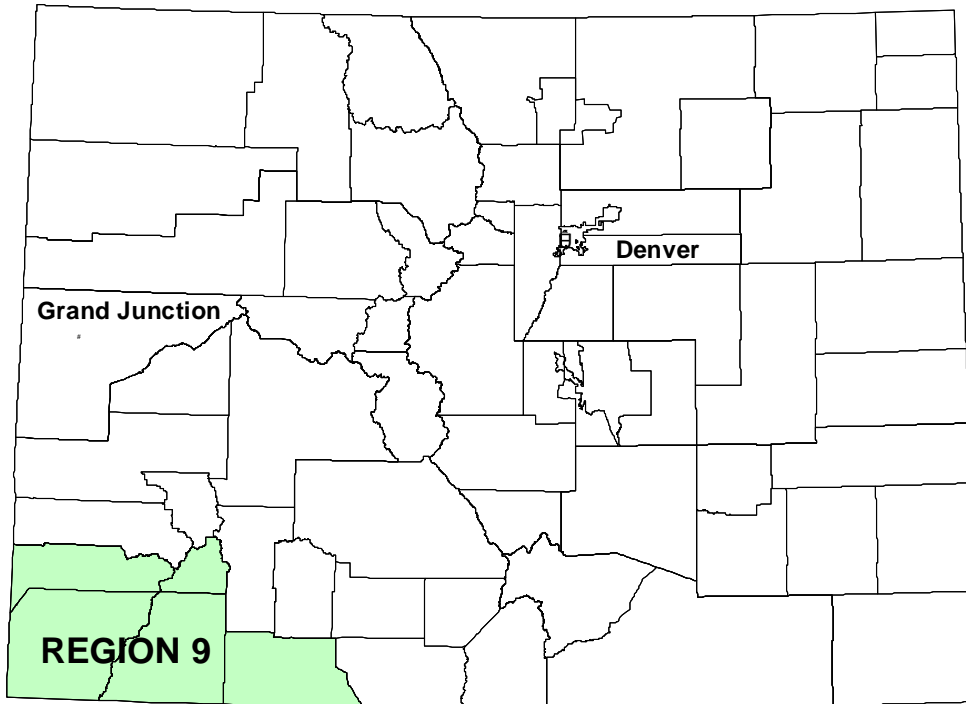


1. INTRODUCTION TO CEDS

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COLORADO



INTRODUCTION

A Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is the result of a local planning process designed to guide the economic growth of an area. In July of 1995, the Region 9 Economic Development District of Southwest Colorado (Region 9) launched southwest Colorado's initial CEDS process by offering county-level data, a strategic planning component with vision, goals, and specific strategies for reaching those goals, and identified community projects. The full CEDS is updated every five years, this 2011 document is the fourth full edition. County profiles and Community Development Action Plans (CDAPs) are updated on a two-year cycle. An annual CEDS Performance Report is also submitted to the Economic Development Administration (EDA) .

The purpose of the CEDS is to create direction for retaining and creating better paying jobs, fostering stable and more diversified economies, as well as maintaining and improving the quality of life in southwest Colorado, which includes the five counties of Archuleta, Dolores, La Plata, Montezuma and San Juan, plus the Southern Ute and Ute Mountain Ute Indian Tribes. This CEDS planning process provides an opportunity for economic developers, key community stakeholders, and the community at large, to unite behind a vision that works towards long-term economic sustainability, while protecting the natural and social assets that make the region distinct and attractive.

While the document is a product of Region 9, and is required to qualify for Economic Development Administration (EDA) assistance, the CEDS document is meant to be a working plan for all local governments, community entities and respective economic development organizations. Region 9 also works to disseminate the CEDS information to state, local, and regional organizations. It is useful for everyone who desires to understand their local economy and work to improve the community in which they live.

This CEDS information is a result of public input, meetings, personal interviews, surveys, a systematic review of draft documents, and active feedback from the EDA. The process was enhanced by Colorado's Bottom Up Initiative that requested grassroots county and regional plans from throughout the state be submitted to the state for development of a state-wide plan. This CEDS builds upon that Initiative, specifically by:

- Summarizing the economic conditions of each county in Region 9 and putting local economic development interests in a regional context.
- Identifying viable economic development projects and initiatives.
- Facilitating eligibility for federal and state economic development funding.
- Developing goals and strategies for implementing economic development projects and initiatives, and
- Identifying and recognizing trends, either positive or negative as they occur.

VISION STATEMENT

The overall CEDS process allows for the formulation of a clear vision statement. A vision statement is an overall "compass" for where communities want to head in the future. Through gathering community level input and analyzing previous vision statements, a *Regional Vision* was compiled. This vision paints a picture of desired economic development for the region.

“We strive to encourage economic development that preserves our small-town and traditional heritage, takes care of our natural resources, and provides opportunities for our children to stay in southwest Colorado.”

CEDS STRATEGY COMMITTEE

The key to a good CEDS is an on-going, participatory planning process that includes input from the CEDS Advisory Committee. This committee oversees the development of an accurate, unbiased, comprehensive, collaborative and balanced document that describes and informs the communities within Region 9 about their economic development strategies, priorities, goals and challenges.

Collectively, members of the current Region 9 Board meet the EDA requirements that the Strategy Committee be composed of public officials, community leaders, and representatives of workforce development boards, representatives of institutions of higher education, minority and labor groups and private sector representatives. This membership also reflects the cultural diversity of southwest Colorado. In addition to the Strategy Committee, interested volunteers from different community organizations review and help edit any topic specific materials. **A list of the CEDS Strategy Committee is provided in Section 8 - Appendix 2.**

The duties of the CEDS Strategy Committee are as follows:

- Uphold CEDS vision statement.
- Advise/oversee the support staff that produces the CEDS 5-year plan.
- Help identify issues and set goals and strategies of the different counties for yearly data updates.
- Establish community priorities/goals/timeline for the CEDS document.
- Set strategic direction for the CEDS' process/work plan.
- Supports local governments and community groups need for planning, expertise and technical assistance for economic development efforts.
- Assist communities to prioritize their specific projects in the CDAPs.

The draft CEDS document was submitted to the EDA for review on August 8th 2011. Additionally, there was a public review period of the draft from August 1st to September 30th 2011. All comments have been incorporated into this final report.

CEDS COMPONENTS

The CEDS includes four main sections: Community Profiles, Strategic Planning, Bottom up Economic Development Strategies, and the Community Development Action Plans (CDAPs).

Community Profiles

Extensive data was gathered to answer: *Where is each county economically?* This question is very critical since goal setting and strategic planning must rest upon sound data collection. For each county, and the region as a whole, there is data presented relating to population, infrastructure, county government, county revenues, land use, transportation issues, services, labor force, employment and income by sector, employment and income trends from 1980 to 2009 (latest year available). New to the 2011 report is information on economic drivers (also called economic clusters) and livable wages for each county.

Strategic Planning

While data collection is important in economic development strategic planning, an equally important consideration is defining what communities want, what they think is going on with their economies, how they perceive their challenges and opportunities, and what they see as solutions. The *Strategic Planning* section is a way for local governments, human service agency representatives, economic development organizations and nonprofit organizations to set priorities for their strategic direction and projects. The goals and actions listed in this section become priorities for Region 9, and through EDA technical assistance funding, provides the assistance to help those projects move forward. **A list of all the organizations and groups that supplied input is listed in Section 8 - Appendix 3.**

Bottom up Economic Development Strategies

These strategies are drawn from Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper's "Bottom-up" Economic Development Initiative. In southwest Colorado, three regional meetings were held bringing representatives from numerous state agencies to assist. County teams were formed to draft their county plans based on community meetings and information received from an on-line survey promoted to area residents. Because of the parallel timing and extensive community participation, the results of the county and regional plans are included as part of this CEDS Update. In response to the county and regional plans, the State has released the Colorado Blueprint that outlines the steps to be taken by the Hickenlooper Administration to support and promote economic development across Colorado. More information is available at www.advancetcolorado.com.

Community Development Action Plans

The fourth and final component of the CEDS is the *Community Development Action Plan* (CDAP), which is developed for each county in the region. The CDAPs are a list of short-term projects (defined as two years or less). Initial drafts of the CDAPs are developed through review of the current project list, interviews with key community stakeholders, and those working on, or planning, community projects. The CDAPs are presented at various community and public meetings, and distributed for public comment. The final drafts are presented to each county's Board of Commissioners for approval. The approved copies are included as part of this document.

The CDAPs are useful tools for organizations working with communities, and have evolved into being the central source for listing the full range of projects that are in process, or are desired. The CDAPs are used as the official community plan required for eligibility for many federal and state funding sources.

The CDAP categories include, but are not limited to:

Public Infrastructure and Services

1. Public Infrastructure
 - Gas, electric, water, sewer, solid waste, recycling
 - Transportation
 - Telecommunications
2. Services
 - Arts and culture
 - Education
 - Childcare
 - Fire protection
 - Health & Human Services
 - Land use
 - Public Lands
 - Parks and recreation
 - Public safety
 - Historic Preservation

Economic Development

1. Business expansion and retention
 - Retention – incentives to keep businesses in the community,
 - Capital for business expansion, i.e. revolving loan funds
 - Recruitment of new businesses
 - Development of infrastructure, i.e. industrial parks
 - Leadership
 - Youth
2. Tourism
 - Market development / targeting
3. Workforce development / training
4. Agriculture

Housing

- Housing availability
- Development of affordable housing
- Fair housing programs

Within these broad categories there are sub-components that have been added throughout the years in response to community feedback. Currently, the format lists: the project, primary partners, available resources (including funding), expected outcomes and action steps. In the next CDAP update, a “number of jobs” section will be added where applicable. The CDAP also provides a column for each County’s Board of Commissioners to rank each project as a “high, medium or low” priority rather than providing more specific prioritization and time frames. The reasons include:

- Even a low priority project will be completed before a high priority one if funding is available.
- Projects get behind schedule.
- Listing specific timeframes cause the CDAP to quickly look inaccurate and not be utilized.
- Listing specific timeframes requires too much guesswork.
- Listing a project on the CDAP is a way to make it a community priority.

Guidelines for CDAP Review & Project Additions

Region 9 updates and monitors the Community Development Action Plans (CDAPs) for Archuleta, Dolores, La Plata, Montezuma and San Juan Counties in an ongoing cycle.

Every Five Years:

- Community meetings are held in each county for CDAP input.
- The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) is revised and updated CDAPs are included as part of the document.

Every Two Years:

The Community Action Development Plans (CDAPs) are:

- Projects with completion dates with a timeframe of two years or less.
- Projects are reviewed and prioritized by community groups and then confirmed or revised by the appropriate county board of commissioners.
- Signed by county commissioners.
- Updated per county/municipality by Region 9, but county commissioners may revise their county’s CDAP at any time. However, Region 9 should be notified of any changes to a county CDAP approved by the County Commissioners

Every Year:

- Additional projects may be submitted for inclusion into the CDAP. If approved by the CEDS Advisory Committee, they are listed as addendums to the current CDAP.
- Additional projects are added twice a year (January & June).
- If a project is submitted out of cycle due to timing or grant applications, the project will be brought to a quarterly meeting of the Region 9 Board of Directors for review and approval.

Criteria for Adding CDAP Projects out of Cycle:

Is the proposed project required to be part of a community plan?

Is project happening before next CDAP revision?

Does project fit a CDAP definition?

Goals and Strategies

Once the data is compiled, the community meetings completed, and the CDAPs drafted, the county teams help to compile and prioritize the information. Recommendations are made to the CEDS Strategy Committee on goals and strategies from the information. These goals and strategies, both local and regional, represent the action-oriented element of the CEDS and are based on community data, extensive community input and strategic thinking.

EVALUATION AND MEASUREMENT

There are many different types of goals and actions listed in the CEDS plan, each requiring either a qualitative or quantitative evaluation strategy. Thus, numerous evaluation strategies will be used including a) tracking on and reporting economic indicators; b) documenting the progress or completion of individual CDAP projects; and c) the number of jobs and predicted jobs created through CDAP projects and/or job changes by sector for each county. This will be accomplished by Region 9, Region 9's partners, other entities (e.g. non-profits and governments) and/or by local economic development groups. As stated in the CEDS plan, accomplishing all of the goals and actions listed will take the resources and efforts of all sectors, not just Region 9.

Significant expansion of this section has occurred in this CEDS update. In order to monitor whether priority community projects are being accomplished, projects listed in CDAPs since 2001, and completed, have been included in the CEDS in **Section 8 - Appendix 4**. This is the CEDS first opportunity to look at accomplishments since that last full document and future CEDS publications will be able to further evaluate the effectiveness of the CDAP process in the area communities.

Other evaluation tools will include: the *Region 9 Report*, *Southwest Colorado Index*; the *Four Corner's Economic Quarterly*; *The Southwest Colorado Economic Drivers Study*; *The Southwest Colorado 2035 Transportation Plan*, *Southwest Colorado Transit Feasibility Study*, the Enterprise Zone Annual Report and other appropriate documents. These tools will be used in the evaluation process to measure our regional economy.

The Region 9 Report

Region 9 publishes the *Region 9 Report*, which tracks such data as population growth or decline, employment and income, labor force statistics, retail sales, total personal income, and per capita income for each county in the region. This information provides a regional snapshot of each county's progress towards achieving the goals and strategies outlined in the CEDS plan. This report is updated every other year with the next update in 2011.

Southwest Colorado Index: Data & Trends

This "healthy communities" indicator report presents, monitors and tracks more community related data in Region 9 such as crime rates, education and healthcare. Because economic development is intricately tied to all community issues from childcare, to the environment, the utility of *the Index* is that it presents a broader picture beyond the income and employment indicators. This report is updated every two to three years.

Southwest Colorado Economic Drivers Study

Region 9 commissioned a study to look at the social and economic impacts of second homes in the region in 2007. In evaluating assessor data, 40% of residential properties, vacant and agricultural lands were owned by non-locals. The potential economic impacts on the region were evaluated for each county and the study expanded to look at what business sectors “drive” our economies. This report is available online at www.scan.org under Region 9 publications. Findings from this study are profiled throughout this CEDS document. This study provides baseline economic data that will be used to track changes in the composition of the region’s economic drivers.

The Four Corner’s Economic Quarterly

This is information produced by Fort Lewis College economists which examine impacts on the “local” economy. Within the last year, this research data has been expanded into developing a local price index. This information is available at <http://soba.fortlewis.edu/FCEQ/fceq/index.html>

Regional Transportation Plans

The District administers the Southwest Regional Transportation Planning Commission and participates on the Regional Transit Coordinating Council. Both entities have approved plans and identified priority transportation projects including intersections, transit, and design work. The completion of the listed priorities will be used to track regional progress in transportation. More information about transportation is available in this document.

Enterprise Zone Annual Report

Region 9 administers the Southwest Enterprise Zone program. Accordingly, targets are established by county for the number of jobs created in various sectors, as well as the tax credits and dollars invested through the EZ program. Region 9 will continue to set and measure these targets with communities. The information provides a very concrete tool for measuring success of goals related to job creation and business expansion. This report is done annually and is filed with the state Office of Economic Development and International Trade.