



RIO BLANCO COUNTY

*Economic Development*

## 2020 TOP GOALS

1

Grow from Within

2

Tell Our Story

3

Build Relationships

4

Advocate

5

Research and Report



The mission of the Rio Blanco County Economic Development Department is to diversify and sustain our economy by participating with and supporting public and private entities. This will be accomplished by building a business friendly environment, elevating the quality of life, leveraging competitive advantages to retain, grow and recruit businesses while cultivating and enhancing business opportunities throughout Rio Blanco County.

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The following list is a summary, a working document and subject to change. This is a general overview of our current projects only. If you have any questions about anything listed here or anything that may have been left out, please contact us! 970-878-9582 or [eco@rbc.us](mailto:eco@rbc.us), or [makala.barton@rbc.us](mailto:makala.barton@rbc.us)

## 2020 Economic Development Projects

Last Updated January 2020

**Overall Goal: Do our part to ensure a favorable business climate in Rio Blanco County.**

### 1. Grow From Within

- Renew/Introduce Business Retention and Expansion Program
- Appreciation and Outreach: We realize that statistics say that most of our economic growth is likely to come from businesses that are already here. One new job created by a handful of local employers within the county is equal to many in urban areas. This approach will lead to greater economic diversity and sustainability. This can't be overlooked. We plan to visit two-three businesses per month, have conversations about challenges and successes and develop partnerships and learn more about how the county can be a better partner. We hope to position ourselves as a trusted resource at the county level for our local businesses, often being their first point of contact. We plan to share these visits with the public on social media and through other communication channels as much as possible.
- Build awareness of and participation in our business support offerings, development of and holding of public workshops and educational programming. Continue to offer consulting services to new and existing small businesses. This includes the continued development of SBDC services, The Headwaters Project which is an RBC ED initiative.
- Natural Resources Inventory development. This is part of the 'grow from within' strategy and being aware of what our key industries and natural resources are will help us to continue to use our area's strengths as a focus on natural growth (what is natural to our area?) rather than top-down/outside solutions. This project will be completed in-house in 2020. It's important to have this inventory in order to share with investors and will eventually save our department time when these questions are asked of us. This project will require efforts from many county departments as well as state and federal partners.
- Creation of job connection group connecting job seekers and employers. This was a service requested by several employers, mainly to connect trailing spouses. This is a trial process with the group but so far have had positive feedback. Adjustments on format/platform will be made as needed.

## 2. Marketing: Tell Our Story

- Responsible for promotion to potential residents and businesses. Our unique history and culture as well as our way of life is attractive to many people. We can't be everything to everyone, but there are many people who are seeking somewhere exactly like RBC.
- Be authentic to our history/culture and our strengths and weaknesses. Take a strengths-based approach to Economic Development.
- Through our marketing efforts, attract potential residents and businesses that will appreciate our places and lifestyle.
- Promotion and maintenance of Economic Development Website. This is an ongoing, weekly process.
- Promotion and maintenance of Rio Blanco County Government website ([www.rbc.us](http://www.rbc.us))
- Our initial target audiences for marketing are young families, remote workers and those who will benefit from our broadband speeds and price, as well as our outdoor recreation as an attractive lifestyle benefit.
- ED/Lifestyle Magazine publication. The first edition was recently completed and we're planning on a yearly publication. This will be distributed to employers throughout the county as well as regionally placed as determined. Will also be available digitally by the end of January 2020
- Create and manage digital advertising campaigns throughout 2020. This includes collecting professional photography for our ads as well as new promo videos in the spring. This will cover both sides of the county. Storyboards are still in the works. This is an intense project and takes approximately 20% of our time at this point. We are hoping that once we get rolling and results start coming in, it will be a more streamlined process.

## 3. Build Relationships

- Research and continued awareness of potential opportunities. These come up weekly. We will help individuals/organizations in market research to determine if opportunities are viable.
- Continue to build and maintain regional relationships and identify when new partnerships make sense.
- Although not everything moves quickly in Economic Development, relationship building is so important in continuing to advocate and make sure our voice is heard.
- Continue to be the first point of contact for investors with potential properties and any state tax incentives. Calls come in weekly and our department answers questions regarding incentives, available properties, connections for relocations, etc. This takes up approximately 10% of our time.
- Work with towns and chambers as needed for special projects or initiatives (current town projects listed at the bottom of this list)
- Considering attending a nationwide investment conference, if determined there is potential value. TBD

- Serve on Destination Development Committee with the state
- Meet quarterly with regional Economic Development Partners

#### 4. Advocate

- Work to streamline/simplify government processes to be more business centric and reduce/minimize barriers while still ensuring legal and regulatory compliance
- Monitor activities impacting the region, and participate in meetings and forums to maintain a county presence at the local and regional level.
- Assist in writing public information articles regarding these topics to ensure the public is informed and aware of what the commissioners, the ED department and other county departments are attending and a part of.
- In 2020 we are expecting many topics including:
  - O&G Exports/Regulation changes/NEPA process changes
  - Wolf Introduction, communication with ag industry
  - Renewable Energy Shortcomings
  - Revision of Rural Jump Start and Other ED Programs at the state level
  - Water issues/many levels but wolf creek reservoir is one of them
  - On a local level- working to ensure our building code regulations are business friendly, ensuring that our land use plan is properly used.
  - Other issues that will affect rural Colorado and RBC
- Industry Specific projects - these will change throughout the year depending on the direction of the commissioners and circumstances, but involves collaboration with members of the O&G industry, the ag industry, the tourism industry, etc.

#### 5. Research and Report

- Collect, compile and analyze key economic indicators including employment/wage statistics, demographic information, real estate and environmental factors.
- Provide and maintain economic impact data on a regular basis. We get many requests for economic data that we provide as requested, but also try to provide quarterly data of interest to the public. We post the info on our website.
- Stay up-to-date on the Opportunity Zone regulations. Answer questions regarding the OZ and determine projects that may be of value to RBC citizens.
- We are testing visitor data tracking from a third party. This will be potentially useful for marketing initiatives and we plan to share this info with our local partners.
- **Public Information-** This part of the ED Department is fairly new and takes up approximately 25% of our time
  - Responsible for social media on countywide FB (county news, info, marketing)
  - Keep current residents informed of county and commissioner happenings through RBC website, social media, and various other mediums. This requires attending commissioner meetings and

having weekly meetings with the commissioners and other departments to stay up-to-date on events and happenings.

- County Educational Pieces including department spotlights. One or two monthly.
- County News Publications, weekly as needed
- Send out weekly employee update to all employees of RBC
- Attend appropriate meetings throughout both ends of the county that may include or affect citizens from a county standpoint
- Assist departments in public information, keeping rbc.us website up-to-date
- Act as Public Information Officer- answer questions from media, review department specific press releases

As mentioned earlier, most of our work is on county level issues and town specific projects are not our focus. However, we do end up and are happy to be involved in certain projects if/when requested by the towns or independent organizations. Most projects are partnerships and we value collaboration as much as possible!

### **Rangely Specific Projects**

- Applied for/received/will administer a \$4000 grant from OEDIT to use for the Gravel Grinder event in fall 2020. We have been assisting the Town of Rangely in creating a logo for the event and will help in whatever capacity is needed on this project. Various other county departments will be assisting in this project as well.
- Continue to administer grant reporting for the 2018 "Grow Your Outdoors Blueprint Award completed in early 2019.
- Spring from the Tank Screening. Organize, co-host, plan for with Colorado Film Commission- completed
- Business workshops, facilitating, approximately one a month
- Ongoing consulting with several SBDC clients from the Rangely area (approximately 20 clients at this time)
- Photos for marketing campaign. This requires several day sessions and will be a collection of photos from every season. Scenery/Airport/CNCC, etc etc
- Remote Rural Work Marketing Materials developed and sent to OEDIT
- New professional promo videos in the Spring to use in our digital advertising campaign
- CNCC Job Connections, Connection CNCC students to available RBC summer jobs. Working with the workforce center on this project but acting as lead. This won't be ongoing all year but something we plan to keep on top of and hopefully improve over time.

### **Meeker Specific Projects**

- Photos for marketing campaign. This requires several day sessions and will be a collection of photos from every season.
- Working with Town of Meeker Specific marketing, they have set aside and plan to collaborate with marketing funds
- Ongoing consulting with SBDC clients (approximately 40 clients at this time)
- Business workshops, facilitating, approximately one a month
- CNCC community education/vocational training development conversations
- New professional promo videos in the Spring to use in our digital advertising campaign
- Remote Rural Work Marketing Materials developed and sent to OEDIT
- Attend Meeker Main Street/Project 45 Program meetings- Placemaking conversations. Power of place is important!
- Assist with R100 event, as requested

- Meeker Moving Forward Project Team/Committee Member
- Outreach to Colowyo employees in spring 2020 and working with tri-state employers to determine path forward.

## Other Projects

- OHV trail Kiosk repair. There are several that need fixed, we will be working on this in the spring and the cost will come from the ED budget.

## FAQ:

### Tourism Promotion:

We recognize that the tourism industry is an important piece of our economic growth puzzle. Our department has taken a step back from direct tourism promotion (in relation to previous projects led by our department related to tourism development) as it was leading to duplicated efforts and spending between ourselves and the Chambers. The Economic Development Department will still promote outdoor recreation in our county, but our focus will be on outdoor recreation as a lifestyle benefit of living here rather than focusing on the *visit*. As a show of continued support for the industry, county funds have been designated in 2020 for both Chamber of Commerce Offices for specific economic development projects including tourism development and marketing. Collaboration is appreciated with these projects as much as possible, as there are ways the marketing efforts between all organizations can benefit from joint projects, and deeper conversations are planned on this topic.

### Direct recruitment of outside business:

We won't be focusing on what many may consider direct business recruitment in 2020, however we will aim to reach businesses and residents interested in our lifestyle offerings through our marketing efforts. When potential residents/business owners/investors call or outreach with questions, we will always work together with that individual or business to determine if relocating to RBC is best for their business goals. If there is an opportunity that we feel a specific organization needs to be aware of, which does happen, we will contact them. We are focused on advocating for a business friendly environment at all levels of government, growing from within, and telling our story. We feel that if we make RBC a place that our current businesses and individuals can thrive and want to be, others will want and be able to have successful businesses here too.

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