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RIO BLANCO COUNTY TEMPORARILY SUSPENDS IMPACT FEES

Meeker, CO, May 11, 2015 – Rio Blanco County Commissioners unanimously passed a resolution temporarily suspending impact fees for all development permits issued from May 11, 2015 through February 8, 2016. This action is the latest in the Commissioner’s pursuit to improve Rio Blanco County’s economic situation and encourage development and business expansion. According to Commission Chairman Jeff Eskelson, “Businesses, especially those associated with extraction of natural resources, are struggling and facing ever increasing federal regulations. While the federal government is making business more challenging, Rio Blanco County is working hard to bring more business into Northwestern Colorado.”

“The economics of developing energy in today’s commodity price environment remains very challenging, but Rio Blanco County’s forward thinking demonstrates strong leadership and consideration for the positive impact our industry has on the region,” said Tyler Bittner, WPX Energy district manager.

In the past, Rio Blanco County was faced with a tremendous increase in growth and there was an urgent need to address the financial impacts experienced by Rio Blanco County. Impact fees have been collected by Rio Blanco County since 2008, with the philosophy that new growth and development in the County places an increased demand upon the County’s Administrative, Law Enforcement, and Transportation departments for protection of the health, safety, and general welfare of Rio Blanco County citizens. The original resolution indicated that taxes and other revenues generated from new development does not generate sufficient funds to offset the expenses, and if new development is not charged, taxpayers will bear the financial burden.

Due to decreased economic activity in Rio Blanco County, a drastic reduction in development yielding lower associated costs for the County, and the negative financial hardship impact fees may cause businesses, the Commissioners are willing to temporarily suspend collection of these fees and reassess the impact fee schedule. Commissioner Shawn Bolton states “as Commissioners, we are trying to help the local and regional economy, and in order to encourage responsible business growth and development, now is a perfect time to temporarily do away with impact fees and hopefully spark some business interest.”

“Building a business friendly environment is a primary goal for Rio Blanco County,” Commissioner Jon Hill elaborates, “We have a responsibility to the citizens of Rio Blanco County, and when the economic situation is down, we need to assist however we can. A temporary suspension of these fees is a simple solution to try.”

Rio Blanco County will be reviewing the existing impact fee schedule in the coming months and determining the appropriate action moving forward.

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For more information about this topic, please contact Katelin Cook at (970) 878-9474 or email at katelin@rbc.us.