a standardized web page for each jurisdiction.
- 3) Site Selection - Work with the County Planning staff and GPS staff in the development of an interactive Site Selection

GPS program. This program would be used by prospective business in the site selection process for all commercial and industrial parcels in the County. As an alternative to a GPS method, reproducible maps would be produced identifying the target parcels.

- 4) Infrastructure - Research and produce infrastructure maps identifying utility service areas, line sizes and capacities, public service boundaries, (i.e. fire, EMS, and school districts). These maps could be used independently or as part of the GPS Site Selection program above.
- 5) Promotion - Work with the CCEDC to identify strategies and method to promote economic development in the County.

INTRODUCTION – Phase 1

The first step in any process of design, research, or formation is to understand the current state or condition of the subject being considered. The above scope of work for the Existing Development profile is intended to establish the current condition within Chaffee County. Phase 2 is not part of this document. In the business world, when considering development of a new product, a startup company or whether to expand a business, a good business plan conducts an analysis to determine if the necessary variables exist to support the business model. Chaffee County, along with the City of Salida, the Town of Buena Vista, the Town of Poncha Springs, and private sector interests have joined together to form an Economic Development Corporation (EDC). The consensus is that in this unprecedented economic climate the opportunity and necessity exists to be proactive in the pursuit of new businesses, quality jobs, and non-resident revenue.

The role of the EDC is to promote, pursue, and secure new and existing business opportunities for the County. In doing so the EDC President and Board will use recommendations from Phase 2 to assist them in promoting Chaffee County and secure new business by guiding them through the process and getting the prospective business the information they need, developed out of Phase 2, to make a sound decision to move forward with relocating to Chaffee County.

Again, this document represents the first phase of a two phase process for Chaffee County and ultimately the EDC. It is a tool and the starting point which contains the information needed to development strategies for attracting new business. One truth of the business climate today is that information is the key to success and thus, the bests decisions are based on good, current information. The Chaffee County Economic Development Profile is a snapshot in time of the current variables which define Chaffee County. The decision to start a business, relocate or expand a business is not always simply a matter of supply and demand. This is especially true in non-urbanized areas where demand is not easily quantified or obvious. This is no less valid for Chaffee County where the population is just under 17,000 people for an area of approximately 1,014 square miles. In Chaffee County, the business prospects will be more targeted

toward those businesses that value lifestyle and quality of life. It has been said that a business headquarters will locate within five (5) to ten (10) miles of the CEO's home. In our wireless business culture today, the barriers of location are less of a factor. Locating a business to Chaffee County because of a lifestyle choice is an option today. The mission of the EDC therefore is to first understand what Chaffee County has to offer, and then provide the information to business prospects in an accessible and usable format.

PURPOSE – Phase 1

The information contained in this Profile has been compiled from numerous sources. All the data, images, and documents sited are existing and readily available. This Profile has organized all the various sources of information about Chaffee County that may be of value to a prospective business. This Profile seeks to identify the variety of attributes Chaffee County offers. This information includes more than the typical business data such as demographics, economic base data, and a listing of the local Chambers of Commerce. Business data is critical to a business, while soft data is also important when selecting a place to do business and be a resident. Soft data includes the history of the place, the natural beauty, climate, lifestyle and quality of life. The businesses, organizations, and agencies in Chaffee County and the Arkansas Valley have already done a great job promoting and documenting the information sited in this Profile. Most of the information referenced in this Profile already exists on a web site represented by the numerous organizations, agencies, and businesses with an interest in Chaffee County. This Profile is an inventory of information that the EDC can use to produce a “One-Stop Shop” source of information. The logical next step for the EDC is to provide a web site or brochure that contains information, resources, and web links helpful to prospective businesses.

In conjunction with this Profile, the Chaffee County Economic Development Corporation has been legally established with the Secretary of State and the selection of the Board of Directors (BOD) is currently in progress. It will be the BOD's responsibility to determine how best to use the information in this Profile. This information will be part of Phase 2 and will be presented as a proposal to Chaffee County.

Recommendations for Phase 2:

This Profile contains existing data that has not been manipulated or analyzed in any way but formatted and compiled in such a manner that will be useful for the EDC to start moving forward in a positive direction towards the ultimate goal of attracting business. The following items are recommendations to move forward into Phase 2 of this process. These are recommendations we feel the Chaffee County EDC should consider when assessing the next step to take:

- The EDC should have their own website connecting to the individual municipalities. All websites should be consistent when research information regarding “Development Services” and the same information should be obtained in the same format from each website. It should be the EDC who spearheads the coordination effort.
- As previously mentioned the main focus of new business besides lifestyle is site selection and/or site development. Accessible information from an interactive website utilizing GIS incorporated into each website will give quick access to information.
- Understanding site issues and any related infrastructure costs is essential for business decision. Utility maps were non-existent or inadequate to assess site or development issues. An executive summary is needed to pull all of the water and sewer capacity information together. We recommend efforts to prepare infrastructure planning maps with service area boundaries. These boundaries are not well defined.
- Critical analysis of land use codes, regulations, interviewing stakeholders and dissecting the development process to promote consistency and misinterpretation of the regulation, policies and procedures.

As we try to make it easier for business to establish themselves within Chaffee County and understand the information at hand the EDC must strive to improve the vision of Chaffee county in regards to promoting itself to business and who or want the community desires to be. Part of Phase 2, along with the previous items is community visioning and marketing/branding. Phase 2 should include ideas for this vision and will come out of the two parts of this phase. Part 1 is the Assessment of the information gathered to date, consensus with EDC on recommendation and arriving at a plan for economic development. The product will be a summary of finding which may include goals, objectives, strategies, facts, and ideas. Part 2 is the Approach and Guide to Implementation of the EDC Plan. The key aspect of this is defining the tasks for the action plan and to implement the action plan. This plan will include continued assessment of this plan, periodic evaluation and changes as needed.

These are recommendations for the EDC Board to consider when moving forward into Phase 2 and other ideas and recommendations will be developed out of Phase 2 and discussions with the Board.

HISTORY and HERITAGE

There are several web sites in Chaffee County which contain brief descriptions of it's history, as well as the history for the cities and towns. The following web sites contain information about the history of Chaffee County.

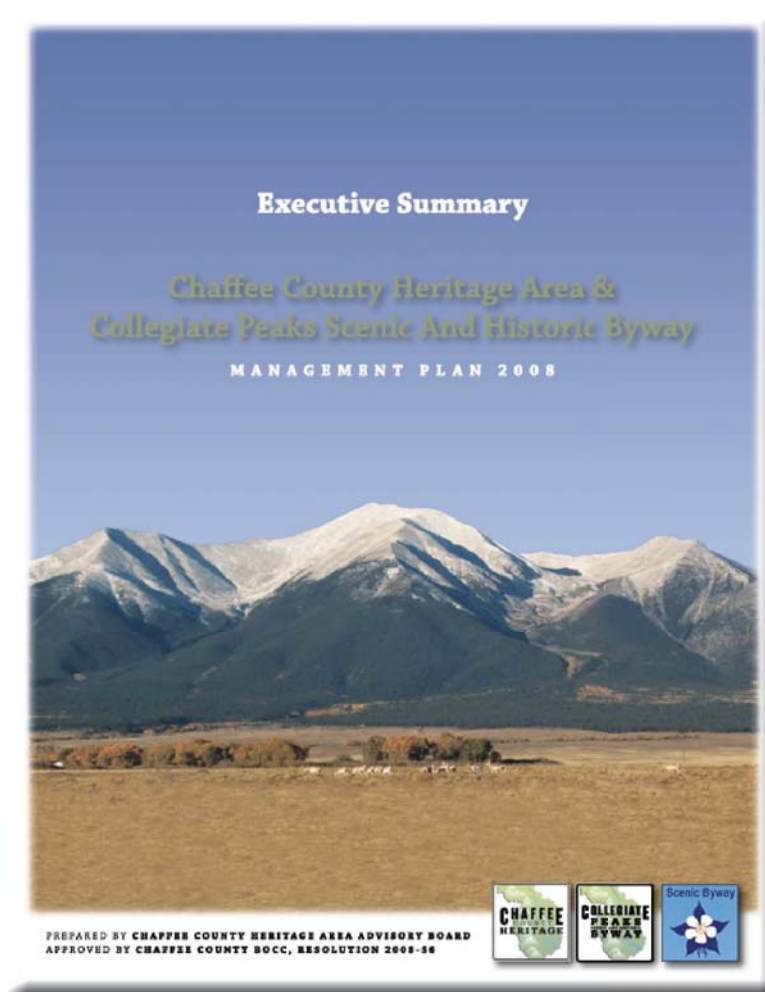
- www.coloradoheadwaters.com
- www.salidaarchive.org
- www.collegiatepeaksbyway.org
- www.chaffeecountyheritage.org



Historic Mining Town - St. Elmo



Characteristic view of the heritage and natural beauty in Chaffee County



WHAT IS MEANT BY “HERITAGE”?

“Heritage” is the essence of your home place. What defines Chaffee County as a place to live work and visit.

The purpose of the Heritage Area & Collegiate Peaks Scenic And Historic Byway Management Plan 2008 is to identify that essence, decide if it should be maintained, and take actions to retain it.

Excerpts from the Management Plan 2008 Report

What is Chaffee County’s “Heritage?”

Like all human landscapes, Chaffee County has a diversity of natural, cultural and historic resources that define its character and establish its unique sense of place. Taken together, these resources, which may also be termed “intrinsic qualities,” compose the County’s “Heritage.”

Our heritage consists of its

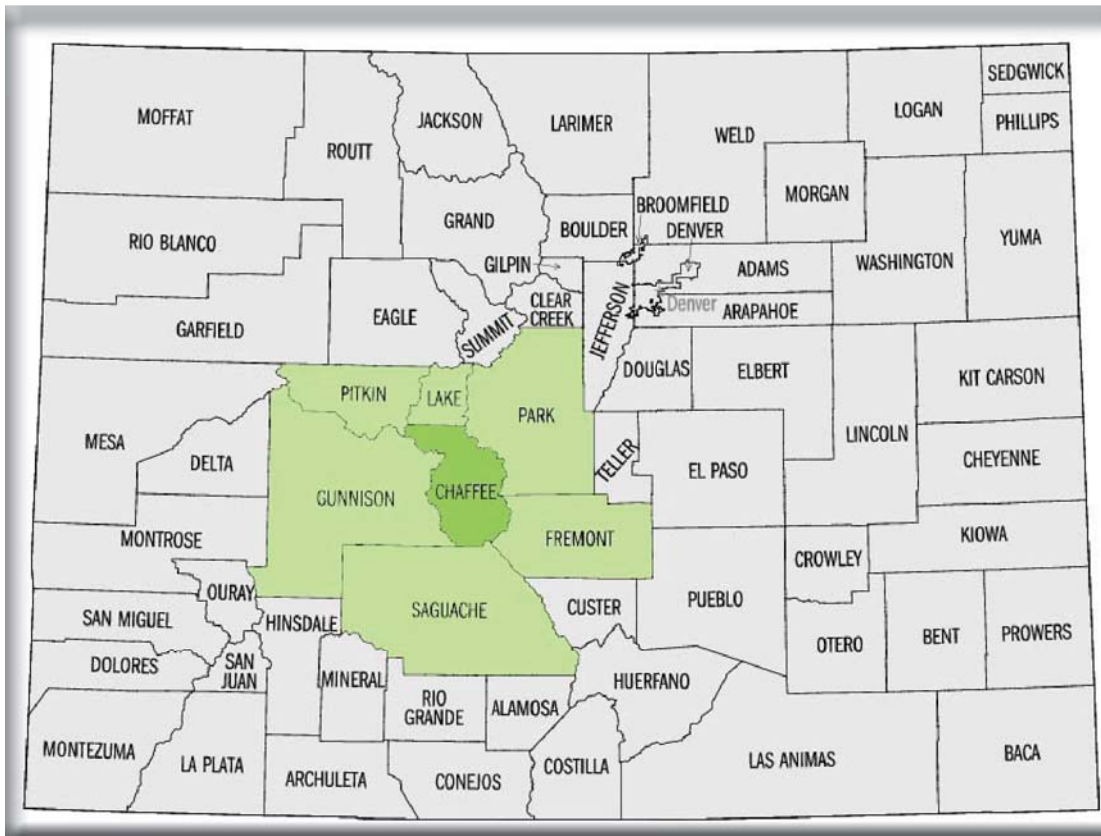
- *Scenic Beauty and Natural Diversity*
- *Agricultural Lands and Traditions*
- *Cultural, Historical and Archeological Features*
- *Recreational Opportunities*

LOCATION AND CONTEXT

Chaffee County is centrally located in the state of Colorado. Known for its natural beauty, the County possesses recreational amenities that attract thousands of visitors every year. The following map illustrates the central location within the county and the adjacent counties that directly compete for jobs, residents, and visitors.

The following link provides information about the County's location:

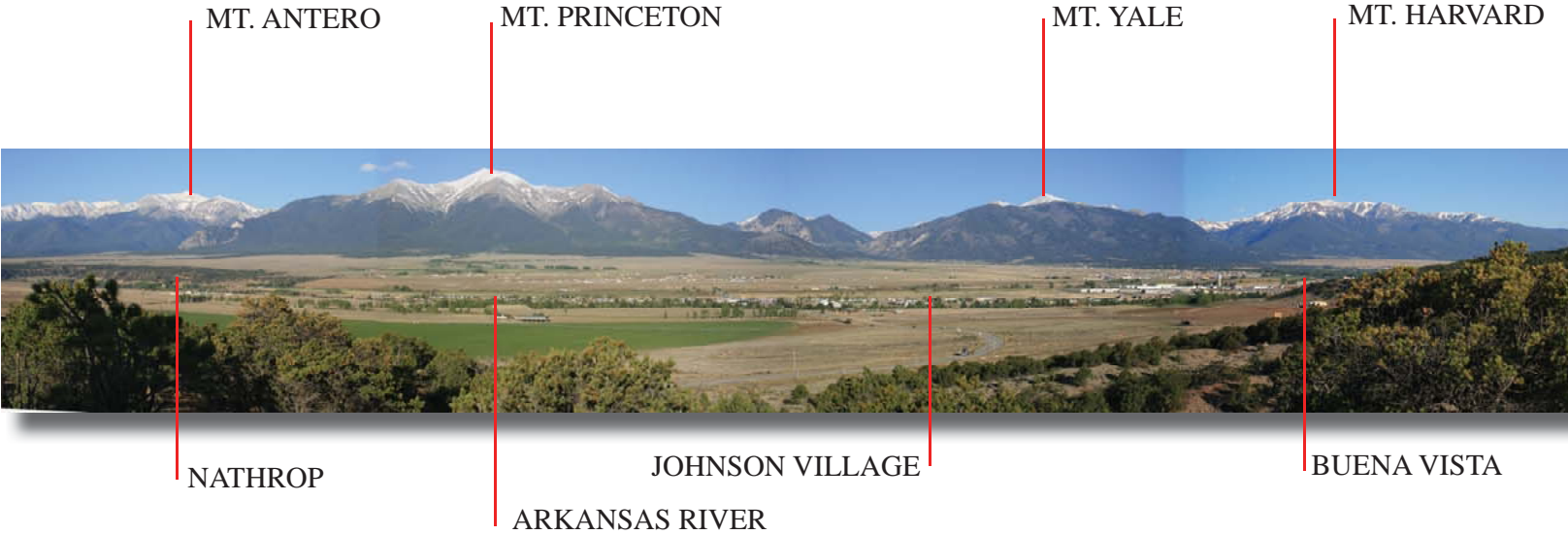
www.coloradoheadwaters.com/chaffee_county/maps.cfm



Source: U.S. Census

Context

Chaffee County is known for the Collegiate Peaks. One of the primary showcase views of the peaks is on display when entering the Arkansas Valley on Highway 285. Travelers entering the Valley are greeted with a breath taking panoramic view of the valley and mountain range. This gateway view is one of the memorable images of Chaffee County and should be promoted as one of the reasons people choose to live and work in the county. Economic Development should also promote the quality of life a place has to offer. The county’s scenic context and outdoor recreation it offers are attractive assets to potential businesses.



Gateway view of Chaffee County from Hwy 285

NATURAL RESOURCES

The climate in a region can be an important determinant in the process of selecting a site to locate a business. It is also important to retirees, new residents, recreationists, resorts, vacationers, and promoters. One of Chaffee County's greatest assets is the climate. The following web sites provide regional climate information.

Climate Data

Chaffee County

Average 300 days of sunshine each year. A typical summer day is sunny, in the high 70's to low 80's and evening temperatures in the high 40's and low 50's. Annual rainfall is 10.15" and annual snowfall is 30.4" with most snow occurring from the end of October through April. Winter typically features sunny and bright days with high's averaging in the mid 40's and lows from the mid teens.

Colorado Headwaters

www.coloradoheadwaters.com/chaffee_county/colorado_altitude.cfm

www.coloradoheadwaters.com/chaffee_county/colorado_mountain_weather.cfm

Weather Bug

www.weather.weatherbug.com/CO/Salida-weather.html?zcode=z6286&zip=81201

Elevation - Chaffee County

Highest Point 14,218

Lowest Point 6,900



Natural Features

Public Land

Nearly 80% of Chaffee County lands are managed by Federal and State agencies as “public lands”. The main river corridor is managed by Colorado State Parks and the Bureau of Land Management. The Colorado State Forest Service manages designated state lands throughout the county with the U.S. Forest Service managing most forested and high elevation portions of the valley.

The Forest Service District boundaries encompass a portion of the Sangre de Cristo mountains west to the Continental Divide and Monarch Pass (11,386 feet) and south to Poncha Pass (9,015 feet). The northern boundary stops north of Buena Vista and splits the Collegiate Peaks Wilderness area between the Salida and Leadville Ranger Districts. The eastern boundary of the District is situated northeast of Salida and meanders north towards Trout Creek Pass.



Agricultural Heritage

The Land

The landscape on National Forest lands varies from desert-like pinon and juniper forests in the foothills to majestic Ponderosa pine and Douglas fir in the montane zone. High elevation areas from 9,200 to 11,000 feet are abundant with moisture seeking trees such as the Engelmann spruce and Subalpine fir. Alpine areas are located from 10,500 feet to 14,000 feet and are devoid of trees with short scrubby bushes and tough alpine grasses. Wildflowers abound throughout the subalpine zone and mid-summer displays are a riot of colors in high mountain meadows. Aspen groves are scattered throughout the forest and bring forth golden bands of foliage during the fall.

US Forest

The Salida Ranger District is part of the Pike and San Isabel National Forests. The district encompasses over 440,000 acres of public lands and is located in the central part of Colorado near the towns of Salida, Buena Vista and Poncha Springs. Visitors can enjoy hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, 4-wheeling and camping surrounded by towering peaks that rise above the valley floor. The Arkansas River flows through the valley and is one of Colorado’s premiere white water rafting areas.

Source: www.fs.fed.us/r2/psicc/sal/

Scenic & Historic Byways

A great resource for the County is the [Chaffee County's Heritage, What's Happening Now? Scenic & Historic Byways Management Plan](#). This plan is a comprehensive document addressing the unique qualities found in Chaffee County. The maps generated for this document possess a wealth of information that will serve the County well as tools to manage growth and preservation. The following websites will direct you to the document.

www.chaffeecountyheritage.org
www.collegiatepeaksbyway.org

The Chaffee County Heritage Area / Collegiate Peaks Scenic & Historic Byway Management Plan was officially adopted by the Board of County Commissioners on November 4, 2008. This extensive document provides a detailed analysis of the county's natural, cultural, historic, scenic and agricultural "heritage." Existence of an approved plan, as shown by numerous examples in other Colorado counties, can be a powerful influence on external grant funding agencies when the Heritage Board or its partners (municipalities, historic preservation groups, land trusts, public land managers and others) approach grantors for financial support of specific projects.



Mt. Antero

Outdoor Activities

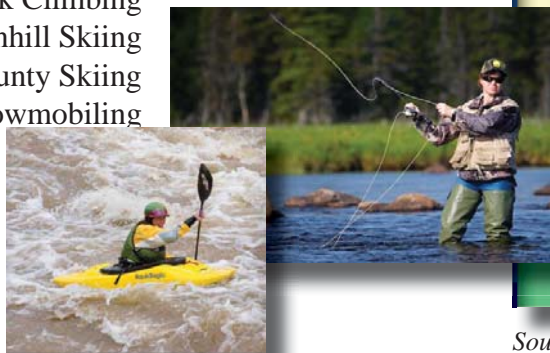
Chaffee County is an outdoor enthusiasts paradise. There are activities available all year round making Chaffee County an attractive destination. The following web site is one of several that promote the County's outdoor activities.

www.coloradodirectory.com/maps/collegiate.html

- Hiking
- Cycling
- Road and Mountain Biking
- Geothermal Hot Springs
- Boating
- Kayaking
- Canoeing
- Fishing
- River Rafting on the Arkansas River
- Fourteen thousand foot Mountains
- Hunting
- Horseback Riding
- Off Roding
- Fourteen thousand-foot mountain range
- Wilderness Camping
- Tent Camping



- Rock Climbing
- Downhill Skiing
- Cross County Skiing
- Snowmobiling
- Equestrian
- Ballooning
- Golf



Source: www.coloradodirectory.com/maps/collegiate.html

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

State Highways

- State Highway 285; Denver to the north, southern Colorado to the south.
- State Highway 24; Colorado Springs to the east, I-70 to the north.
- State Highway 50; Pueblo to the east, Grand Junction to the west.



Railroad

The Union Pacific Railroad owns the rail system that runs through the Valley.

Airports

Salida-Harriet Alexander Field

9255 County Road 140
Salida, CO 81201
719-539-3720

Harriet Alexander Field serves Salida and Chaffee County. The paved runway is 7,350 in length. The facility is at an elevation of 7,489 feet. It is located 2 miles west of Salida.

For more information, visit www.airnav.com/airport/KANK

Airport Services

Fuel available: 100LL JET-A
FUEL AVAILABLE WITH CREDIT CARD
Parking: hangers & tiedowns; hanger rentals
Bottled oxygen: NONE

Central Colorado Regional Airport/Buena Vista Municipal Airport

27960 County Road 319
Buena Vista, CO 81211
719-395-2496

Central Colorado Regional Airport serves Buena Vista and Chaffee County and is owned by Town of Buena Vista. The paved runway extends for 8,300 feet. The facility is at an elevation of 7,946 feet and located near highway 24 at the south edge of Buena Vista.

For more information, visit www.airnav.com/airport/KAEJ

Airport Services

Fuel available: 100LL JET-A
Parking: hangars and tiedowns
Airframe service: MAJOR
Powerplant service: MAJOR
Bulk oxygen: HIGH



COMMUNICATIONS

Detailed information on communications technology and service providers for telephone, cable, fiber optic and wireless service was not readily available at the time of this profile. Further research will need to be conducted by the CCEDC to acquire this information.

Telephone Provider

QWEST is the service provider for the County

www.qwest.com

Digital Cable Television

Bresnan Communications is the Cable provider for the County

www.bresnan.com