

2021-2025 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

ELBERT, LINCOLN, KIT CARSON AND CHEYENNE COUNTIES



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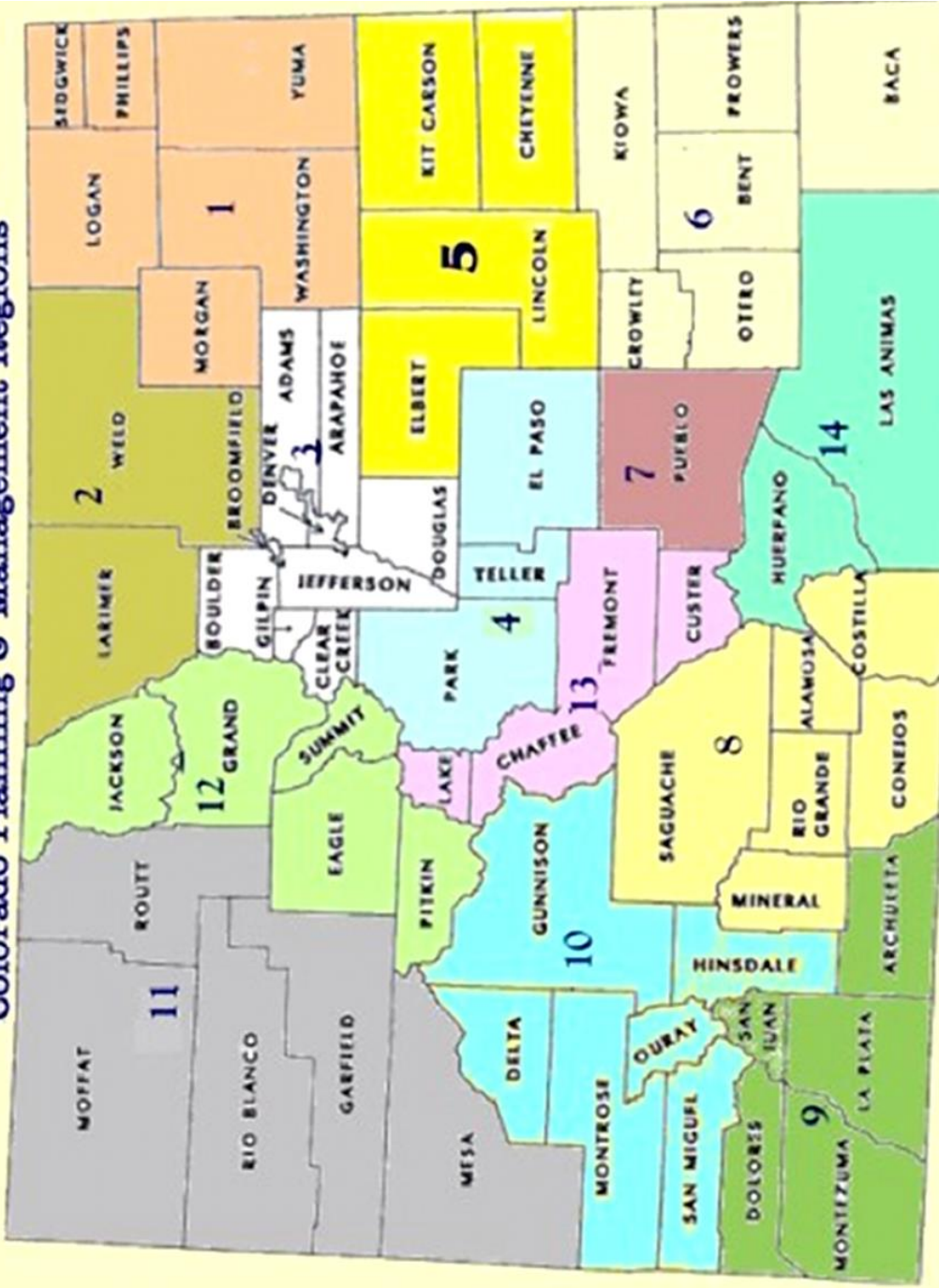
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Colorado Planning & Management Regions



*East Central Council of Local Governments
Planning & Management Region 5*

Executive Summary:

A Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is the result of a local planning process designed to guide the economic stabilization and growth of an area. The original five-year CEDS for Elbert, Lincoln, Kit Carson and Cheyenne Counties was adopted in December of 2009. This 2021 - 2025 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy builds on earlier plans. The purpose of the CEDS is to construct a plan for retaining and creating jobs, encouraging a stable and more diversified economy, and maintaining and improving the quality of life. This CEDS covers East Central Colorado or a region also known as Colorado's Central Plains.

This Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for East Central Colorado:

- Summarizes the economic conditions of the region
- Guides and coordinates local economic development interests and efforts region-wide
- Facilitates eligibility for various federal and state economic/community development funding at both the local and regional levels
- Develops goals and strategies for implementing economic development projects
- Identifies viable economic development projects and initiatives
- Outlines the standards for the evaluation of the program
- Sets forth an economic resiliency plan as a "plan within a plan"

This CEDS process was guided by an officially designated CEDS/EDD (Economic Development District) Committee. The CEDS Committee members also served (along with others) as the region's Blueprint Committee to further the Governor's Office of Economic Development and International Trade's (OEDIT) Blueprint Program. It was further guided by the governing boards of both East Central Council of Governments (ECCOG) and Prairie Development Corporation (PDC). These three guiding forces are comprised of individuals representing many diverse groups including, but not limited to, business, industry, civic organizations, economic development organizations, and the education community, as well as county and municipal governments. The CEDS/Blueprint Committee continues to meet to discuss economic development issues. The Committee will recommend additional or modified priorities and action items to the ECCOG Board as updates to the CEDS strategies and priorities are indicated.

While the document is a product of the East Central Council of Governments (and is required to qualify for Economic Development Administration assistance), the CEDS document is meant to be a working plan for all local governments, community entities and respective economic development organizations. The Council also works to disseminate the CEDS information to state, local, and regional organizations. It is useful for all area residents desiring to understand their local economies and working to improve the communities in which they live.

Our future CEDS will be developed into an online story told with graphics, maps and data with interactive modules to further enhance the story of Colorado's eastern plains and the inspiring development based on the region. Offering this new online version is expected to engage more partners of multiple age groups, inspire businesses to establish operations here, and tell a colorful story of growth, resilience and development from the data and the people.

Chapter 1-Introduction and Region

A. PURPOSE

The ECCOG Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) will develop a framework to support and enhance regional economic development opportunities in east central Colorado: Elbert, Lincoln, Kit Carson and Cheyenne Counties. The CEDS has three objectives:

- Develop a database to better understand and describe Colorado’s Central Plains in terms of its geographic, economic and social relationships,
- Identify and prioritize regional development issues/challenges/opportunities; and
- Develop strategies to address selected issues.

B. VISION STATEMENT

Colorado’s Central Plains provides a quality of life which will be enhanced and preserved for future generations. As these communities continue to grow, so will cutting-edge jobs in agriculture, energy, education and health. Existing business and industry will strengthen and expand.

C. MISSION STATEMENT

Mission:

In collaboration with public and private partners, the East Central Council of Local Governments Economic Development District will encourage and facilitate the success of entrepreneurship, agriculture, business, industry and innovation in Colorado’s Central Plains...Elbert, Lincoln, Kit Carson and Cheyenne counties. We will strive to assist with the needed resources, financial incentives, collaboration, and creation of additional opportunities for startups, expansions, or relocation to this area. The success of this mission will be measured by sustained stability and economic growth in the Colorado’s Central Plains.

Goals/Strategies:

1. Build a Business-Friendly Environment

- Development Broadband to the highest standards throughout the Region
- Encourage dialogue among local government to examine existing regulations in regard to impacts on business retention, expansion, and attraction
- Educate elected officials and citizens on the value of energy development
- Develop affordable workforce housing

2. Recruit, Grow and Retain Business

- Maintain/expand the current Enterprise Zone Boundaries
- Work with the Small Business Development Center to assist existing businesses with the challenges of today’s economy
- Continue marketing resources to promote Colorado’s Central Plains for investment and business

growth

- Market state and local incentives including the Enterprise Zone Program to prospective new, existing and expanding businesses
- Encourage and support community and downtown improvement efforts
- Promote and implement the 2015 established Foreign-Trade Zone
- Encourage the development of home-based businesses within the region
- Develop Business Resiliency Plan/mitigation alternatives to address natural, manmade or economic disasters

3. Increase Access to Capital

Bridge the gap for businesses to qualify for bank financing by continuing to expand use of Prairie Development Corporation Loan Fund including the DIB (Drought Impacted Business) and ABE (Agricultural Business Entrepreneur) loan programs

4. Create and Market a Stronger Colorado Central Plains/Colorado Brand/Promote and expand tourism/travel industry within the Region with emphasis on historical, cultural, recreational, agricultural and eco-tourism resources and events

- Promote eco-tourism, agri-tourism, signature community events, and the cultural heritage of the Colorado Central Plains through joint branding and promotional marketing
- Encourage local business and industry to promote the state business image and branding
- Create a Colorado Central Plains brand by building on the *Our Journey* and *Here's Its Easier to See What's Important* logos and tag lines

5. Educate and Train the Future Workforce

- Encourage partnerships and cooperative efforts between the business community and education
- Advocate for continued existence of the Community College “mini-campuses” for the Colorado Central Plains
- Champion the “Colorado Sectors” process and develop private business driven Sectors as appropriate

6. Cultivate Innovation and Technology

Explore opportunities in innovation and technology that can be applied to economic development efforts within Colorado’s Central Plains

7. Plan for Energy Opportunities:

- Promote the energy resources, both traditional and new, of the area which will invigorate the economy, create new jobs and protect natural resources
- Promote rural leadership for sustainable energy by educating local governments and economic development groups about the potential benefits of the renewable energy sector
- Support development of alternative energies from agricultural products and by-products

8. Plan and Be Ready for Transportation Corridors Development and Expansion:

- Participate with local government and other groups in providing guidance to the

Colorado Department of Transportation and the Federal Railroad Administration regarding the importance of highway maintenance and expansion, public transit and the continuation and maintenance of Short Line and Class 1 railroad operations in the region

- Educate local governments, community leaders and economic development groups on the potential economic benefits of the transportation system and its connection to urban and global markets
- Develop regional public private partnerships to expand economic opportunities provided by interregional transportation corridors
- Develop the necessary public private partnerships to expand opportunities for local and regional bicycle and pedestrian “trails”

9. Offer Technical Assistance:

- Maintain an active CEDS advisory committee to identify and address regional economic development issues
- Assist local/county governments and economic development groups in identifying and securing financial and other resources that enable positive results for their respective programs as well as on the entire region
- Help local governing officials locate resources necessary to deal with unexpected economic issues
- Assist local/county governments and economic development groups in identifying and securing resources for mitigation of local Brownfield sites and blight
- Assist local/county governments in identifying and securing resources for the development/expansion of a geographic information system (GIS) throughout the region
- Disseminate information on emerging opportunities as they arise and be positioned to take action

D. HISTORY OF REGION

For more than a century, an 8,400 square mile patch of high prairie just east of the Rocky Mountains has been known by its political names, Cheyenne, Elbert, Kit Carson and Lincoln counties, Colorado. For the casual observer, this large parcel of land appears to be a homogeneous mass.

And it’s true, these counties have a great deal in common. Even after thousands of get-rich-quick gold miners somehow crossed the plains to set up mining communities with local governments in the mountains, this high prairie land remained, for the most part, unpopulated. It was saddled in 1820 with the name “The Great American Desert,” and Horace Greeley, on his way to see the gold rush for himself in the 1860s, told the folks on the east coast that this area “is a land of sterility and thirst.”

However, one man’s junk is another man’s treasure, and it wasn’t long before cattlemen arrived to establish huge ranches, and entrepreneurs in the East pushed through stagecoach routes and sent coaches full of passengers and mail through this wild land. And around this time, the “permanent” residents of this new bonanza realized it was time to set up housekeeping on their own. The area was removed from Kansas Territory and became Colorado Territory in 1861.

The new territory created its own counties. Some of them, especially those furthest from the Rocky Mountains, were immense in size because of their limited populations. The 8,400 square miles in East Central Colorado made up one-half, or less, of two large counties: Douglas and Huerfano, both extending from the Front Range to the Kansas state line, and Huerfano extending south to the New Mexico-Oklahoma line. A large area in the middle of these two counties was reserved for the use of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Indian tribes.

The tribal reservation was short-lived; it was gone by 1870 and newly created Greenwood and Bent counties replaced it and part of Huerfano County. In fact, another new county was in place, also, Las Animas County, and except for a small island of land to the southwest of Pueblo County, Huerfano County was gone, as well.

There were high hopes for Greenwood County, named for a Kansas Pacific railroad official. The new road pushed through Greenwood and Douglas counties to Denver, and eager businessmen who settled along the new line had visions of big cities dotting the plains. The town of Kit Carson already was fairly large by Colorado Territorial standards; it was the new county's seat of government and more train tracks were run south from Kit Carson to Las Animas.

But the track moved on west, with all the railroad construction employees and all the saloons, grocers, and other businesses that came to serve those employees moving west also. Soon, Kit Carson was very quiet, indeed, and all the other stops along the line were...just stops. It became apparent in Greenwood County that its citizens now numbered too few to support a county government, and in 1874, Greenwood County became the only Colorado county to go from whence it came.

Into the void stepped another new county, Elbert County, which took over most of Douglas County to the state line, along with about half of Greenwood County. Bent County expanded north to absorb the rest of Greenwood County. Kiowa and Hugo, the oldest communities in their respective areas, both began where stage stations were established around 1859. Later, for a few years, both were the primary towns in Elbert County, and a few Hugo citizens were elected to Elbert County offices, working from the county seat at Kiowa. A couple of these officials were appointed to office in the new Lincoln County, when it was created with Hugo as the county seat.

Lincoln County, along with Kit Carson and Cheyenne counties, was carved out of Elbert and Bent counties in 1889. This arrangement of counties in East Central Colorado has remained unchanged to the present day in spite of occasional efforts to further divide them.

Regardless of stage stations and cattle ranches, this area really was a negligible entity until the railroads came. In 1914, Elisha Talbot (a publicist for the Rock Island Railroad) had this to say about the early days: "Not long ago this entire region was a vast cattle range and considered valueless for any other purpose. The homesteader and the speculator alike turned it down as unworthy of consideration. It was too unpromising for the theorist and too big for the rainmaker. In other words, it had no friends."

But the railroads proved to be the area's friends. The Kansas Pacific (later Union Pacific) and the Rock Island lines sunk wells and platted towns at regular intervals as the tracks were laid. It might be said that the town locations were dictated by the needs of steam locomotives as much as by any other factor. These towns, then, caused the current counties to be created.

Elbert County was different. Its communities arrived before the railroads and were located more because of the availability of water than for any other reason. And unlike the other three counties, Elbert County was blessed with trees, and an early timber and sawmill industry thrived there.

The first communities were hardly settled when the first schools were established. In the early 1870s, most of this region still was in Elbert County, and the first school in that large land area was at the unlikely community of Tuttle. In those days, Tuttle stood alone, nearer to Kansas than to Denver, with a store, post office and school. This school is believed to be the first in Elbert County, with a Hugo woman as teacher. In the course of time, Tuttle ended up in Kit Carson County, its location now described as 20+ miles "northwest of Burlington."

Latter day historians use the present county boundaries to determine “firsts,” and therefore, Rock Butte School southeast of Elizabeth, opened in 1874, is now considered the first school in Elbert County. Elbert County also had a school at Hugo around this same time. Hugo’s school district, Number 7 in Elbert County, was District Number 1 when Lincoln County was created in the Spring of 1889.

Not counting Tuttle, there seems to be agreement that Kit Carson County’s first school was in Burlington in 1886. The community was small, then, as the railroad had not yet arrived.

Cheyenne County’s situation is not as clear-cut. In spite of numerous histories and tales surrounding the early days in Cheyenne County, very few writers discuss schools there in the 19th Century. One writer said the first school in Cheyenne Wells opened in a rented building in 1888, and until other evidence comes forward, this must be considered the first school in the county. Kit Carson was a larger town in

In 1870, boasting 510 citizens when the federal census was taken. At the time, the community had 31 children of school age (6 through 16), but the census taker found no teachers, which may mean there was no school yet. There was no minister, either, but the town had 134 railroad employees and 14 saloonkeepers!

In all of the counties, the earliest fiscal bases (timber and railroads) were replaced over the years by a strong agricultural economy. Much of rural Elbert County is devoted to the raising of livestock. Cheyenne and Lincoln counties sustain both livestock and dryland farming, while Kit Carson County is best known for its irrigated farms, watered from deep wells served by the Ogallala aquifer.

But now, 135+ years later, the four counties sit astride major highway systems heading all directions, and both the trucking industry and the tourism industry continue to increase their contributions to the regional economy.

All four counties have benefited from oil and gas production. Taxes paid by these producers did much to help counties keep pace with their infrastructure needs.

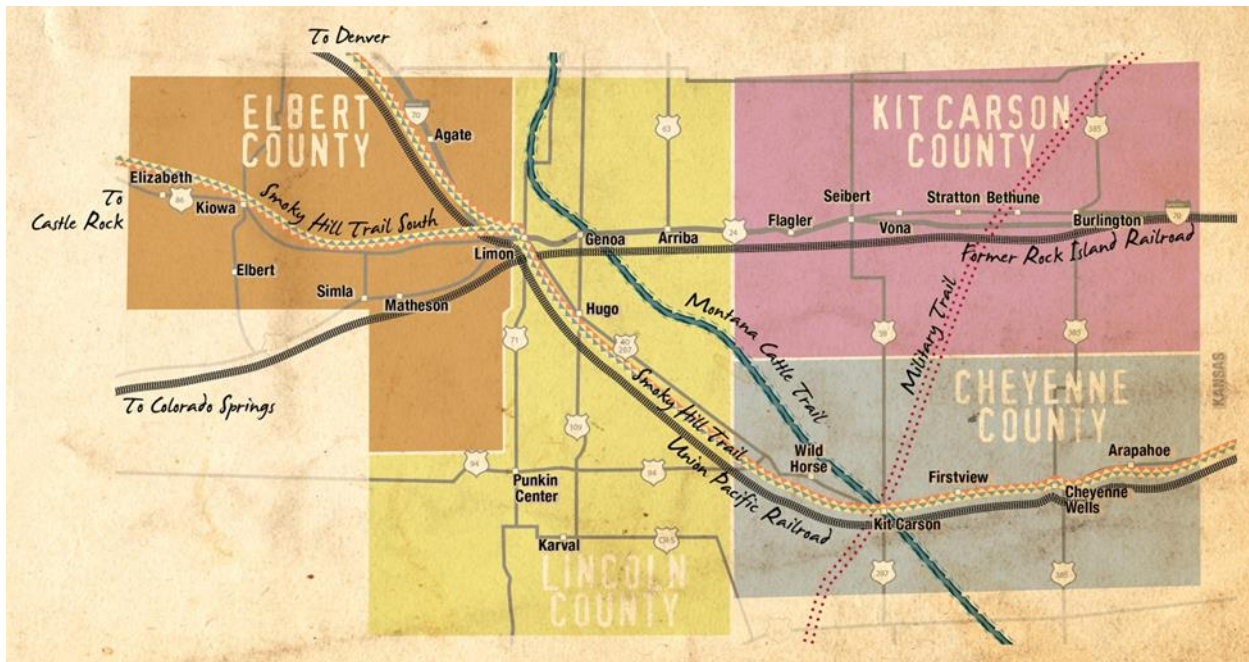
Also, in Cheyenne County is the second largest helium production facility in the nation. Not currently operating at capacity, this business could easily increase production and employment in this county.

The wind and solar are other natural sources of energy being harnessed in this region. Across the four counties over 1,000 wind turbines are in operation and another wind farm will be under construction in 2021. Solar farms are in the beginning stages of planning and development now in Elbert County.

Thanks to its proximity to the Colorado Springs and Denver metropolitan areas, and to its intrinsic scenic attractions, Elbert County became the residential choice of many city workers who wanted to escape the hectic hustle of city life and perhaps keep a horse or two at home. Subdivisions sprouted across western Elbert County, to the delight of local merchants but causing local elected officials to burn the midnight oil to provide expected county services. Elbert County continues to experience growth and development in 2020 and into the future as is seen every day in their communities.

Now, wireless technologies have made urban professionals realize they can do their work from any location, and many are escaping to the rural communities where they join the ranks of the “lone eagles.” Unfortunately, broadband service is minimal in parts of the region; a Broadband analysis and plan to address these deficiencies has been completed for the region. Due to COVID-19, connectivity speeds and reliability have been in high demand since Spring of 2020.

There are centennial farms and ranches in this region, owned by the same families for 100 years or more. The families stay on their land because they can, and because they love it. Hopefully, current planning for the future will result in other families remaining in the region, regardless of their careers or lifestyles, because they can...and because they love it, as well.



E. 2021 OVERVIEW of the REGION

Colorado's Central Plains region (Colorado Planning and Management Region 5) is comprised of Lincoln, Elbert, Kit Carson and Cheyenne counties. Agriculture is the base economic driver in each of the four counties, but the 8,000 square-mile region with a very diverse geography. The population of the region in 1980 was 21,265. The US Census Bureau population estimate for 2020 in the region was 41,909, almost 100% growth. However, most of that net growth was concentrated in 3% of the geographical area within the region (the very northwest corner of Elbert County continues to experience high residential growth, with much of that population commuting to jobs in Denver).

Throughout the region opportunities exist to capitalize on renewable energy resources; value-added agriculture, oil and gas development/production, transportation, tourism, and entrepreneurial business expansion/attraction services.

From 2010 and 2013, the population of the overall region remained virtually unchanged with an increase of 379 or 0.98%. Population reports for 2018 show Kit Carson County's population decreased from years 2015 to 2018 while Lincoln, Cheyenne, and Elbert counties each posted slight gains. The decrease for Kit Carson County is attributed to the prison closure in 2016.

Most of the Elbert County's growth takes place in the northwest corner of that county, within commuting distance of metro Denver. Colorado is increasing in population which exacerbates the housing demand.

Jobs and the Economy

The principal employers in all four counties are public: schools, health services, and local and county governments. The Limon Correctional Facility is also public. The Kit Carson County Correctional Facility is the largest private employer in the region with 175 - 200 full time employees depending on the inmate count closed in 2016. Today in 2020, the prison remains closed and the jobs have not been recovered elsewhere. The tax base throughout the region is predicated on agriculture. Farming is preeminent in Kit Carson County, whereas ranching is primary in the other three; nevertheless, all four counties exhibit a mixture of both farms and ranches. Like rural plains communities throughout the Midwest, many of Colorado's Central Plains' towns have main streets with vacant storefronts. Households are often single elderly persons whose grocery and basic needs are less. As small "Mom and Pop" stores that have provided basic services for years come up for sale, there are few interested buyers. While such a business may still have cash flow under the original owner, that owner probably also has limited debt. Added debt for the new buyer plus the impact of an ever-declining market means the continued existence of the small hardware stores and grocery stores in towns with a population under 1,000 becomes doubtful. The current economy makes this even more unlikely as people during COVID-19 in spring 2020 were buying products online as fear and executive orders forced businesses to close and people to stay home. Oil and gas valuations (impacting Cheyenne, Lincoln and Elbert counties) are unstable but drilling activity was improving until the Coronavirus effected that industry.

Housing

Demand for housing continues its upward climb and was certainly evident during the last two years. As home prices in the metropolitan areas increase more families are moving to the outlying areas and may commute into the cities for work. Home prices are increasing in rural settings also but the prices started lower so the families may be able to purchase a rural home and put children in schools for in-person learning. Increased home building also causes infrastructure demand to increase which another challenge in rural communities. Other critical infrastructure ranging from water supply to schools may have adequate surplus capacity to absorb this level of growth but not always in every location. Such development could significantly enhance tax bases, workforce availability and domestic markets. Real

estate developers have projects in Elbert, Lincoln and Kit Carson counties but access to materials and delivery delays are impacting their progress. Workforce availability is an opportunity also as skills or trades are in high demand for this region.

Affordable Housing

Home Sweet Prairies (www.homesweetprairies.com) has a new look for its website. The four counties are promoting the availability of affordable housing units throughout Colorado's Central Plains. This grass roots economic development effort capitalizes on the homes and the area's traditional and valued rural lifestyle. The target audiences are retirees and "lone eagles" wanting to work from home. In today's language, we refer these workers as "gig" workers since they work on one job then move to another. "Gig" workers are very popular as people like having flexibility in their jobs and time off. Thanks in part to the coronavirus, remote working has become the newest way to work while living where one may afford a home, have children attend in person learning and enjoy a more relaxed lifestyle in rural settings. In the region, an increase in home ownership is realized by those fleeing the urban setting of a more expensive housing scenario. We aim to help them find their home on the sweet prairies!

Agriculture

The agricultural economy throughout the region was severely impacted by the 2011--2012 drought and continues today. Current reports show 30% of Colorado is now in a drought pattern including our region. The 2014 wheat crop (planted in the fall of 2013) was one of the best in recent history. However, the impacts of the drought will continue. Cattle herds that were liquidated due to lack of (or high cost of) feed will continue to take several years to build back up. Crop prices are fluctuating now with the drought and high input costs while COVID-19 challenges stir the market as livestock processing was compromised and food supply was disrupted. The future of the farmer/rancher remain an unknown with or without COVID-19 influences.

Clean Energy

Development of renewable energy sources on Colorado's Central Plains in 2021 is slowing but not stopped. Wind turbines dot the landscape across all four counties and transmission line installation is planned for 2021 and beyond. The county's portion of revenue from each wind farm has been very beneficial as the county has made road improvements, created new jobs tied to economic development, and replenished depleted coffers from years past. Gas & oil remains an untapped source for energy development while electric vehicles charging stations are popping up within the region. A new tourism attraction tied to energy is being developed in Limon called Wind City. Guests may learn about renewable energy and those impressive turbine blades with a tour of Wind City.

Helium Production

Another unusual source of natural gas is the second largest helium production facility in the nation is located west of Cheyenne Wells in Cheyenne County. The Tumbleweed Midstream helium plant is not operating at full capacity however an increase in production was seen in the last two years. The plant operates round the clock and brings great salaries to the employees.

The greatest economic development need remains within the region to stabilize the economy and diversify. Each area within the region needs to capitalize on its assets. Retention and expansion of existing businesses are the primary goals. Growing from within has a greater chance of success than bringing new business and industry to the area, but efforts to attract new jobs from outside the region also must be continued. Broadband service is minimal in parts of the region, and if business and industry are to be retained and public safety needs met, broadband services must be upgraded. In light of COVID-19, this effort has gained strong support as schools closed and education was performed remotely while parents stayed home to work their own job and took on teaching their children for the final three months of the 2020 school year. New emphasis on connectivity has caused more funding to be offered.

The Region completed the Region 5 Broadband Strategic Plan in 2019 which included a Broadband analysis and development of an overall plan to address Broadband deficiencies. The area CEDS (Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy) was updated during 2015 to include this Plan.

The area, through its various economic development organizations, continue work today to simplify the access to capital for businesses. Closing the financial gap with a diverse capital stack is strongly supported by lenders and partners in the rural area. Most notable from the broadband survey of needs was that people couldn't afford both smart phone data plans and home internet services so many people used their smart phone as their computer although the screen size was terribly small in comparison to a computer screen. That tells us the cost need to decrease and the number of users must increase.

Partnerships play a vital role among communities. Some of the smaller towns must consider becoming great neighborhoods to the larger communities down the road. Standing and working together is even more important in areas of limited population and services.

F. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT DESIGNATION

The four counties comprising the East Central Council of Local Governments' service area were designated a Planning and Management Region under executive order of the Governor of Colorado in 1972. ECCOG was officially incorporated in 1973 under Chapter 88 of the Colorado Revised Statutes. This Region sought and was granted designation from the Economic Development Administration as an Economic Development District in 2009. To meet the criteria for this designation, the make-up of the East Central Council of Local Governments Board of Directors was changed to meet EDD criteria. The Articles of Association were amended by Resolution on April 1, 2009 to add five non-governmental member seats. The ECCOG Board is now comprised of 13 directors: eight local government representatives and five non-government representatives.

2021 ECCOG/EDD Board Membership Roster

1. GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES (51 – 65%)

Elected officials and/or employees of a general-purpose unit of state, local or Indian tribal government who have been appointed to represent the government.

Name	Government	Position
Ron Smith	Cheyenne County	Commissioner
Chris Richardson	Elbert County	Commissioner
Dave Hornung	Kit Carson County	Commissioner
Steve Burgess	Lincoln County	Commissioner
Ryan Fulmer	Town of Simla	Trustee
Ben Ferree	Town of Limon	Trustee
<i>Vacant</i>	Town of _____	Town Council Member
Troy Schultz	City of Burlington	Town Council Member

2. NON-GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES (35 – 49%)

- A. **Private Sector Representatives:** *Any senior management official or executive holding key decision-making position, with respect to any for-profit enterprise. (At least one required)*

Name	Company/Business	Position
Melody McKinsey	Big Sandy Hunts	Co-Owner
Rhonda Brown	Farmers Insurance	Owner
Scott Wills	Wills Insurance	Owner

B. Stakeholder Organization Representatives: *Executive directors of chambers of commerce, or representatives of institutions of post-secondary education, workforce development groups or labor groups. (At least one required)*

Name	Organization	Position
Valerie Rhoades	Morgan Community College, Burlington	Director

3. **AT-LARGE REPRESENTATIVES:** *Other individuals who represent the principal economic interests of the region. (No minimum required)*

Name	Area of Interest	Background
Marc Dettenrieder	Economic Development	Elbert County ED Manager

2021 Strategy Committee Roster

1. PRIVATE SECTOR REPRESENTATIVES (at least 51%)

Any senior management official or executive holding a key decision-making position with respect to any for-profit enterprise.

Name	Company	Position
Troy Schultz	Eastern Colorado Technology	Owner
Marilyn Ward	Eastern Colorado Bank	AVP
Pat White	Eastern Slope Rural Telephone Assn.	General Manager
Rol Hudler	Hudler Consulting	Owner
Dorothy Stone	Dorothy C. Stone Attorney at Law	Owner

2. REPRESENTATIVES OF OTHER ECONOMIC INTERESTS (No more than 49%)

Persons who provide additional representation of the main economic interests of the region. These may include, but are not limited to: public officials, community leaders, representatives of workforce development boards, institutions of higher education, minority and labor groups, and private individuals.

Name	Area of Interest	Position
Dave Hornung	Kit Carson County	County Commissioner
Jennifer Beck	Limon Workforce Center	Director
Grace Erickson	Town of Elizabeth	Community Development Director

Jennifer Wells	Cheyenne County Economic Development	Economic Developer
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ECCOG Staffing/Management Structure

The management objectives of the ECCOG are to:

1. Develop and maintain adequate staff capacity
2. Build staff technical capabilities
3. Stabilize long-term agency financing

ECCOG relies on a variety of sources to support its staff and/or work plan, including membership dues, grant and loan administration funds, service contracts, etc. An organizational chart is located as *Attachment A* to the CEDS.

G. Regional Relationships

During the past four decades, the East Central Council of Local Governments staff, Board of Directors and various advisory groups have established relationships with numerous state and federal agencies, including but not limited to the Colorado’s Office of Economic Development and International Trade, Colorado Department of Local Affairs, Colorado Division of Housing, USDA Rural Development, CSU Regional Technical Assistance, Colorado Division of Aging and Adult Services, Colorado Department of Transportation, Eastern Transportation Planning Region, Eastern Colorado Work Force Region, RC&D, Colorado Tourism Office, History Colorado, Ports to Plains Alliance, High Plains Highway, and Colorado Division of Local Government. ECCOG and its divisions (i.e. partners) including the East Central Area Agency on Aging, Outback Express Transit System, East Central Enterprise Zone, and Prairie Development Corporation Business Loan Fund meet several times annually with their counterparts throughout the State for information exchange and training.

The Prairie Development Corporation was created in 1986 as a public-private partnership but with its own board of directors and 501(c) (3) designation. ECCOG staffs the Prairie Development Corporation through a Professional Services Agreement. PDC is the development counterpart of the ECCOG and operates a business loan fund that emphasizes job creation and retention in cooperation with the ECCOG and the four counties. The loan fund utilizes federal CDBG grant funds awarded to the State of Colorado and then subcontracted to Lincoln County on behalf of the region. PDC also operates a smaller housing loan fund for rehabilitation and home buyer assistance and takes the lead in the region in development of Our Journey, the multi-jurisdictional heritage and marketing program.

There are limited formal local Economic Development groups within the four counties. The Lincoln County ED Corp is the only countywide group and is professionally staffed. The Cheyenne Wells Community Growth Alliance is staffed by volunteers however the county recently formed its own economic development office which is now staffed. Kit Carson Rural Development promotes community economic development for the town of Kit Carson and has been very successful in developing several housing and blight removal projects. The Hugo Improvement Partnership also works with an all-volunteer staff. The City of Burlington employs a part-time Economic Development Director. The staffs (both professional and volunteer) of these groups will meet quarterly starting in summer of 2021 through Blueprint/CEDS to discuss mutual challenges and projects. Recent demands of COVID-19 concerns have triggered a refocus on duties and a hiatus of sorts while people work remotely has been implemented. Duties for many people involved in the CEDS has been disrupted severely. The pandemic has directed a new focus on resiliency and local businesses support which one might say has been needed.

A longstanding partner, Small Business Development Center of Greeley, has provided business counseling services across the four counties for more than 20 years. From 2019-2021, over fifty-four webinars or training sessions have been offered in the region in-person or online. The materials shared reached over 550 people with a variety of topics like business plan writing, hemp production, social media marketing, Leading Edge courses, and other business-related topics in English and Spanish. SBDC also provides a newsletter with resources and guidance to enrolled clients and partners.

The historic nature of the working relationships among the local governments and economic development groups is real and genuine. These relationships didn't need to be created for this CEDS effort; they have been sustained for more than 45 years. These long-standing relationships brought great strength to the CEDS process, and this strong partnership, "To Do Together What We Can't Do Alone," will assure a quality implementation of the CEDS in the years to come.

H. PAST ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Much has been accomplished in the Region since the adoption of the initial CEDS (December 2009). A sampling of those accomplishments follows:

ECCOG continues to promote several small housing loan programs overseen by the Prairie Development Corporation.

When the Community Development Block Grant for the regional Business Loan Fund ended January 31, 2014. ECCOG staff drafted a new four-county application to the Governor's Office of Economic Development and International Trade for \$300,000 in new capital for PDC Business loans. This was awarded and then amended in 2015 to add another \$250,000. The fund was re-capitalized in 2020 for \$250,000 and then amendment to increase the fund to \$690,000 to accommodate a loan in the region. As of June 2020, an additional \$80,874 business assistance funds were added to help local businesses with COVID-19 related financial needs. In the fall of 2020, an amendment to extend the contract for two years with an additional \$406,000 for business loans and administrative costs was approved. CDBG funds is a major funding source in Colorado.

The board of Prairie Development Corporation is very adaptive and creative to meet the lending needs of businesses and families in the four counties. In 2015, the "drought impacted business" (DIB) loan program initiated by ECCOG and PDC staff resulted to date in 38 loans totaling \$485,000. As of 2021, all loans have been paid in full except one that was charged off. The Drought Impacted Business loan program was suspended when the rains came but as we head back into dry conditions, the board may reinstate the program if needed.

PDC also approved an Agricultural Business Entrepreneurs (ABE) program to help agricultural producers diversify to other ag-related businesses for supplementary income. Two loans totaling \$69,000 were made in 2014 and subsequently paid off. Then PDC created the Local Economic Downturn (LED) loan policy in response to the 2016 Burlington prison closure. The board may declare a local economic downturn to authorize use of the funds in a county or area. In 2019, large damaging hail stones hit our region and the board declared the program available to help impacted businesses. When COVID-19 impacted the region in March 2020 the board declared this event as a qualifying use for LED. Leveraging resources is a primary goal of the loan while partnering with local lenders to meet the needs of borrowers.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Prairie Development Corporation, our lending arm of ECCOG, and Energize Colorado Gap Funds, processed over 30 grant applications and passed along over \$175,000 in grant funds to sixteen qualified businesses in Elbert, Lincoln, Kit Carson, and Cheyenne Counties. Low

to no interest loans with no collateral are being offered now with modified repayment terms. PDC also participated in a new statewide loan fund providing higher risk borrowers or character loans to startup companies. To date, PDC has used the pool of funds to assist six businesses with over \$200,000 which may require 50% match from Revolving loan funds.

The Home Sweet Prairies project was developed to promote opportunities for “lone eagles” to come to the Central Plains region and work from their “affordable homes” that were marketed by linking to the realtors in the four-county area. See: www.homesweetprairies.com. A new emphasis on working remotely and home purchases outside the metro areas thanks in part to the pandemic is being seen and felt in rural areas. Home prices in this area are lower but the inventory is either old or non-existent. Each community in ECCOG’s service area works collaboratively to mitigate the challenges of material availability and pricing today.

Over 3,000 printed “Fun, Fairs, Festivals” brochures and “Places” brochures (historic structures, register sites, bed and breakfast establishments, specialty/antique shops) promoting the summer heritage tourism season throughout the EDD are printed and distributed May through September. Printed materials have declined as people use smart phone technology to find activities and events. Heritage tourism received a boost during the pandemic when we added TravelStorys, a digital storytelling app using technology devices to keep tourists coming into our region and encouraged them to visit the museums and other local attractions. TravelStorys uses geotags to tell the stories as one drives on the highways covering Colorado’s Central Plains. Additions to the stories or tours are developing during this time. During June 2021, video shorts to aid in marketing the Our Journey Heritage Tourism program were created for each museum. These videos are featured on social media, websites and in television interviews now and into the future. Because of these videos, ECCOG added a “You Tube” channel to our marketing efforts and promoted the region and museums in a new method.

ECCOG contracts annually with a public relations firm in Denver to obtain television, radio and print media coverage of events, attractions and economic development opportunities in the four-county area. Promoting the Central Plains to the Front Range is a realistic target for economic development/expansion. Public relations coverage by media is a much less expensive option than purchasing “often unread or unseen paid advertising”. The **Silver Journey** Project was created to market opportunities for pre-arranged small bus tours to area attractions for senior citizens. **Tours ‘R Us** is a similar effort aimed at youth groups. The PR firm handles many of these details for ECCOG. This PR firm also facilitated the production of the twelve museum video shorts mentioned herein.

ECCOG has been the driving force behind the Region 5 Colorado Blueprint initially in Elbert, Lincoln, Kit Carson and Cheyenne Counties. With the change of the governor, the program has changed names and initiatives, but the overall purpose to provide technical assistance and education to businesses continues. Staff develops the agenda, notifies interested parties of upcoming meetings. ECCOG was asked to serve as the fiscal agent for SECTORS Summit II held in 2014 in Denver and to coordinate a team from the Region to participate in the conference. SECTORS was an agenda item at each Blueprint meeting. New efforts are being rekindled for SECTORS for fall 2021. ECCOG initiated the major health care providers after the SECTORS conference to determine if those hospitals/clinics could create a working group to coordinate and share best practices. That group meets quarterly as does the general SECTORS group.

In previous years, ECCOG assisted several entities by writing private and public grant requests. But thanks to the new Colorado Common Grant Application, organizations may easily apply for grants themselves. A license to Colorado Grants Guide was purchased in 2019 and ECCOG staff uses that platform to research grant funding opportunities for the four counties. ECCOG staff circulates grant announcements and workshop information while researching funding opportunities and shares that

information within the region. This facilitates capacity building and makes each organization more resilient by developing their staff.

East Central COG staff has provided one-on-one business consulting services as cash and in-kind match toward the Small Business Development Center program that serves the ECCOG area out of the University of Northern Colorado until 2017. At that time, the Greeley SBDC office provided services to Kit Carson and Cheyenne counties. In 2021, that counseling service changed again for these two counties as a new contract was created with a person from Otero County. With this contract, SBDC counseling services are offered regularly in all four counties. The Prairie Development Corporation also contributes \$5,000 to the SBDC to help with their cash match. Office space in Stratton has also been provided for counseling appointments when needed.

The PDC Board accepted ECCOG staff's recommendation and provided \$6,900 to provide a live webinar series for area business owners. The series features presenter Jon Schallert, small business strategist. Three webinars were held for small businesses...April 10, May 1 and June 5 in 2014. Each session had over 30 attendees. In 2019, another event with Jon Schallert was discussed but his schedule did not allow for the course until later in 2020. Schallert is scheduled to offer his expertise again in September 2021 for the whole region. A local lender and Lincoln County Economic Development Corporation is sponsoring this event with SBDC staff.

The Prairie Development website that provides business financing, startup and consulting information to new and expanding businesses was completely overhauled in 2019. It is now updated monthly to assure that it remains current and relevant.

ECCOG conducted a Broadband Planning Initiative which was completed in the fall of 2019. The Broadband Plan is available online at ccpbroadband.com. Broadband activity in 2021 is increasing as new partners like Mountain View Electric Association and East Central Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) are working independently across the region to provide better access to higher speeds. This offers more options to residents and keeps the cost low via competition and leveraging existing resources. Barriers to market entry are dissolving through the strong desire to help rural residents. Broadband access leads to business attraction while providing remote or teleworking jobs.

Promotion of the East Central Enterprise Zone and the various tax credits continues annually. ECCOG, the Enterprise Zone administrative agency for this Region, developed extensive educational/promotional materials to make area taxpayers aware of new rules requiring pre-certification. A boundary amendment was received in 2019 to allow Cheyenne County as a whole region eligible for tax credits. Region 5 has been approved for re-designation through 2026. Currently, seven contribution projects are active in the region meaning they are supported with cash or in-kind donations for their operation.

An application was submitted in 2014 to the Foreign-Trade Zones (FTZ) Board by the Town of Limon and Lincoln County to establish a foreign-trade zone under the Alternative Site Framework (ASF) at sites in Limon, Colorado, including a service area covering major portions of Elbert and Lincoln counties, and the ability to create subzone in the rest of the Region. It was approved by the U. S. Secretary of Commerce on June 11, 2015. To date, interest has been generated in the FTZ and two companies have possible approval to be in the FTZ.

I. The Colorado Blueprint and Central Plains Regional Blueprint and RTAP

The Colorado Blueprint was a statewide effort to create jobs and expand companies across the state. The key strategy, built on the foundation of the Colorado Blueprint, was developed through the "Bottom-Up"

process initiated by the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade in early 2011...centering on growth in Colorado's key industries across all regions in the state. The Blueprint is the statewide plan to spur Colorado's economy, help businesses grow and attract new jobs to the state. The Blueprint has given the State of Colorado a framework to build a comprehensive economic development plan that aligns existing effort and identifies opportunities for growth and focused investments/efforts.

As Blueprint was developing, it became apparent to the East Central Council of Governments staff that the CEDS process and the Blueprint process needed to work in partnership so as to assure that the regional Blueprint Goals and the CEDS Goals were in sync. Thus by 2013, the Blueprint Committee was a working group within the official CEDS Committee with some participants officially serving on both groups. The 2015 Blueprint vision, mission and goals developed for the Colorado's Central Plains Region (East Central Council of Governments) mirror the vision, mission and goals of this Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. Colorado's governor has reinvented the Blueprint program into Regional Technical Assistance Program (RTAP) with more support from the state partners. We have a new regional manager to aid in our project development and grow the economy. Our working group developed goals which coincide with the Enterprise Zone goals for economic growth and development, as follows:

RTAP/Blueprint Goals

1. Support a diverse economy including support for agriculture, tourism, healthcare and manufacturing to increase or maintain employment levels.
2. Establish/grow/promote regional tourism that attracts visitors to the region.
3. Develop infrastructure that expands multi-modal transportation, enhances commercial corridors, creates healthy communities, and advances modern communication networks.
4. Improve/enhance workforce skills and assist businesses with obtaining qualified skilled/trained employees with emphasis on remote work or location neutral positions.
5. Improve housing inventory focusing on affordability and safety.

Chapter II – The Region and Its Economy

A. GEOGRAPHY AND CLIMATIC DATA

Colorado's Central Plains region is commonly referred to as Colorado Planning and Management Region 5 located on the eastern central plains near the Kansas border. Agriculture is the base economic driver in each of the four counties, but the 8,000 square-mile region with a very diverse geography. The population of the region in 1980 was 21,265. The US Census Bureau population estimate for 2020 in the region was 41,909, almost 100% growth. However, most of that net growth was concentrated in 3% of the geographical area within the region (the very northwest corner of Elbert County continues to experience high residential growth, with much of that population commuting to jobs in Denver).

Map of East Central Colorado



East Central Colorado consists of four counties (Cheyenne, Elbert, Kit Carson and Lincoln) and 15 incorporated communities (Cheyenne Wells and Kit Carson in Cheyenne County; Elizabeth, Kiowa and Simla in Elbert County; Bethune, Burlington, Flagler, Seibert, Stratton and Vona in Kit Carson County; and Arriba, Genoa, Hugo and Limon in Lincoln County). The Western portions of this region, particularly in Elbert County, are greatly impacted by the Denver/Colorado Springs Metropolitan Areas.

The four counties comprising the East Central Council of Local Governments' service area were designated a Planning and Management Region under executive order of the Governor of Colorado in 1972. ECCOG was officially incorporated in 1973 under Chapter 88 of the Colorado Revised Statutes. The region sought and was granted designation from the Economic Development Administration as an Economic Development District in 2009. To meet the criteria for this designation, the make-up of the East Central Council of Governments Board of Directors was changed to meet EDD criteria. The Articles of Association were amended by Resolution on April 1, 2009 to add five non-governmental member seats. The ECCOG Board now consists of thirteen directors: eight local government representatives and five non-government representatives.

Major transportation corridors provide ready access to Elbert County via Interstate 70, Colorado 86 and U.S. 24. Significant acreage and subdivision development have occurred and is likely to continue once

the current recession has passed. The region's geographic location relative to the Front Range is a significant development consideration including both opportunities and challenges.

This region is part of the high plains grasslands ecosystem and it is semi-arid where climate and water are central development issues. The region's climate is continental in nature with four distinct seasons. Major weather systems moving across the Continental Divide can create rapidly changing weather illustrated by spring blizzards and summertime thunderstorms. From a development standpoint, the East Central High Plains of Colorado does have a relatively favorable climate from a people attraction standpoint. Summers can be hot but typically are moderate. Winters can be cold with snow, but there are extended periods of sunshine and Indian summer temperatures.

The region has a history of natural disasters primarily related to drought, winter storms, summer tornados and thunderstorms, with flash flooding during high precipitation periods.

Land use patterns vary across this region. Large farms, ranches and numerous small towns dominate the eastern areas. Industrial and commercial development is relatively limited. Major transportation corridors with associated highway and rail development cross the region. The western portions of the region are experiencing increasing urbanization as the Denver and Colorado Springs Metropolitan Areas are pushing out, resulting in acreages, subdivisions, associated commercial development and an increasing number of hobby and niche farms/ranches.

B. Environmental & Natural Resource Profile

There are no wilderness areas, wild or scenic rivers or national grasslands within this region.

Agricultural lands are addressed in other sections of this report. This region has productive land, but they are vulnerable to deterioration due to the arid climate and light soils. Wind erosion can be a problem. Soil development and renewal requires strong stewardship and aggressive fertilizer inputs when intensively cropped for feed grains.

There are limited State recreational areas within the region. However, this region does offer extensive seasonal hunting opportunities for selected species.

The region has important archeological, historic, and cultural resources associated with both historic Native American and contemporary western settlements. Colorado's Central Plains has several State and National Register historic sites. Heritage and cultural tourism are a priority for the region, and these assets are addressed in greater depth in other sections of this report.

There are no superfund sites, officially designated brownfield sites or significant hazardous materials challenges within the region.

Groundwater is critically important to the region and drinking water supplies are tied to individual and public well fields. An inventory of these resources is available.

The region has extremely limited year-round flowing waterways and these are primarily associated with the Republican River Basin. Due to over appropriation within this basin, there is a legal settlement requiring fundamental changes in its use and that of associated aquifers. The Region has numerous seasonal riverbeds that flow only during periods of intense rain often associated with warmer weather thunderstorms. Flash flooding associated with these dry river and streambeds can pose seasonal

challenges. These challenges are mitigated by the relatively small population base and level of urbanization.

Clean Energy - Opportunities for the development of renewable energy sources on Colorado’s Central Plains in 2020 is reaching a slower pace. Farmers or ranchers who own the parcels on which the turbines are placed benefit annually. The counties’ tax bases have increased. Construction jobs related to development of wind farms come and go with each farm developed but there will be far fewer permanent jobs once the wind farms are in operation. Where lack of transmission lines was once a problem, you could say that has gone with the wind. Bronco Plains constructed south of Flagler will provide 300MW of power while Crossing Trails stretching across Kit Carson and Cheyenne counties will provide 104MW of energy. Another 108 turbines producing 500MW called Cheyenne Ridge has been placed into operation in 2021. The Arriba Wind Farm was approved in 2021 by Lincoln County commissioners for 150MW of power. The winds have provided some needed revenue increases for the farmer and rancher while changing the landscape in this EDD region. Solar farms and bio-diesel plants also are realistic industries to capture and develop in the coming years. Ethanol has never been a target industry due to its dependence on corn. As alternatives to corn are developed for ethanol, it may become an emerging industry, but that is still doubtful due to the high demand for water.

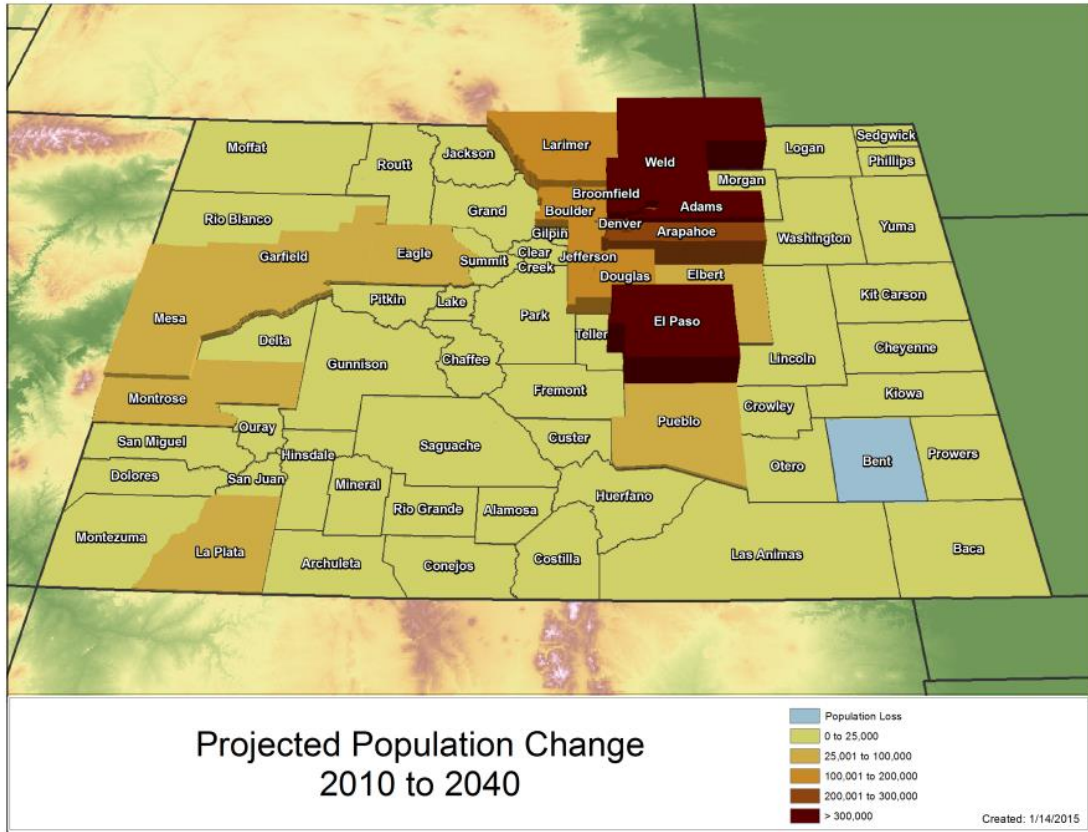
Helium Production - The second largest Helium production facility in the nation is located near Cheyenne Wells. The DCP Midstream Ladder Creek helium plant was acquired and now carries the name of Tumbleweed Midstream. Though not operating at capacity, there still exists the strong possibility that additional helium supplies will be developed, increasing the plant’s production.

C. DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Population is an important indicator for a region. The Region saw important population growth between 1980 and 2020, from slightly more than 21,000 in 1980 to nearly 42,000 residents. Most of the population growth is on 3% of the land in western Elbert County.

	<i>1980</i>	<i>1990</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2020</i>
Cheyenne	2,153	2,395	2,205	1,836	1,795
Elbert	6,850	9,761	20,063	23,086	27,313
Kit Carson	7,599	7,117	7,947	8,270	7,121
Lincoln	4,663	4,516	6,065	5,457	5,680
Region 5 - Whole	21,265	23,789	36,280	38,659	41,909
Colorado	2,889,735	3,303,862	4,328,277	5,029,196	5,807,719

CUS Census Bureau / StatsAmerica 07/07/2021



**Special Note: Census 2020 data is anticipated on August 16, 2021. If this data is released prior to the approval of the CEDS this section may be updated.*

D. HOUSING

Housing Units in 2019	Cheyenne	Elbert	Kit Carson	Lincoln
Total Housing Units (ACS estimate)	989	9,614	3,568	1,988
Occupied	774	9,280	3,004	1,518
Owner Occupied	553	8,354	1,995	1,071
Renter Occupied	221	926	1,009	447
Vacant	215	334	564	470
For Seasonal or Recreational Use	36	117	70	62
Source: U.S. Census Bureau				
Residential Building Permits in 2020	Cheyenne	Elbert	Kit Carson	Lincoln
	Units	Units	Units	Units
Total Permits Filed	6	296	11	9
Single Family	6	296	9	9
Two Family	0	0	2	0
Three and Four Family	0	0	0	0
Five Families and More	0	0	0	0
Source: U.S. Census Bureau				

Suburban development in western Elbert County is changing the overall housing profile for the region. For the balance of Elbert County and the other counties within this region, housing stock is moving to less affordable but generally older. This available and attainable housing is a leading asset for the region's proposed people attraction strategy. Fair market rental housing continues to be limited and when available more expensive than the market can justify. The availability of work-force housing stock is a principal objective of the Region. Even adjusting for substandard housing there is still significant room to attract new population with existing housing stock. Other critical infrastructure ranging from water supply to schools has adequate surplus capacity to absorb this level of growth. Such development could significantly enhance tax bases, workforce availability and domestic markets. Developers have recently begun their own projects in several communities in Lincoln and Kit Carson counties. Housing continues to be in short supply. There are factors that include insufficient water supply, lack of sanitary facilities, and lack of new construction due to limited number of jobs available to attract talent to the area. There were a limited number of new building permits issued in 2020.

E. INFRASTRUCTURE AND OTHER SERVICES

Transportation Systems - The region has a significant highway system with Interstate 70 running 115 miles east west through the region. Additionally, there are State and Federal highways that handle traffic north south as well as parallel to I-70 and east west to Colorado Springs and the Denver Metro area.

There is detailed information, developed by the Colorado Department of Transportation, for all regional transportation modes. These include layered maps and data bases. This information can be found at: <https://dtdapps.coloradodot.info/otis/>

The Council's due diligence considered a wide range of infrastructure and other services considerations. These are listed below. Not all of these considerations are relevant to this Region and were not explored in further depth (e.g., National Parks or Wilderness Areas).

Infrastructure includes:

Highways	Paved	Bladed	Gravel
Congested	Railroads	Rivers/Streams	City Limits
County Lines	Township Lines	Lakes	Public Lands
State Lands	Forests and Parks	Wilderness Area	Wildlife Area
National Parks	Indian Reservations	Military Bases	

Regional Utilities and Services - The Council has identified and assessed available information for the Region's electric utilities, natural gas services, rural water systems and regional landfills.

Comprehensive information exists on current electric, natural gas and land fill services. The following summarizes the major providers:

Electricity

- K.C. Electric Association
- Intermountain Rural Electric
- Southeast Colorado Power Association
- Eastern Colorado Utility Company
- Mountain View Electric Association
- Public Service of Colorado

Natural Gas

Black Hills Energy

Natural gas services are available primarily in incorporated areas. Rural areas have access to LPG, propane and bottled gas through private for-profit suppliers.

Rural Water Systems

This Region is serviced by a combination of municipal and private water supply and wastewater systems. Additional information on these systems is available through the Council office.

Landfills

Elbert County Transfer Station/Elizabeth (No Landfill in Elbert County)
 Lincoln County Landfill - Lincoln County
 Kit Carson County Burlington Landfill - Kit Carson County
 Kit Carson County Transfer Stations at Flagler, Seibert & Stratton
 Firstview Landfill - Cheyenne County

Telecommunications - The Region is serviced by multiple national, regional and local telephone, cable, cellular phone and Internet service providers. Information on those services that are regulated by either the federal or state governments is readily available. However, given the rural nature of this area, information on Internet, cell phone and cable television services is less available. As a general rule these services are available at reasonable costs and levels in the more populated areas of the Region. However, access, quality and competitive options are concerns existing in the less populated and more rural areas. There is a need for a more comprehensive assessment of this critical infrastructure in the future (particularly given the Region’s strategy focus on people attraction).

Childcare – Current childcare services are provided by over thirty locations in the service area of ECCOG through either in licensed home care or daycare facilities. The current licensed facilities have a capacity to serve 1,200 children. The pandemic brought to light that childcare is severely lacking in our region. Lincoln County continues its work to open a full daycare facility while Kit Carson County has begun in earnest the process to open three facilities in their county.

Health and Social Services - The following table summarizes the primary health and social service institutions within the Region.

Table of Health Care/ Assisted Living Services

County	Community	Type	Name
Cheyenne	Cheyenne Wells	Hospital	Keefe Memorial Hospital
Cheyenne	Cheyenne Wells	Nursing Home	Cheyenne Manor
Elbert	Elizabeth	Assisted Living	Goodwin Manor
Elbert	Simla	Nursing Home	Good Samaritan Society
Kit Carson	Burlington	Hospital	Kit Carson County Memorial Hospital
Kit Carson	Burlington	Nursing Home	Grace Manor Care Center
Kit Carson	Burlington	Assisted Living	Burlington Care Center, Inc.
Kit Carson	Burlington	Assisted Living	The Legacy at Burlington
Kit Carson	Flagler	Assisted Living	Aspen Leaf Assisted Living
Kit Carson	Stratton	Assisted Living	Aspen Leaf Assisted Living
Lincoln	Hugo	Hospital	Lincoln Community Hospital
Lincoln	Hugo	Nursing Home	Lincoln Community Nursing Home
Lincoln	Hugo	Assisted Living	Lincoln Park
Lincoln	Limon	Assisted Living	Aspen Leaf Assisted Living
Lincoln	Limon	Assisted Living	Aspen Leaf Assisted Living

The Region is served by the standard State (Federal) supported public social services. Because of the Region’s relatively small market size, the incidence of private and for-profit social services is limited. There are comprehensive private and for-profit social services available in both the Colorado Springs and Denver Metropolitan Areas.

All three hospitals offer specialty clinics on a regular basis. Specialty physicians come from Denver or Colorado Springs. In-patient health care services are also available in communities adjacent to this Region, including La Junta and Lamar to the south, selected communities in Western Kansas, Sterling and Fort Morgan to the North and a complete range of high-end health care services in both Denver and Colorado Springs. Travel distances to these services from some locations in the Region could be an issue, but there is excellent and diverse care availability.



The ECCOG's Information and Resource Directory is available online as often contact information changes and new services are added. Please see our website: <https://www.eccog.com/ecaaa/>.

F. LABOR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS/BUSINESS & INDUSTRY

The Region, despite its relatively small population base, has been able to create significant new employment. Since this data is measuring both wage and salary jobs as well as proprietor jobs, this is an important consideration. Mainly, it is the number of jobs being measured, not the number of people. A common economic strategy in rural areas is multiple job holding. It is believed there is a mix of new job creation coupled with increases in multiple job holdings.

Commuting Patterns - Colorado's Central Plains, like other Great Plains regions, has large geographic workforce regions. Given economic needs and the right opportunities, rural workers will travel relatively long distances to access work. When compared to urban commuting times, these commutes are not unrealistic due to uncongested highways.

Many workers in Elbert County must travel outside of the county to find employment. This is a function of residential development in western Elbert County and residents traveling back into the Denver and Colorado Springs Metropolitan Areas for work.

Commuting patterns for Kit Carson County balance out with a near equal in and out flow of commuting related income.

Lincoln County, because of its prison and transportation corridor related services, is an employment hub attracting workers from the larger region resulting in the net outflow of earnings to other communities.

Production Agriculture - This region is supported by a historic and traditional production agriculture sector dominated by cattle, wheat, corn for grain and livestock forages.

The eastern portion of the region tends to have larger farms and ranches. However, suburbanization of the Western portions of Elbert County provides a different profile with increasing numbers of smaller operations in the 10 to 49 acre and 50 to 179-acre ranges. This urbanization is creating additional smaller farms and also resulting in traditional farm and ranch land being converted to urban uses.

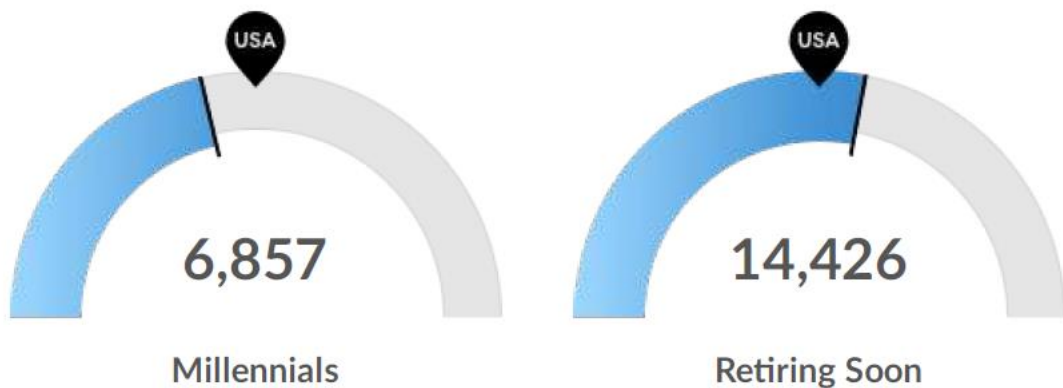
Irrigation is particularly important to some producers of corn for grain and forages. Current and future restrictions on ground water pumping adversely impacts the irrigated ground productivity, corresponding producer incomes and total area economic activity. Movement to production methods requiring less or no irrigation water will be an important development challenge.

	Cattle	Cheyenne	Elbert	Kit Carson	Lincoln	Total
Farms		140	815	207	252	1414
Cattle/Caves		34,782	40,779	173,384	42,645	291,590

USDA NASS AG Census 2017
 Colorado Cattleman's Assoc.

Heritage and Cultural Tourism - The Region has prioritized “heritage and cultural tourism” as a development priority. Funds were secured to enable the development of a comprehensive heritage tourism program strategy and associated marketing materials in partnership with the Prairie Development Corporation.

An estimated 6.3 million consumers live within a 250-mile radius of the region. The population in the region is concentrated in the Denver and Colorado Springs Metropolitan Areas. Additionally, travelers in the hundreds of thousands pass through the Region via Interstate 70 and other transportation corridors. A small percentage of these residents and travelers attracted to the Region for tourism can greatly increase the size and impact of this potential industry on the Region.



Labor Force Annual Averages in 2020	Cheyenne	Elbert	Kit Carson	Lincoln	Total
Total Labor Force	1,103	14,961	4,249	2,375	22,688
5-Year % Change	9.10%	12.80%	-1.70%	9.50%	
10-Year % Change	5.90%	17.70%	-2.70%	10.80%	
Employed	1,076	14,264	4,130	2,269	21,739
5-Year % Change	9.20%	10.90%	-2.20%	8.20%	
10-Year % Change	8.00%	22.60%	-0.70%	12.90%	
Unemployed	27	697	119	106	949
5-Year % Change	3.80%	73.40%	19.00%	49.30%	
10-Year % Change	-41.30%	-35.30%	-43.30%	-21.50%	
Unemployment Rate	2.4	4.7	2.8	4.5	
5-Year % Change	-7.70%	56.70%	21.70%	36.40%	
10-Year % Change	-45.50%	-44.70%	-41.70%	-28.60%	

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Annual Industry Distribution of Jobs in 2020 (NAICS)	Cheyenne		Elbert		Kit Carson		Lincoln	
	Est.	Jobs	Est.	Jobs	Est.	Jobs	Est.	Jobs
Total	98	698	731	3,743	303	2,855	171	2,180
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	13	56	22	76	27	0	7	0
Mining	11	70	4	6	3	0	0	0
Utilities	1	0	2	0	4	29	4	44
Construction	6	0	177	814	30	150	14	90
Manufacturing	2	0	23	113	10	121	3	0
Wholesale Trade	5	52	48	116	27	330	6	14
Retail Trade	9	35	39	494	33	307	27	304
Transportation & Warehousing	10	6	25	22	14	88	14	42
Information	3	0	13	33	8	33	3	0
Finance and Insurance	9	0	26	64	25	118	7	62
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	2	0	29	26	7	15	5	21
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	2	0	117	275	18	37	11	28
Management of Companies and Enterprises	1	0	5	3	1	0	1	0
Admin. & Support & Waste Mgt. & Rem. Services	4	0	58	181	6	0	4	0
Educational Services	2	0	13	647	6	0	4	0
Health Care and Social Services	4	0	26	85	25	192	12	118
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1	0	9	69	3	5	0	0
Accommodation and Food Services	3	11	26	177	23	275	24	0
Other Services (Except Public Administration)	3	0	53	169	14	37	8	0
Public Administration	8	72	18	305	21	34	17	261

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)

D = Not shown to avoid disclosure of confidential information.

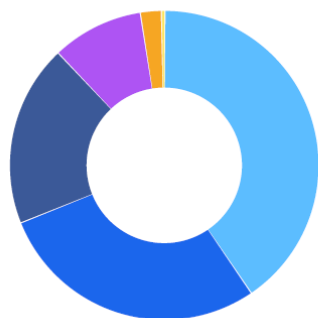
N/A = This item is not available.

Place of Work vs Place of Residence

Where Talent Works		Where Talent Lives	
Name	Year 2020	Name	Year 2020
Elizabeth, CO (Elbert County)	3,753	Elizabeth, CO (Elbert County)	9,259
Burlington, CO (Kit Carson County)	1,842	Kiowa, CO (Elbert County)	2,461
Limon, CO (Lincoln County)	1,757	Burlington, CO (Kit Carson County)	1,928
Flagler, CO (Kit Carson County)	1,001	Limon, CO (Lincoln County)	1,600
Kiowa, CO (Elbert County)	967	Flagler, CO (Kit Carson County)	813

Emsi Q2 2021 Data Set | www.economicmodeling.com

Business Size



	Percentage	Business Count
1 to 4 employees	40.4%	663
5 to 9 employees	28.5%	467
10 to 19 employees	19.0%	312
20 to 49 employees	9.6%	157
50 to 99 employees	2.2%	36
100 to 249 employees	0.4%	6

**Business Data by DatabaseUSA.com is third-party data provided by Emsi to its customers as a convenience, and Emsi does not endorse or warrant its accuracy or consistency with other published Emsi data. In most cases, the Business Count will not match total companies with profiles on the summary tab.*

Emsi Q2 2021 Data Set | www.economicmodeling.com

Education - The region has an educated population. Almost 95% of the population having at least a High School diploma. Completed degree programs show 42.6%. There are also several trades that do not require a degree but do require advanced training and education.

Educational Attainment

Concerning educational attainment, 20.6% of the selected regions' residents possess a Bachelor's Degree (0.6% above the national average), and 12.2% hold an Associate's Degree (3.6% above the national average).



2020 Labor Force Breakdown



G. PUBLIC SAFETY

The Region's detailed information on both public safety infrastructure and performance statistics may be found at <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/publicsafety/about-department-public-safety>. The Region is served by county, municipal and state law enforcement. Primary emergency medical and fire services are organized by community and area with availability throughout the region. In the realm of volunteer fire and ambulance services, volunteers are declining to serve for several reasons which could create a different type of crisis in the future. Recruitment of volunteers is often ongoing and currently underway in several communities of the eastern plains due to retirement and age of volunteers.

When compared to Colorado or the United States, crime rates in this Region are relatively low primarily related to theft, burglaries, and auto thefts. Violent crime is relatively rare. However, a single violent crime event can create a distorted picture when benchmarked against the relatively small regional or community population.

Summary crime statistics are available through the State of Colorado or www.city-data.com.

Chapter III - Regional Goals & Implementation

A. Regional Process

As the four counties have a long history of working together, the process for developing this CEDS for Colorado's Central Plains was immediately able to capitalize on the on-going working relationships among all of the local governments, various advisory committees and the economic development groups throughout the Region. Input on how best to develop a truly regional plan was obtained from Board members of the Prairie Development Corporation and the East Central Council of Governments as well as from representatives of the member entities making up each Council/Corporation. It was determined that utilizing the Blueprint committee members as active participants in or with the ECCOG appointed CEDS Committee brought the needed expertise and continuity to the CEDS process. As this Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy would be built using the previous CEDS and the former Blueprint work, due to the complexity of the resiliency plan and its importance following the recent pandemic, a consultant was hired to conduct community meetings and update the CEDS. ECCOG staff would be involved in discussions and meetings along with COG's numerous partners and committees.

The draft CEDS document is posted online and offered for review for a thirty-day period. The CEDS is posted on the ECCOG web site as of July 27, 2021 and all partners/communities/counties/committee members are notified of the availability to review and comment. Hard copies of the draft are mailed to each of the CEDS Committee Members and the Board of Directors of ECCOG. Print copies are also available to any town or county that so request. ECCOG believes the additional expenses are justified as it is easier to review the CEDS in written form, and the cost of printing it from the website may have been prohibitive for some of the local governments and others. The CEDS Committee may approve the CEDS by August 31, 2021 and the East Central Council of Local Governments will adopt the CEDS and recommended submittal to EDA at their Board Meeting held on September 1, 2021.

B. Development Opportunities & Challenges

A substantial amount of data was collected from municipal and county leaders, business owners, interested parties and members of the economic development organizations. Data collection was conducted thru a

series of one-on-one interviews and phone calls, email responses, four Zoom meetings and a distributed online survey.

The questions were: **What are the Strengths of our region? What are the Weaknesses of our region? What are some Opportunities for our region?** and **What are the Threats for our region?** Participants were encouraged to include as much or little information as they wished. They were also encouraged to include their name and/or organization.

An interesting outcome of the SWOT analysis was that many issues appeared in multiple categories. Some issues that were mentioned often had both positive and negative sides.

For example, the topic may appear to be housing and a lack of housing generally in the work areas. When the responses were reviewed it was not just housing, but water and sanitary facility capability to support the housing units. Without the housing there is a lack of population to fill jobs. There are positions open that could be filled if there was housing for employees. With a lack of housing, new commercial investment is reluctant to come to the area due to a lack of potential employees.

Transportation and infrastructure overall. While the highway system gets high marks from many respondents, the maintenance of those highways is a major concern. While existing highways are in place and in reasonably good repair there is a concern that Federal and State moneys will go to larger population areas and the caliber of the roadways will decrease. This could cause commercial and leisure traffic to take alternative routes outside of the region.

Municipal and County governments get many comments in the strengths section with the ability to enact rules and regulations to meet the local and regional needs. There is a significant amount of cross boundary collaboration. Consistency of the application of codes has been raised. Making this even more contentions is the fact that some areas do not have certain codes [building as an example]. There are also concerns that forces from outside the region will legislate or pass measures at the ballot box that may be contrary to current practice.

Strengths

Strong Leaders

Rural Lifestyle

Transportation

Agriculture

Renewable Energy

Strong community leaders that are aware of the challenges in our area and are willing to search and work hard finding a solution. These same people are common sense, think outside the box individuals that actually know one size fits all does not apply very often. Community leaders who work for the betterment of the region while striving to retain local/regional control. Visible community leaders with a strong work ethic, conservative values and a sense of community identity.

People that live in the region do so in part because of the rural lifestyle. There is often a lower cost of doing business and it is less expensive to live in the region. Many do not like the big city life. During the pandemic a number of people could practice social distancing just through the separation of properties. The region has good

schools where students are in relatively small classes where they can receive attention for their needs. Broadband capability has been expanded but is not yet available at all locations. Cellular service has improved but is still spotty.

I-70 traverses the region and is the gateway from the Kansas border to the greater Denver area. There is a feeling of larger regional support due to the multiple transportation systems, highways, roads and rail. The proximity to major metropolitan areas; Colorado Springs, Denver and Denver International Airport makes the area attractive for companies considering expansion or relocation, individual commuting from high density work areas to a rural lifestyle and a retirement location. I-70 in Limon is a hub for diverse Federal and State highways going in all directions.

A strong agriculture base adapted to the environment. Significant open spaces allow for large scale cattle grazing and appropriate crop production.

The open space allows for the implementation of solar capability due to the high number of days with full sun. Similarly, the open space and winds allow for turbine-based power generation without impacting residential areas.

Weaknesses

Housing

Broadband Access

Transportation Infrastructure

Workforce / Daycare

Resistance to Change

Housing was listed by more people than any other item in this category. The general lack of housing followed by the lack of affordable housing. For the area to grow a business environment, there has to be places for people to live. The rural wages paid by rural businesses [in general] will not support inward migration of a workforce. Housing of all types; single and multi-family across all price spectrums are in short supply.

Consistent broadband access across the area. To encourage work from home or location neutral business opportunities there has to be virtually universal accessibility. Home schooling, remote education at any level also requires consistent access.

While the proximity to I-70 and Federal and State highways is a strength mentioned by many, there is a downside. The constant traffic flow without sufficient maintenance is a high concern. With the distances between residences cities and town roadways need to be taken care of. Additionally, for those that lack their own transportation, even with the highways, they may not be able to go to doctors' appointments, groceries or shopping in general.

Many were concerned that the lack of available workforce would make it difficult to have businesses move to the area. A lack of daycare, especially during the Pandemic, has shown a weakness when a parent or responsible party cannot go to work. Lack of childcare capability can significantly reduce the household income or put children at risk.

Collaborative spirit was a high comment item by many on the Strengths section. Many also expressed a concern that there is often a great deal of talk but a reluctance to move forward. There is some amount of resistance to change and a concern that the rural lifestyle will change. Change adoption is slow, but with limited new residents the need to change continues to be questioned.

Opportunities

Energy

Agriculture

Available Land

Broadband

Green Energy: solar, wind, geothermal, also potentially carbon storage. There is significant open space that could be utilized for renewable energy with transmission lines to a larger grid. There were some comments about using a type of battery storage that would allow for continued electrical production in times of reduced demand. Establishing an energy storage option for produced but not yet needed energy would be ideal and would provide a redundant system if a failure occurs outside our region.

Agriculture that requires low water usage is often mentioned as a significant opportunity. The current available land could be studied by universities and commercial producers for the addition of potential cropping. This would also expose more people to the rural lifestyle. There is available nonproducing land that could be placed into service with minimal disruption to other ongoing activities.

There are significant amounts of land available for commercial development with highway or rail access. As land becomes more expensive and less available in major metropolitan areas, the region is an excellent location. Warehousing, distribution, break bulk and cross dock supply chain operations could be considered for the open space with buildings configured to suit.

There is plenty of land available for housing. Density and location would depend on available water and sanitary considerations. Attracting new residents will increase the opportunity for childcare, additional small businesses, grocery stores and potentially medical clinics.

Leveraging broadband capabilities would allow for increased connectivity for remote education and telemedicine. This could also attract telecommuters, work from home individuals and small businesses.

Threats

Lack of Housing

Forced change

Population

Large Scale Farming

Distance / Rural

The lack of housing and the current high cost of construction or rental may deter people from moving to the area. The lack of potential for growth may cause some people to not come to the area. If the population continues to decline, new and existing business may find it cost prohibitive to be in the region.

There is a significant concern that people outside the area will attempt to continue to force additional regulations in the region. Oil and gas regulation changes, legal changes to agricultural methods, both crops and cattle, and 'city based' rules may have a negative impact on the region. Government overreach, negative attitudes from urban areas are a concern.

The aging population and declining work force may further reduce the declining customer base of local businesses. The potential for a larger operation that has the capability or equivalent product of existing businesses may cause them to retire out or close.

Larger scale farming that may be able to take advantage of economies of scale may reduce the number of family farms. With the reduction of workers needed the potential for increased population decreases. Additional nonlocal influence may threaten the rural lifestyle.

For some people the distance to major metropolitan areas, seen by others as an opportunity, causes a feeling of isolation. There is a concern that there will not be the people or infrastructure needs to sustain the communities in the region.

C. Goals & Strategies

Based on the SWOT survey responses and the East Central Enterprise Zone strategies for economic development, five goals were developed for East Central Council of Governments and the communities served by ECCOG to address the recovery and resiliency needs. By mitigating the service disruptions caused by natural and man-made disasters or economic downturns, the region becomes more resilient to sustain their businesses and communities.

2021 ECCOG Goals
Support a diverse economy including support for agriculture, tourism, healthcare and manufacturing to increase or maintain employment levels.
Establish/grow/promote regional tourism that attracts visitors to the region.
Develop infrastructure that expands multi-modal transportation, enhances commercial corridors, creates healthy communities and advances modern communication networks.
Improve/enhance workforce skills and assist businesses with obtaining skilled/trained employees with an emphasis on remote work or location neutral positions.
Improve housing inventory focusing on affordability and safety.

Chapter IV – Economic Resiliency

A. Mitigation and Recovery

There was a parallel effort to revisit and enhance the safety, security of the extended region through mitigation and recovery. These efforts have been completed and agreed to. The *Northeast Colorado Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan* information is included, in a reduced form, so that efforts would not be duplicated.

The five-year update of the *Northeast Colorado Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan* is a collaborative effort of nine counties and their local partners, including municipalities, fire protection districts, hospitals, schools and other special districts and stakeholders. The counties of **Cheyenne, Kit Carson, Lincoln, Logan, Morgan, Phillips, Sedgwick, Washington** and **Yuma** and their partners participated in the 2020 update of this document. This allows for regional participation in the identification of incident types, mitigation prior to incidents and recovery methodology post incident. All incidents are reviewed for actions and potential next steps for mitigation.

“Over the years through cooperative efforts, dozens of preparedness and mitigation projects have been completed in communities across the region, resulting in improved public safety and greater awareness of protective measures that can be taken by individuals, families, schools, businesses and local governments.

Formal approval of this plan by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) also assures that participating jurisdictions in the region will remain eligible for federal grant funding under FEMA’s Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) program to include the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program and Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) program. Participation in the multi-hazard mitigation planning process also allows jurisdictions to earn planning credits for the National Flood Insurance Program’s Community Rating System (CRS).

In Colorado and across the U.S., proactive mitigation planning has proven to help reduce the costs of disaster response and recovery to communities and property owners by protecting critical community facilities, reducing liability exposure, and minimizing overall community impacts and disruption. The mitigation actions recommended in this plan are based on an assessment of hazards and risks and a planning process that engaged a wide range of stakeholders, including the public. Natural hazards were evaluated with respect to probability (based on historical frequency), magnitude (estimated severity of consequences) and priority (significance for future planning and mitigation).

This updated version of the Northeast Colorado Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan brings the history of recorded hazard events up to date, including the pandemic hazard and the coronavirus COVID-19 crisis that broke out during the process of updating this plan and will continue to cause impacts and yield lessons long after this document is formally adopted. The plan also reassesses risks from other natural hazards, identifies vulnerable community assets, updates goals and objectives, and proposes a mitigation strategy for achieving goals based on a range of distinct mitigation actions.” *Northeast Colorado Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan*

County	Participating Jurisdictions	
Cheyenne	Cheyenne County	
Kit Carson	Kit Carson County	Town of Flagler
	City of Burlington	Town of Stratton
Lincoln	Lincoln County	Town of Hugo
Logan	Logan County	City of Sterling
Morgan	Morgan County	City of Fort Morgan
	City of Brush	Quality Water District
Phillips	Phillips County	Town of Haxtun
	City of Holyoke	
Sedgwick	Sedgwick County	
Washington	Washington County	
Yuma	Yuma County	

Northeast Colorado Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan – Elbert County aligns with counties to the west.

Natural Hazard Category	Natural Hazard
Meteorological Hazards	Blizzards and Severe Winter Storms
	Dam Failures and levee Failures*
	Drought
	Dust Storms
	Flooding
	Fog
	Hailstorms
	Lightning
	Noxious Weeds/Tumbleweeds
	Straight-Line Winds
	Temperature Extremes
	Tornadoes
	Wildland and Grassland Fires*
Geologic Hazards	Earthquakes
	Landslides
Biological Hazards	Pandemic
	Pestilence
	Zoonotic Diseases

** Dam/levee failures and wildland/grassland events may be human caused, but generally have a natural hazard component that trigger or expand the event (i.e., flooding for dam/levee failures and lightning or wind for wildland/grassland fires). Northeast Colorado Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan*

“At the regional level (for Regional Base Plan), the only natural hazard that was added to the list of hazards addressed in the plan was the **Pandemic** hazard, due to the outbreak of the *coronavirus COVID-19* crisis during the updates to this plan. The pandemic hazard is profiled in the Regional Base Plan and is also addressed in the County Plan Elements, including its significance for planning/mitigation, vulnerable community assets, and local mitigation actions. No hazards were deleted from the regional analysis.” *Northeast Colorado Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan*

Mitigation Actions 2020 -2025 Northeast Colorado Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan

The following charts are from the current approved Mitigation Plan. Each of these activities has a direct impact on individuals, families, schools, businesses and local governments. The activities of this CEDS will support the ultimate completion of these goals by the respective parties. The implementation of these actions will reduce the impact and enhance all parties.

Cheyenne County		
#	Proposed Mitigation Actions	Responsible Agency
1	Determine feasibility and costs of installing community safe room in two facilities: (1) Cheyenne Manor Nursing Facility and (2) Housing Authority of the Town of Cheyenne Wells public housing community for families and senior/disabled individuals.	OEM, Cheyenne Manor Nursing Facility, Cheyenne Wells Housing Authority
2	Conduct evacuation planning and community education and involvement activities for the Town of Cheyenne Wells -- reimplement call-tree notification system.	Cheyenne Wells Town Manager
3	Take steps to qualify for and maintain participation in the National Flood Insurance Program for the Town of Kit Carson.	Kit Carson Town Manager/Council
4	Implement Countywide emergency management public education program.	OEM
5	Conduct evacuation planning and community education and involvement activities for the Town of Kit Carson.	Kit Carson Town Manager, OEM
6	Reach out to public and business community to promote tornado safe rooms.	OEM
7	Develop a comprehensive After-Action Report that documents COVID-19 impacts and captures lessons learned related to government services, public safety, education, agriculture, health care and the economy.	OEM with EMS, Public Health and Medical Services Partners
8	Develop a countywide mitigation strategy that outlines recommended actions that can be taken at different stages of a pandemic by individuals/families at home, schools and childcare facilities, assisted living facilities, workplaces, health care facilities, and community- and faith-based organizations.	OEM with EMS, Public Health and Medical Services Partners
9	Develop a medical surge capacity plan, in cooperation with local, regional and state partners, to improve capabilities for scaling up the coordinated delivery of health interventions during a pandemic event, including vaccinations, patient transport and care, medical staffing, and critical medical and personal protective equipment.	OEM with EMS, Public Health and Medical Services Partners
10	Develop a plan for acquiring, maintaining and refreshing a local stockpile of vaccines, medicines (including antibiotics and antivirals), and equipment (such as masks, gowns, and ventilators) and identify reliable vendors and other external sources to supplement local stockpiles.	OEM with EMS, Public Health and Medical Services Partners
11	Develop public education guidelines for communicating with the public during a pandemic that ensures information is timely, accurate, coordinated, and includes provisions for addressing rumors, misinformation and public perceptions of risk.	OEM with EMS, Public Health and Medical Services Partners

Northeast Colorado Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan

Kit Carson County		
1	Purchase and install emergency generators in the following facilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burlington Community Center (designated public shelter) • Burlington Wastewater Treatment Plant • Blending Plant, Well 11, Well 12 and Well 13 • Aspen Leaf Assisted Living Center in Flagler Wheatland Conference Center in Flagler (designated public shelter).	City of Burlington, Town of Flagler, OEM
2	Purchase new transformer for substation or build new substation on north side of town to service critical infrastructure.	City of Burlington, OEM
3	Establish emergency public shelter for the Town of Stratton at the Church of God.	Town of Stratton, OEM
4	Update building codes in the City of Burlington.	Burlington City Manager

5	Update City of Burlington Comprehensive Plan and incorporate goals, concepts and recommended mitigation actions from the Kit Carson County Hazard Mitigation Plan Element.	Burlington City Manager
6	Continue to coordinate a countywide emergency management public education program, including the use of social media to inform citizens of Red Flag warnings, severe weather alerts, and detours/road closures.	OEM
7	Promote benefits of tornado shelters and safe rooms and foster their construction.	OEM, Municipalities
8	Evaluate the capacity of two bridges in the Flagler area to convey high-water flows following heavy rainfall events and determine if improvements (e.g., new bridges or culverts) are needed: (1) bridge on County Road 4 approximately 3 miles north of Flagler (Duck Creek) and (2) bridge on County Road 5 approximately 5 miles south of Flagler (S. Fork Republican River).	Kit Carson County Road and Bridge Department
9	Develop a comprehensive After-Action Report that documents COVID-19 impacts and captures lessons learned related to government services, public safety, education, agriculture, health care and the economy.	OEM with EMS, Public Health and Medical Services Partners
10	Develop a countywide mitigation strategy that outlines recommended actions that can be taken at different stages of a pandemic by individuals/families at home, schools and childcare facilities, assisted living facilities, workplaces, health care facilities, and community- and faith-based organizations.	OEM with EMS, Public Health and Medical Services Partners
11	Develop a medical surge capacity plan, in cooperation with local, regional and state partners, to improve capabilities for scaling up the coordinated delivery of health interventions during a pandemic event, including vaccinations, patient transport and care, medical staffing, and critical medical and personal protective equipment.	OEM with EMS, Public Health and Medical Services Partners
12	Develop a plan for acquiring, maintaining and refreshing a local stockpile of vaccines, medicines (including antibiotics and antivirals), and equipment (such as masks, gowns, and ventilators) and identify reliable vendors and other external sources to supplement local stockpiles.	OEM with EMS, Public Health and Medical Services Partners
13	Develop public education guidelines for communicating with the public during a pandemic that: (1) ensures information is timely, accurate and coordinated, (2) addresses the needs of non-English speaking residents, and (3) includes provisions for addressing rumors, misinformation and public perceptions of risk.	OEM with EMS, Public Health and Medical Services Partners

Northeast Colorado Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan

Lincoln County		
1	Obtain generators for schools in the county and for the events building at the fairgrounds.	Lincoln County Commissioners, Lincoln County OEM, Schools
2	Continue hazard awareness and outreach efforts to educate the public about natural hazards; conduct an annual Awareness Week in conjunction with the County Fair to inform citizens about current preparedness and mitigation efforts in Lincoln County.	Lincoln County OEM, Public Health, Schools
3	Evaluate feasibility and requirements for installing back-up generator power for new and existing sirens in all communities.	Lincoln County OEM, Town Managers
4	Improve communications interoperability and emergency fire response by supporting existing and expanded Multi-Agency Coordination (MAC) Group operations.	Lincoln County Sheriff, Lincoln County OEM, Fire Protection Districts
5	Improve regional communications and public notification by increasing 911 capabilities through CenturyLink, integrating the use of Text-to-911, and expanding use of the Integrated Public Alert & Warning System (IPAWS).	Lincoln County Sheriff, Lincoln County OEM, Towns
6	Conduct a public awareness and education campaign to promote the installation of tornado safe rooms in new and existing construction. Provide	Lincoln County OEM

	educational materials and construction specifications through multiple media about the life-saving benefits of safe rooms.	
7	Reduce repetitive minor flood events in the Town of Hugo: (1) evaluate the effectiveness of ongoing efforts to improve stormwater runoff in the drainage ditch that runs through town (including previous sediment control efforts), (2) remove sediment that has collected between 5 th St. and 6 th St. from 7 th Ave. to 10 th Ave., and (3) develop a long-term strategy for addressing any remaining stormwater management issues.	Hugo Town Clerk, Public Works, Chief Marshal
8	Continue to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) by enforcing local floodplain regulations and implementing or improving upon effective floodplain and stormwater management practices.	Lincoln County, Town of Limon
9	Develop a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), to include an assessment of wildfire risks throughout Lincoln County and recommendations for reducing fuel loads, coordinating open burns and creating defensible spaces.	OEM with local Fire Protection Districts and CO Division of Fire Prevention and Control
10	In cooperation with agriculture experts and practitioners, evaluate strategies and mitigation measures that can be established to address risks created by the movement and accumulation of tumbleweeds along transportation routes and around improved property (i.e., buffers, keeping current plants from producing seed, removing tumbleweeds from fence lines and other measures to decrease the spread of seeds).	OEM with CSU Extension Services
11	Develop a plan for acquiring, maintaining and refreshing a local stockpile of vaccines, medicines (including antibiotics and antivirals), and equipment (such as masks, gowns, and ventilators) and identify reliable vendors and other external sources to supplement local stockpiles.	OEM with EMS, Public Health and Medical Services Partners
12	Develop public education guidelines for communicating with the public during a pandemic that: (1) ensures information is timely, accurate and coordinated, (2) addresses the needs of non-English speaking residents, and (3) includes provisions for addressing rumors, misinformation and public perceptions of risk.	OEM with EMS, Public Health and Medical Services Partners

Northeast Colorado Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan

CHAPTER V - Evaluation Plan

A. Measuring the Goals and Objectives

Assessing the implementation of the CEDS and resiliency plan begins with communication between ECCOG staff and the municipalities and counties staff on what efforts are in process related to the five goals. Knowing what progress is being made and what obstacles are prohibiting progress and action is beneficial to partners locally and regionally. Engaging the CEDS Committee on a quarterly basis to gain feedback and insight with peer interaction to help problem solve or duplicate success will increase the odds of success.

Monitoring jobs created or retained, new business startups or closures will bring attention to industry sectors or projects that need attention or assistance. East Central Council of Governments will actively seek feedback from the ECCOG board members, Prairie Development board members and the regional partners each spring through a survey, on site visits, phone calls or in person meetings as weather and time allows.

Each community and county will be contacted annually about the progress being made for their projects. Regional projects or projects where there is direct involvement from the EDD/ECCOG will be monitored on more frequent intervals.

The yearly evaluation reports will be shared with the CEDS Blueprint Committee, the ECCOG Board and the Prairie Development Corporation Board. At least once annually, the ECCOG Board will include in its Board's agenda, a specific agenda item(s) to discuss general regional economic development successes, needs, and to outline any needed amendments/adjustments to the project list and/or to the CEDS.

For each of the five economic development goals, the regional action plan in this CEDS details actions, expected outcomes (with measurable results) and a timeline. The annual report will provide progress on each of these goals and items. These performance factors are subject to refinement and revisions as part of the on-going CEDS process. These performance factors will include:

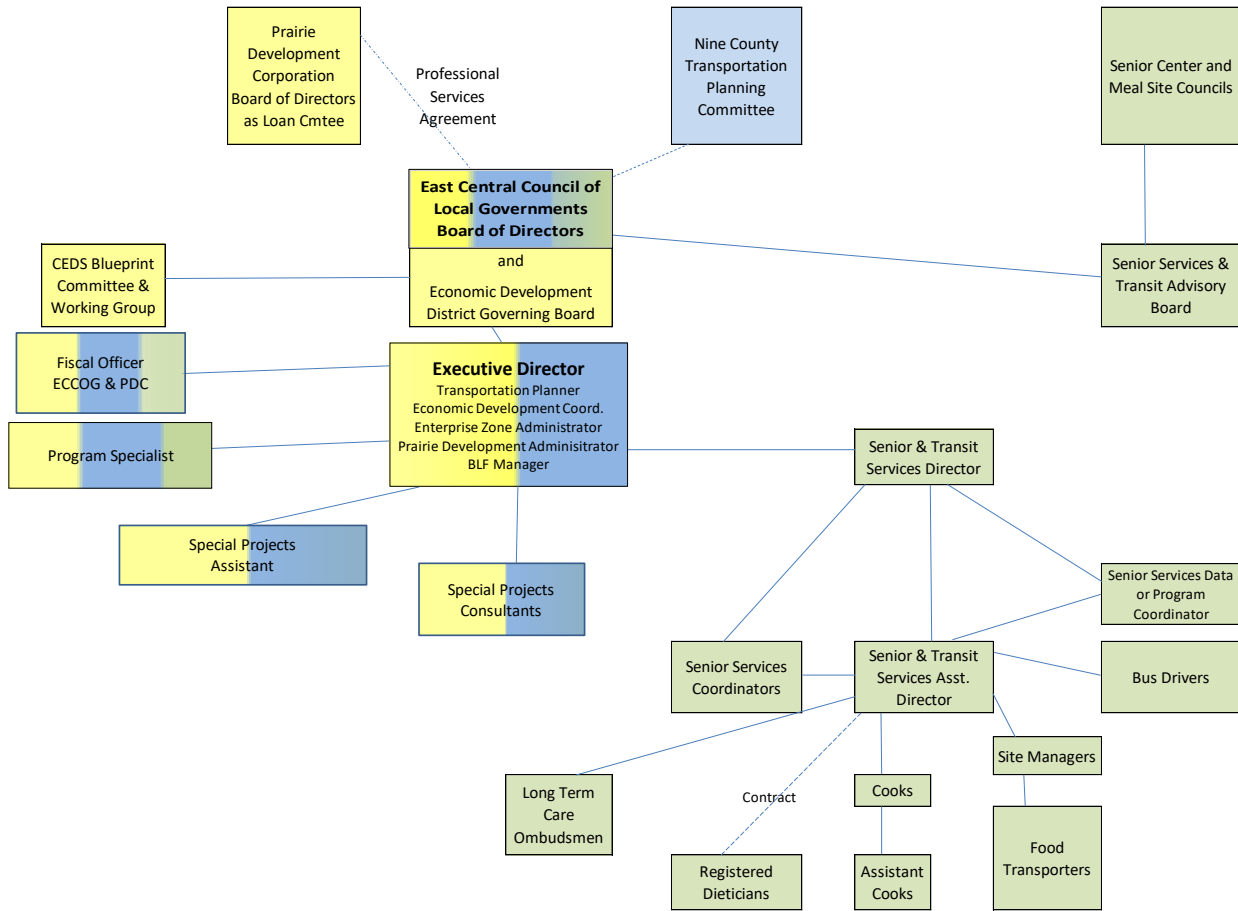
- Number of jobs created as a result of CEDS implementation
- Number of jobs retained as a result of CEDS implementation
- Number of new businesses in the region; new emerging industries in the region
- Amount of capital that existing businesses have accessed/acquired as a result of the CEDS program implementation
- New capital-accessing programs implemented Amount of private sector investment in the region as a result of CEDS implementation
- Amount of jobs/businesses created in the renewable energy industry
- Amount/value of new infrastructure built in the region as a result of CEDS implementation
- New workforce development/training programs initiated in the region as a result of CEDS implementation
- Changes in the economic environment of the region
- Recommendations concerning changes, revisions, deletions needed for goals, objectives, and strategies that are not producing the desired level of outcomes or are no longer relevant
- Recommendations regarding new goals, objectives, and strategies needed to pursue new opportunities
- Economic development staff will collect, monitor, analyze and present data and information on economic conditions in the region in an on-going manner and share this information as a resource to stakeholders in the region. This data and information will include economic indicators such as labor force, jobs, unemployment, wages, changes in industries, retail sales, population, real estate activity, as well as national and state trends.

Through collaboration and leveraging of assets, the CEDS evaluation plan identifies time and cost savings that benefit not only our region but the state of Colorado. Therefore, review of the plan throughout the five years is not only necessary but imperative.

Attachment A – ECCOG Organization Chart

East Central Council of Local Governments

2019 Organization Chart



ECCOG Organizational Divisions	
Division 1	Administration and Community Development
Division 2	Economic/Business/Housing Development
Division 3	Area Agency on Aging/Outback Express

Rev. 8-07-2019