



State of the County

February 10, 2025

Happy 151st birthday, Hinsdale County! Here is our 6th annual State of the County snapshot.

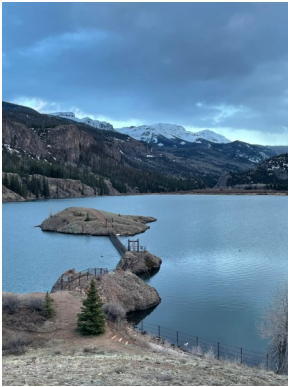
Respectfully, Commissioner Greg Levine, Commissioner Robert Hurd, Commissioner Kristie Borchers

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.

2024 Accomplishments

- Completed 4 miles of chip & seal on County Road 30; adding bike lanes (Multi-Modal Opportunity Fund grant for \$900,000).
- Celebrated 150th anniversary with community celebration; 8-page history timeline in Visitor's Guide; displays at Museum, Post Office, County, and Visitor's Center.
- Thanked Sheriff Chris Kambish for six years of service as Sheriff; appointed Sheriff Ron Bruce for six months; welcomed Sheriff Denim Starnes; welcomed Undersheriff Jim Hunsicker.
- Presented Lifetime Achievement award to Bobby McDonald for 40 years of service.
- Presented 8 Lifesaver awards to Hinsdale County Sheriff's Office & Hinsdale County EMS.
- Thanked Erin Cavit for 9 years of service as Veteran's Services Officer (VSO) and welcomed Mike Harrington; hosted Memorial Day and Veteran's Day ceremonies; provided support for veterans.
- Received delivery of Hinsdale County Sheriff's Office truck and 2 Ford Expeditions; approved Law Enforcement agreements with public land partners; responded to more than 1,000 calls.
- Received Backcountry Search and Rescue (SAR) grants (\$7,513 and \$23,212); received Ben Brownlee Memorial Fund grant (\$1,345) for specialized clothing; purchased snowmobile trailer; hosted Swiftwater training; purchased 10 communication helmets for helicopter travel; responded to 10 SAR calls.
- Legislatively changed County categories from V-B to V-A.
- Approved 70 County building permits; restored floors in courthouse; managed facilities.
- Adopted new Rules and Regulations for Hinsdale County Recreation Facilities.
- Supported Aquatic Nuisance Species inspections to protect watershed; approved 3rd addendum to Lake San Cristobal Conservation Covenant adding peninsula park; fire mitigation and trail work completed at Red Mountain Gulch; installed Respect signs along Alpine Loop; prepared site for ADA fishing pier at Peninsula Park; approved Right-of-Way with GCEA to bury lines at Red Mountain Gulch; completed design for Lookout plan; welcomed new Campground host.
- Installed fence around winchhouse at the Ute Ulay; trail restation completed by Los Valles Conservation Corps.
- Planning Commission reviewed Land Use Codes with RPI Consulting under IHOP (Innovative Housing Opportunities Program) grant; appointed Nathan Wuest and re-appointed Camille Richard to Planning Commission.
- Appointed Teresa Wagner to Lodging Tax board; updated Lodging Tax bylaws.
- Raised funds for Toys for Tots; participated in Trunk-or-Treat.
- Completed three elections; implemented Electronic Recording Technology Board (ERTB) grant (\$21,192.28).
- Opted out of Senate Bill 24-131, thereby allowing firearms in certain government buildings.
- Amended the Floodplain Damage Prevention Ordinance; shared information about Highway 50 Bridge Closure project.





- Executed grant contracts with FEMA, DOLA, and the Colorado Energy Office totaling \$3,256,500 for the County Operations Building; dismantled old County shop; removed concrete floor to prepare site; hired Construction Manager/General Contractor for project.
- Made progress on comprehensive policy review including updated Conflict of Interest policy, Filing policy, Personnel policy, Disaster-Finance Policy, Secure Transportation Services policy, Investment policy, Contract Administration and Legal Services policy, Information, Technology and Related Services policy, Electronic Mail policy, Amended Special Event Permit policy, and Purchasing and Procurement policies.
- Received waiver from FCC related to wide-banding. Approved 9 special events permits.
- Hosted Mineral/Hinsdale and Archuleta/Hinsdale meetings; attended 2 joint Town/County meetings.
- Finalized Asset Inventory.
- Provided comments on Rio Grande National Forest’s over the snow management plan.
- Responded to 155 EMS calls; welcomed new EMS director; hired Chief Paramedic; hired 2 AEMT Team Captains and Emergency Vehicle Technician; engaged with Gunnison Crisis Mobile to begin the creation of a volunteer crisis unit; began ‘Protocol Club’; hosted bi-monthly trainings; hosted a Responder Resiliency training; provided on-site EMS Services to 8 events; installed 3 FirstNet phones on the ambulances and deployed apps for enhanced communication with Gunnison and Montrose Eds; transitioned to new online ordering system for controlled substances; deep-cleaned, organized, and inventoried station facilities and equipment including installation of team lockers and safety rail; moved from local licensing to state requirements.
- Awarded and closed out \$27,500 from EMTS Funding Program for State Consultative Visit; \$16,898.95 from EMTS Provider Grant for a light package and lift kit for Med 93, and a new cardiac monitor; \$15,174.56 from WRETAC for computerized equipment; \$13,601.45 from CREATE for EMSAC Conference; \$6,412.01 from LCAMC Endowment Fund for updated CPR materials, a Humeral Head IO Trainer, 3 stretcher batteries, an AED battery, and tuition for a Critical Care Paramedic course; \$3,270 from Lake Fork Community Foundation for Responder Wellness Fund.
- EMS received the following major donations: \$17,000 from San Juan Solstice 50 Race for Stipend Program; \$15,000 from the Town of Lake City; \$12,800 from Friends of Lake City EMTs for team support; \$6,569.20 from Lake Fork Community Foundation in private donations; \$2,310 from individuals to support Responder Wellness Fund; \$12,050.56 from individual donors/fundraising efforts.
- Certified 44 people in CPR and First Aid from EMS, Admin, Road and Bridge, LCCS, HCSO, LCAMC, HCSAR, LCAFPD, and the Coroner’s Office; 5 EMTs to perform IV therapy; 4 new EMTs; 3 new drivers; 1 new CPR Instructor; 1 new EMS Instructor.
- Updated several emergency plans to include the Emergency Operations, Alert and Warning, and Continuity of Operations plans; started the Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) and Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) updates; All Hazards Team set a new record for deployments.
- Hinsdale County Marketing Committee published Visitor’s Guide; received Colorado Tourism Office management grant; received Destination Development Mentor Program grant; hosted alpineloop.info website; Do Lake City Right campaign prepared for roll-out.
- Contracted with Reynolds Ash & Associates to complete clearances for 11 toilets and one observatory under Federal Highways Scenic Byways grant.
- Installed new attendant station and new hopper at Transfer Station; received cardboard recycling rebate grant; updated Transfer Station rates.
- Partnered with Region 10, Visionary Broadband, Gunnison County Electric Association, and Town of Lake City to complete middle mile fiber project.
- Road maintenance on 247 total miles of County roads, including snowplowing on 110 of those miles; leased to purchase 150 all wheel drive Road Grader; updated IGA with Town of Lake City for snowplowing services; Returned to historic speed limits on County Road 30; applied mag chloride on County Road 520, Piedra Road, and other county roads; purchase F150 pickup for Road & Bridge; updated Work for Others equipment rates.



- Received 2024-2025 OHV Highway program permit.
- Provided additional First Net phones to key personnel.
- Proclaimed May as Mental Health month and September as Suicide Prevention Month; approved 1 opioid settlement agreement; participated on the Southwest Colorado Opioid Regional Council.



- Received Colorado Parks & Wildlife Impact Assistance grant (\$6,524.68).
- Updated website to comply with ADA requirements. Completed 2023 audit; amended 2024 budget; approved 2025 budget; attended Colorado Counties Inc. conference.
- Completed Phase 2 evaluation for Town-owned lots through Brownfields grant; supported Local Planning Capacity grant with Town of Lake City for housing plan; completed Housing Rental Needs Assessment with Town.



- Installed vault toilet at Piedra River Trailhead through Resource Advisory Council (RAC) grant (\$66,188); approved sub-lease for Commnet to locate on Visionary tower at Southend Shop; installed bench at Debs Schoolhouse.
- Became Cooperating Agency for BLM / Lake San Cristobal Fuels Reduction Project; executed IGAs for Conservation of Native Fish Populations (6 counties) and Undesirable Plant Management (Gunnison / Saguache); partnered with Archuleta County to treat noxious weeds; site visit to Deer Lakes dams and updated campground; participated in Risk MAP floodplain project; completed Rural Technical Assistance Program (RTAP) with Colorado University and Extension Service



- Acquired refrigeration unit; established office space accessible to the public; developed IGA with Archuleta County Coroner's office; acquired used Stryker gurney for the coroner's truck; hosted/coordinated regional training opportunity with attendees from California and greater Colorado; conducted monthly team meetings and trainings.
- Continue to ensure accuracy of property records, with prompt sale confirmations, site reviews, and accurate data entry; continue to implement Department of Property Taxation's rules and regulations; continue to be apprised of and implement state legislative changes to property tax law. This includes the impact of such legislation on both the taxpayer and the taxing entities. Continue to ensure fair and accurate property valuations throughout the 2025 reappraisal process; provide property owners with assurance of values during the 2025 reappraisal, consider all concerns and physically view properties if warranted; Assessor and Deputy Assessor continuing education, including maintenance of Ad Valorem Appraisal License; continue to keep online GIS system up to date (complete GIS Webmap publishing to the county website and maintenance of GIS system); to work with all county departments as needed to establish good working relationships and provide necessary assessor resources in line with the assessor function, as needed; establish primary needs of the Assessor's office and develop a plan for hiring and training Assessor Office personnel to ensure a smooth transition for 2026 election.

- Received DOLA grant (\$106,275) to repurpose Hill 71 solar array with High Mountain Solutions.

Department & Commission Goals & Strategic Actions 2025

ECONOMIC FOUNDATIONS

- Partner to create a vibrant, business-friendly climate that enables citizens, entrepreneurs, taxpayers, and businesses opportunities 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 and work to support destination management, responsible stewardship, and infrastructure needs.
- Seek ballot initiative for 1% sales tax increase for public safety (law enforcement/EMS). Monitor bill seeking to raise Lodging Tax to 6% with additional uses.





- Participate in alpineloop.info website with High Alpine counties.
- Support OHV education project in Upper Rio Grande.
- Partner with Rio Grande National Forest/San Juan County to increase safety at Pole Creek.
- Capitalize on opportunities for economic diversification.
- Continue to research opportunities for affordable housing with public lands partners.
- Complete Housing Plan with Town of Lake City.
- Seek funding for updating the Comprehensive Plan / Community Plan and input process.

HISTORIC & NATURAL RESOURCES

Promote responsible stewardship of historic and natural resources.



Planning and Land Use

- Complete Land use Code updates with RPI Consulting as part of DOLA's Innovative Affordable Housing Strategies program.
- Continue to streamline/update planning and zoning review procedures.
- Review new Template for Land Development Code from Department of Local Affairs.
- Update Land Use Fees.
- Update regulations related to avalanche building hazards and other disaster mitigation efforts related to building and land use.



Local Sites and Amenities

- Begin construction on County Operations Building.
- Continue work with the Ute Team to further develop into a heritage tourism destination, including penstock stabilization evaluation or bring down; install two interpretive signs, complete survey and permanent road easement; replace kiosk map; rehabilitate upper trail; install gate.
- Complete EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) Brownfields grant.
- Fund and implement infrastructure proposed for Lake San Cristobal peninsula and boat launch facilities to install ADA fishing pier; create sign plan; improve human-powered boat launch area; develop concepts for man-gate access to peninsula; open Boat Shed to public; IGA with Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS); install ANS inspection gate at boat launch; complete Lookout and Trail; install Lifejacket Loaner station and sunscreen station; inspect pedestrian bridge; install Tiny Library on Boat Shed deck.
- Evaluate Hinsdale County Trails Commission structure and best agency to oversee.
- Seek funding for new water delivery system at Wupperman Campground; replace signage as needed; conduct general campground clean-up.
- Review assessment work on Slumgullion Earthflow with Lake Fork Valley Conservancy.
- Repair window sills and install bench at Debs Schoolhouse.
- Implement wayfinding sign plan if funding secured (with Main Street, Town, Scenic Byways, and Colorado Department of Transportation).
- Consider agreement for long-term stewardship of Deer Lakes dam.
- Complete design aspect of Federal Highways Scenic Byways grant for 11 toilets/ observatory.
- Install toilets; prepare bid documents; purchase/install.
- Evaluate Southend Shop site for construction.
- Participate in the Lake San Cristobal Fuels Project Planning with BLM.



Noxious Weed Control

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

PUBLIC SAFETY

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

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





Sheriff's Office

- Provide professional law enforcement services through responsive, caring, and dedicated service.
- Continue to provide appropriate training opportunities that will enhance the capabilities of all office personnel and allow us to better serve our community.
- Provide more effective and efficient communication with the public.
- Continue to collaborate with and improve relationships with our state and federal law enforcement agencies (USFS, BLM, CPW, CSP) to provide more comprehensive and capable law enforcement services to the county.

Emergency Management (EM)

- Continue to support an EM Program that includes preparedness, prevention, mitigation, response and recovery.
- Refine, update, and develop plans and exercises to enhance the resiliency of Hinsdale County.
- Support existing efforts for Multi-Agency Coordination (MAC), training and exercises.
- Foster and build partnerships with San Luis Valley and West Region partners.
- Complete 2025 EMPG work plan and enhance the Hinsdale Office of EM program.
- Continue to develop the All-Hazards Team.
- Complete the update of the Hinsdale County/Lake City Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP).
- Complete the update of the Hinsdale County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) as part of the HMP.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

- Continue practicing quality prehospital medicine.
- Continue to provide CPR, AED, Stop the Bleed, and First Aid certification courses for Hinsdale County.
- Review and refine team membership standards.
- Send team members to quality educational programs and conferences.
- Offer 3 quality in-house training sessions per month.
- Actively search for grant funding opportunities.
- Prepare for an EMT/AEMT course starting Dec 2025.
- Add 4-5 new drivers to the team.
- Certify and clear 1 new EMT through Gunnison Paramedic's EMT program.
- Certify Chief Paramedic as a Critical Care Paramedic.
- Complete clearing process for our 4 newest EMTs.
- Complete clearing process for our 5 EMTs cleared to perform IV therapy.
- Assist LCAMC where possible to bring Community Paramedic Services to Hinsdale County.
- Review options presented in state consultative visit report and work with county on implementing select options going forward
- Finish agency Policies and Procedures manual.
- Create Medical Branch IC Kits.
- Update our QA/QI program.
- Investigate new billing services and review what services are billed.
- Secure funding to purchase DTRS radios/pagers for the full team, and base radio for the station.

COUNTY SERVICES

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

Administration Office

- Provide professional and helpful assistance to residents and visitors.
- Continue to review and streamline processes for greater efficiency and consistency.
- Continue to provide positive and professional office culture.
- Assist as needed with Construction Management and General Contractor on new County Operations Building.
- Increase availability of online customer services, including web payments.
- Continue to review budget and expenditures regularly for fiscal responsibility.
- Continue to administer county grants.
- Review and obtain grant opportunities when applicable to supplement County budgets.
- Continue ongoing policy review process.
- Provide public information through website, email and social media.



- Increase information available on county website.
- Increase access to services in accordance with Americans with Disabilities act, including website and online documents.
- Continuing to participate in position appropriate training and professional conferences.
- Participate in ongoing county project planning.
- Increase focus on information security and cybersecurity.
- Collect data on long and short-term rentals.



County Facilities Department

- Continue landscape maintenance.
- Continue winter maintenance at Coursey Annex and Courthouse.
- Continue upgrades and re-organization of county storage facilities in preparation of new County Operations Building.
- Work with design and construction team on new County Operations Building.
- Conduct Courthouse exterior and interior maintenance.

Building Official and Enforcement Department

- Provide high quality enforcement of adopted building codes and 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.
- Increase education on the importance of building codes and the county building process.
- Continue to work with Colorado Water Conservation Board and FEMA on update of county's flood risk mapping project.
- Work with partners and public on construction within potential natural disaster areas to help prevent loss of life and property.
- Begin process to adopt updated building codes.
- Establish IGA with Fire District for enforcement of fire codes.
- Continue to provide required onsite water treatment system (OWTS) inspections per state guidelines.
- Continue to provide education and assistance to property owners in relation to radon exposure
- Continue professional training and education.
- Obtain certification in Colorado Small Water Systems.
- Continue to work with regional partners on a variety of project.
- Update schedule for building fees.



Assessor's Office

- Continue to ensure accuracy of property records, with prompt sale confirmations, site reviews, and accurate data entry.
- Continue to implement Department of Property Taxation's rules and regulations.
- Continue to be apprised of and implement state legislative changes to property tax law. This includes the impact of such legislation on both the taxpayer and the taxing entities.
- Continue to ensure fair, accurate property valuations throughout the 2025 reappraisal process.
- Provide property owners with assurance of values during the 2025 reappraisal, consider all concerns and physically view properties if warranted.
- Assessor and Deputy Assessor continuing education, including maintenance of Ad Valorem Appraisal License.
- Continuing to keep online GIS system up to date (Complete GIS Webmap publishing to the county website and maintenance of GIS system).
- To work with all county departments as needed to establish good working relationships and provide necessary assessor resources in line with the assessor function, as needed.
- Establish primary needs of the Assessor's office and develop a plan for hiring and training Assessor Office personnel to ensure a smooth transition for the 2026 election cycle.



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.



- Since 2018 the Clerk's Office has received eight Electronic Recording Technology Board (ERTB) grants to allow our historic records to be digitized and indexed into a web-based search program. We will continue to pursue grant funds from ERTB for Recording System upgrades/maintenance.
- The Clerk's office will continue to index all recent and historic county documents into a County Search system. These county documents include: Contracts, Agreements, Intergovernmental Agreements, Land Use, Commissioner Minutes, Ordinances, Resolutions and Variances.
- Continue to be provided with the resources needed for efficient, high-quality services
- Increased storage for historic records.

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.
- Attend continuing education courses to maintain certification for County Treasurer/Public Trustee through the Extended Studies Program at Colorado Mesa University.
- Training Deputy Treasurer while working through the office procedures and processes manual.
- Remain active with state and regional treasurer's groups.

Veteran's Office

- Continue weekly veterans meet and greets at Hinsdale County Museum.
- Continue to utilize social media & Silver World for veteran's outreach.
- Permanently relocate County Veterans Day Observance to Lake City Armory.
- Complete process to access national veterans archives and records in order to be able to process all veterans needs.
- Work with real estate companies to identify veterans as they move into the area.
- Host semi-annual dinner meetings with veterans and spouses to maintain contact.
- Attend monthly training programs with CO Dept of Military & Veterans Affairs.
- Attend Colorado County Veteran Service Officer semi-annual training conferences, either virtually or in person.
- Continue work on renovation of Hinsdale County Veterans Memorial Park to include a historic sign on the USS Hinsdale.
- Work with the Cemetery District Board to include the graves in the Hinsdale County Cemeteries in the Wreaths Across America program.

Coroner's Office

- Carry out the duties of the Coroner's Office with professionalism and compassion.
- Coroner and Deputies will attend 20 hours of American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigator approved Continuing Education through the Colorado Coroner's Association to maintain certification.
- Continue to develop written policies and procedures for the office.
- Maintain relationships with coroners in surrounding counties and statewide.
- Find office space for coroner that is not a shared space with the Treasurer's office.
- Maintain a team of deputies for the office.
- Conduct monthly team meetings and quarterly trainings.
- Two Deputy Coroner's complete certification through Colorado Coroner's Association as certified death investigators.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

- Promote prosperous, collaborative, and healthy communities. Support families, children, seniors, and all community members so they can prosper and thrive.
- Deliver high-quality services throughout Hinsdale County.
- Ensure sound infrastructure.
- Continue prevention services for all.
- Embrace health equity within our community and support health care access and resources for community members.
- Participate in the Southwest Colorado Opioid Regional Council.
- Update MOU with Prowers County for hotline calls coverage after business hours for child and adult protection. Continue staffing a 24/7 on-call position to assure access to Child and Adult protective services.



- Continue to measure and meet goals related to the Colorado Department of Human Services C-STAT goals from CDHS are key goals to ensure the community is receiving timely and quality services.
- Monitor public assistance programs, (Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), Medicaid, Food Assistance/SNAP), and adjust to changes within these programs (C-STAT measures are used to monitor the programs and adjust to changes).
- Continue to lead the local work for the universal Pre-K program as appropriate for our region. The Early Childhood Council for Hinsdale and Gunnison Counties supported a successful implementation in the 2023-24 school year and will work on the opportunities to improve the enrollment process (online) for families for the 2025-26 school year.

TRANSPORTATION

Road and Bridge Department (R&B)

- Continue to maintain and repair all county roads, culverts and bridges.
- Finish the final inspection and hopeful release on CR 30 Chipseal project.
- Upgrade and or rebuild equipment in the shop as time and budget permits.
- Remove decommissioned toilets at Slumgullion and Spring Creek Pass, as well as Burrow’s Park.
- Continue to work on all USFS Schedule A roads, culverts and drainages.
- Continue to stockpile and screen gravel from multiple places around the county.
- Continue our progress on regravelling 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 in past years.
- Continue to improve and implement a safety program/culture for R&B employees.
- Keep the Transfer station running as efficiently and improve as possible.
- Oversee Debris Mitigation Hazard program seek funding to offset costs.
- Add one new piece of equipment to the fleet. (2025 CAT 150 M3 Motorgrader)
- Help with the mitigation and civil work on the new County Operations Building.
- Rebuild the mag chloride program to include all county roads.
- Work on rebuilding the roads up Nellie Creek and Wager Gulch with Forest Service support.
- Work on finding a gravel source within the county for county roads.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Update the Communications Plan for Hill 71 with technical assistance.
- Complete solar array restoration at Hill 71.
- Review opportunities to connect communications to the south with San Luis Valley REA.
- Continue conversations with public land management agencies about the possibility of small repeaters in outlying areas for safety communication.
- Seek funding to create a Countywide broadband plan.
- Provide support (if needed) for Commnet for wireless/cellular service in Upper Piedra installed on Visionary tower located on Hinsdale County land.
- Continue effective partnerships with Region10, DOLA and Colorado Broadband Office.
- Continue to work with Gunnison County on extending cell coverage north on Hwy 149 to Gunnison, specifically constructing a cell tower on Rose Ridge.



Hinsdale County
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Commissioner Robert Hurd, Commissioner Greg Levine, Commissioner Kristie Borchers, Treasurer/Coroner Lori Lawrence, Clerk Joan Roberts, Assessor Sherri Boyce, Sheriff Chris Kambish, Sheriff Ron Bruce, Sheriff Denim Starnes, Administrator Sandy Hines, Finance Director Lynn McNitt, Building Official Gabe McNeese, EMS Director Katherine Heidt, Emergency Manager Phil Graham, Road & Bridge Supervisor Don Menzies, Gunnison/Hinsdale Health & Human Services Director Joni Reynolds, Veteran’s Services Officer Mike Harrington