

CHAFFEE

COUNTY

CHAFFEE

open for business

COUNTY

I love Chaffee County for all the obvious reasons: the biking, hiking, fishing, hunting, skiing, kayaking, and rafting - those are all phenomenal. But what really drives our desire to be here is the small and unpretentious community. I know when I need something, I can call whomever I need whenever I need.

~ Carlin Walsh, Co-founder and General Manager, Elevation Beer Co.

COMMUNITY

CHAFFEE COUNTY, COLORADO

BREATHTAKING VISTAS

CREATIVE SPIRITS

BOLD VISIONS

We are the crossroads of Colorado.

Nature powers our inspiration.

History stirs our entrepreneurial spirit.

A sense of community anchors our life.



CHAFFEE COUNTY
a place to belong • a place to become

Front cover photo & this photo © 2012 H. Mark Weidman

ROOTS

If we go way back in time, these communities were built as working class blue collar communities; and mining and railroad attracted so many people from throughout the world....they had an independence about them.

~ Charlie Forster, Co-CEO and Mountain Region President, Collegiate Peaks Bank

Photo courtesy of Salida Museum Association

Photo courtesy of Salida Museum Association

Photo courtesy of Salida Museum Association

Photo courtesy of Buena Vista Heritage Museum

Photo courtesy of John Gray

CROSSROADS

Photo courtesy of Baby Doe Studios

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HISTORY

The entrepreneurial spirit of the Great American West runs through the valleys, canyons, and mountain passes of scenic Chaffee County. Explorers and settlers of the 1800s, many of them miners, bet their future on the treasure in the mountains, streams and beneath the surface of the county. They often gave up everything for the chance to strike it rich.

Yesterday's miners with their mules, picks, and shovels have been replaced by today's entrepreneurs with computers, high-speed Internet access, and the latest advances in technology. Our natural surroundings still offer up their wealth through the many outdoor activities that enrich the lives of our families and visitors.

History is etched in the Victorian storefronts in downtown Salida, which grew with the arrival of the railroad and now provide a home for the Colorado *Certified Creative Arts District*. Additionally, Buena Vista's downtown revitalization spotlights a core value of the county: honoring the past through a bold reinvention of the future.

Over the years, many different people have called this special place home. Whether newly arrived or part of a multi-generational family, Chaffee County stands at the crossroads where the roots of our history inspires the growth of your future plans and dreams.

FUN FACTS:

Established in 1879.

Named for Jerome Chaffee, who lobbied for Colorado statehood and became one of it's first US senators.

The Hutchinson Homestead Ranch, on Highway 50, was established in 1868 before Colorado became a state.

Buena Vista incorporated in 1879 and Poncha Springs in 1880.



There is an energy and excitement here...lots of small things are happening. Add up the pieces and you have a place that's happening. And these pockets of prosperity are feeding the economy.
~ Jed Selby, Co-founder and President, South Main

SYNERGY

INNOVATION

BUSINESS CLIMATE

Stories of risk-and-reward unfold across our valleys and mountains. Anticipate a need, seize the opportunity, and build a successful business. Our businesses mix self-reliance with a dash of collaboration and support from like-minded pioneering spirits.

Success requires innovation in the face of constant change. The county's businesses have shown resilience time after time: railroads and mining have given way to tourist-focused and creative industries, while the roots of ranching and farming support today's growing local agriculture movement.

We boast a growing hand-crafted beer and libation industry. A global allergen-free snack food company now calls Salida home. These new businesses supplement our existing specialty manufacturers and light industry, bringing diversity to our growing business base.

Bold expression of self, the reinvention of ideas, and the support of a strong community – those three themes anchor business in Chaffee County. Whether you plan to relocate or grow your business, you will find an active community of like-minded people creating meaningful work fueled by innovative ideas.

FUN FACTS:

2010 labor force participation rate was 62% of people age 18 and older.

The highest percentage of employed persons are ages 35-49.

The number of county businesses grew 11.2% from 2001 to 2012.

33.3% of residents have a bachelors degree or higher.

INVESTMENT

Recruiting is less difficult here than in other communities because it is such a desirable place to live. I had three physicians call in one month and say they would be interested in moving to this community, is there an opportunity for me.

~ Robert Morasko, CEO, Heart of the Rockies Regional Medical Center

CAPACITY

View from inside Salida's new wastewater treatment plant, 2012

Photo courtesy of City of Salida

INFRASTRUCTURE

Chaffee County has always played host to one of the busiest corridors of Colorado. Bisected by Highways 50 and 285, the county sits at an economic crossroads, which serves the larger intermountain region. Scenic Highway 24 provides quick access to the I-70 corridor. Two airports serve the area.

The county offers high speed and reliable Internet services, with fully redundant backbone services and multiple last mile ISPs. To serve our workforce, Buena Vista is home to a campus of Colorado Mountain College, ranked 17th in the nation by CNN/Money in 2013.

Stewardship of county resources remains a priority. Salida is completing a new state-of-the-art wastewater treatment plant. A privately run residential drop-off and commercial pickup recycling company serves the county. Our downtown areas embrace mixed use, including Buena Vista's South Main development, which provides living, office and retail space while preserving open space on the banks of the Arkansas River.

Overall, the county's ample office, warehouse and commercial spaces provide new businesses and those looking to expand with the needed capacity and services for growth.

FUN FACTS:

Central Colorado Regional Airport, at 7946 feet, has a 8300 foot runway.

Harriet Alexander Field has a 7348 foot asphalt runway, which was resurfaced in 2011.

CDOT 2011 traffic counts for Highway 50 reported over 13,000 daily one-way trips along the corridor.



POWERED BY NATURE

We are central in the state, a couple of hours from major cities and we've got some of the best of Colorado's natural resources minutes away. And because of this, we draw people from all educational backgrounds, all age brackets, and from all over the country.
~ Judy Hassell, Executive Director, Buena Vista Chamber of Commerce

PLAY MORE

TOURISM AS INDUSTRY

Blue skies, clear streams, and snow-capped mountains – the inspiration to create is in the air we breathe and the vistas we see every morning. Our everyday reality is your vacation postcard.

Who wouldn't want to start a business in Chaffee County?

With one of Colorado's only natural snow ski areas and the Arkansas River's unparalleled whitewater rafting, kayaking and fishing, Chaffee County motivates the entrepreneur to create. To design an amazing product. To offer an irresistible new service.

Visitors come from all over the world to participate in every outdoor sports imaginable... or just to relax in the beauty of the area. And they purchase the best of what our tourist-based businesses offer. If tourist-related products and services are your specialty, then Chaffee County is the place to work, live, and breathe your outdoor passion.

FUN FACTS:

- The county covers 1000 square miles, 80% of which are public lands.
- Colorado outdoor recreation generates \$13.2 billion in consumer spending.
- Visitor numbers are increasing: County lodging tax receipts increased 24.4% from 2011-2012.



BUENA VISTA

PONCHA SPRINGS

SALIDA

Photo © 2013 Kenney Selby

Photo © 2012 H. Mark Weidman

The key message for Chaffee County is "Be What You Want To Be." Poncha Springs, Buena Vista and Salida are very different – but what these towns have in common is a high level of intellectual talent and a terrific quality of life in terms of recreation, health care and education.
~Paul Erickson, CEO, Sangre De Cristo Electric Association

COMMUNITY who we are

A honk and a wave. Kids riding their bikes to school or to the skate park. A couple hand-in-hand on the bike path.

Whether you're single, a young family, or a retired couple enjoying the fall of life, Chaffee County is a family's paradise. Here are just a handful of our highly ranked activities: FIBArk, PaddleFest, Gold Rush Days, Fourth of July parades, and the annual lighting of Christmas Mountain, complete with fireworks. Other cultural and community opportunities include concerts, lectures, and volunteering at service organizations.

Chaffee County, however, is much more than the sum of our outdoor activities. At our collective core is a deep belief in education. We proudly invest in our schools and support our students by providing the funds to build new schools, retain great teachers and ensure access to the best the Internet has to offer.

Chaffee County is family friendly, and we value and nurture the relationships that come from working, learning, and playing together in this place we call home.

FUN FACTS:

Median age is 47.2.

Chaffee County population grew 8% in the last 10 years.

Home ownership rate was 74.5% from 2007-2011.

The average commute to work is 15 minutes, and that might just be on your bike.

Photo © 2012 H. Mark Weidman

CREATIVE

I am just blown away at the number of artist-owned galleries and how so many of the arts have followed: theatre, dance, poets, writers and musicians.

~ Jack Chivvis, long-time Salida artist



POTENTIAL

ARTS AND CULTURE

The grandeur of our twelve 14,000-foot peaks has inspired some of our best creative minds. It's no wonder that for years award-winning artists have been making Chaffee County home. Visual arts, community theater, musical concerts, and other creative endeavors – the artistic wealth inspires us year-round.

Downtown Salida was named one of two *Certified Creative Districts* in Colorado and received funding to help develop a cohesive and sustainable arts district. The Collegiate Peaks Forum sponsors events featuring nationally recognized lecturers in philosophy, religion or science. The Salida-Aspen Concerts, started in 1977, hosts world-renown musicians. Both Buena Vista and Salida are home to history museums and public libraries, which serve visitors and locals of all ages.

Our imaginative and creative culture makes space for you to etch your own expressions of beauty and to appreciate the creative impulse of the community.

FUN FACTS:

Refurbished from the Edison Electric Light Company steam power plant built in 1887, the Salida SteamPlant offers concert and community event venues.

Chaffee County Council on the Arts has plans to acquire property at the gateway to downtown Buena Vista for a permanent gallery and atelier.

Salida ArtWalk, started in 1993, highlights local artists with events, demonstrations and the famous miniatures sale.

NATURE

I'm in Chaffee County because of the beauty, activities, the recreation we have to offer, and it's slower paced than a lot of other areas. I think that's healthy.
~Jeff Post, Owner, First Colorado Land Office

HAPPINESS

QUALITY OF LIFE

Health and wellness is not just a phrase here, it's a way of life.

Before or after work or on the weekend, you can walk, run, paddle or bike in one of the most pristine valleys of the American West - good for the heart and soul. At any point in the valley, you are only minutes away from the Sawatch Range or the Arkansas River.

The Heart of the Rockies Regional Medical Center provides the best in traditional healthcare while our many alternative medicine providers offer residents other options for maintaining a healthy life. And if all you need is a quick soak in a natural hot springs, your choices range from world-class luxury to rustic charm.

Chaffee County provides a spectacular backdrop for the perfect day off. Because of the stewardship on behalf of the visionaries who have gone before us, the wealth of Chaffee County today lies in its scenic vistas, historic downtowns, and vibrant communities.

FUN FACTS:

Home to 12 of Colorado's 58 14,000+ foot peaks.

Access to four federally designated wilderness areas.

The Arkansas River and Colorado Trail run north and south through the county.

Built in 2008, Heart of the Rockies Regional Medical Center is a 25-bed Critical Access Hospital.

BREATHTAKING



FINAL WORDS

Chaffee County does not need to be only a one-time vacation or dream reserved for when you retire some day, although retirement here can be a treasure in its own right.

Whether you consider moving your business here or starting a new one, it makes perfect sense in a county with this many resources, strategically located in the heart of Colorado.

We'd love to help you make your dream a reality. Please contact us at the Chaffee County Economic Development Corporation.

Wendell Pryor, Director
719 239 2018
wendell@chaffeecountyedc.com

Or visit our website:
ChaffeeCountyEdc.com

CHAFFEE COUNTY

a place to belong • a place to become

People come here because they love this area. You take a big risk to move here when you've had a beautiful career in big cities. But you change your life because this is what you want and then I really believe the right things follow.

~ Jane Pinto, CEO Pinto Barn, Inc. (20yr resident from NYC)

OPEN for **Business**
Chaffee County
Economic Development Corp.



**Chaffee County Economic
Development Corporation**
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