WELD COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

2018 SUMMARY

WELD COUNTY HIGHWAY COMPLETED IN JULY

The Weld County Highway (WCR 49/47) opened in July 2018 and is the only county highway designated as such in the state of Colorado. This 26-mile section of roadway extends from Interstate 76 to State Highway 392, and included multiple projects along the route. These projects encompassed the WCR 49 Corridor (I-76 to US 34), the Weld County Parkway (US 34 to WCR 60 1/2), and the WCR 47 Corridor (WCR 60 1/2 to State Highway 392). Also included in the project were several key intersection improvements such as the intersection of WCR 22 and WCR 49; WCR 44 and WCR 49; US 34 and WCR 49; and WCR 47 and State Highway 392.

Read about the Top 10 Roads Award the Department of Public Works received for their completion of the Weld County Highway on page four.

HOME RULE CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE WORKED DILLIGENTLY IN 2018

In January, following two days of interviewing 28 applicants for the Ad Hoc Charter Review Committee, the Board of Commissioners appointed nine Weld County residents to lead the task of reviewing the county’s Home Rule Charter. Al Dominguez (Windsor), Jackie Johnson (Greeley), Dave Kisker (Johnstown), Mark Lawley (Eaton), Raymond Patch (Greeley), Justus Pettit (Pierce), Garrett Varra (Longmont), James Welch (LaSalle), and Sam Gluck (LaSalle) served as the Ad-Hoc Charter Review Committee. The committee, charged with reviewing the charter, gathering public input, and making suggested changes to the Board of Commissioners held 10 general business meetings in addition to seven public information gathering meetings which were held throughout the county. The committee recommended to the commissioners nine proposed amendments to the charter. The board was unanimous in their comments that the charter belongs to the people and the proposed amendments by the Charter Review Committee should all be considered and voted on by the residents. All nine amendments passed in November.
WELD COUNTY, UNION PACIFIC AND CDOT WORK TO IMPROVE SAFETY ON HIGHWAY 85

Applications regarding the closure of five Union Pacific railroad crossings along the Highway 85 corridor were submitted to the Colorado Public Utilities Commission (PUC) by the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) on behalf of Weld County. Under consideration were the railroad crossing closures at Weld County Roads 2.5, 29, 46, 72, and 104. The goal of this project is to improve safety not just among the railroad crossings, but to the corridor itself as traffic has increased.

WELD COUNTY ROAD 105 RECEIVES MUCH NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS

Temporary closure of WCR 105 between Highway 14 and Weld County Road 390 took place between July and November while construction occurred. Construction included paving and the creation of a “T” intersection which allows for safer and easier access to Highway 14 from county road 105.

This improvement project began as an effort five years ago to improve county road 390 near Grover. After meetings were held with residents who voiced wanting travel and safety improvements made to WCR 105, the commissioners decided to stop improvement plans scheduled for WCR 390 and instead focus efforts on county road 105.

WELD COUNTY JAIL IS EXPANDING

In December 2017, Weld County Commissioners approved $44.5 million for an addition to the jail. In April 2018, the board selected Roche Constructors to head up the design-build project, which will include a three-story building to house 373 additional beds, a new booking area, a new laundry service area for the entire complex, and administrative offices. A second phase of the project includes remodeling roughly 19,000 square feet of the existing jail. The preliminary schedule for the expansion has construction starting in January 2019. The project should be completed by April 2021.

WELD COUNTY OPPOSES PROPOSITION 112

The commissioner hearing room was filled beyond capacity as oil and gas industry employees overflowed into the lobby to support the Weld County Commissioners’ resolution opposing Proposition 112. During the meeting, employees from the energy industry gave public comment addressing the impacts passage of Proposition 112 would have not only on the industry but also on countless businesses, municipalities, law enforcement, first-responder agencies, and the state overall. Those comments were echoed by the board.

“This isn’t a partisan issue,” Commissioner Chairman Steve Moreno said. “At the end of the day, the people of Colorado all want the same thing — to protect our quality of life, our land, our air, and our water, but shutting down the industry isn’t the answer.”

VIETNAM VETERANS HONORED AT PINNING CEREMONY

For the third year, the county hosted a pinning ceremony as part of a national effort to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War. The first local ceremony, held in November of 2016, honored more than 20 Vietnam Veterans while the May 2017 ceremony honored approximately 100 veterans. Over 100 people gathered at the Windsor Community Center for the 2018 ceremony to officially “welcome home” veterans of the Vietnam War. The county’s Veterans Services Office worked through a program offered by the federal government to make sure Vietnam veterans received the recognition and honor they earned but did not get when they returned home from the Vietnam War.
COUNTY REMEMBERS 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF WELD COUNTY TORNADO

May 22, 2008, is a day etched in the memories of many Weld County residents. On that day, a decade ago, an EF3 tornado descended on Weld County impacting the communities of Platteville, Gilcrest, Greeley, Windsor, and unincorporated areas of Weld County. On its 39-mile path, it destroyed homes, displaced families, and caused one fatality. The event reminded everyone just how quickly weather can change and how important it is to prepare for emergency situations — as individuals and as an agency.

To commemorate the 10-year anniversary, Weld County government published several feature articles and accompanying social media posts, which examined the impact of the tornado on county government and community members. It also offered reminders on the importance of emergency preparedness. The articles reached more than 38,000 people.

COUNTY DEBUTS NEW CHILD CARE WEBSITE

Certain areas within Weld County have been described as a child care desert by the Colorado Department of Human Services (DHS) due to the need for more child care providers. To address this need, Weld County DHS has made several large strides to help more people become child care providers including partnering with United Way of Weld County, North Range Behavioral Health, and the Weld County Department of Public Health and Environment to offer support services for both child care providers and parents alike.

To help people learn more about child care in Weld County, www.weldchildcare.com debuted in June. The goals of the new child care website are many: to recruit new child care providers; to inform existing child care providers about upcoming trainings and ways to increase the quality of the care they provide; to educate parents on the importance of quality child care; to offer community, county and state support; to answer commonly-asked questions; and to provide fun and free links for child care providers and parents, among others.

POUDRE TRAIL REPAIR WORK COMPLETED

Repair work was completed on a stretch of the Poudre Trail originally damaged by the 2013 flood. Weld County, in partnership with Windsor, Greeley, and the Poudre Trail Authority, have diligently worked together to secure funding to replace a section of the trail that collapsed into the Cache La Poudre River during the 2013 flood and further eroded in the 2015 spring run-off. Emerges Services, LLC was awarded the construction contract for this project, which was located in Windsor near WCR 23 and approximately two miles east of State Highway 257.

In 2016, a Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Grant was awarded specifically for this project. The grant, which uses funds from the Federal Highway Administration and is distributed by the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), is designed to assist in projects relating to bicycle and pedestrian (non-motorized) transportation activities, environmental mitigation transportation activities, and historic and scenic transportation activities.
2018 SUMMARY

FEMA HELPS COUNTY TRAIN FOR EMERGENCIES

To ensure continued readiness and rapid response in an emergency, the Weld County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) hosted a four-day integrated Emergency Management (IEM) training course, in August. This training was led by 10 Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) instructors representing the Emergency Management Institute (EMI) in Maryland.

This year’s IEM training was the third the county participated in. In 2013, Weld County attended the training at the EMI institute in Emmittsburg, Maryland, and in 2016, the training was held in Breckinridge. Weld County’s opportunity to participate in FEMA training is unique. Each year, EMI selects only 12 communities from the U.S. and its territories to participate.

Each training was beneficial as it presented an opportunity for emergency response agencies to evaluate the effectiveness of their response plans.

One hundred twenty-four individuals registered for the 2018 Weld County course, and participants represented 15 Weld County departments; 10 City of Greeley departments; and 17 agencies, including, the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission; City of Fort Lupton; Frederick Firestone Protection District; Front Range Fire, Banner Health Paramedics; North Range Behavioral Health; Leprino Foods; University of Northern Colorado; American Red Cross; United Way/2-1-1; FEMA Region VII, EMI, Colorado Department of Local Affairs, Colorado Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management and the National Weather Service.

“I applaud (Weld County) for taking on a responsibility like this,” said Kevin Neary, EMI Adjunct instructor and Mayor of the Village of Richmondville in New York. “The communities that do well and provide good services in emergencies are ones like this one.”

COMMISSIONER JULIE COZAD FINISHES TERM

District 2 County Commissioner Julie Cozad completed her term in office in 2018 and said farewell to an impactful career in county government. Cozad, who started working for Weld County in 1995, held numerous positions in the planning department before moving onto a job in the private sector doing similar work. She was elected as county commissioner in 2014 and sworn in in 2015 and quickly became involved with projects such as the Hill-n-Park Transportation and Trails effort, the Weld County Fair Board, the Weld Faith Partnership Council, and she initiated the Freedom Parkway Coalition – a coalition of nine government entities working together to develop a workable plan for future growth along WCR 54. In 2015, Cozad was appointed by Governor John Hickenlooper to the Colorado Commission on Aging, on which she has served continuously since, and in 2018, Hickenlooper appointed her to the Regional Air Quality Council as the North Front Range MPO Representative. Last April, Cozad was named a Woman of Distinction by BizWest magazine.