On time and on budget! The county's largest public infrastructure project to date celebrated its completion in the fall of 2017: the Weld County Road 49 Corridor. This corridor is now a five-lane, concrete road stretching 20 miles from I-76 in the south to Highway 34 in the north and provides a safe and efficient north-south route for travelers throughout the county.

While improvements to WCR 49 had been on the county’s project list for years, road closures during the 2013 flood, which prevented traffic traveling north and south throughout the county, spurred the accelerated timeline for improvements to 49. Working efficiently and with speed and diligence, Weld County Government began the project—the county’s first design-build project—two years ago. Now complete, travelers can enjoy a safe alternate corridor for traveling throughout the county.

The next project, WCR 47, will allow travelers to drive the Corridor from I-76 north to State Highway 392. That project will be complete by the end of 2018.

Nicknamed the “Jewel of the Plains” upon its completion in 1917, the Weld County Courthouse celebrated its 100th Anniversary in June. The celebration included public tours of the building, a series of Lunch and Learns and a proclamation. The celebration capped off with a public event, which drew more than 200 people who joined in the official centennial celebration ceremony complete with speakers, a barbershop quartet and a 500-pound cake designed as a replica of the majestic building.

The courthouse, which was likely Weld County Government’s first debt-free project, was paid for through a $5.25 tax on every $1,000 of taxable property which covered the $414,000 expense of constructing the marble, granite and limestone building.
In 2017, Weld County Government worked hard to continue informing the public in all aspects of government. Communication with the public has always been a top priority, and enhancements were made to ensure the public can continue to find information easily and in a time-efficient manner:

- As part of a county web site redesign, www.weldgov.com now features a newsroom. All press releases from the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) from 2011-2017 are stored in one convenient place. The newsroom is the place to visit to read about important events going on in various departments throughout Weld County Government. News may also cover information about retirements, awards won by Weld County employees or upcoming projects.
- The BOCC made its calendar available to view on the commissioners page at www.weldgov.com. There, you can see meetings the commissioners are attending as well as the times for different work sessions and presentations.
- The BOCC also made notes from work sessions available, giving the public an opportunity to see what was discussed in those sessions. In 2018, audio recordings of work sessions will also be made available.
- To keep the public informed of the progress made with road construction on WCR 49, 54 and 29, newsletters were produced and distributed via email and on the county’s web site. The newsletters featured project achievements, articles pertaining to safety precautions when traveling through construction areas, and feature stories about Weld County employees working on the various projects.

“Getting information out to the residents of Weld County is critical in accomplishing the goals we have, and key to us understanding what issues are important to them,” Weld County Chair Julie Cozad said. “I’m proud of the steps we’ve taken to consistently inform the public about Weld County. We will continue to work hard to come up with new ways to distribute important information to the public, so that everyone always has a voice and is always represented.”
In response to the tragic home explosion in Firestone last April, the Board of Commissioners unanimously agreed to use general fund dollars to purchase and make available to county residents explosive-gas monitors.

Commissioners hosted events distributing gas monitors to any resident who wanted one. While demand outpaced initial supply, reorders were done, and more events were held to ensure everyone had an opportunity to receive a monitor. Additionally, residents could pick up a monitor from the Planning Department if they couldn’t get one at an event.

Events were held in Firestone, Fort Lupton, Hudson, Milliken, Eaton and Erie. The program concluded Oct. 31 with more than 850 units being distributed.
In early December, Text-to-911 Service went live in Weld County. Promoted under the theme, “Call if You Can, Text if You Can’t,” the service allows people in Weld County to text 911 when calling isn’t an option.

Text-to-911 can be beneficial in many different scenarios, including assisting those with hearing disabilities, allowing contact with 911 when doing so might put you or your family member in danger, or when signal strength is too low to place a call.

Text-to-911 service is available to anyone who has a phone with text message capability and is using a participating wireless provider. Currently, AT&T, Sprint and Verizon support Text-to-911 service.

The county’s Public Safety Communications Department is responsible for implementing the service, and staff has worked hard to ensure the service meets the emergency needs of the public of Weld County.

“We are proud of the work our Public Safety Communications team has done to make this service available to residents,” Weld County Chair Julie Cozad said. “It provides another method for people to request help when it’s desperately needed.”

Many Weld County Departments were recognized in 2017 for outstanding work.

Weld County employs almost 1,600 people, each of whom work hard every day for the residents. Below is just a short list of some of their accomplishments in 2017:

**Department of Human Services:** C-STAT Award from the State of Colorado Dept. of Human Services.

**Department of Public Safety Communications:** NICE Systems—Voice Recording/Data Security Corporation, Jessica Powers and Brett Phipps.

**Department of Finance:** GFOA Distinguished Budget Presentation Award.

**Department of Justice Services:** Doug Erler (Director) reappointed by Gov. Hickenlooper to the Justice Assistance Grant Board and the Community Corrections Advisory Council.

**Extension Department:** First Place Fair Book from the Colorado Association of Fairs; Second Place Fair Event Guide from the Rocky Mountain Association of Fairs.

**Sheriff’s Office:** Excellence in Service to Students Award, Deputies Dan Heintz and Les Weimers.

**District Attorney’s Office:** Who’s Next Excellence in Law Award, Tony Perea.

Throughout 2017, the Weld County Planning Department held several open meetings with the public to help review Weld County’s pipeline regulations. Topics discussed included pipeline mapping requirements, pipelines that carry produced water, the size of pipelines and hoop stress for natural gas pipelines.

The meeting also focused on the consideration of changes to section 23-1-90 of the Weld County Code, including the potential expanding of the definitions to include flow lines and gathering lines.

Meetings were open to the general public, business owners, and industry representatives. More meetings will be held in the future.

“The energy industry touches us all in Weld County in some form or another. We need to make sure we continually work together to improve efficiencies and safety,” said Weld County Commissioner Barbara Kirmeyer, coordinator for the Planning Department.

Discussions regarding pipelines will continue into 2018 as the Weld County Board of Commissioners and Planning Staff continue to work toward improving the county’s policies and guidelines.