WELD COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

2014 SUMMARY

TEAM WELD DELIVERS AGAIN!

Projects took center stage for Weld County in 2014: flood recovery projects, public safety communications projects, public information outreach projects, and, most importantly, public infrastructure projects. The economy in Weld County is strong. In fact, in August it was announced that Weld County’s assessed value became the second highest in the state — behind Denver. Our strong economy has allowed county government to not only build a $140+ million fund balance, maintain our debt-free status, and pay for projects in cash but also to provide residents and businesses with tangible savings on their property taxes through our low mill levy — which will be reduced again in 2015.

We want to assure the residents of this county that the Board of County Commissioners takes seriously our duty to be good stewards of your tax dollars. We continue to save for future projects so they can be purchased with cash — not tax increases, we continue to look for ways to improve government without growing government, and we continue to focus on projects that will benefit residents not only now but also for decades into the future.

We are proud of the accomplishments of 2014, and are already working hard on projects for 2015. Connect with us on one of our communications platforms and receive up-to-date information on how your county government is working for you.

Sincerely,
The Weld County Board of Commissioners: Douglas Rademacher, Sean Conway, William Garcia, Mike Freeman and Barbara Kirmeyer

RADEMACHER AND GARCIA FINISH THEIR TERMS

Weld County said farewell to two county commissioners who completed their terms in 2014. Douglas Rademacher, District 2, and Commissioner William Garcia, At-Large, were both elected in 2006 and then re-elected in 2010.

Rademacher, who served as Chairman of the Board in 2010 and 2014, represented not only the residents in his district but also the concerns of farmers and ranchers throughout the county. His participation in and knowledge of agricultural issues made him an invaluable asset to our county. In fact, he was named Prairie Partner of the Year by the National Grasslands Council for 2013.

Garcia, who served as Chairman of the Board in 2009 and 2013, was instrumental in many projects during his tenure including the much needed improvements to the Spanish Colony subdivision. The project, which was started in 2011 and completed this past summer, included drainage and road improvements to the historic neighborhood.
For the 20th consecutive year, real property owners in Weld County received a reduction in the mill levy from Weld County government, which has resulted in a reduction of $278 million dollars from Weld County tax payers. Under the State Constitution, Weld County Government is authorized to impose a maximum mill levy of 22.038. For the past 20 years, however, the county has not imposed that maximum amount which has resulted in county residents saving hundreds of millions of dollars over the past two decades. For the eighth consecutive year, the levy remained under 17 mills. Following the budget approval process for 2015, the Board agreed to further reduced the mill levy by 1.004 mills, or an additional $16 on a $200,000 home.

The new mill levy for 2015 will be 15.800 — one of the lowest mill levies in the Front Range. That, coupled with the fact that Weld County does not impose a county sales tax makes Weld County a economically smart place to live and own a business.

REGIONAL COMMUNICATIONS CENTER COMPLETE

The Weld County Board of Commissioners hosted an open house celebration for the new Weld County Regional Communications Center (WCRCC) in February of 2014. The event, which was open to the public, was held at the Center’s new location, 1551 N. 17th Ave. in Greeley. The new 10,316-square-foot facility features state-of-the-art equipment and technology, including Next Generation 9-1-1 capability, WeatherTap HD future weather radar, and the Front Range Communications Consortium (FRCC) Radio System. The center cost approximately $4 million.

BOARD WORKS TO MAKE I-25 PRIORITY FOR REGION

While the formation of the North I-25 Coalition occurred in 2013, tremendous progress was made toward making the corridor a regional priority in 2014. The Coalition, which consists of members from each of the communities along the I-25 corridor, met with then Congressman Cory Gardner to discuss the need to include the corridor in the 2014 reauthorization of the Federal Transportation bill. In March, the group secured support from Congressman Jared Polis, and in July, Commissioner Barbara Kirkmeyer addressed House Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman Bill Shuster about the need to focus on I-25. Commissioner Sean Conway, through the county’s position in the North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization (NFRMPO), proposed the 15-member organization dedicate $13 million in funding to improve the corridor which is vital for the continued success of northern Colorado. Unanimously, the group approved the proposal and continued to keep focus on I-25 by later targeting $5 million for specific projects along the corridor.
Weld County Commissioners and the Department of Public Works celebrated the completion of the Española Subdivision paving/road project in June. The project originated in 2011 when the county first applied for a grant to address drainage and pavement issues for one of Weld County’s historic neighborhoods located at the southwest corner of 25th Avenue and O Street. In 2012, Weld County received a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) from the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) for $275,000 to be used for road and drainage improvements in the subdivision. Weld County contributed a local match of $470,188. Española Subdivision was started in 1924 by the Great Western Sugar Company (platted in 1929) as a colony for its Hispanic laborers, commonly referred to today as Spanish Colony. The project was a result of issues Weld County Public Works Department experienced in maintaining the roads in the neighborhood for a number of years; the project was an economical solution to the problem of road maintenance and drainage issues.

Debris removal was another continuing aspect of flood recovery. While the county made vouchers available to residents impacted by the flood in 2013, a second round of debris-removal vouchers were requested by residents in the spring of 2014. Approximately 130 of these vouchers were used bringing the total to approximately 1,730 vouchers used for flood-debris removal in the recovery process. One debris removal project, however, required a different solution. A Weld County resident contacted the county Planning Department requesting help with disposing of more than 1,000 tires left on his property from the flood. County volunteers partnered with a local church to remove the tires from the man’s property.

FLOOD RECOVERY CONTINUES ACROSS COUNTY

The year began with an assistance request from the City of Evans regarding two mobile home parks destroyed by the 2013 flood. While residents in the parks were able to return to their damaged homes briefly to retrieve a few belongings, the majority of the contents of their homes remained, including trash, food left in refrigerators, and household hazardous waste. In addition to those items, the presence of mold, and human sewage throughout the parks were also a huge concern for city and county officials. A joint letter from the county and the city drew attention from state officials and media which helped remedy the problem.

Evans officials later thanked Weld County for their assistance during the flood with a plaque and a framed letter of gratitude for recovery work in their community. Continuing in the spirit of gratitude, Weld County officials formally thanked seven other Colorado counties for their assistance to Weld following the flood.

Project Worksheets identifying repair projects, scope of work and estimated costs continued to be submitted to FEMA for federal assistance to restore to pre-incident conditions for reimbursement. The county also worked on several road repair projects with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Weld County has requested $3,622,009.11 in reimbursement from FEMA and $2,274,136.38 from FHWA. To date, the county has received $2,794,076.66 from FEMA and $1,939,658.00 from FHWA to complete permanent repairs.

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SPANISH COLONY SUBDIVISION PROJECT COMPLETED

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COUNTY EMBARKS ON ITS LARGEST ROAD PROJECT

The largest road construction project in county history was formally kicked off Friday, October 10, with a groundbreaking for the Weld County Road 49 Parkway. The 3.5-mile project, which will extend from WCR 49 north of US 34 to WCR 60.5, will include the building of a new four-lane concrete road and two new bridges, one over the Cache la Poudre river and the other over the South Platte River. The project is expected to be completed by September of 2015.

Work on the Parkway Project preceded the Weld County Road 49 Corridor Project which also began in 2014. In the October episode of Spotlight Weld County, Commissioners William Garcia and Barbara Kirkmeyer spoke about the corridor project, which will be the largest road construction project in the county’s 153 year history including why the county is undertaking this massive project and why it is important not only for the safety of the traveling public but also the economic development of Weld County. The Corridor project, which includes enhancements to WCR 49 south from Highway 34 to Interstate 76, is expected to be completed by 2017.

Residents and travelers of WCR 49 alike are encouraged to check the Public Works section of the Weld County web site frequently for updates on both projects.

INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION ON COUNTY NG PROGRAM

In August, Weld County Commissioners Barbara Kirkmeyer and Sean Conway had the opportunity to share the county’s knowledge about compressed natural gas (CNG) by leading a tour for Noble Energy’s Government Relations Advisor in Israel, Noa Binyamin, along with Sherrie Merrow, CNG Advisor/LNG and CNG Development for Noble. After hearing about Noble’s partnership with Weld County to provide CNG school buses to Weld County School District RE-1, Binyamin said she wanted to come visit Weld County to learn how she could implement a similar project in Israel. Along with Weld County Public Works Director Jay McDonald and Engineering Supervisor/Transportation Planner Elizabeth Relford, the Commissioners gave Binyamin a tour of the county’s CNG stations, demonstrating how they operate and safety precautions they take.

The following month, the Board helped Noble and RE-1 celebrate the completion of the school district’s new CNG bus barn and CNG fueling station. Weld County assisted the school district in applying for the grant funding used to help pay for both the station and the buses. The county also assisted the district by writing the bid documents for the bus barn so that it met the appropriate standards for CNG vehicles.