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THE NEW WEST.**

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**GRAND JUNCTION** economic  
PARTNERSHIP

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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- 3** LOCATION OVERVIEW
- 4** INDUSTRIES | GRAND VALLEY BY THE NUMBERS
- 5** 2021 ECONOMIC INDICATORS
- 6** COST OF LIVING & DOING BUSINESS
- 7** EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
- 8** WE ARE GROWING | TRANSPORTATION
- 9** INFRASTRUCTURE KEY DEVELOPMENTS

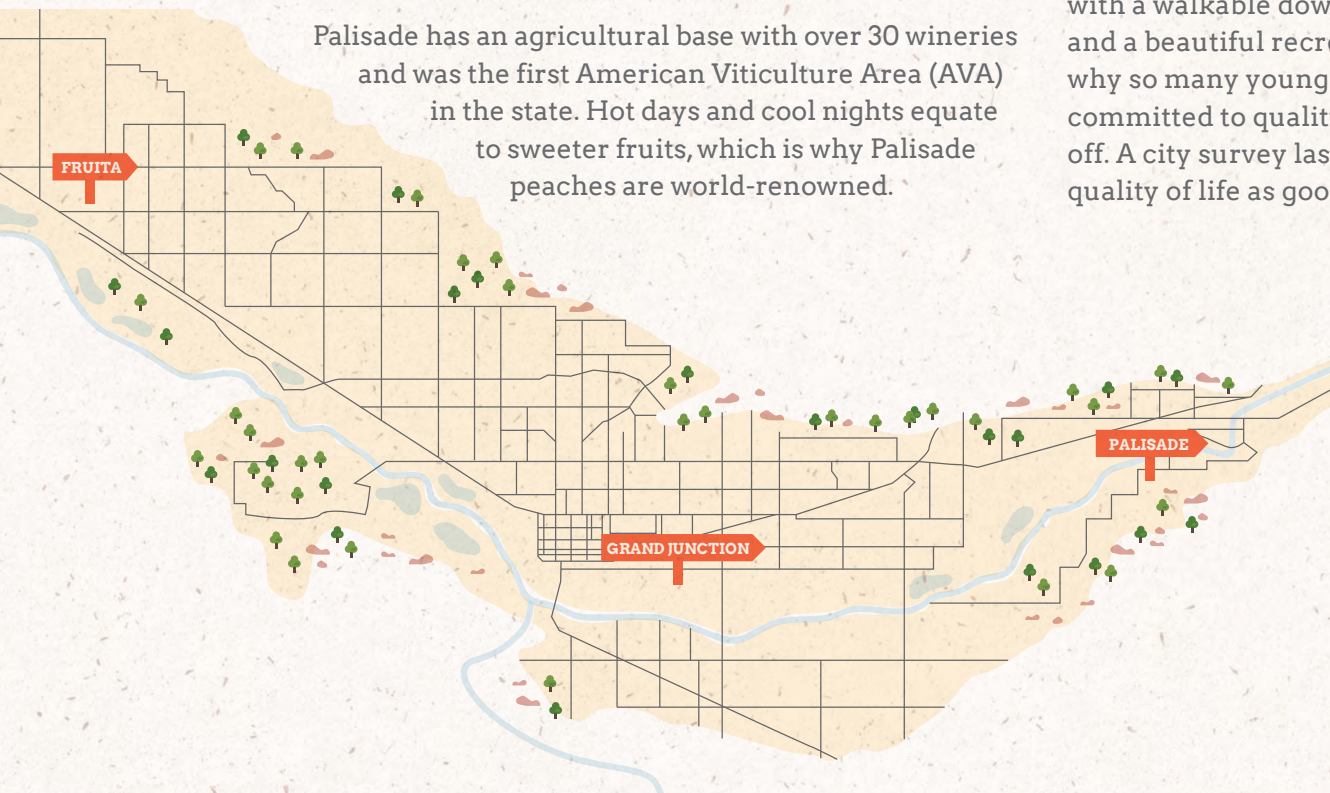
# LOCATION OVERVIEW

Grand Junction, Colorado is the largest metropolitan area in Western Colorado - and the largest city between Denver and Salt Lake City, Utah. Located on I-70, Grand Junction sits in the middle of Colorado's Grand Valley at the junction of the Colorado and Gunnison Rivers. The City of Fruita is situated on the western edge of the valley and the Town of Palisade sits at the base of the Grand Mesa on the eastern edge of the valley. These three municipalities, along with the smaller communities of DeBeque, Collbran, Mesa, Mack and Loma make up Mesa County— population 158,000. Most of the county works in Grand Junction, although they may live in one of the surrounding communities, which each has their own unique culture.

Palisade has an agricultural base with over 30 wineries and was the first American Viticulture Area (AVA) in the state. Hot days and cool nights equate to sweeter fruits, which is why Palisade peaches are world-renowned.

A quaint downtown complete with a local brewery and distillery round out a great tourism experience for anybody visiting the region. USA Today named Palisade's Colorado Mountain Winefest one of the best wine festivals in the country. The Cameo Shooting Complex is expanding into one the nicest shooting complexes in the country for competition and education. And the recently complete Palisade Plunge, a 32-mile singletrack trail with a 6,000-foot elevation drop, is already touted as a world-class mountain-biking destination.

Fruita is world-renowned among mountain bikers for its first-class singletrack trails. Often ranked among the safest cities in America, with a walkable downtown, a family-friendly summer concert series and a beautiful recreation and community center, it is easy to see why so many young families are moving to Fruita. City leadership is committed to quality of life and outdoor recreation, and it's paying off. A city survey last year showed that 93% of residents rated quality of life as good or excellent in the City of Fruita.





# INDUSTRIES

## TOP INDUSTRIES IN OUR REGION:

**HEALTHCARE-** Our largest local industry, with five hospitals and over 11,000 employees serving over half million people across the Mountain West.

**AEROSPACE/AVIATION-** Grand Junction has a cluster of aerospace and aviation-related businesses that includes innovative industry leaders such as West Star Aviation, Jabil Lewis Engineering and NASA's Orion Spacecraft supplier SG Aerospace & Gas.

**AGRIBUSINESS-** The valley boasts over 30 wineries and is well known for its peaches and corn. Our mild climate, skilled workforce and low taxes continue to attract new agribusinesses to the area - within the year, we expect to outnumber Denver in number of breweries per capita.

**ENERGY-** Piceance Basin is the second largest natural gas reserve in the US, which has made energy a legacy industry for the region.

**OUTDOOR RECREATION-** A very fast-growing industry in the region, particularly outdoor recreation manufacturing, which makes use of the available labor pool that formerly supported the energy manufacturing industry.

**TECH-** Another fast-growing sector, tech has expanded in recent years, specifically with geospatial, cybersecurity and software development companies that are both opening up headquarters and hiring locally for remote workers.

# GRAND VALLEY BY THE NUMBERS

**157,987**  
POPULATION

**5.7%**  
UNEMPLOYMENT

**\$47,892**  
AVG. ANNUAL WAGE

**74,698**  
LABOR FORCE

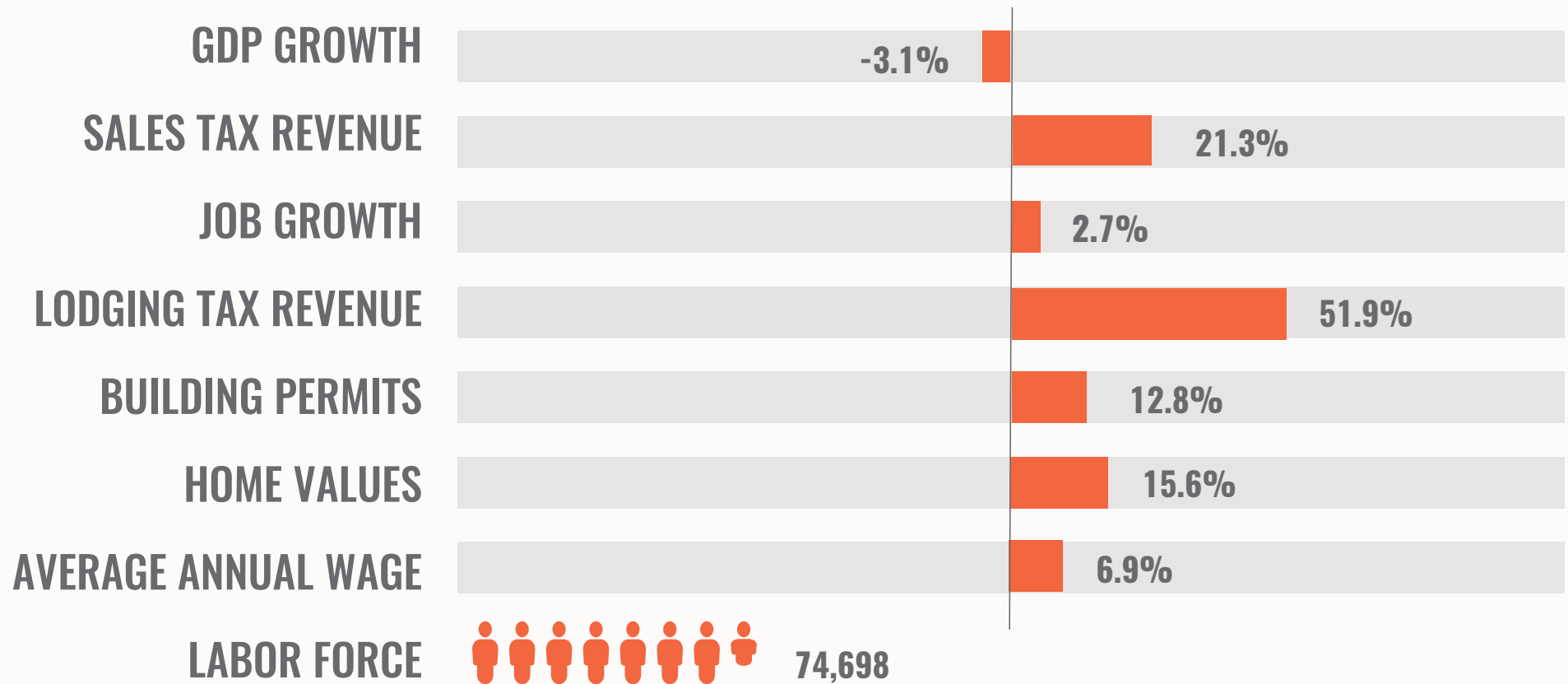
**91.4%**  
w/ HIGH SCHOOL  
DIPLOMA

**30%**  
w/ BACHELOR'S  
DEGREE OR HIGHER

(Q4 2021)

# 2021 ECONOMIC INDICATORS

GROWTH YEAR OVER YEAR



**THE COVID IMPACT:** Mesa County, Colorado, was less impacted than many other areas by the COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, we did see a drop in several economic indicators in 2020, which subsequently led to a significant increase in those same indicators in 2021. We expect numbers to start balancing out this year, with continued but more stable growth.

# COST OF LIVING & DOING BUSINESS

	GRAND JUNCTION	DENVER
MEDIAN SINGLE-FAMILY HOME PRICE	\$390,000	\$659,000
MEDIAN PROPERTY TAX	\$1,794	\$3,576*
AVERAGE COMMERCIAL COSTS	OFFICE: \$17.15 SHOP/YARD: \$8.01 RETAIL: \$8.97	OFFICE: \$33.82 SHOP/YARD: \$10.60 RETAIL: \$21.62
AVERAGE ROUNDTRIP COMMUTE	32 MINS.	50 MINS.

A house in Grand Junction is nearly half the price of one in Denver.

Mesa County has the **second lowest** property tax burden in the Mountain West Region—that's second least expensive in Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, Montana, Wyoming, and Utah.

*\*Denver County*

Commercial office and retail space costs in Denver are twice as high as in Grand Junction.

Residents in Denver spend about 72 more hours per year commuting than those in Grand Junction. Imagine what you could do with those 3 extra days per year!



# EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Mesa County is home to Colorado Mesa University. As Colorado's fastest growing university, CMU offers electrical-computer, civil and mechanical engineering programs, a robust nursing program, computer science, cybersecurity, construction management, and a number of other programs that cultivate a highly skilled workforce catered to our local industries.

The Mesa County Workforce Center (MCWC) is the only Work Ready Certified center in Colorado, putting our workforce ahead of every other region in the state. Our Workforce Center and our Department of Human Services have a unique partnership—the only one like it in the country—that allows us to get more people back to work successfully than anywhere else.

We have fostered several collaborations between our workforce center, CMU, the community college and D51 schools that put kids on career tracks at an early age, providing a continuous and qualified workforce to fill local jobs.



## MESA COUNTY VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT 51

**25**  
ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOLS

**8**  
MIDDLE  
SCHOOLS

**1**  
MIDDLE/HIGH  
SCHOOL

**6**  
HIGH  
SCHOOLS

**3**  
K-12  
SCHOOLS

**3**  
CHARTER  
SCHOOLS

**Including:** Dual language and STEM elementary schools, P-TECH and International Baccalaureate (IB) programs for high school students, Waldorf and Montessori education, and a number of non-district charter and private, faith-based schools.

# WE ARE GROWING

Mesa County was slow to climb out of the 2008 recession, while the Denver metro area boomed. As a result, leadership across the valley collaborated on a plan to invest in needed infrastructure, streamline efforts and better market the quality of life.

Those efforts and the unprecedented growth on the Front Range pre-COVID have resulted in consistent growth in our valley. Migration patterns for the state were balanced, with nearly identical number of people moving in to Colorado as there were moving out of the state. However, the Western Slope seemed to see a flurry of new residents during the pandemic, primarily fueled by the remote work trend. And the Colorado State Demographer's Office has estimated Mesa County will continue to grow as much as 60% by 2050.



## TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Grand Junction is a transportation hub with multiple options for freight and business travel via air, rail and highway.

The Grand Junction Regional Airport (GJT) has experienced exceptional growth in recent years. In 2021, it was designated the Airport of the Year from the Colorado Department of Transportation. Today, it is the smallest airport in the U.S. with service from six airlines, and offering 18 daily direct flights to seven destinations.



# KEY DEVELOPMENTS

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There is abundant room for mixed-use commercial developments, especially along the 24-Road corridor on the western side of Grand Junction. There is open, available, shovel-ready acreage with easy access to I-70 that is available surrounding Community Hospital, the region's newest hospital, making this area ripe for medical offices and senior living developments.

A redevelopment of the Mesa Mall into a more open shopping area to include top national retailers, green space and residential is underway. Building permit applications are up considerably year-over-year for residential and commercial construction.

The City of Grand Junction invested over \$14 million in a new river district located along the Colorado River in the heart of the valley. A key component of the river district is Riverfront at Las Colonias Park— a 140-acre city park with an embedded commercial business park geared towards the outdoor industry. The park includes a 5,000-seat amphitheater, a zipline across the Colorado River, multiple ponds for stand-up paddle-boarding, and a river park with two standing waves. The Colorado River Trail, which runs from the Town of Palisade to the Utah border, runs right through the park, making the entire valley accessible by bike. Bonsai Design and

RockyMounts are headquartered within the business park – and several more businesses lease space within the Bonsai Building.

A little further west, just past the Fifth Street bridge, the City of Grand Junction is reinvigorating the grounds of a former auto salvage yard with a mixed-use commercial and residential park. Alongside high-density housing, Riverfront at Dos Rios will include a bike park, a retail and restaurant complex, glamping grounds, and multiple pads for retail, office space and light industrial.

The entire river district, including Riverfront at Las Colonias Park and Riverfront at Dos Rios, falls within Mesa County's federal Opportunity Zone tracts.

The City of Fruita has more than 68 acres of shovel-ready sites ideal for outdoor recreation manufacturers or any business seeking land equipped with fiber, as well as direct rail and highway access. The Fruita Commercial & Industrial Business Park offers lakeside sites complete with a cable wakeboard park and panoramic views of the nearby Colorado National Monument. The picturesque landscape is located on a multiuse bike path connecting downtown Fruita and the world-famous Kokopelli mountain bike trail system.

# CONTACT US

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**GJEP.ORG**



**INVEST@GJEP.ORG**



**970.245.4332**

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