

For Immediate Release

City of Grand Junction Selected as Large Community of Year GJEP nominates City based on economic development accomplishments

GRAND JUNCTION, CO May 1, 2009 – Each year EDIE awards are given by the Economic Developers Council of Colorado (EDCC) to acknowledge individual, corporate and community contributions to the economic development of Colorado. Awards presented include: Economic Developer of the Year, Greatest contribution by a Non-Economic Development Professional, Rookie of the Year, Legislator of the Year, Large Community of the Year, Small Community of the Year, and Company of the Year. On Thursday, April 30, 2009 Grand Junction Mayor Gregg Palmer and Grand Junction City Manager Laurie Kadrich were presented the award for 2009 Large Community of the Year.

The award for Large Community of the Year is presented to a community over 20,000 in population that demonstrates support for economic development through an organized economic development program and strong leadership. The community must also illustrate long-term planning and investment in the development of the community through infrastructure planning, permanent economic development funding and strategies. Realization of a special project or development is also considered.

Mayor Gregg Palmer states, “We are very honored to have been recognized like this. This award is the result of many years, many City Councils, and many community leaders who have consistently pushed for diversity in our economic base. It is gratifying to be recognized for the fiscal practices that we practice day in and day out.”

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The nomination, which was submitted by Ann Driggers of the Grand Junction Economic Partnership (GJEP), was based on economic development programs that brought the City out of the dark days that followed the May 2, 1982 “Black Sunday” in which Exxon pulled out of its oil shale project in western Colorado. During the ensuing desperate economic times, unemployment hit 12%, population dropped 9%, and foreclosures sky-rocketed to record levels.

In the quest for jobs, and a strong economy based upon diversity of industries, the City came together with other community leaders and formed economic development programs and initiatives in an attempt to strengthen the community’s economic base. While local business leaders formed one of the earliest business attraction groups in Colorado, the City passed a sales tax increase to fund economic development.

Still in existence today this fund has contributed directly to job recruitment, creating over 3,000 new primary jobs and significant economic impact. For a community of this size this level of support for economic development is very significant.

Today, in part because of a commitment to economic development, Grand Junction’s economy is strong and diverse. Recent highlights of this economic advancement include:

- The Milken Institute Best Performing Cities Index ranks Grand Junction #5 of small U.S. metropolitan areas.
- Forbes placed Grand Junction 24th on its Best Small Places for Business and Careers list.
- Grand Junction was chosen twice to appear on national television regarding the relative stability of the current economy.

The City of Grand Junction will continue to plan for a strong economic future and work towards achieving the vision of being the most livable community west of the Rockies by 2025.

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