

# State of the County

February 10, 2022

Happy 148th birthday, Hinsdale County! We are excited to share our third annual State of the County snapshot of accomplishments and our goals for the upcoming year.

Respectfully, Commissioner Robert Hurd, Commissioner Kristie Borchers, Commissioner Greg Levine

**MISSION** Hinsdale County works to preserve the past while developing future opportunities.

**VALUES** Hinsdale County will promote citizen confidence through community engagement, transparency, accountability, strategic planning, collaboration, stewardship, and fiscal responsibility.

## 2021 Accomplishments

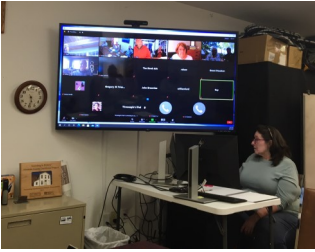
- Welcomed new building official, new deputy clerk/treasurer, three new Road & Bridge employees, new custodian, two new part-time deputies, and one full-time deputy.
- Implemented fifth Electronic Recording Technology Board (ERTB) grant to allow historic records to be digitized and indexed into a web-based search program in Clerk's Office. Continued work on indexing all recent and historic county documents into a County Search system, including Contracts, Agreements, Intergovernmental Agreements, Land Use, Commissioner Minutes, Ordinances, Resolutions and Variances.
- Implemented credit card tax payments (in person or by phone) for Treasurer's Office. Acquired software program and hardware at a very reduced rate to implement online access to constituents for tax payments and accounts.
- Conducted ribbon cutting at Peninsula Park; created Master Plan with DHM Design and community; received funding from Anschutz Family Foundation, Gates Family Foundation, El Pomar Foundation, Ben Brownlee Memorial Fund, Fishing is Fun! grant; installed signage and dog waste station; amended boat slip policy; created a boat slip lottery; operated Wupperman Campground including upgrades and maintenance of water system and additional campground signage; installed access barriers and signage at Slumgullion Creek Inlet; provided support for Slumgullion Earthflow Evaluation; conducted evaluation and repair of Lake San Cristobal dam outlet with the Upper Gunnison Water Conservation District.
- Hired vacant, full-time deputy position; hired one part-time POST certified deputy to patrol Alpine Loop; received Body Worn Camera (BWC) grant for purchase and implementation of state mandated BWC program; added one non-certified reserve deputy to volunteer roster; expanded square footage of Sheriff's Office by 120 square feet in order to provide adequate office space for all full-time employees; moved Search and Rescue (SAR) supplies and operations into Coursey Annex enabling faster response times and easier access to equipment; all certified personnel completed POST-mandated training by November; four members gained instructor certifications in three areas of POST mandated training (Firearms—pistol and rifle, Defensive Tactics/Arrest Control, Driving); currently have certified instructors in 3 of 4 mandatory training areas; entered Intergovernmental Agreement with Archuleta County for jail services, law enforcement and emergency response agreement.
- Installed east entrance sidewalk to Courthouse; installed memorial bench for Jack Nichols with regional Building Official group; installed porch on administration office.
- Attended multiple professional trainings for administration office; managed multiple grants for project revenues; implemented ability to accept credit card payments online for administrative and building department fees; implemented new county-wide voice over internet phone (VOIP) system; issued Request for Proposals for Asset Inventory & Evaluation; completed 2020 audit; created zoom-room for remote meeting capabilities; updated personnel policy and investment policy and amended grant policy.
- Amended Joint Resolution with Silver Thread Public Health District to add two commissioners per county; participating in Southwestern Colorado Opioid Regional Council.
- Amended zoning regulations to allow Communication Sites by special use permit.





- Expanded and enhanced coordination between Hinsdale County and the West and SLV All-Hazards Regions; conducted multi-agency trainings; coordinated multi-agency plan and implementation for Wine & Music Festival; expanded multi-agency coordination (MAC) group; created All-Hazards Office of Emergency Management (OEM) team for deployment; implemented Emergency Management Program Grant (EMPG); hosted IC 100 and IC 200 classes for multi-agencies; hosted debris mitigation incentive program; participating in Upper Gunnison Shared Stewardship Council.
- Added one paramedic and four EMTs to Hinsdale County Emergency Medical Services; placed new 2021 Ford Transit ambulance (Med 95) in service; created Peer Support Team; added five CPR instructors; hosted ECG certification for providers; introduced new pediatric care system.
- Responded to 28 Search and Rescue (SAR) missions; received funding from the Ben Brownlee Memorial Fund and hosted Avalanche 1 training, Swiftwater 1 training; purchased additional rescue gear for swiftwater, avalanche, high angle response rescue gear, satellite repeater, phones, NReaches, other comms support; received two state grant awards for training and equipment.
- Reclaimed County Road 30 to a crushed asphalt/gravel finish and used EarthBind for dust abatement; completed the Resource Advisory Council (RAC) project to repair culverts and overlay with gravel on USFS Road 788 (Deer Lakes); constructed a new pullout for the Hidden Treasure Dam; opened County Road 20 and County Road 30 after multiple mudslides and washouts; made substantial improvements to several County roads and FS roads, widening roads and repairing and cleaning culverts including Oleo Rd and County Road 50; added dust abatement to more county roads and subdivisions; installed road signs at four intersections in the Upper Piedra; added material to soft spots on County Road 50; provided support for installation of cell tower in Upper Piedra; provided snow plowing services and opening of Engineer and Cinnamon passes; replaced Windy Point interpretive panels.
- Approved permit for Commnet Wireless Communication Tower; approved site leases for Visionary and Simply Broadband; approved permit for Visionary for Upper Piedra tower on County land; entered contract with Digitcom to maintain radio services; working with Region 10, Town of Lake City, and Gunnison County Electric Association (GCEA) for backbone communication project.
- Supported installation of County Road 520 interpretive signs led by Sandra Wagner, resident; concessionaires hosted soft opening at historic 30-Mile Resort; attended Rio Grande dam outlet opening ceremony; planning for off-highway vehicle (OHV) education grant for Upper Rio Grande.
- Hosted Year One of the Pilot Project; increased OHV penalties; implemented Know Before You Go education campaign with partners; installed additional signage; hired additional law enforcement.
- Hosted Winter Tourism Colorado Tourism Office (CTO) workshop for grant received by Marketing Committee; supported and received national designation for America's Byways Silver Thread Scenic & Historic Byway; participating in Restart Destinations planning grant.
- Coroner duties carried out with professionalism and compassion; Coroner & Chief Deputy Coroner each attended 20 hours of American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigator approved Continuing Education; Coroner attended First Responder Resiliency training and participated in the ensuing First Responder Resiliency Program, as member of Peer Support Team; Chief Deputy Coroner will complete 40-hour, 17 section MedicoLegal Death Investigator Course, complete investigation & reports for 10 fatalities & attend 5 autopsies to attain MedicoLegal Death Investigator Certification.
- Installed new hardware for current geographic information system (GIS) software in Assessor's Office; received values range of .95-1.05 of actual comparative sales to pass assessor audit.
- Building official received certification in Onsite Water Treatment System (OWTS) inspections and implemented streamlined inspection process; installed information signage on County Road 50, Pearl Lakes, and Hermit Lakes area; overall improvement & maintenance of facilities and grounds.
- Completed visioning for workforce housing under Small Housing Innovation Projects (SHIP) with Colorado Finance & Housing Authority (CHFA), Williford Housing, and Gunnison Ranger District.
- Opened middle portion of the Ute Ulay to pedestrian traffic; installed additional sign; conducted minor trail work & other maintenance; entered contract with Ayers Associates for EPA grant.
- Partnered with Archuleta County for noxious weed treatment; implemented noxious weed grant.





- Entered agreement with Lake City Continental Divide Snowmobile Club for grooming program.
- Hosted meetings in Mineral County and Upper Piedra of Hinsdale County; testified for House Bills 21-245 and 21-249 for SAR and Keep Colorado Wild; testified in CDOT Planning Commission's Rulemaking Hearing regarding the Proposed Greenhouse Pollution Reduction Standards for Transportation Planning; participated in statewide work group for Backcountry SAR study; held four Commissioner field trip days to outlying areas of Hinsdale County. Participated in Wayfinding Plan process; participating in High Alpine Partnership for roadmap recovery grant; received motorized trails grant on behalf of the four counties; provided restricted grant-funding raised to Lake Fork Valley Conservancy for Philip H. Virden Dark Skies Observatory; received Parks & Wildlife impact grant.
- Work on proposed Sheriff's Office / administration building; negotiated agreement with Lake City Community School for sale of WeeCare building.

## Department & Commission Goals and Strategic Actions 2022

### ECONOMIC FOUNDATIONS

- Partner to create a vibrant year-round economy and business-friendly climate that enables citizens, business owners, employees, entrepreneurs and tax payers the opportunity to prosper.
- Promote economic development by supporting local organizations and events.
- Partner with tourism-based organizations on efforts to market Lake City and Hinsdale County as a tourism destination. Work to support destination management and infrastructure needs.
- Capitalize on opportunities for economic diversification.
- Develop funding and enter lease for workforce housing project with USDA Forest Service.

### HISTORIC & NATURAL RESOURCES

Promote responsible stewardship of historic and natural resources.

#### *Planning and Land-Use*

- Monitor water-related issues relevant to the County.
- Work with Planning Commission to identify opportunities and priorities to update land use regulations with a focus on housing options and nontraditional camping structures.
- Coordinate at least two joint Planning Commissioner/Board of County Commissioner meetings.
- Planning Commission to continue to streamline/update planning and zoning review procedures.
- Planning Commission to review and update Land Use and Development Regulations as needed to stay current.
- Planning Commission to review and update regulations related to avalanche building hazards and other disaster mitigations efforts related to building and land use.

#### *Local Sites and Amenities*

- Complete Asset Inventory & Assessment on all County infrastructure.
- Complete plans for Sheriff's Office/Administration building; seek funding.
- Continue work with the Ute Team to further develop the Ute Ulay into a heritage tourism destination, including penstock stabilization, drainage work, and install two interpretive signs.
- Implement National EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) Brownfields grant.
- Fund and implement infrastructure proposed for Lake San Cristobal peninsula and boat launch facilities; address safety concerns on bridge and install new toilet.
- Plan, find funding for and install new water delivery system for Wupperman Campground; update Red Mountain Day Use Area.
- Review assessment work on Slumgullion Earthflow with Lake Fork Valley Conservancy.
- Continue minor restoration work at Debs Schoolhouse to include plaster work, paint, window repair, exterior board replacement, and interpretive signs.
- Support Lake Fork Valley Conservancy's project of Philip H. Virden Dark Skies Observatory on Slumgullion Pass with Gunnison Ranger District.
- Partner with Main Street, Town, Scenic Byways, and Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) for wayfinding project; implement if funds are secured. Review options for local vendors to be included.
- Evaluate county-owned property for potential sale and highest/best use.



### *Noxious Weed Control*

- Continue partnering with Archuleta and Gunnison counties for weed control.
- Continue to review County Weed program for efficiency and effectiveness.
- Provide information and education to landowners concerning noxious weeds and control.

### **PUBLIC SAFETY**

Provide a safe and secure community that protects life and property.

Develop an all-agency volunteer roster with qualifications and associated training schedule.

Identify all-agency short-term and long-term emergency communication needs.



### *Sheriff's Office (SO)*

- Ensure a safe and secure environment for all persons by providing professional law enforcement through responsive, caring, and dedicated service.
- Provide timely and professional response and stewardship of public funds.
- Continue improving SAR & Wildland Fire capabilities by recruiting more, capable volunteers.
- Provide appropriate training opportunities to certified personnel for the continued advancement of their skills and careers.
- Complete an SO legacy plan for implementing crucial programs, and equipment needs as well as a solid succession plan for maintaining a fully staffed and capable office for years to come.
- Collaborate with all of our partners (USFS, BLM, Town of Lake City, Lake City Community School, etc.) in order to find ways to strengthen our relationship and provide constantly improving services to all.
- Implement Search and Rescue (SAR) funded trainings, equipment purchases, shed, and new drone program.



### *Emergency Management (EM)*

- Continue to support an EM Program that includes preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation through implementation of updated plans and exercises.
- Support existing efforts for Multi-Agency Coordination (MAC), training and exercises.
- Foster and build partnerships with San Luis Valley and West Region partners.
- Complete 2022 EMPG work plan and enhance the Hinsdale Office of EM program.
- Continue program to incentivize debris management for wildfire risk mitigation.
- Build an All-Hazards Response Program that will enhance the training, response capability of the OEM, Hinsdale County Emergency Response Agencies and our SLV and WR OEM partners.
- Continue to work towards updated county-wide Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP).

### *Emergency Medical Services (EMS)*

- Enhance education program by implementing quarterly Education and Quality Improvement conferences with EMS team.
- Continue to work on Community Outreach Program with addition of community CPR training.
- Begin work on Public Access Defibrillator program.
- Support successful Advanced EMT training for volunteer providers.
- Continue the important work of the Peer Support Team.
- Provide specialized adult and pediatric training for providers.
- Continue to provide quality emergency medical care in the shadows of the San Juans.



### **COUNTY SERVICES**

Provide resources to Elected Officials and Departments for efficient, high-quality services.

### *Administration Office*

- Continue to review and streamline processes for greater efficiency and consistency.
- Support positive and professional culture and work environment.
- Continue positive working relationships with department heads and other partners.
- Increase availability of online customer services.
- Continue to provide increased access to meetings through virtual platforms.
- Continue to provide access to information on county website.
- Continue to review budget and expenditures regularly for fiscal responsibility together with the Treasurer's Office.







- Quarterly review of Grants Path to supplement County budgets.
- Implement ongoing policy review process.
- Continue to provide current public information through website and social media.
- Provide access and services to community and visitors according to ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) regulations.
- Continuing to participate in position appropriate training and professional conferences.
- Participate in ongoing county project planning.

#### *Assessor's Office*

- Finalize geographic information systems (GIS) parcel overlay.
- Implement public computer terminal for GIS map use and parcel record search.
- Verify first responder information, new zoning maps, digitization of flood zone mapping.
- Work with Tyler Technologies to find an affordable and practical method to put computer aided mass appraisal (CAMA) system online for public use.

#### *Building Official and Enforcement*

- Provide high quality building safety and code enforcement services for property owners, builders and contractors.
- Focus on community public health and safety while working to maintain the quality and economic viability of construction.
- Provide education to homeowners and potential builders on the importance of adopted building codes and the building process, including permits and other requirements.
- Continue to monitor FEMA's development of new digital floodplain maps.
- Work with partners and public on construction within potential natural disaster areas to help prevent loss of life and property.
- Provide required onsite water treatment system (OWTS) inspections for Silver Thread Public Health while providing OWTS education to homeowners.
- Provide education and assistance to property owners in relation to radon exposure.
- Increase online access of building documents and applications.
- Continue professional training and education in order to obtain appropriate certifications.

#### *Clerk's Office*

- All County Offices are committed to being good public servants and team players by respecting the public and providing quality services with integrity and excellence. We work to be courteous and treat all equally with professionalism and efficiency.
- To be provided with the resources needed for efficient, high-quality services.
- Increase storage for historic records.
- Continue to input current and historic records into the county search system.

#### *Treasurer's Office*

- Use and maintain a comprehensive accounting system within the Treasurer's office. This has been accomplished by the implementation of the Eagle Treasurer system and a more in-depth use of Incode, an evolving process in which the Treasurer's Office and the Finance Director will continue to work together.
- Implement online access of tax accounts for constituents.
- Implement online tax payment abilities for constituents.
- Implement credit card payments for traffic tickets.
- Attend continuing education courses to maintain certification for County Treasurer/Public Trustee through the Extended Studies Program at Colorado Mesa University.

#### *Veterans' Services Office*

- Continue to utilize social media & Silver World for veteran's outreach.
- Work with real estate companies to identify veterans as they move into the area.
- Host quarterly meetings with veterans and spouses to maintain contact.
- Attend training programs with CO Dpt of Military & Veterans Affairs Western Region.
- Attend Colorado County Veteran Service Officer annual training conference.
- Work on renovation of Hinsdale County Veteran's Memorial Park—upgrade flags to include Space Force, USS Hinsdale information sign, new benches, etc.



### Coroner's Office

- Carry out the duties of the Coroner's Office with professionalism and compassion.
- Coroner and Chief Deputy Coroner will each attend 20 hours of American Board of MedicoLegal Death Investigator approved Continuing Education through the Colorado Coroner's Association.
- Coroner will remain active as a member the Hinsdale County Peer Support Team.
- Chief Deputy Coroner will complete the 40-hour, 17 section MedicoLegal Death Investigator Course, complete investigation and reports for 10 fatalities and attend 5 autopsies to attain MedicoLegal Death Investigator Certification.
- Coroner will assist in the search for a replacement.

### HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (HHS)

- Promote prosperous, collaborative and healthy communities.
- Deliver high quality services throughout the valley.
- Ensure sound infrastructure.
- Continue prevention services for all.
- Embrace health equity within our community.
- Participate in Southwest Colorado Opioid Regional Council.
- Establish MOU between Hinsdale County and Prowers County for hotline calls for child and adult protection.
- Continue to measure and meet goals related to the Colorado Department of Human Services.



### TRANSPORTATION

#### Road and Bridge Department (R&B)

- Continue partnership grooming trails with Continental Divide Snowmobile Club.
- Upgrade and or rebuild equipment in the shop as time and budget permits.
- Assist Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in the high country with campsite designation and trash removal.
- Remove decommissioned toilets at Slumgullion Pass, Spring Creek, and Red Mountain Gulch.
- Continue to work on all Forest Service (USFS) Schedule A roads, culverts and drainages.
- Removal of excess over burden in Slumgullion Creek from the lake up in to the canyon.
- Continue to stockpile and screen gravel from multiple places around the county.
- Continue our progress on regaveling CR 20 from the Ute to Capital City and beyond.
- Work on the high country sections of both CR 20 and 30 to repair landslide areas that damaged those roads last summer.
- Remove decommissioned toilet at the boat ramp on Lake San Cristobal.
- Implement drainage project at Ute Ulay.
- Continue to improve and implement a safety program/culture for R&B employees.
- Keep the Transfer station running as efficiently as possible and make improvements as able.
- Add two newer pieces of equipment to the fleet: 2019 CAT Roller and a 2010 CAT 140M motorgrader.



### COMMUNICATIONS

- Update Communication Plan for Hill 71 with technical assistance.
- Repurpose solar panels through partnership, if possible.
- Review opportunities to connect communications to the south with San Luis Valley REA.
- Complete cell tower construction in the Upper Piedra area.
- Continue conversations with public land management agencies about the possibility of small repeaters in outlying areas for safety communication.
- Secure grant funding for Lake City / Hinsdale County Broadband Project.
- Create a Carrier Neutral Location (CNL) in Lake City to serve as a hub for Broadband.
- Begin Phase One of fiber connection to Lake City.



PO Box 277

Lake City, CO 81235

970-944-2225

[www.hinsdalecounty.colorado.gov](http://www.hinsdalecounty.colorado.gov)

**ONE TEAM**

Commissioner Robert Hurd, Commissioner Kristie Borchers, Commissioner Greg Levine  
Treasurer Lori Lawrence, Clerk Joan Roberts, Assessor Luke de la Parra, Coroner Jerry Gray  
Sheriff Chris Kambish, Administrator Sandy Hines, Finance Director Lynn McNitt  
Building Official Gabe McNeese, EMS Director Buffy Witt, Emergency Manager Phil Graham  
Road & Bridge Supervisor Don Menzies, Gunnison/Hinsdale HHS Director Joni Reynolds  
Veterans' Services Officer Erin Cavitt