

**GRAND JUNCTION** economic  
PARTNERSHIP

# BUILT ON SOLID GROUND

2025 ANNUAL REPORT:  
ECONOMIC IMPACT & MARKET OVERVIEW



**COLORADO**

**Grand Junction • Fruita • Palisade • Mesa County**

# THE DIRT.

***For residents born here, they say if you leave Mesa County, you should take a little dirt with you.***

Not much, just enough to fill a Mason jar. A handful from the Colorado National Monument, a bit from the Bookcliffs, some from the banks of the Colorado River, a handful from the peach orchards, and maybe the school yard where you grew up (just for good measure).

Versions of this local legend trace its origins back to the forced removal of the Ute people from this valley in the late 1800s, when families were pushed from their homelands to reservation lands in what is now Utah. Whether the legend of the dirt is told as folklore or cautionary tale, the story echoes a deeper truth: this land holds memories, both good and bad. Long before rail lines, orchards, or highways, this valley sustained communities who understood its rhythms and respected its demands. Their displacement changed the region, but it did not erase the deep connection between people and place.

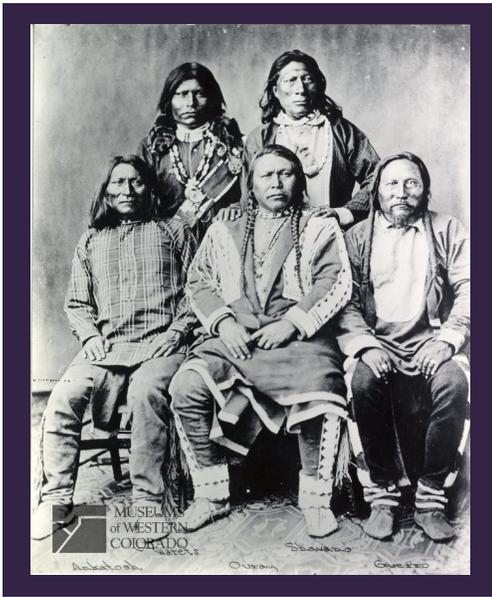
Over generations, many that leave do return, not because of cursed soil, but because of the relationships, landscapes, and sense of home that takes root here. And over time, new residents and diverse perspectives have added to the rich tapestry of industry, workforce, and community.



Mesa County's history illustrates that the land here has never promised ease; it demands resilience. It asks people to build something that can endure beyond a single sector or a single moment, for generations to come.

**And time after time, this community has answered.**





Five chiefs of the Uncompahgre Ute: Ankatosh, Warets, Ouray, Shavano, and Guerro, ca. 1879 -- Attribution: The Wilson Rockwell Collection, Museums of Western Colorado #1980.13.71

Apple orchard in Palisade ca. 1900. Attribution: The Palisade Public Library Photograph Collection, Museums of Western Colorado #1979.23.57



## STEWARDSHIP OF THE LAND

### Pre 1880s - Indigenous Presence

For centuries, Ute peoples lived seasonally throughout the Grand Valley, guided by the rhythms of land, water, and migration. Their stewardship shaped early understanding of the region's resources and established the valley as a place defined by adaptation and movement rather than permanence.

## AGRICULTURE & COMMUNITY GROWTH (1910s - 1940s)

Commercial orchards, livestock operations, and small businesses began defining the local economy. Diverse communities, including many Hispanic families drawn by rail and farm work, helped stabilize the valley through labor, entrepreneurship, and civic life rooted along the Colorado River corridor.

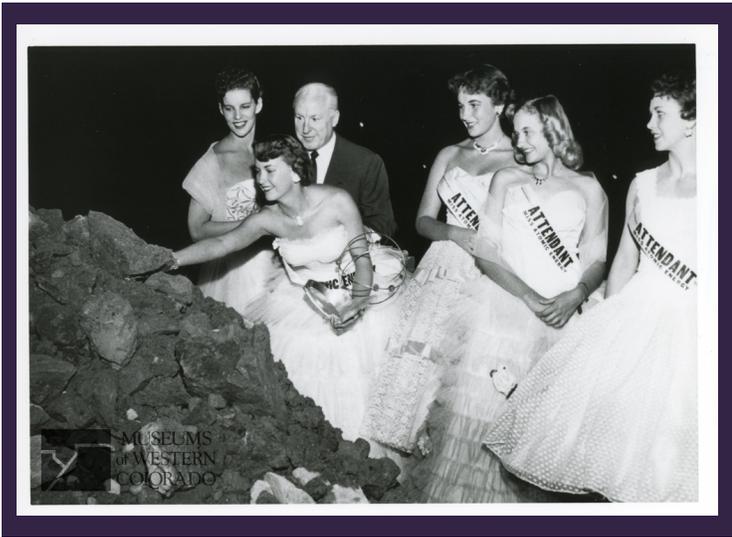


(1884) First railroad bridge crossing the Colorado River, connecting Orchard Mesa to Grand Junction. Built by the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad -- The Museums of Western Colorado, #F516b

## SETTLEMENT, IRRIGATION, & RAILROADS (1880s - 1910s)

Following the forced migration of Ute communities, early settlers arrived seeking farmland and trade routes. Irrigation projects transformed the desert landscape into productive orchards, while the arrival of the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad marked the start of the modern economy, connecting the valley to national markets and anchoring Grand Junction as a regional hub.

In 1955, Karen Keeler of Denver is crowned Miss Atomic Energy, winning a truckload of uranium ore worth \$523.54, valued at over \$5,000 today. The contest was sponsored by the Uranium Ore Producers Association and the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce—The US Department of Energy, Museums of Western Colorado, #1983.63.236



Aerial view of the Anvil Points oil shale processing facility located near Rifle, CO, that operated from 1947-1982. The Historic Anvil Points Photo Collection, Museums of Western Colorado, #2023.22.55



## THE ENERGY AND EXTRACTION ERA

### Uranium Boom (1940s - 1960s)

Driven by Cold War demand, uranium mining across the Western Slope created jobs and regional growth with Grand Junction becoming a processing center for the Atomic Energy Commission.

### Energy Resurgence Then Recession (1990s - 2000s)

As national energy demands shifted, oil and natural gas development once again accelerated growth across Western Colorado. Investment and job growth signaled new confidence; however, the surge proved sensitive to global markets and price fluctuations, leading to another harsh economic correction and reinforcing that Mesa County cannot depend on a single industry.

### Oil Shale Boom & Bust (1970s - 1980s)

A surge in oil shale projects ramped up economic activity, followed by a sudden cancellation that triggered widespread job loss and economic contraction across Mesa County. In response, community leaders shifted their focus toward diversification and economic stabilization, spurring the creation of the Grand Junction Economic Partnership and later, our partners, the Business Incubator Center.

## THE DIVERSIFICATION ERA

### (2010s - Today)

After economic devastation, Mesa County resolved to make a comeback, rebuilding around economic diversification. Today, Mesa County's economy reflects a balance of legacy industries, emerging sectors, entrepreneurship, tourism, and remote-enabled work. The focus has shifted from chasing rapid growth to building sustainable prosperity, grounded in proactive business development, workforce development, livability, and long-term regional strength.

Photos courtesy of  
Museums of Western Colorado

# FROM FOUNDATION TO FUTURE.

***Over the last year, GJEP has continued to advance its mission with intention, collaboration, and a results driven approach to economic development.***

Through focused business attraction, retention, and expansion efforts, the Grand Junction Economic Partnership continued to support quality relocations and expansions that strengthen our local economy and reinforce our community's position as a competitive place to do business.

Measuring economic impact remains a critical part of demonstrating value to our investors, partners, and stakeholders. Our work continues to show consistent, year over year growth in economic impact for Mesa County. This sustained momentum reflects the effectiveness of our strategy and the strength of collaboration.

None of this progress would be possible without the commitment of our investors and community partners. Together, we convened impactful events such as the Western Colorado Economic Summit, the Site Selection Familiarization Tour, and worked collaboratively to advance initiatives that support long term economic resilience. These efforts are helping the Grand Junction area position itself for smart, sustainable economic growth rooted in opportunity and quality of life.

As we look ahead, the Grand Junction Economic Partnership remains focused on the future, attracting high quality primary jobs, strengthening key industries, and creating pathways for continued prosperity. With the continued support of our investors, stakeholders, and local leaders, we are well positioned to build on this momentum, drive innovation, and expand opportunities for businesses and residents alike.

Together, we are shaping a resilient and vibrant economic future for the Grand Junction area, one grounded in collaboration, strategic vision, and a shared commitment to long term success.

Sincerely,



Curtis Englehart, CEcD  
Executive Director, Grand Junction Economic Partnership  
curtis@gjep.org • 970-245-4332 ext. 5



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## FROM OUR 2025 BOARD CHAIRMAN

It is hard to believe we are already entering 2026. The pace of change continues to accelerate, and with it comes both opportunity and responsibility. It has been a privilege to serve alongside a committed board and dedicated partners who share a common goal of strengthening our community's economy for the long term.

With more than twenty engaged board members and strong participation from our investors and community partners, the Grand Junction Economic Partnership continues to play a central role in advancing economic vitality across the region. Through strategic business attraction, retention, and expansion efforts, GJEP remains focused on supporting quality job creation, private investment, and sustainable growth that aligns with our community's values.

Over the past year, GJEP continued to build momentum by supporting impactful projects, strengthening regional partnerships, and elevating Mesa County's competitiveness as a place to do business. These efforts reflect the confidence businesses have in our community and the importance of a coordinated, proactive approach to economic development.

I am continually impressed by the professionalism, leadership, and dedication of the GJEP staff, board members, and partners. Their commitment to this organization and to Mesa County is evident in both the progress achieved and the vision guiding future efforts. As a board, we remain focused on supporting strategic initiatives, cultivating meaningful relationships, and positioning our community for continued success.

**Thank you to our investors, stakeholders, and partners for your continued confidence in the Grand Junction Economic Partnership. We look forward to building on this momentum and continuing our shared work to strengthen our economy in 2026 and beyond.**



**Brad McCloud**  
Area Manager, West Slope  
Xcel Energy

*2025 Board Chairman,  
Grand Junction Economic Partnership*





## ABOUT THE GRAND JUNCTION ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP (GJEP)

The Grand Junction Economic Partnership is a 501c(3) non-profit organization that focuses on economic development within Mesa County, including the City of Grand Junction, the City of Fruita, and the Town of Palisade.

01

### MISSION

To enhance the economic vitality of Mesa County and Colorado's Grand Junction area, creating a strong and diverse economy and an improved quality of life.

02

### VISION

To create quality jobs and expand capital investment through the attraction, expansion, and retention of primary business.

## 2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Brad McCloud | Chairman**  
Xcel Energy

**Quint Shear | Vice Chairman**  
SHEAR Inc.

**Chris Thomas | Immediate Past-Chair**  
Community Hospital

**Pat Tucker | Secretary**  
Conquest Development

**Tim Fry | Treasurer**  
Mountain Racing Products

**Shane Haas | Exec. at Large**  
FCI Constructors

**Karen Troester | Exec. at Large**  
Grand Junction Federal Credit Union

**Mike Bennett\***  
City of Grand Junction

**Stephanie Copeland**  
Four Points Funding

**Bobbie Daniel**  
Mesa County  
Commissioner

**Robert Glover**  
Shaw Construction

**Aaron Hancey**  
City of Fruita  
Mayor Pro Tem

**Janet Hawkinson\***  
Town of Palisade  
Trustee

**Todd Hollenbeck**  
Mesa County

**Cody Kennedy**  
City of Grand Junction  
Mayor

**John Marshall**  
Colorado Mesa University

**Sarah Matchett**  
Town of Palisade

**Jay Seaton**  
The Daily Sentinel

**Ryan Schramm**  
Powderhorn Mtn. Resort

**Thaddeus Shrader**  
Bonsai Design

**Doug Simons**  
Enstrom Candies

**Mike Sneddon**  
SG Aerospace & Gas

**Mike Stahl**  
Hilltop Community Resources

**Megan Terlecky Fiedler**  
Intermountain Health

**Shannon Vassen\***  
City of Fruita

**Denny Granum**  
Monument Homes  
Member Emeritus

**Jamie Hamilton**  
Home Loan  
Member Emeritus

*\*Ex-Officio (non-voting)*

## STAFF DIRECTORY



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## THE GRAND JUNCTION MSA (MESA COUNTY, COLORADO)

The Grand Junction MSA is the largest metropolitan region between Denver, CO and Salt Lake City, UT. The region blends a competitive business climate and available commercial property with a skilled, work-ready workforce and strong talent pipelines through Colorado Mesa University and CMU Tech.

Comprised of the City of Grand Junction, City of Fruita, and Town of Palisade, the region is centrally located in the United States with excellent connectivity to national and international markets, acting as a regional transportation and logistics hub with amenities including the Grand Junction Regional Airport (GJT).



### KEY & EMERGING INDUSTRY CLUSTERS



Health Care & Medical



Transportation & Logistics



Advanced Manufacturing



Energy & Renewables



Technology



Outdoor Recreation



Agribusiness



Aviation & Aerospace



# DATA HIGHLIGHTS: MESA COUNTY, CO

## Population

**162,833**

*(Colorado State Demography Office - 2025 Estimate)*



## NET MIGRATION

**80.6%**

Increase in annual net migration  
(2019-2023)

### Civilian Labor Force

**80,474**

### Number Employed

**76,716**

*(Colorado Mesa University - August 2025)*

### 2024 Net Migration

**1,476**

### 2036 Projected Migration

**3,037**

*(Colorado State Demography Office - 2025)*

## INCOME & HOUSING

### Personal Income Per Capita (2023)

**\$57,653**

### Average Home Value

**\$418,325**

### Median Household Income (2023)

**\$66,339**

### State Corporate Income Tax Rate:

**4.40%**

### Colorado State Sales Tax Rate:

**2.9%**

### City of Grand Junction Sales Tax Rate:

**3.39%**

### City of Fruita Sales Tax Rate:

**3.0%**

### Town of Palisade Sales Tax Rate:

**2.0%**

### Mesa County Sales Tax Rate:

**2.37%**

# MAJOR PRIMARY EMPLOYERS



**Mesa County  
School District 51**  
**3,397**



**Intermountain Health  
St. Mary's Regional Hospital**  
**3,007**



**Community Hospital**  
**1,403**



**Mesa County**  
**1,250**



**Colorado Mesa University**  
**1,206**

**6**

**City of  
Grand Junction**  
1,156

**7**

**Grand Junction VA  
Medical Center**  
1,001

**8**

**Family Health  
West**  
630

**9**

**West Star  
Aviation**  
584

**10**

**Hilltop  
Community Resources**  
495

**11**

**HopeWest**  
468

**12**

**Powderhorn  
Mountain Resort**  
416

**13**

**Alpine Bank**  
298

**14**

**STRiVE**  
264

**15**

**Leitner Poma of  
America**  
250

**16**

**Primary Care Partners**  
240

**17**

**RSI Entech**  
223

**18**

**City of Fruita**  
218

**19**

**Calfrac Well  
Services**  
196

**20**

**CO Department of  
Transportation**  
181

*Data Sourced February 2026*

*Employee counts sourced directly from the organizations listed and data provided through Mesa County Workforce Center.*

# MESA COUNTY, CO: JOB GROWTH PROJECTIONS & EMPLOYMENT CONCENTRATION

NAICS	Description	2025 Jobs	2025 - 2035 Change	2025 - 2035 % Change	2035 Jobs	2025 Employment Concentration	2035 Employment Concentration
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	13,041	2,285	18%	15,325	1.27	1.29
90	Government	12,011	1,539	13%	13,550	1.10	1.16
44	Retail Trade	9,118	700	8%	9,818	1.31	1.34
72	Accommodation and Food Services	7,263	652	9%	7,914	1.16	1.14
23	Construction	6,204	394	6%	6,598	1.41	1.36
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	3,658	236	6%	3,893	0.97	0.94
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	3,291	449	14%	3,740	0.75	0.79
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	3,197	397	12%	3,595	0.61	0.60
31	Manufacturing	3,159	324	10%	3,483	0.56	0.58
48	Transportation and Warehousing	3,081	413	13%	3,493	0.94	0.94
42	Wholesale Trade	2,498	194	8%	2,692	0.93	0.92
52	Finance and Insurance	1,768	(49)	(3%)	1,719	0.58	0.52
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	1,512	(405)	(27%)	1,107	5.88	4.05
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,393	5	0%	1,399	1.06	0.97
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1,333	186	14%	1,519	0.97	0.97
61	Educational Services	1,216	299	25%	1,515	0.62	0.70
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	631	(141)	(22%)	490	0.73	0.54
51	Information	605	68	11%	673	0.46	0.45
22	Utilities	223	13	6%	236	0.85	0.80
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	200	59	29%	259	0.18	0.21
	<b>Total</b>	<b>75,407</b>	<b>7,613</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>83,020</b>		

Source: Mesa County Workforce Center, February 2026

# GROWING INTENTIONALLY: CAPITAL INVESTMENTS TAKING SHAPE



**Commercial development across Grand Junction and throughout Mesa County reflect a market that is grounded in confidence and long-term opportunity. Industrial expansions, community facilities, medical expansions, retail investment, and new mixed-use projects, continue to signal steady demand and thoughtful growth in the region.**

While commercial markets nationwide have faced shifts in office utilization and capital costs, Mesa County is experiencing a diverse mix of new construction and improvement projects defined by the community’s economic resilience and diversification. Industrial and flex space continue to perform strongly, healthcare and professional services are expanding, and strategic infill projects reinforce key corridors throughout the community.

The above map highlights a handful of recent commercial development and capital investments throughout the heart of Grand Junction. Notable GJEP supported projects highlighted in purple represent targeted efforts to support the creation of new primary jobs, support business relocation and expansion, and align development with the region’s projected industry growth.



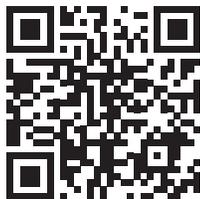
# GRAND JUNCTION ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

The Grand Junction Economic Partnership (GJEP) collaborates with regional and state economic development partners and our comprehensive network of investors, developers, and commercial brokers to offer a comprehensive suite of services for businesses relocating and expanding in Mesa County.

### FEATURED INCENTIVES:

- **Job Growth Incentive Tax Credit:** Performance based program for businesses pursuing job creation projects that would otherwise not occur in Colorado. Businesses creating at least 20 net new primary jobs within a credit period may be eligible for a state income tax credit equal to 50% FICA paid.
- **Advanced Industries Accelerator Program:** Businesses operating within one of Colorado’s seven advanced industries (Advanced Manufacturing, Aerospace, Bioscience, Electronics, Energy and Natural Resources, Infrastructure Engineering, Technology and Information) may be eligible for an early-stage capital and retention grant, proof of concept grant, export grant, or trade show stipend.
- **Rural Jump-Start Program:** New and expanding businesses in Mesa County may be eligible for a “tax holiday” for up to eight years, and they can receive up to \$15,000 as a newly established business. To be eligible, businesses must create a minimum of five (5) primary new jobs, cannot be moving existing jobs away from another part of the state, cannot be in direct competition with another business in Mesa County or a contiguous county, and must add to the economic base and export goods or services outside of the region.



*Explore business development resources:  
[gjep.org/business-resources](http://gjep.org/business-resources)*



**COLORADO**  
Office of Economic Development  
& International Trade

**GRAND JUNCTION** economic  
PARTNERSHIP



## Site Selection & Real Estate Support

GJEP provides tailored property portfolios to relocation and expansion prospects, leveraging our network of local real estate brokers and robust site selection tools.



## Community Connections & Removing Barriers

GJEP provides business prospects with direct access to key leaders and economic development partners, delivering proactive solutions to address business challenges.

Fruita, Colorado



**SCAN TO SEE AVAILABLE  
SITES & BUILDINGS**

# IMPACTING ECONOMIC STABILITY

*Strong businesses thrive when communities are proactive, collaborative, and intentional.*

How do we ensure that Mesa County maintains its economic momentum and remains a state leader? By facilitating successful and proactive business relocation and expansion efforts to diversify our economic base, expand job creation, and enhance the quality of life for our community.

Through the support of our community network of investors, public partners, and economic development partners, the Grand Junction Economic Partnership facilitates proactive business recruitment and expansion efforts in Mesa County, CO, specializing in site selection and incentive negotiation support. GJEP measures its economic impact through supported business activity including job creation, capital investment, and average annual wage. 2025 was a record year for economic development efforts despite global economic shifts, signaling long term resilience and a bright future.

## 2025 ECONOMIC IMPACT & RETURN ON INVESTMENT



**224**

**2025 Primary Jobs  
Created/Retained**

**943**

**Additional Primary  
Jobs Projected**

**EMPLOYMENT IMPACT**

**\$56,774,501**

**CAPITAL INVESTMENT**

**\$48,154,547**

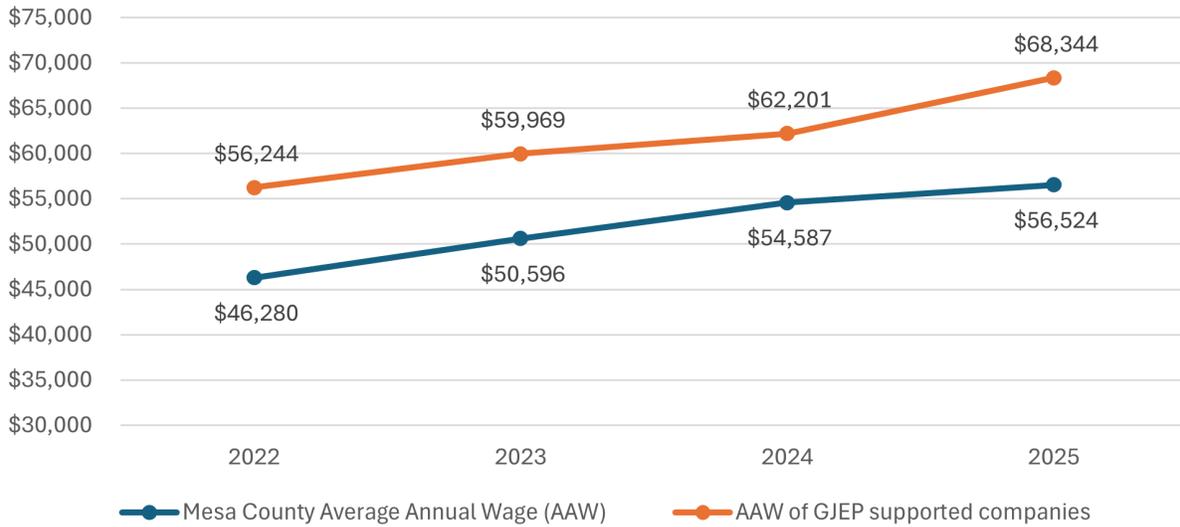
**CAPITAL EXPENDITURE IMPACT**

**\$91,333,171**

## TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT

**\$194,872,443**

## Mesa County's Average Annual Wage Compared to GJEP Supported Companies (2022 - 2025)



**\$68,344**  
Avg. Annual Wage for 2025 Jobs Created/Retained

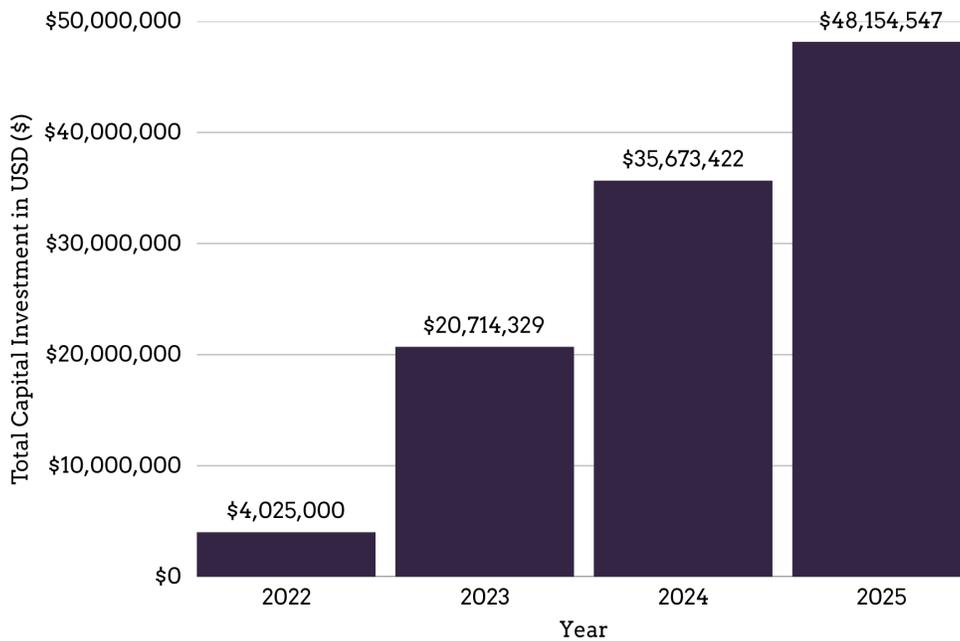
**For every \$1 invested in GJEP, we generated \$202 in economic impact.**  
(GJEP 2025)

The Grand Junction Economic Partnership calculates economic impact using Economic Impact Modeling Software: IMPLAN® model, [2024] Data, using inputs provided by the user and IMPLAN Group LLC, IMPLAN System (data and software), 16905 Northcross Dr., Suite 120, Huntersville, NC 28078 www.IMPLAN.com. Total economic impact is based upon Direct Output: \$127,287,270.45, Indirect Output: \$34,219,295.68, and Induced Output: \$33,365,876.85

## PRIMARY JOBS CREATED & AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGE (2022 - 2025)

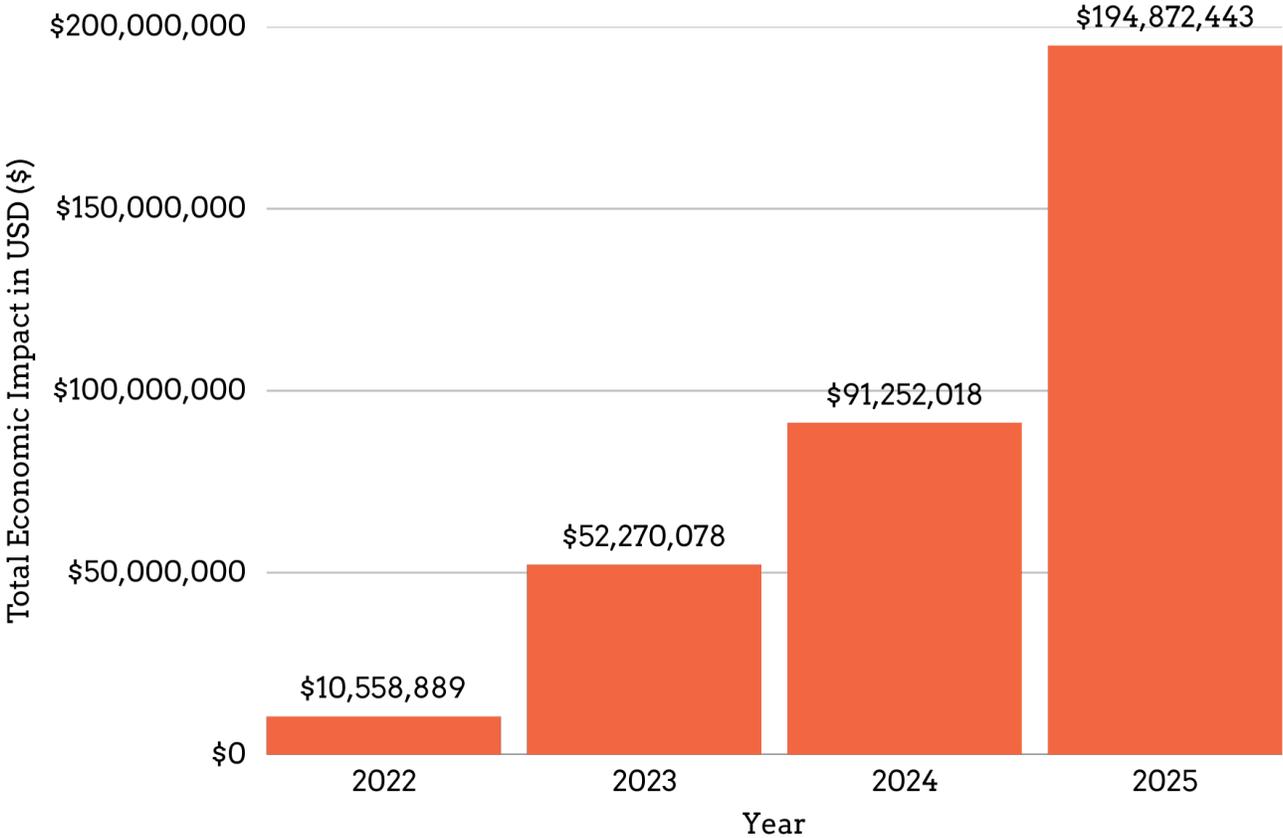


## CAPITAL INVESTMENT (2022 - 2025)



# GRAND JUNCTION ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

## Economic Impact (2022 - 2025)



	2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>Jobs Created</b>	83	178	299	224
<b>Potential Jobs</b>	333	128	147	943
<b>Average Salary</b>	\$56,244	\$59,969	\$62,201	\$68,344
<b>Capital Expenditures</b>	\$1,025,000	\$20,714,329	\$35,673,422	\$48,154,547
<b>Economic Impact</b>	<b>\$10,558,889</b>	<b>\$52,270,078</b>	<b>\$91,252,018</b>	<b>\$194,872,443</b>

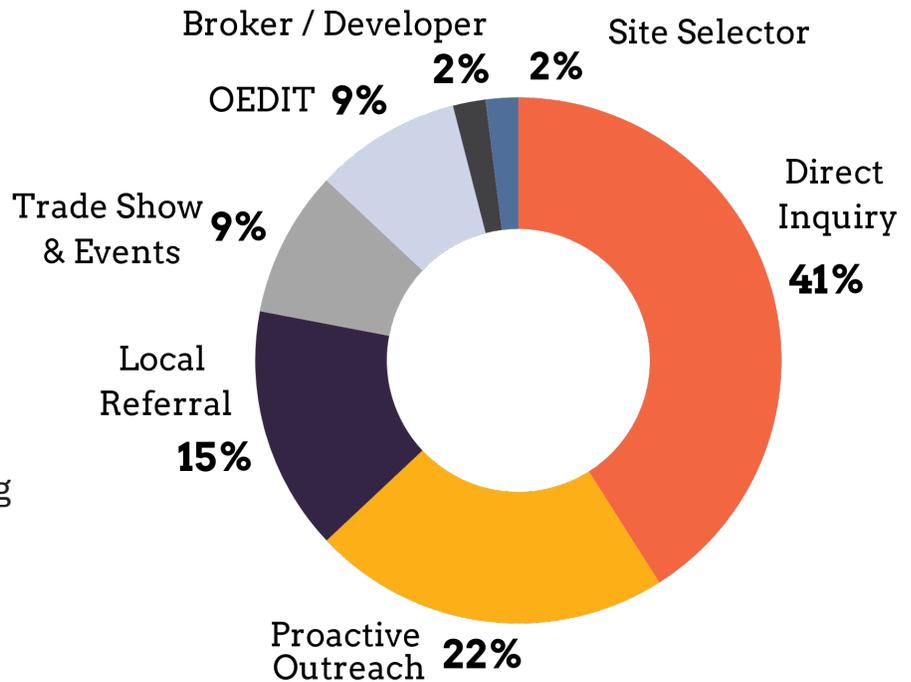
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# PROSPECT PIPELINE (2025)

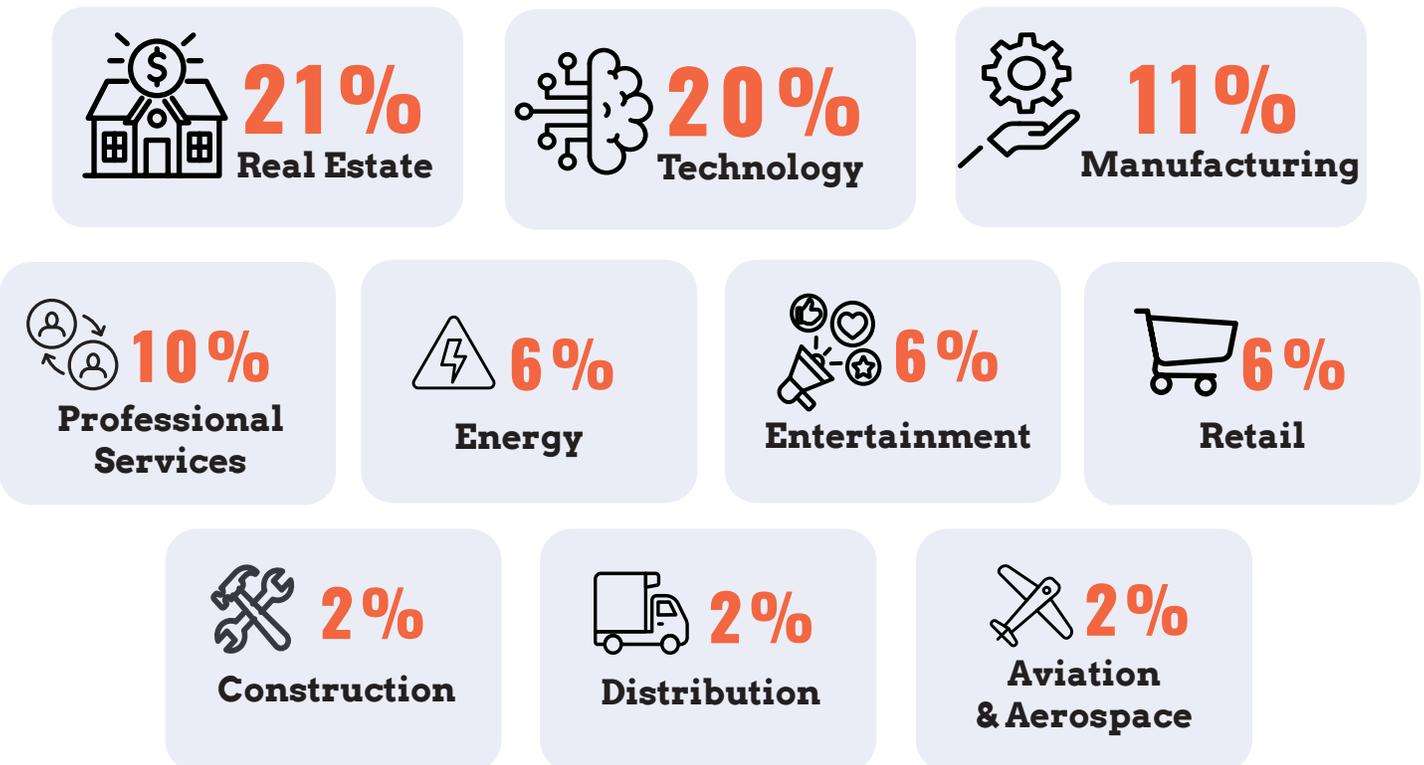
## Top Sources:

Direct inquiries remained the largest source year over year, demonstrating continued awareness of GJEP as an organization and inbound interest that result in quality leads and prospects.

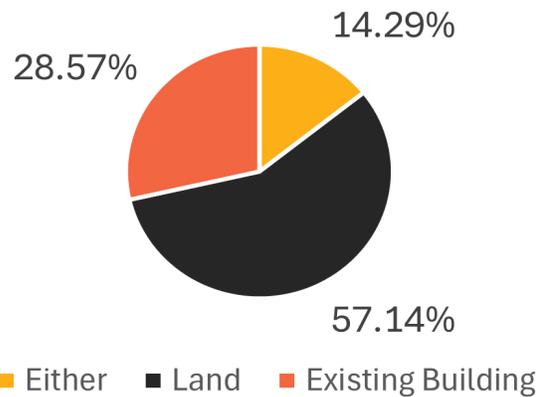
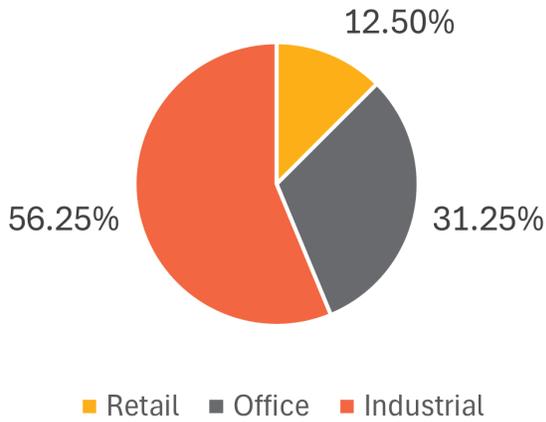
The most significant shift in lead sources from prior years was in cold outreach, increasing from 3% in 2024 to 22% in 2025, highlighting a focus on proactive business recruitment strategies.



## Top Industries:

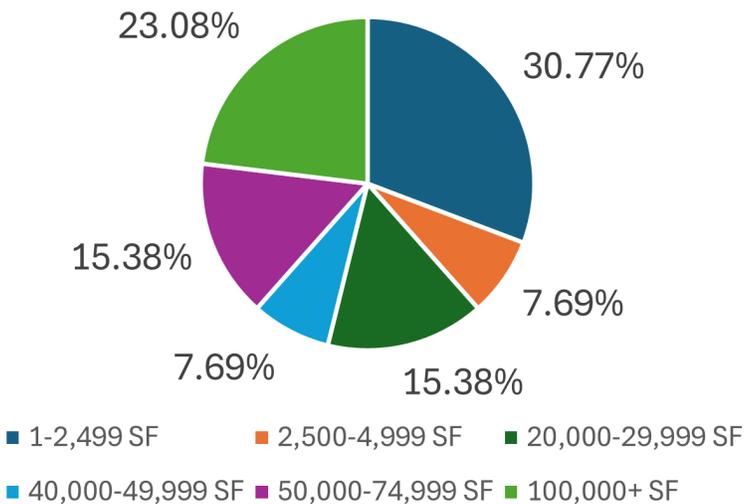


## Requests By Project Type:



The majority of prospects GJEP worked with in 2025 were searching for land development opportunities, representing over 57% of requests compared to only 32% last year. Additionally, we have seen an overall year over year increase in office project requests, reflecting national employment trends shifting to returning to the office.

## Property Size Requests By Square Foot



Similar to last year's requests, prospects are requiring larger square footage (50,000+ SF)

*\* Not all businesses share their real estate needs as many prospects already have this portion of the project secured. GJEP collects this data when possible to help quantify project needs for relocations and expansion in Mesa County.*

## ENGAGEMENT METRICS:

**142** Proactive outreach efforts tracked

**80** Unique marketing touchpoints deployed

**24** High-value communications resources developed

**6** Comprehensive State RFIs submitted to the Colorado Office of Economic Development & International Trade



## STREAMLINING THE PATH TO PROGRESS: HIGH COUNTRY BEVERAGE

*When Colorado's premier, family-owned beverage distributor needed a new home on the Western Slope, developing a strategic launchpad for their operations was not without its challenges. Through partnership, collaboration, and community alignment, High Country Beverage was able to successfully facilitate their expansion with a newly constructed 159,650 square-foot-facility located at 2825 Riverside Parkway, serving as a testament to intentional development and logistical excellence.*

### Intentional Alignment

In economic development, speed to market matters. To ensure that High Country Beverage, a local primary employer, was able to successfully expand operations in the region, the Grand Junction Economic Partnership acted as a critical bridge between private enterprise and local government.

By coordinating with the City of Grand Junction on an expedited review process, the Grand Junction Economic Partnership was able to support High Country Beverage and ensure the project crossed the finish line on schedule and ready to serve the region. *"GJEP was instrumental in facilitating our communication with the city and the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce to complete our project. We're proud to continue to grow on the Western Slope and contribute to the region's economic momentum,"* shared Steve Nichols, President of High Country Beverage.



## Future-Proofing Supply Chains and Enhancing The Commercial Market

High Country Beverage's new facility is built to meet the growing demands of western Colorado. With 32-foot ceilings and high-bay storage, the site maximizes operational efficiency.

*"Grand Junction is an important and growing market for High Country Beverage. Investing in a new Western Slope distribution facility was a natural next step to support our employees, customers and suppliers, in the Western Slope region. Mesa County offers a strong workforce, a pro-business environment, and a community that values long-term partnerships, all of which align with our family company's approach to growth,"* stated Nichols.

- **Superior Connectivity:** High Country Beverage's new site provides direct access to I-70 and Highway 50, ensuring that the company can meet the region's growing supply chain needs.
- **Flexible Growth:** By making 80,000 square feet of the new facility available for lease, High Country Beverage is going beyond expanding their regional footprint by adding needed commercial inventory for other emerging businesses to grow in Grand Junction.

## Celebrating the Spirit of Economic Development

High Country Beverage was recognized during the 2025 Western Colorado Economic Summit as the recipient of the Spirit of Economic Development Award, presented annually to a business or organization that exemplifies a commitment to community engagement, economic vitality, and leadership in Mesa County.

***"The Grand Junction Economic Partnership was a valuable resource throughout our warehouse expansion project, helping us navigate the process and reinforcing why this community is such a great place to invest."***

***- Steve Nichols,  
High Country Beverage***





## **RURAL JUMP-START PROGRAM:**

### **BRUIN WASTE'S MODERN MATERIALS RECOVERY FACILITY**

*Through a landmark partnership with the City of Grand Junction, OEDIT, and GJEP, Bruin Waste is modernizing recycling in Western Colorado.*

For years, the story of recycling in Western Colorado was one of miles traveled. Every bottle, can, and cardboard box collected faced a long, carbon-heavy journey across state lines. By transforming the former 10.5 acre Halliburton property at 365 32 Road into a state-of-the-art Material Recovery Facility (MRF), Bruin Waste and the City of Grand Junction are turning a previously underutilized site into a cornerstone of modern infrastructure.

Through a landmark partnership between Bruin Waste, the City of Grand Junction, the Colorado Office of Economic Development & International Trade, and the Grand Junction Economic Partnership, the region is poised to become a leader in the circular economy. The \$5.6 million land purchase approved by Grand Junction City

Council will support the development of a \$18-19 million facility that will ultimately strengthen the region's sustainability and self-reliance. The expansion is anticipated to create 30 new primary jobs with wages averaging \$56,525, providing stable, competitive wages for Mesa County residents.

The Materials Recovery Facility will introduce state-of-the-art sortation technology, including AI-driven systems, to improve recycling efficiency, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and shorten regional supply chain costs. Plans for the facility also include an on-site community viewing room to educate students, residents, and stakeholders about modern recycling practices and environmental responsibility.

***“Colorado is proud to support businesses like Bruin Waste that are leaders in recycling and provide reliable services to Coloradans on the Western Slope. Investing in our local businesses is an investment in our communities, and by creating sustainable pathways through the Rural Jumpstart initiative, we are helping businesses grow, create new jobs, and contribute to Colorado’s economy.”***



Colorado Governor Jared Polis

***“We are thrilled to see the Rural Jump-Start Program support Bruin Waste Management as it launches a new division in Western Colorado. By providing a much-needed service, the company will improve recycling and waste management while providing as many as 30 new jobs and career advancement opportunities. That is a win for Grand Junction and for Colorado.”***



Eve Lieberman, Executive Director of the CO Office of Economic Development & International Trade

***“The support we are getting from the Rural Jump-Start Program will support this mission. We are grateful for the partnership of OEDIT and GJEP”***

Jeff Kendall, President and CEO of Bruin Waste



## **The Rural Jump-Start Advantage**

Success in Grand Junction is a collaborative effort. By helping Bruin Waste navigate and secure approval for the Rural Jump-Start Program, the Grand Junction Economic Partnership and the Colorado Office of Economic Development & International Trade were able to support Bruin Waste’s entry into the market. Through the Rural Jump-Start Program (RJS), Bruin Waste’s new division is now eligible for significant financial incentives and tax relief, including exemption from state and local income taxes for up to eight years.

The company will also be eligible to receive up to \$20,000 in grant funding to offset startup costs. Through the program, Bruin Waste will also collaborate with Colorado Mesa University to access its talent pipeline for internships, recent graduates, and alumni.

# **BUILDING A MORE RESILIENT WATER FUTURE, RIGHT HERE IN MESA COUNTY.**

## ***RAPIDS secures \$412,558 to launch secure water pilot at Colorado Mesa University***

*In Mesa County, water is more than a resource. It is the foundation of agriculture, outdoor recreation, economic growth, and daily life throughout the Western Slope. As water scarcity intensifies across the Colorado River Basin and cyber threats increasingly target critical infrastructure, local leaders are taking action to protect what matters most and prepare the next generation to do the same.*

### **The Resilient & Adaptive Cyber Protection of Industrial Control Devices**

**(RAPIDS)** initiative began as a shared vision among representatives from Mesa County, Grand Junction Economic Partnership, Colorado Mesa University, City of Grand Junction, the Colorado River District, and cybersecurity leader Kurtis Minder to identify proactive methods to address water scarcity and security.

Water scarcity continues to be a threat to Colorado's economy, with governance currently fragmented, and data being disconnected, insecure, and inconsistent. Systems

face growing vulnerability to cyberattacks, with ransomware targeting water utilities up 140% year over year. Protecting the Colorado River means protecting the future of our economy, environment, and quality of life.

### **Built by the Community, Designed for the Future:**

At its core, RAPIDS is an investment in the next generation. RAPIDS aims to protect critical infrastructure, particularly the Colorado River, by transforming water management through the establishment of a secure system to measure, manage, and protect water systems. Through initial support from the Colorado Office of Economic

Development & International Trade (OEDIT), RAPIDS will move from vision to reality with a pilot program anchored at **Colorado Mesa University's Ruth Powell Hutchins Water Center.**

The pilot program will begin developing its next phase, which will define, engage, and assess minimum viable measurement standards for secure water management.

These standards will help identify gaps and develop methodologies to combine and secure data from various sources, ultimately leading to a prototype that demonstrates the viability of secure water

*“Colorado Mesa University’s Ruth Powell Hutchins Water Center is proud to partner with RAPIDS as the central hub for this innovative pilot program. The Water Center’s mission is rooted in addressing water issues in the Upper Colorado River Basin, and this collaboration will accelerate solutions for secure water management and workforce development—critical components in working toward a more resilient water future.”*



Shannon Wadas, Executive Director  
Ruth Powell Hutchins Water Center —Colorado Mesa University



**RUTH POWELL  
HUTCHINS  
WATER CENTER**  
COLORADO MESA UNIVERSITY

technologies and supports the development of workforce curriculum.

By uniting regional partners and anchoring this work at Colorado Mesa University, RAPIDS will create new pathways for high-wage jobs, drive commercialization opportunities, and strengthen Mesa County’s position as a national leader in secure water and cybersecurity innovation.

**From Vision to Regional Impact:**

In 2024, the RAPIDS consortium was awarded

\$212,400 in initial grant funding through OEDIT’s Technology Development Hub Program. Through this initial funding, RAPIDS hired Alvarez and Marsal Consulting to conduct a feasibility study, which successfully unlocked the second phase of grant funding.

The second phase of funding, \$412,558, will support RAPIDS in launching its pilot program at Colorado Mesa University over the next two years to support secure water measurement methodology and workforce development. Improved water systems ultimately

resulting from this initiative are anticipated to produce economic benefits, including cost savings, increased productivity, and resource efficiency across sectors. RAPIDS represents what is possible when a community comes together around shared responsibility and shared opportunity. By protecting the Colorado River, strengthening cybersecurity, and investing in local talent, Mesa County is building a future that is resilient, innovative, and deeply rooted in this place.

# COMPETING AT SCALE:

## *Strengthening Our Value Proposition and Positioning Mesa County for National Expansion*



### **BIORIGINAL** **ESTABLISHES U.S. PRESENCE IN GRAND JUNCTION THROUGH LOCAL EXPANSION AFTER COMPETITIVE SITE SELECTION PROCESS**

Bioriginal Food & Science Corp., a leading Canadian-based manufacturer of nutritional supplements, has selected Grand Junction, Colorado as the site for its newest U.S. expansion following a competitive multi-state site selection process. Headquartered in Saskatoon, Canada, with a global footprint across the U.S., Europe, and Asia, Bioriginal specializes in bulk softgel manufacturing, private label packaging, and custom formula solutions for the human and pet wellness industries.

The expansion centers on the acquisition and scaling of existing Grand Junction-based company, Softgel Co. This strategic move establishes a premier production hub to improve service and reduce lead times for customers across the western United States. As part of the Bioriginal family, the Grand Junction facility now benefits from a worldwide supply chain network while maintaining a shared commitment to quality, innovation, and local employment growth.

Bioriginal worked closely with the Grand Junction Economic Partnership throughout the site selection process to evaluate eligible programs and incentives, market conditions, and to secure access to local leadership. Bioriginal received approval from the Colorado Economic Development Commission for the **Job Growth Incentive Tax Credit**, a performance-based incentive designed to support competitive relocation and expansion projects. While the company also considered Denver and Salt Lake City for the expansion, Bioriginal ultimately selected Grand Junction because its strategic location, seamless integration with existing local infrastructure, and strong support from local economic development partners.

## *Performance Based Incentives*

# **The Job Growth Incentive Tax Credit**

Offered through the Colorado Office of Economic Development & International Trade, the Job Growth Incentive Tax Credit (JGITC) is a performance based program for businesses pursuing job creation projects that would otherwise not occur in Colorado. Businesses creating at least 20 net new primary jobs at a minimum of 100% of the selected county's average annual wage within a credit period may be eligible for a state income tax credit equal to 50% FICA paid.

For companies evaluating relocation or expansions in Colorado during through a competitive state-wide site selection process, this performance-based incentive encourages companies to commit to meaningful, above-average wage job creation that strengthens our employment base and economic resilience. Since 2022, the Grand Junction Economic Partnership has been able to secure seven company approvals for JGITC, enhancing the region's competitive advantage.

**Recent Mesa County approvals for this incentive program include: Morgan Mining, Goose Gear, West Star Aviation, Bioriginal, Project Coils, Method Homes, and Fort + Home.**

## **MORGAN MINING APPROVED FOR JOB GROWTH TAX INCENTIVE CREDIT**



When Morgan Mining, a Tennessee-based leader in heavy civil construction and engineering was evaluating where to establish its future growth, the company considered two locations: their established headquarters in Knoxville or an emerging footprint in Mesa County.

The Grand Junction Economic Partnership worked with Morgan Mining to help evaluate Mesa County for potential expansion plans, ultimately helping the company secure approval for the **Job Growth Incentive Tax Credit** for the creation of up to 893 new primary jobs, valued at over **\$10.8 million in eligible tax credits**. Approval for the performance based incentive and Morgan Mining's consideration of the Grand Junction MSA signals the region's ability to compete for high-impact expansion opportunities and the capacity to support meaningful, high-wage job creation.

# WESTERN COLORADO ECONOMIC SUMMIT

*Building what's next at the region's premier economic development focused conference.*

The premier gathering of business leaders, policy makers, and economic development professionals dedicated to driving sustainable growth and innovation, the Western Colorado Economic Summit explores key economic trends, investment opportunities, and strategies for sustainable development.

500+ attendees



(Left) Jeannine Purser, City Council - Fruita, (Right) Laurell Cole, City Council - Grand Junction and Dan Caris - City of Fruita  
(Bottom) Trent Prall—City of Grand Junction, Andrew Golike—CoorsTek, and Angela Padalecki—Grand Junction Regional Airport



## Challenge Yourself and Change the World with Luis Benitez

Luis Benitez, globally recognized leader in the outdoor industry and within public policy, shared inspiring tales of Everest expeditions and overcoming adversity during his keynote address, weaving together lessons on resilience, courage, and leadership. He reminded us that meaningful impact begins when we step beyond our comfort zone, embrace challenge, and commit to something greater than ourselves.



## Exploring Economic Trends with Dr. Nathan Perry

Renowned economist and professor at Colorado Mesa University, Dr. Nathan Perry, shared his annual insights into economic trends in Mesa County and throughout Colorado, highlighting industry growth, labor force dynamics, sales tax performance, and more. Dr. Perry translated complex data into clear insights, setting the stage for actionable takeaways.



COLORADO MESA UNIVERSITY



(Top) WCES Attendees during lunch keynote presented by Luis Benitez. (Left) Business of Creativity Panel featuring - Dave Goe, Downtown Grand Junction and Arielle Brachfeld, OEDIT; (Right) Water and Critical Infrastructure Panel featuring - Andy Mueller, Colorado River District and Bobbie Daniel, Mesa County Commissioner; (Bottom) Community Leadership Roundtable featuring Todd Hollenbeck (Mesa County), Dr. Brian Hill (School District 51), Mike Bennett (City of Grand Junction), and Derek Wagner (Colorado Mesa University)

# 2025 AWARD RECIPIENTS:



## **The Spirit of Economic Development: High Country Beverage**

*High Country Beverage is more than a premier beverage distributor. Our community recognized them as a community cornerstone and true economic development partner, demonstrating an unwavering commitment to both business excellence and community investment. As a leading regional employer, High Country Beverage is committed to creating high quality jobs and investing in the Grand Junction MSA through their new state-of-the-art facility, contributing to the local economy and tax base.*

## **The Joseph C. Prinster Leadership Award: Patricia Tucker, Conquest Development**

*Embodying leadership, philanthropy, generosity, and service, Pat Tucker is a driving force for our community's economic vitality. She has served as a board member for key organizations supporting community well-being including: Hilltop, Grand Junction Economic Partnership, Business Incubator Center, Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, Mind Springs, The Art Center, and BANF Film Festival. Pat has supported high-impact fundraising and philanthropy campaigns to support organizations including raising over \$100,000 for Riverside Education Center (REC) and playing an instrumental role in a major capital campaign to support Hilltop's hospice facility.*



## **The Real Estate Catalyst Award: Katie Worrall, CBRE**

*Katie Worrall goes beyond the transaction, demonstrating a commitment to community development through volunteer roles with the City of Grand Junction and the Business Incubator Center. She has been a vital partner to the Grand Junction Economic Partnership, supporting major business relocations and expansions resulting in new capital investment and job creation in Mesa County, bringing a collaborative approach to help prospective companies understand Mesa County's regional assets, incentives, and workforce solutions.*

**Visit the official event website:  
[info.gjep.org/western-colorado-economic-summit](http://info.gjep.org/western-colorado-economic-summit)**





## GRAND JUNCTION ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP SITE SELECTOR FAMILIARIZATION TOUR

The inaugural Site Selector Familiarization Tour invited four premier site selection consultants to tour Mesa County, meet with community leaders, and explore available opportunities for economic development. These site selection professionals represent a variety of businesses actively seeking relocation and expansion opportunities in industries including manufacturing, professional services, hospitality, aerospace and aviation, technology, and more.

### FEATURING:

- Meetings with municipal leaders representing Mesa County, City of Grand Junction, City of Fruita, and the Town of Palisade
- Campus tour of Colorado Mesa University lead by President John Marshall
- Tours of featured commercial sites including the Riverfront at Las Colonias and the Fruita Business Park
- Industry tours of West Star Aviation and High Country Beverage
- Commercial Broker Happy Hour at Asteria Theatre, sponsored by Shaw Construction



## Hear What The Site Selectors Had To Say....

*“Whether it’s investments in parks, trails, entertainment, or other quality of life attractions, the entire valley is taking on the feel of a modern community that wants to attract and retain talent.”*

**Christopher Lloyd,  
McGuireWoods Consulting**



*“Grand Junction’s success trajectory reflects proactive leadership from the city, county, and GJEP—a balanced economy and community-driven approach to feedback and change.”*

**Savannah Jermance, Ryan**

*“While not all communities this size have such a significant university presence, the thing I like best about Colorado Mesa University is the focus on ‘practical’ capabilities of graduates.”*

**Jeff Pappas, Newmark**



*“For companies seeking to reduce R&D costs while tapping into fresh talent and cutting edge resources, CMU offers a compelling proposition.”*

**Sabrina Champagne, Strategic Location Services**





*(Top) Campus tour of Colorado Mesa University led by President John Marshall; (Left) Presentation and tour with Grand Junction Regional Airport; (Right) Lunch with the City of Fruita led by City Manager, Shannon Vassen; (Bottom) Wine tasting and the history of regional agriculture in Palisade led by Colterris Vineyards and Town of Palisade.*



## ***The State of Site Selection—How do we stack up?***

The Site Selector Familiarization Tour culminated with an engaging plenary session during the Western Colorado Economic Summit. Site selection professionals, Christopher Lloyd, Savannah Jermance, Jeff Pappas, and Sabrina Champagne shared their perspectives on Mesa County’s strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for advancement.

### ***Our Core Strengths:***

The panel highlighted Mesa County’s legacy of resilience and unique spirit of collaboration, setting the Grand Junction MSA apart from competing markets.

- **Unified Leadership:** The site selectors noted a rare alignment between economic development partners, local government, and educational institutions.
- **Education as an Economic Engine:** The cohesion between Colorado Mesa University, Mesa County School District 51, and the business community provide a strong talent pipeline through both degree and certification programs.
- **Infrastructure & Connectivity:** Ongoing broadband expansion, Grand Junction Regional Airport, and amenities including the Riverfront Trail system were cited as key competitive advantages for both business operations and talent retention.
- **True Grit:** A community-wide determination to reinvent ourselves while maintaining the region’s character and a high quality of life demonstrate that “people have found what they are looking for” here.

## Opportunities for Strategic Growth:

To remain competitive, the panel identified key industry sectors where Mesa County is uniquely positioned to lead:

- **Emerging Industries:** Growth potential exists within Ag Tech, Outdoor Recreation, Logistics, Clean Energy, and Hospitality, aligning with the proactive efforts and strategic goals of economic development partners throughout the region.
- **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI):** Leveraging lifestyle appeal, the Grand Junction MSA is positioned to attract Western European firms, particularly as global trade shifts demand for domestic operations.
- **Hospitality & Entertainment:** Consumer demand for creating memorable experiences and Mesa County’s unique topographical landscape, sports and entertainment venues, and vibrant downtowns, paired with momentum fueled by Visit Grand Junction, positions the region to continue attracting visitors, talent, and industry growth.

## The Path Ahead: Challenges & Solutions

While our foundation is strong, the panel provided candid feedback on the hurdles we must overcome to win future projects.

<i>The Challenge</i>	<i>The Strategic Opportunity</i>
<b>Inventory Scarcity</b>	Focusing on “speed to market” by streamlining approval processes and increasing transparency for developers
<b>Commercial Space</b>	Demand for flex-spaces under 14,000 sq. ft. and shared facilities (50-60,000 sq. ft) for early stage companies
<b>Workforce Vitality</b>	Prioritizing the 18-26 demographic and their ability to live and work in the region, posing the question: “Can a young, single professional afford to live, work, and thrive here?”
<b>Creative Incentives</b>	Utilizing city/county land as “hard infrastructure” incentives and supporting local supply chains against global pressures.



## TALENT IS CURRENCY IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### *Launching the New “Live Grand” Initiative*

At the Grand Junction Economic Partnership, we know that talent is the tipping point. Access to available workforce is one of the top questions we hear from prospects and site selectors. To stay competitive, we must not only develop talent locally but also attract and retain the right professionals who will protect our community’s character while driving local industry forward.

### **Introducing Our Talent Attraction Toolkit:**

This year, GJEP is officially launching a suite of digital assets designed to be a force multiplier for our local business community featuring:

- **A signature video** highlighting real community perspectives on what it’s like to build a career, a family, and a future in Mesa County, CO.
- **A dedicated website**, acting as a one-stop shop where prospective residents and emerging talent can explore quality of life aspects and discover resources from our partners.

*These resources were built with two goals in mind: Aid local employers with resources to bridge the perception gap of what living in Western Colorado really looks like and act as an ambassador’s handbook for our community, calling us all to lead with authenticity and contribute to our collective story.*

**Visit the website:**  
**GRANDJUNCTION.CO**





## **GROUNDED IN PARTNERSHIP: INVESTING IN THE FUTURE OF OUR COMMUNITY**

**When you invest in the Grand Junction Economic Partnership, you join a network of leaders shaping a diverse economy and a strong future for generations to come.**

Through the support of our investors, public partners, and the broader community, we are able to pursue proactive business recruitment and expansion that drives job creation while also strengthening Mesa County's long-term opportunities and value proposition for investment—aligning data, business resources, commercial real estate, and impactful storytelling.

### **STRONG BUSINESSES ARE BUILT ON SOLID GROUND. YOUR SUPPORT ENABLES OUR ORGANIZATION TO:**

-  Assist business relocation and expansion by facilitating site selection, incentive negotiations, workforce development support, and community connections
-  Promote Mesa County's business assets and key industries through targeted marketing and proactive outreach
-  Identify opportunities to diversify our regional economy by championing strategic initiatives and reporting industry trends



# GRAND JUNCTION economic PARTNERSHIP

## MAXIMIZE YOUR IMPACT BY PARTNERING WITH GJEP

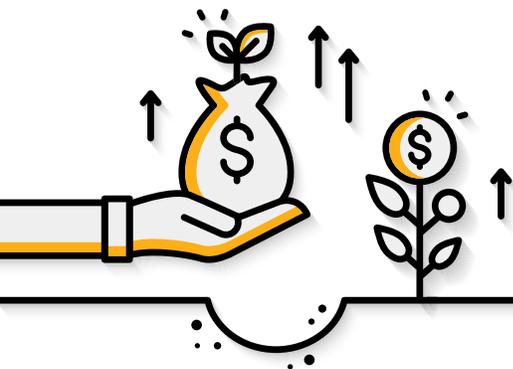
Your investment not only fuels economic development, it also offers a significant tax advantage for your business.

### Enterprise Zone Contribution Credit

As a designated Enterprise Zone Contribution project, your annual contribution to our 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization is eligible for a 25% state income tax credit.

*Example: A \$5,000 donation to the Grand Junction Economic Partnership is eligible for a \$1,250 tax credit, reducing your overall tax burden while strengthening Mesa County's economy.*

**Learn how you can impact economic development in Mesa County, Colorado by becoming a GJEP investor by visiting [gjep.org/invest](http://gjep.org/invest)**



***For every \$1 invested  
in GJEP, we generated \$202  
in economic impact.  
(GJEP 2025)***

# THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

It is through the support of our investors that we are able to shape a diverse economy and strong future.

## OUR CHAIRMAN'S CIRCLE PARTNERS:



St. Mary's Regional Hospital

