




Northeast Colorado Regional Vision Report



**Envisioning Our Tomorrows So We
Can Advocate Today!**

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Comments From Board Chair

The Northeast Colorado Regional Visioning Project was a grass roots effort where citizens were able to provide input into the future through town hall meetings, focus groups, electronically through Blogs, one-on-one conversations and on line surveys and through printed materials.

The Board of Directors of Progressive 15 knew that by working together within the region and identifying those things that we can all support, we will be stronger in our advocacy so that our region will be more economically viable and the quality of life for the citizens will be enhanced.

The following pages outline the findings of these efforts.

David Foy

Chairman of the Board

Cripple Creek & Victor Gold Mining Company

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Overview of Project

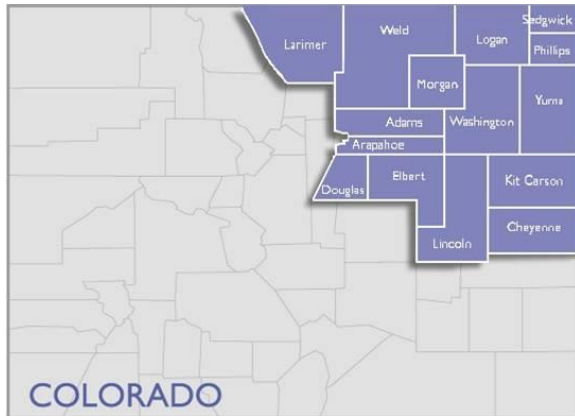
Many Backgrounds Many Voices One Vision

The 15 counties in Northeast Colorado that are part of the Progressive 15 membership can have a vibrant and prosperous future, but to prepare, we must honestly and objectively decide what that future is to be. We must answer the tough questions and we must work together.

This report is not meant to be a replacement for all the work that individual towns, cities and counties have already completed. Nor is it intended to replace the work of the associations, groups or entities that have been focusing on their particular issues. In fact, no laundry list of projects will be produced.

This report is focused on ideas that were gleaned as being opinions held by all parts of the region and recognizing that while differences will exist and we can focus in on the things of mutual agreement. Before the process was over we had over 500 contacts for input.

Progressive 15's hope is that this document will be used as a guideline for entities within the region as they complete their own visioning processes and strategic planning. Progressive 15 also hopes that elected officials and state & federal agencies will look at the report as a resource in developing policy and/or legislation so as to support our efforts for economic vitality and quality of life in the region.



The Findings

Seven topic focused meetings were held over the summer of 2007. The topics covered were:

1. Agriculture
2. Infrastructure
3. Economic Opportunity
4. Community Development
5. Health Care
6. Education
7. Government

From the topic focused meetings it became clear early on, that even with varied topics the issues still remained the same.

Best Features of Region:

Quality of Life
Growth in “Green” Technologies
Educational Opportunities
Community Safety
Communications Technology.

Items of Greatest Concern:

Agriculture sustainability
Water Limits
Increasing Costs
Presence of competition – both internal and external – as opposed to cooperation

Most important for the future:

Meeting Local Needs Locally
Renewable Energy
Attracting Retirees
Attracting and Retaining Young People
Changes in Educational Needs
Health Care Changes
Meeting Transportation Needs
Water and Agriculture

Next we look at the surveys, town hall meetings and one-on-one conversations. They showed the following:

The **Greatest Strengths** of the region were identified as:

Environment
Parks & Recreation
Education
Public Safety
Community Diversity, Character, Feel

The **Greatest Concerns** for the region were:

Employment
Economic Development
Arts & Culture
Housing

Items that would have the **Biggest Impact** on economic prosperity and quality of life in the Northeast Colorado region in the next 25 years:

Availability of Water

Availability of Jobs

Quality of K-12 education

Growing local entrepreneurs

Business Recruitment

Preservation of Agriculture

CHM

Correctional **Healthcare** Management

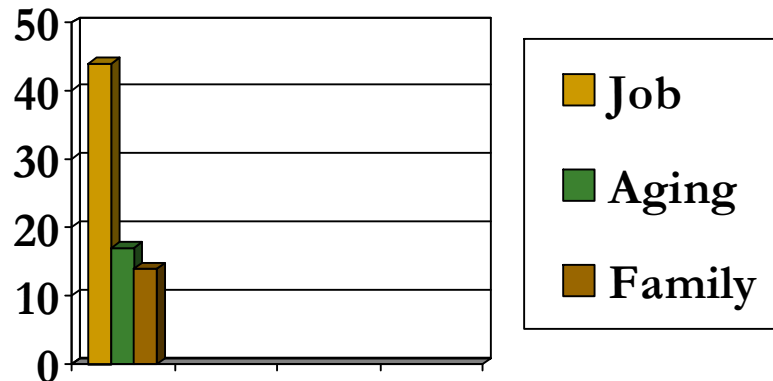


Micheal L. Acree
Account Executive



8484 South Valley Highway, Suite 250, Englewood, CO 80112
Phone: 720.229.1661 ■ Fax: 303.706.9068 ■ Cell: 303.880.7253
www.jailcare.com ■ E-mail: mike.acree@jailcare.com

- The survey asked what would cause the respondent to move away from the region.

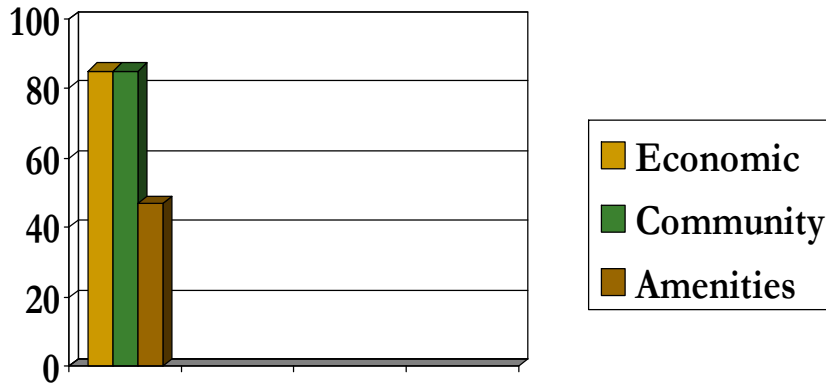


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- Next the survey asked what 3 things most impact your decision when selecting a town/area to live?



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Survey Respondent Characteristics

- Most respondents were long time residents of the region – 59% over 10 years
- Every county was represented
- Most planned to stay in the region
- Overall they rated their communities' livability as “good”.
- 47% felt they had “moderate impact” in making their community a better place
- They were active in public affairs – 86% has attended a public meeting or contacted an elected official
- Half were between 51 and 65
- 99% were Caucasian
- They were highly educated
- Respondents came from all 15 counties with highest from Logan and Morgan counties



- 
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The 20 Year Vision



5 Key Focus Areas

Saving Our Agriculture Roots

- Cooperative Rural-Urban efforts to main adequate water in region
 - Local land use plans encouraging native species
 - Conversation
 - Regional water authority-water banks – water coops
 - Water Storage
 - Incentives to lease rather than sell water
 - Ground water monitored in real time
 - Timely resolution of water issues
- Development of Renewable Energy
- Education on the value of agriculture
 - Food, Fiber
 - Open Space
 - Carbon Credits
 - Renewables
- Agriculture producing/growing product – developing it and then marketing it
- Continued education on new technologies, trends and options
- Everything produced in agriculture can be put to some use
- Diversification of crops and exploration of optimum crops, cultivation techniques and marketing techniques more suited to arid climate
- Make sure regulations don't come with unintended consequences and are based on sound scientific findings
- Value Added Agriculture



Regional / Internal Cooperation

- Rural – Urban Cooperation to enhance Progressive 15 region's political effectiveness
- Recognize and develop the common economy
- Local governments partnering to share services, equipment and costs
- Land use planning requires local, regional and statewide perspectives
- Identification of locally-controlled solutions, pooling of resources and sharing of benefits to meet the region's energy needs
- Identify problems that have the potential to be resolved on a multi-entity basis
- Regional leadership will become increasingly important
- Local control can co-exist with regional and state policies



Blending Our Heritage With Our Future

- Occupations, recreation, education and healthcare will support and promote the needs of young families
- An atmosphere will be created that provides retired individuals with access to recreation, transportation, employment and healthcare, and that helps them develop bonds to their community
- Preserving our historical footprint and community character for both economic and institutional memory
- Recognizing the diversity of our citizens and embracing and engaging all segments of our population
- Blue Skies, Open Space, Clean Water and Fresh Air have served us well and can be part of the solution for statewide goals
- Agriculture in our region provide some of the lowest cost food and fiber in the world and now can also serve the State as we look at a “Green” economy
- Reduction in Rural representation creates opportunities to educate and partner with our urban legislators
- Neighbors helping Neighbors will continue to be the norm



Sustainable Economy

- Equal and affordable access to communications technology across the region
- Diversity in economic base
- Growing local entrepreneurs
- Expansion of tourism in region
- Support downtown historical districts
- Development of Wind, Solar and Bio Diesel
- Development of Value Added Agriculture
- Small business will be supported in creating opportunities that allow them to compete in a global economy
- Education directly linked to job opportunities in the region
- Health care will be an economic driver for the region
- Infrastructure in place to support economic sustainability
 - Transmission lines
 - Roads
 - Water
- Affordable housing in place
- Recreational amenities, cultural activities, open space and parks in place to attract workers
- Regulations and laws that support growth and innovation in business
- Recruitment of business that is compatible with resources of the region
- Supporting expansion of local business



At The End of the Day.....

■ We Need To:

- Recognize that change is inevitable and work to be pro-active
- Recognize we are now in a global economy
- Recognize that strong local, regional and state leadership will be needed
- Recognize that partnerships and cooperation both internally and externally will be needed to secure our future

47% of survey respondents felt a regional vision and regional cooperation had a “big impact” on their county. Another 38% felt it had a “moderate impact”.



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By developing the infrastructure to support the region's growing renewable energy market, Ports-to-Plains will help lead the charge in reducing our dependency on foreign oil - an approach that will inevitably lead to more investment in wind energy and biofuels. That means more investment in our communities. The result? More jobs for the people of our region.



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During the topic focused meetings it was noted the rural housing development helped in bringing the youth back to their communities.

Project Participants

- Laura Teague, Teague Diversified
- Kenny Rogers, Colorado Cattlemen
- Maye Gene Lee, Lincoln Manor Bed & Breakfast
- Don Ament, Ament Farms
- Clark Bernhardt, Town of Julesburg
- Andrea Anderson, Yuma County Economic Development
- Joyce Evans, Northeast Colorado Housing
- Doug Anderson, Northern Colorado Rural Development Association
- Kari Linker, Morgan County Economic Development
- Denise Selders, Colorado Division of Housing
- Patricia Vice, Lincoln County Economic Development
- Tim Edgar, Logan County Chamber of Commerce
- Paula LaPorte, Centennial Mental Health
- Brandy Whitlow, HealthOne Outreach
- Patsy Schultz, Washington County Nursing Home
- Greg Ganselau, Platte Valley Medical Center
- Frank Schneider, Colorado Plains Medical Center
- Betty Summers, RE-1 Valley School District – Sterling
- Bill Pile, Platte Valley RE3 District – Ovid
- Jim Engelker, Platte Valley RE3 District – Ovid
- Michele Haney, Morgan Community College
- Bob Churchwell, City of Burlington
- Greg Etl, Department of Local Affairs
- Debbie Carlstrom, Rep Marilyn Musgrave
- Melissa Clapper, Burlington Chamber
- Deni Coryell, City of Burlington
- Debbie Knudsen, Town of Cheyenne Wells
- Norma Pankratz, CCA and Burlington ED
- Cathy Smotherman, State Bank of Wiley
- Rick Hanger, Division of Housing
- Antoinette, Division of Housing
- Linda Duerst, Duerst Machine Works
- Shauna Schreiter, American Mortgage Alliance
- Barb Young, Equitable Savings

- Debbie Zwirn, Logan County Commissioner
- Tony Carlson, Morgan County Commissioner
- Jon Becker, Morgan County Commissioner
- Cheryl Scofield, USDA-Rural Development
- Muriel Nelson, Town of Julesburg
- Patricia Vice, Lincoln County Economic Development
- David Foy, Washington County Commissioner
- Judy Giacomini, Northeastern Junior College
- Scott Temple, Adams County
- Chuck Rech, CW Rech & Co
- Del Beattie, Town of Limon
- Gene Putnam, City of Thornton
- Mac McGraw, Senator Ken Salazar
- Danyel Brenner, Senator Wayne Allard
- Kay Schmidt, City of Burlington
- Darlene Scott, Office of Economic Development
- Debbie Thomas, First National Bank, Burlington
- Karen Harkin, CHFA
- Linda Rae Schaal, Schaal Drilling
- Helen Newberry
- Anna Wheeler
- Kim Hubbard, Pioneer Valley/Healthy Living Systems
- Kristine McClain, CHFA
- Julie Scruby, USDA-RD
- Jane Winslow, USDA-RD
- Cathy Shull, Progressive 15
- Survey, Blog & One-on-One Respondents

A big thank you to the people listed above. Over 200 invitations to participate were sent out and these people gave willing of their time and expertise. Our hope is that we have every name of the participants who took their time to attend meetings and answer phone calls. If a name was left out it was done so inadvertently.

Facilitators for the Process:

Blue Key Group - Loveland & Sterling

Non Profit Doctor – Fort Collins



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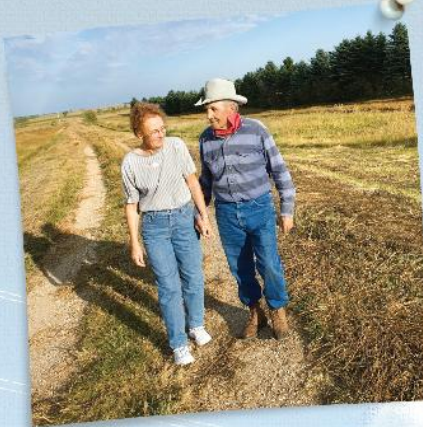
Appendix

- Photo Credits

- Cover PhotoNortheastern Junior College
- Page

- Contact Information

Progressive 15
Cathy Shull, Executive Director
629 Warner Street
Fort Morgan, CO 80701
Phone: 970-867-9167
Cell: 970-768-2230
Fax: 800-521-9413
E mail: cathy@progressive15.org
URL: www.progressive15.org



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To learn more about the EPTP, visit www.tristategen.org or contact Lee Boughrey at 303-254-3555, or lboughrey@tristategen.org.



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