



*Synergy* by Gabriel Reising, Artist-in-Residence at Caribou Ranch

# 2017 State Legislative Agenda **Boulder County** | Colorado



**BOULDER COUNTY ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE PROGRAM**

The Artist-in-Residence (AiR) Program gives artists a chance to pursue their work for one week in the inspiring landscape and history of Caribou Ranch Open Space. Boulder County's AiR Program also gives the public tangible connections to today's musicians, painters, illustrators, photographers, visual/film artists, sculptors, performers, poets, writers, composers, and crafts/artisans.

Artists apply for the program each year in February and selected artists stay at the historic DeLonde Barn for up to seven days during a time frame from July through September. In return, artists are required to donate one piece of work to Boulder County which is representative of their stay at Caribou Ranch.

The Boulder County Parks & Open Space Department continually works to improve the breadth of core programs through innovative projects and programs that increase our community's awareness, support, and stewardship of local open space.

The AiR Program offers residents an opportunity to view open space in a new way, which opens the door to further education and outreach opportunities. Through art we can flesh out a sense of place, develop an atmosphere of inclusiveness, and foster appreciation for the beauty of environmental and cultural resources. The Artist-in-Residence Program demonstrates this connection and is truly a legacy for future generations.

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**CONTRACT LOBBYING ON BUDGET ISSUES**

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## BOULDER COUNTY AT A GLANCE

### THE PEOPLE

- Population – 319,372
- Median Age – 35.7 years
  - Youth under 18 – 20.74%
  - Seniors – 11.1%
- Race
  - White/Anglo – 87.7%
  - Asian – 4.2%
  - African American – 0.9%
  - Two or more races – 3%
  - Other – 3.7%
- Ethnicity
  - Hispanic/Latino - 13.8%
  - Am. Indian & Alaska Native – 0.4%
- Poverty rate – 14.6%
- Housing – Historically expensive housing market and rental market with low vacancies. In Boulder, 59% of renters spend more than 30% of their income on rent (national average is 52%).
- Immigration – Approx. 33,000 foreign-born residents

### THE LAND

Public land divided among local, state and federal managers, including the United States Forest Service, Boulder County Open Space, the City of Boulder and State Parks.

- 753 Square Miles
- 40% Private Ownership
- 60% Public Ownership
- Boulder County Open Space
  - 100,000 + acres county owned & managed
  - 29% agricultural

*Sources: U.S. Census, Community Foundation Serving Boulder County Trends Report, Colorado Dept. of Local Affairs, and college and university websites.*

### THE GOVERNMENT

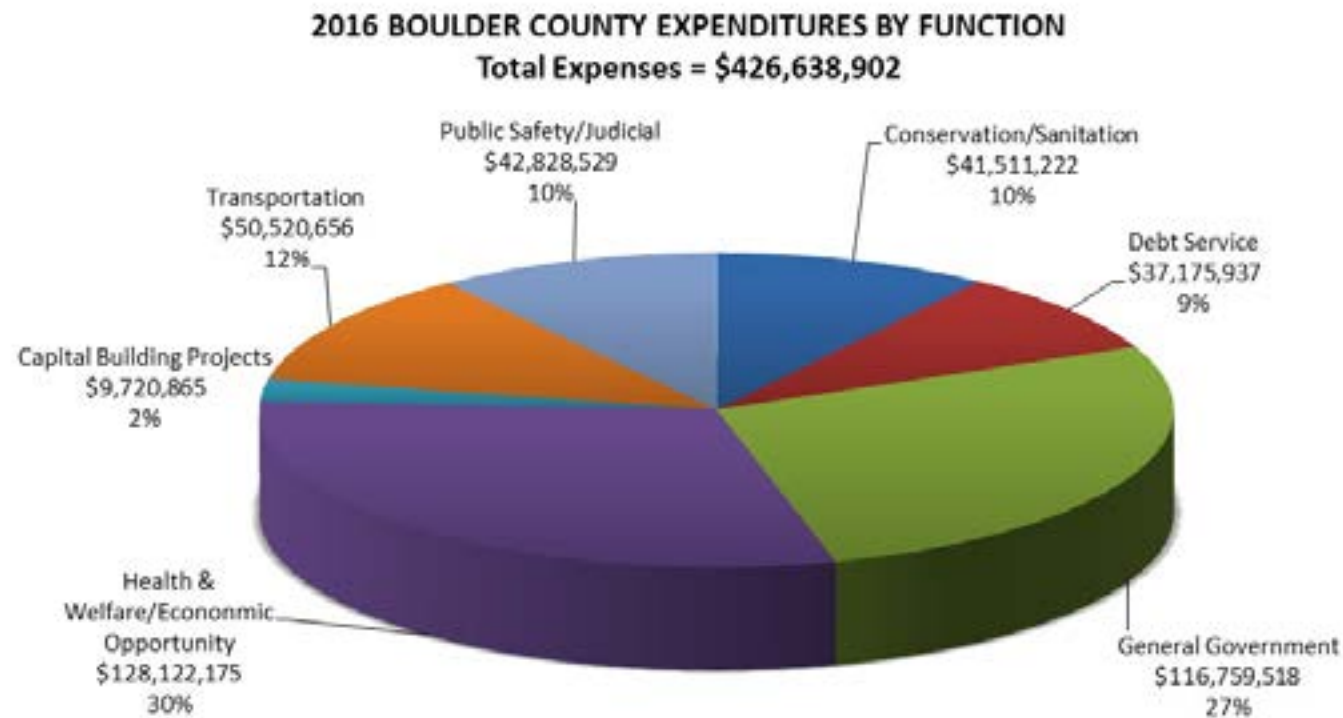
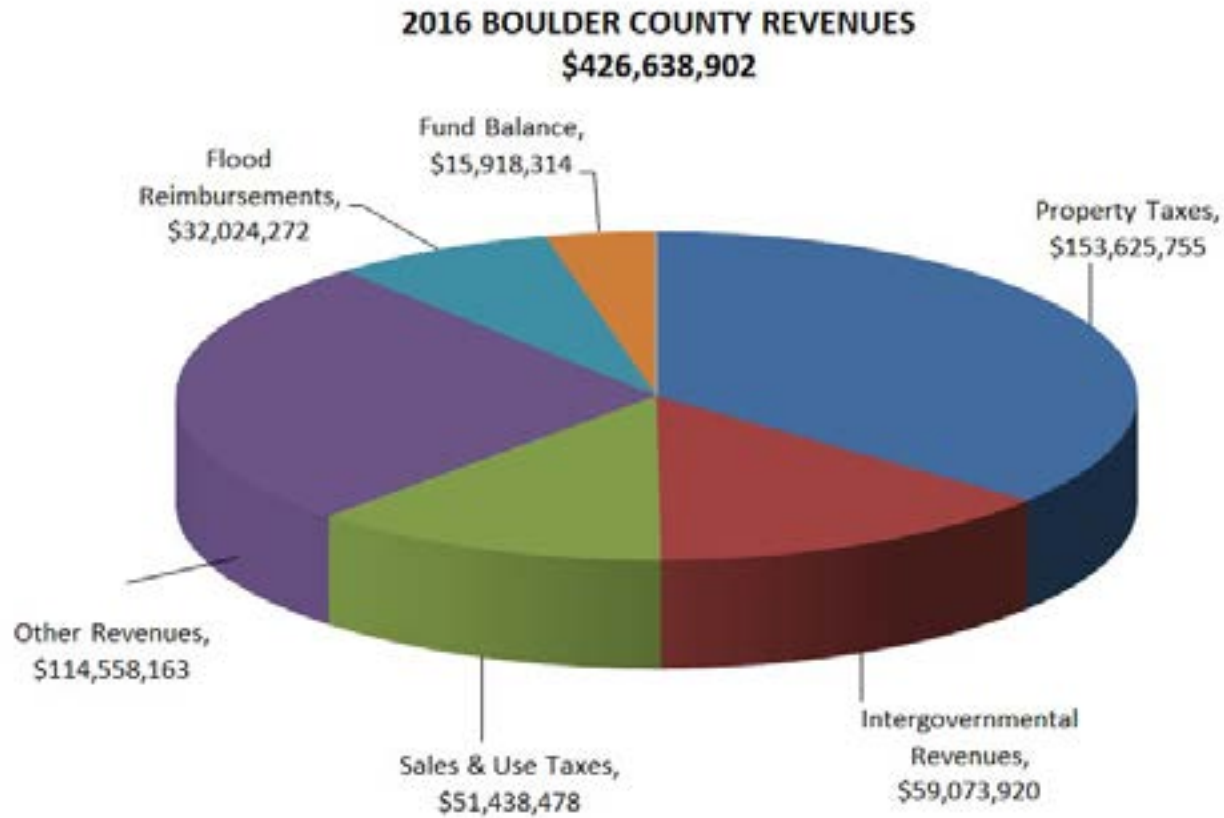
- Founded in 1861
- 11 Cities and Towns
- 4 School Districts – 59,000 Students
- 3 Airports
- 3 Members on Board of Commissioners
- 7 Elected County Offices
  - County Assessor
  - Treasurer
  - Sheriff
  - Coroner
  - District Attorney
  - Clerk and Recorder
  - Surveyor
- 3 Higher Education Institutions
  - University of Colorado, Boulder – Approx. 33,000 students
  - Front Range Community College – Approx. 4,900 students
  - Naropa University – Approx. 1,000 students

### EMPLOYMENT SECTORS

- Unemployment Rate – 2.5% in Oct. 2016
  - Private Sector jobs - 150,900
  - Government jobs – 38,400
- Employment Sectors:

Prof., and Business Services	17.83%
Prof., Scientific & Tech. Services	13.65%
Education & Health Services	12.87%
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	12.87%
Leisure and Hospitality	11.92%
Manufacturing	9.10%
Information	4.24%
Computer & Electronic Product Mfg.	4.13%
Financial Activities	3.77%
Mining, Logging and Construction	3.17%
Other Services	3.14%
Food and Beverage Stores	2.35%

# COUNTY BUDGET AT A GLANCE



**Other Revenue** include specific ownership taxes, motor vehicle fees, recording and filing fees, Treasurer’s fees, building permits, various other fees, rents, and charges for services.

**Intergovernmental Revenues** are primarily Federal and State pass through monies for social service programs, state shared monies for roads, state lottery proceeds, other various government programs, and grant monies.

# LETTER FROM THE COMMISSIONERS

December 2016

Dear Boulder County Stakeholder:

Thank you for your interest in Boulder County’s 2017 State Legislative Agenda. The legislative agenda identifies core county legislative and state budget priorities in need of support from our state legislative delegation.

The Boulder County 2017 State Legislative Agenda was developed over the course of the summer and fall of 2016 through engagement with county departments, partners, legislators, and other stakeholders. It will be used by the county’s elected officials and staff to inform any county positions that may be taken on active state legislation.

It is our hope that this legislative agenda will serve as a reference tool for our Boulder County state legislative delegation when they consider legislation that may impact the county and those that we serve. We also present this legislative agenda as an informative guide for our residents, partners, and staff to assist in understanding Boulder County’s positions on the wide variety of public policy issues that impact our work.

In closing, we’d like to take this opportunity to thank the members of Boulder County’s state legislative delegation for their hard work, and to express our deep appreciation for their service on behalf of the residents of Boulder County and all Coloradans. Their collective effort to understand Boulder County’s positions on issues and advocate on behalf of the county is invaluable. Just as invaluable is the collaborative partnership that we have with our delegation members. We look forward to working with them during the 2017 state legislative session.

Sincerely,

*Cindy Domenico*

*Elise Jones*

**DEB GARDNER**

## Boulder County Board of County Commissioners



Cindy Domenico



Deb Gardner



Elise Jones

## LEGISLATIVE PRINCIPLES

Boulder County's State Legislative Agenda adheres to the following Legislative Principles, which serve as a guide in the development of the positions the county takes on state legislation.

**Environmental Sustainability:** Boulder County supports an environment that is sustainable for generations to come, and we are committed to protecting and enhancing our environment. To that end, Boulder County advances multi-modal transportation networks and alternative modes of transportation, compact land use development, energy efficiency and renewable energy, conservation of resources, and healthy land, air and water. We will continue to make decisions and promote policies that support our ability to use only the resources we need and to protect our environment through conservation, energy efficiency, waste diversion and other means.

**Lands and Natural Resources:** Boulder County looks to manage public lands and natural resources for the future, through pursuit of initiatives that improve the quality of life for our residents while balancing the multi-faceted needs and rights of community stakeholders. To that end, Boulder County works to preserve open spaces for recreation use, wildlife habitat, and sustainment of our agricultural heritage; manage our wildland urban interface area for both fire preparedness and healthy forests; protect water sources and ensure a sustainable water supply; and efficiently regulate extractive industries such as mining and oil and gas development to protect air and water quality, reduce impacts to residents, and support industry viability.

**Service Integration and Collaboration:** Boulder County strives to ensure effective use of taxpayer funds through efficient service delivery and integration of programs and services. To increase efficiency and effectiveness, Boulder County engages in and strongly supports collaborative efforts within county departments, with external partners in the local community, and with the state and statewide organizations.

**Economic Opportunity:** Boulder County seeks to increase economic opportunity and improve equity and self-sufficiency for all residents. Boulder County's efforts to create and sustain a high quality of life play an important role in attracting and retaining employers, and the county will continue to support local economic development activities that enhance individual and community economic vitality. An economically robust community must provide pathways to living-wage jobs for all residents, through means such as employment readiness, job training, and self-sufficiency programs.

**Health and Human Services:** Boulder County is dedicated to supporting and sustaining healthy communities that strengthen individuals and families while promoting human dignity and positive outcomes for the future. To that end, Boulder County advances a high quality of life for all residents by protecting vulnerable populations, ensuring the well-being of seniors, providing access to affordable health insurance and health care to all, maintaining safe and affordable housing for residents, and improving access to effective and efficient public benefits and services that support healthy lives for our clients.

**Local Control:** Boulder County believes that the authority to address issues that pertain to the county must reside firmly with the county, where state or federal authority does not already exist. Local governments are best suited to identify solutions to local issues particularly as regards the services we provide and the land use decisions that we make. Local authority also includes the flexibility to determine use of funding and precludes unfunded mandates from the state or federal government.

**Fiscal Responsibility:** Boulder County recognizes the importance of a state government that operates in a fiscally responsible way and advances the economic vitality and well-being of all Coloradans. We appreciate the transparency in the state budgeting process and the opportunity to provide input, and we seek collaboration with the state, especially with regard to decisions and processes that affect our organization or our constituents. Boulder County believes it is important to address the state revenue structure that negatively impacts the state's economy, including the Gordian knot of TABOR, Amendment 23 and the Gallagher Amendment.

## LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES AT A GLANCE

Following are Boulder County's legislative priorities for the 2017 legislative session. Boulder County staff will be active in any legislation introduced in these areas, and we ask for our legislators' support for these bills that are important to us and our constituents.

### Road and Bridge Fund

- Support the extension of SB 14-007, to allow counties to continue transferring general fund dollars to the road and bridge fund in declared disasters

### Wildfire Mitigation

- Support legislative efforts to promote wildfire mitigation and reduce the structural ignitability of homes in the wildland urban interface

### Climate Change

- Support legislation, regulatory efforts, and other policy approaches to mitigate climate change
- Support state government action to reduce emissions from electricity generation and consumption at least equivalent to the levels required by the U.S. EPA Clean Power Plan
- Support state legislation to require the Public Utilities Commission to consider all environmental and health costs of the fuels used by investor-owned utilities to generate electricity

### Immigration and Human Rights

- Support legislation and other policy approaches to improve social justice and equality

### Affordable Health Care

- Sustain the high rate of health insurance coverage in Colorado
- Increase access to health care, preventive care, specialty care, and mental health services for all Coloradans

### Oil and Gas Authority

- Support legislation to preserve and expand local government authority to regulate the land use activities of the oil and gas industry

### Protection of Public Lands

- Oppose legislation and other efforts to transfer Colorado's federal public lands to state ownership

## BUDGET PRIORITIES AT A GLANCE

In the development of the FY 2017-2018 state budget, Boulder County asks for the support of the General Assembly in addressing adequate appropriations for the following important program areas.

### HUMAN SERVICES

#### County Administration Funding

- Support increased funding for county administration of human services

### CHILD WELFARE

#### Child Welfare Funding

- Continue to increase funding for child welfare caseworkers and supervisors in order to reduce caseloads and caseworker turnover
- Sustain current levels of funding in the county child welfare block grant

### CCCAP

- Support funding for the Child Care Assistance Program to provide safe, quality child care options for families moving toward self-sufficiency

### HOUSING

#### Affordable Housing

- Increase state support for the development of a diverse stock of permanently affordable housing and support policies that increase access to affordable housing
- Increase efforts to provide an on-going, sustainable source of state funding for permanently affordable housing

#### Homelessness

- Support funding for efforts to end chronic, youth, family, and veterans homelessness through community-based, comprehensive programs

# 2017 State Legislative Agenda Boulder County | Colorado



### Key:



Positions marked with this symbol indicate a position related to the State Budget.



Positions marked with this symbol indicate high priority legislative positions, which also can be found on page 6.

# COMMUNITY JUSTICE AND SAFETY

To promote the safety of children, families and vulnerable adults and strengthen community justice services.



Enchantment by Mario Miguel Echevarria

## CONTINUE TO INCREASE FUNDING FOR CHILD WELFARE CASEWORKERS AND SUPERVISORS TO REDUCE CASELOADS AND CASEWORKER TURNOVER



The August 2014 child welfare workload study conducted by the Colorado Office of the State Auditor found that the estimated amount of time required to complete mandated child welfare activities and meet program objectives significantly exceeds the amount of time available from the current number of Colorado child welfare caseworkers. The study estimated that 574 additional caseworker full-time positions plus 122 related supervisory positions are needed to handle current caseload levels. The workload study did not include all counties in its analysis, nor did it address the increase of abuse and neglect reports and cases resulting from the January 2015 launch of the statewide child abuse and neglect reporting hotline. To address this need, the Colorado General Assembly supported funding for approximately 100 new child welfare caseworkers across Colorado in both 2015 and 2016, providing an incremental step toward addressing the shortfall. However, between new initiatives that aim to better protect children and families and the historic underfunding, the system remains understaffed. Further, caseworker hiring and retention remains an issue; finding qualified employees at the current wage level is difficult, and high caseload levels are contributing to high turnover rates. Counties have seen no increase in child welfare funding to address cost of living increases, for example, and federal rules now require higher pay for child welfare case workers. Boulder County supports increased funding for child welfare personnel to reduce the child welfare case-to-caseworker ratio, reduce unsustainable workloads, and improve morale among the caseworker workforce. Investments in child welfare are investments in the health of Colorado families and the safety of children.

## SUPPORT ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES TO ADDRESS INCREASED CASELOADS AND WORKLOAD ASSOCIATED WITH MANDATORY REPORTING, AND PROVIDE FUNDING FOR PREVENTION SERVICES TO ASSIST VULNERABLE ADULTS REFERRED TO APS BUT FOR WHOM NO CASE IS OPENED

Colorado instituted mandatory reporting for elder abuse in 2014 and for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in 2016. Since the implementation of mandatory reporting of elder abuse, call volumes for Adult Protection Services (APS) has increased dramatically – 20% in Boulder County and 47% across the state; the anticipated increase and accompanying state budget increase was 15%. While Boulder and other counties are seeing a high conversion rate of mandatory reports to open cases, other counties are not, highlighting the need to ensure that the state’s APS funding is distributed effectively to meet the statewide need. Funding levels should support the nationally recommended caseload-to-casework ratio of 25:1 as the best strategy for keeping at-risk adults and seniors safe. In addition, the increase in reports has illuminated the vulnerability of many individuals in the community, and has presented opportunities to support prevention and early intervention for older adults and other at-risk adults so that they are able to safely stay in the community. These funds should be provided through APS for emergency support services and also through regional Area Agencies on Aging, so that APS can refer individuals for which a protective case was not opened to stabilization services.



### **SUPPORT FUNDING FOR EVIDENCE-INFORMED PROGRAMS AND PROCESSES THAT REDUCE YOUTH INCARCERATION AND OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENTS, INCLUDING THE COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM AND THE BOULDER COUNTY IMPACT PROGRAM**

Over the past several years evidence-informed programs – programs that have been widely implemented and proven effective and replicable under the highest-level of scientific scrutiny – have been identified that successfully support community-based alternatives to youth confinement. The replication of these programs in communities across Colorado will reduce costs and improve outcomes in multiple systems, including education, corrections, child welfare, public benefits, and others. One example is Boulder County’s Integrated Managed Partnership for Adolescent and Child Community Treatment (IMPACT) Program, which for more than a decade has provided high-need, high-risk youth with mental health, juvenile justice, and child welfare services. IMPACT has achieved proven results by reducing out-of-home placements, psychiatric hospitalizations, and commitments while increasing the numbers of youth residing in family and kinship environments. Because of this shift in placements, the program has achieved significant cost savings that have been reinvested in additional community-based, wrap-around programs. The IMPACT program is supported in part with state funding through the 1451 Collaborative Management Program (CMP). In 2015, the state legislature recognized the effectiveness of the 1451 CMP program and provided a \$2.5 million investment in the program, through SB 15-241. Boulder County supports ongoing funding for the 1451 CMP program, and urges investments in other evidence-based programs for at-risk youth in Colorado. Other opportunities could include the alignment of programs such as HB 1451 and SB 94 to better leverage state funds for prevention and cost-savings in youth incarceration.

### **SUPPORT THE HEALTH OF TODAY’S CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM THROUGH EXTENSION OF COLORADO’S IV-E WAIVER OR OTHER MEASURES THAT PROVIDE INCREASED FLEXIBILITY OF FUNDING FOR FAMILIES INVOLVED IN THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM**

Colorado has much at stake with current federal conversations regarding child welfare funding. The IV-E waiver, awarded to Colorado in 2012 and set to expire in 2017, has effectively allowed Colorado to garner more federal funds for children and family services despite the fact that out-of-home placements are declining across the state. This strategic program shift has allowed federal dollars, which without the waiver would only have been available for foster care or other out-of-home placements, to be invested in early intervention services to stabilize and strengthen families. With the waiver set to expire, and no federal extension on the horizon, the child welfare system improvements Colorado has worked hard to achieve could be in jeopardy. Colorado must strongly advocate for federal measures to support ongoing flexibility in child welfare funding, either through the extension of the IV-E waiver or other alternative approaches. Without action, Colorado risks losing the millions of dollars it has invested in system changes that have dramatically improved outcomes for Colorado’s children and families.

### **SUPPORT INCREASED SERVICES AND ADEQUATE RESOURCES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF YOUTH AGING OUT OF FOSTER CARE**

According to state data, only 29% of youth in the foster care system will graduate from high school, but 36% of these youth will have been incarcerated between the ages of 16 and 19. National data shows that 43% of women and 74% of men who emancipated from the foster care system will have been incarcerated at least once in their lives. Colorado has taken significant steps toward placing foster children in permanent homes, through adoption or reunification with their birth families. But for those youth for whom permanency was not achieved, and for all children who have spent significant time in the child welfare system, Colorado needs more supports to improve their chances of success once they age-out of the system. Housing is one such support that is largely unavailable; programs that provide transitional housing and supportive services for youth as they graduate into adulthood can help prevent incarceration and improve lifelong outcomes. The Chafee Foster Care Independence program does not provide adequate resources to support the needs of youth aging out in Colorado – and yet an investment in this area would prevent many long-term costs.

**36%**  
Youth in the foster care system who will be incarcerated between the ages of 16 and 19.

### **SUPPORT A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO DATA SHARING TO INFORM THE DELIVERY OF CHILD WELFARE AND OTHER INTERVENTIONS AND SERVICES AND IMPROVE OUTCOMES**

Numerous systems operated by Colorado state agencies, schools, and local governments collect a significant amount of data to help serve residents. These systems often do not interface; data is not shared or accessible to the multiple agencies that

might provide services to an individual or family within each unique system. In some cases, data is protected by state and federal laws. If used effectively, this data holds the power to inform services, interventions, and ultimately improve outcomes of clients in the multitude of programs for which it’s collected. Predictive analytics approaches, or the use of data to inform where a problem might occur, vary across the country. Several states have applied predictive analytics in child welfare, including California, Pennsylvania and Florida, allowing case workers access to comprehensive data sets to inform the risk-level of their cases. Boulder County supports an effort to first ensure that the right data systems can be accessed, including law enforcement, employment, health, and education in addition to child welfare case history, before implementing an analytics system. Efforts to ensure system access and compatibility and safe utilization and review of data in a non-discriminatory manner are critical in order to establish a system that can contribute useful intelligence in a child welfare case. Further, predictive analytics should in no way be seen as an efficiency measure in child welfare.

### **SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIES TO ELIMINATE CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT FATALITIES IN COLORADO**

The safety and well-being of children should be the highest priority of our state and communities. Policy changes around child abuse and neglect are often reactive, driven by an incident that piques awareness of child maltreatment and fatalities. Colorado state and local governments have been working on proactive strategies that align with the work of the National Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities to identify opportunities to change our communities, partnerships, and the child welfare system to reduce the occurrence of child fatalities. Strategies include efforts to strengthen and support the parents and caregivers of children at risk for abuse and neglect; leveraging of data from calls received by Colorado’s child abuse and neglect hotline reporting system; collaboration between health and public health systems and partners; and stronger data integration systems that allow for earlier identification of at-risk children. Boulder County supports efforts to reduce abuse and neglect-related child fatalities in Colorado.

### **SUPPORT PROGRAMS THAT REMOVE BARRIERS AND PROVIDE A COORDINATED RESPONSE TO OFFENDER REENTRY FOLLOWING INCARCERATION IN JAIL, PRISON, OR JUVENILE DETENTION**

Prisoner reentry is a complex issue, with the transition from jail or prison to the community being challenging not only for offenders but also for their families and communities. Offender reentry efforts should seek to promote offender success in the community and reduce recidivism. Reentry programs traditionally have focused on a specific area such as employment, job training and placement, housing, access to services, or substance abuse treatment. However, given the complexity of challenges faced by returning offenders, a reentry program focused on a single area may not adequately address the issues faced by this population. An integrated approach to problem solving that includes cognitive behavioral treatment is crucial, with comprehensive, collaborative case management based on a continuum of service, from jail “in-reach” through successful reentry. Boulder County supports increased coordination between agencies and service providers to ensure successful reentry of offenders.

### **SUPPORT LEGISLATION THAT PROMOTES EFFECTIVE PRETRIAL PRACTICES AND A SHIFT FROM A MONEY-BASED TO A RISK-BASED SYSTEM**

Research shows that the money bail system does not increase public safety or court appearances in the pretrial population. Under the current bail system, those who can afford to post bail are released while those who cannot remain in custody, regardless of risk. Recent legislation in Colorado has bolstered the use of evidence-based pretrial practices, including individualized risk assessment and least restrictive conditions of safe release from jail. Pretrial services play an important role in ensuring court appearance and public safety, whereas the commercial bond industry exists primarily for profit. Boulder County will oppose efforts to reduce appropriate regulation of the commercial bond industry or to impede or otherwise diminish the role of pretrial services programs. Legislation that supports a risk-based system, such as a preventive detention statute that would allow high-risk offenders to be held without bail, will be supported.

### **SUPPORT SENTENCING REFORM THAT REDUCES RECIDIVISM THROUGH ALTERNATIVE SENTENCING AND EXPANDED EFFORTS TO DIVERT OFFENDERS FROM INCARCERATION, INCLUDING DRUG AND ALCOHOL TREATMENT COURTS**

Boulder County supports legislation to advance problem-solving courts such as drug and alcohol treatment courts, family courts, veterans’ courts, and other alternatives to incarceration, both to divert offenders from incarceration and to reduce

recidivism and criminal justice costs to state and local government. Community-based sentencing offers the best opportunity for integrated treatment programs and wrap-around services to reduce recidivism and associated costs. Drug treatment courts are particularly effective for reducing incarceration and recidivism, and do so with substantial cost savings.

**SUPPORT FUNDING FOR EXPANDED MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS STABILIZATION SERVICES STATEWIDE TO REDUCE PLACEMENT OF MENTALLY ILL INDIVIDUALS IN HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOMS AND JAILS**

There is a lack of mental health crisis services statewide. Individuals with mental illness comprise a disproportionately large population in the Boulder County Jail, with an estimated 40% of inmates having a diagnosed mental health problem. Currently a peace officer has a choice between a hospital emergency room and a jail when dealing with someone who is a danger to themselves or others due to mental illness. Neither is truly the correct resource for this problem, and both alternatives are very expensive. However, in the Denver metro area there is an alternative available, through three state-funded Crisis Stabilization Units. These units help people in crisis and divert them from the hospital and criminal justice systems. Patients are stabilized and then referred to community-based services or on to hospitalization if needed. Crisis Stabilization Units are proven alternatives, and represent best practice in community mental health across the country. Boulder County supports funding for the establishment of crisis stabilization centers on a regional and statewide basis in order to effectively divert people from more costly hospital and criminal justice systems.



**SUPPORT THE REINVESTMENT OF COST-SAVINGS ACHIEVED IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS, DIVISION OF YOUTH CORRECTIONS, AND STATE JUDICIAL IN PROGRAMS THAT REDUCE INCARCERATION AND RECIDIVISM**

For the 2016-2017 state fiscal year, the budget for the Division of Youth Corrections was reduced by \$2 million due to the decrease in placements of youth in juvenile detention. These reductions depict a very positive shift in youth corrections – earlier and less invasive interventions are supporting families and youth so that incarcerations are reduced. However, the reductions come at a cost earlier in the system, in the form of prevention and early intervention services that oftentimes must be sustained to keep youth free of incarceration. When incarceration budgets are reduced, every effort should be made to determine what services and programs are contributing to the improved outcomes and the actions necessary to sustain those services and programs.

**EDUCATION**

*To support educational opportunities as a pathway to self-sufficiency.*

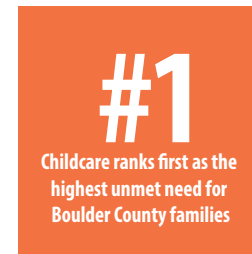
**SUPPORT THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IN PROVIDING SAFE, QUALITY CHILD CARE OPTIONS FOR FAMILIES MOVING TOWARD SELF-SUFFICIENCY**

**\$** The cost of child care presents a challenge for low-income working parents across the country. In Boulder County, child care ranks as the costliest monthly expense for families with one pre-school and one school-age child, above even housing and food costs. In a recent assessment of over 3,000 Boulder County families, childcare emerged as the highest-risk unmet need for families. This means that their risk of losing, not being able to afford, finding, and keeping childcare is higher than health, food, employment, housing or any other need.



*Caribou Ranch Landscape* by Michael Lohr

The Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP) is the public benefit that provides child care subsidies to families struggling to care for their kids while they work or go to school. Colorado has experienced significant changes in the CCCAP program, primarily as a result of HB 14-1317 and federal changes to the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) block grant. These changes have improved access to the program through increased eligibility, provider rate increases, improved provider quality and transparency around quality, and strengthened technical infrastructure to support the system. While these changes have improved and increased access to care, the amount of funding in the program is not sufficient to meet the need. Coloradans continue to struggle with the high-cost of child care and many counties are moving to waiting lists or reducing their eligibility levels in the CCCAP program. Colorado must recognize the importance of child care as a critical support for families and an economic and community investment – and increase resources for child care assistance accordingly..



**IMPROVE ACCESS TO SCHOOL DATA AND PROVIDE INTEROPERABILITY WITH OTHER SYSTEMS THAT SERVE CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES**

It is clear that a child’s educational success and attainment is closely related to his or her health, human development, and well-being. However, children and youth face many barriers to educational success, including poverty, food insecurity, domestic violence, and neglect and abuse. In response, many Colorado school districts have strengthened their systems of outreach and support for families in collaboration with community partners. These partnerships amongst schools and agencies that serve children and families, specifically those designed to support families experiencing adversity, are critical to ensuring efficacy and efficiency in service delivery. Data sharing between schools and agencies is an important aspect to these partnerships, as it can lead to earlier risk identification and improve the effectiveness of interventions. In addition, measurements of student success and achievement can help inform the efficacy of early childhood education and prevention efforts. Families who are involved in multiple systems benefit from greater service coordination and more appropriate and timely services. Boulder County supports the legal sharing of data, to improve outcomes and both enhance and improve the efficacy and efficiency of services for children and families.

## EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RECOVERY

*To ensure the safety of our community during emergencies, prepare for and mitigate prior to disasters, and facilitate timely and full recovery following disasters.*



Untitled by Anne Gifford

### SUPPORT LEGISLATION THAT ASSISTS COUNTIES IN REDUCING WILDFIRE RISK AND THE COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH WILDFIRE SUPPRESSION EFFORTS

Local governments have various land use and land management tools available to reduce wildfire risk on public and private lands. Many counties also work closely with the community on wildfire prevention, mitigation, and suppression. The return on investment for wildfire mitigation efforts was proven through fires as recent as the Cold Springs Fire in Nederland, where effectively mitigated homes survived the fire and mitigated lands served as a safe zone for fire suppression efforts. Boulder County's nationally recognized Wildfire Partners program supports a comprehensive approach to community wildfire mitigation and resilience, by providing private homeowners with wildfire mitigation assessments, technical assistance, and financial incentives for completing mitigation projects. Through the Colorado Department of Natural Resources Wildfire Risk

Reduction Grant program and FEMA funding, Boulder County has assisted 1,000 homeowners in reducing their wildfire risk. Other examples of important county programs include the private resident prescribed burn permit program, chipping and sort-yard services, and law enforcement efforts that assist with the coordination of wildfire suppression, such as multi-jurisdictional cost-sharing agreements. Boulder County supports legislation that provides counties and law enforcement partners with the tools necessary to reduce wildfire risk in the wildland urban interface, ensure public safety, and improve collaboration during wildfire disasters.

### SUPPORT LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE EFFORTS TO CREATE A SHORT-TERM HOUSING ASSISTANCE FUND FOR VICTIMS OF A DISASTER

Coloradans impacted by natural and other disasters often need emergency, short-term housing. Hundreds of Boulder County residents faced this situation in the aftermath of both the 2010 Fourmile Canyon Fire and the 2013 Front Range Flood. Boulder County supports the creation of a state-administered emergency housing assistance fund to support Coloradans who find themselves displaced as a result of a disaster. Such a fund would provide additional financial resources to help victims who do not qualify for federal assistance or need additional assistance to cover their specific need, should the disaster be declared a federal emergency as was the case with the Front Range Flood, or be a primary source of support for state declared disasters, such as the Fourmile Canyon Fire. Critical to the success of such a fund is flexible access, achieved through a streamlined application and reporting process that is not burdensome to residents or those state and local agencies working to serve them.

### SUPPORT STATE FUNDING MECHANISMS THAT ENABLE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO COMPLETE RECOVERY PROJECTS IN A TIMELY MANNER AND THAT PROTECT LOCAL GOVERNMENT SOLVENCY

Three years into 2013 flood recovery, much has been achieved. With strong and responsive support from the state, local governments have made progress on addressing the wide and varying needs of their communities, many of which dealt with basic necessities such as transportation, housing, and public health and safety. However, much work remains, as does the

uncertainty of how local governments will continue to deal with flood recovery cash flow and funding issues. Boulder County asks for continued examination of funding needs and consideration of additional funding and funding mechanisms as needed in order to allow communities to fully recover while also ensuring that local governments remain financially solvent.

### SUPPORT THE EXTENSION OF SB 14-007, TO ALLOW COUNTIES TO CONTINUE TRANSFERRING GENERAL FUND DOLLARS TO THE ROAD AND BRIDGE FUND IN DECLARED DISASTERS

Coloradans impacted by natural and other disasters often need emergency, short-term housing. Hundreds of Boulder County Colorado statute (30-25-106 and 43-3-202) prohibits counties from transferring General Fund dollars to their county Road and Bridge Fund for road and bridge construction projects. In response to the hundreds of millions of dollars in road infrastructure damage caused by the 2013 Front Range Flood, the General Assembly passed legislation in 2014, SB 14-007, to allow counties to transfer money from their General Fund to their Road and Bridge Fund, to facilitate road reconstruction recovery projects. This authority was granted for four years, and was limited to counties impacted by a state- or federally-declared disaster.

Four years later, counties continue to rebuild from the 2013 flood. In Boulder County, transportation recovery projects have taken longer to complete than initially anticipated in SB 14-007 for a number of reasons, including coordinating projects with the affected public, acquiring over 200 easements necessary to implement flood repair projects in a manner consistent with federal requirements, ensuring compliance with applicable floodplain and environmental permitting requirements after the hydrology and topography of adjacent creeks and rivers had changed significantly as a result of the flood event, and the resource and staffing challenges associated with the simultaneous design and construction of many major capital projects. Colorado counties need the SB 14-007 authority extended in order to plan, contract for, and pay for the remaining transportation projects necessary for flood recovery, without being placed at risk for insolvency.

### SUPPORT EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT RESILIENCY AND BUILD CAPACITY TO PREPARE FOR AND RESPOND TO DISASTERS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Data and forecasting reinforces recent experiences of communities along Colorado's Front Range – we will continue to be burdened by the negative effects of climate change, from drought to wildfires to floods. These ecosystem disruptions deeply affect residents and communities, and demand swift action and response on the part of local governments. With local emergency response agencies in place, county response is typically well-managed and triaged; however, the growing scale of disasters means that more programs and staff are necessary to aid in responding. Some examples of disaster response impacts to local governments include: Provision of support services by staff who lack the training to work with disaster-affected clients and communities; entire programs, staff teams and funding diverted to address the immediate needs of disaster-affected community members, placing other programs on-hold; urgent and around the clock services demands on a system ill-equipped for continuous operation; and staff experiences of secondary trauma from interactions with disaster-affected individuals and families. These are only a few examples of the immediate and long-term impacts a local government experiences when a disaster strikes, impacts which can extend for months or years, depending on the scope of the disaster. State funding should be provided to increase local government capacity to respond, while continuing the ongoing functions necessary to keep an agency running and meet the basic service needs of all residents.

## EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME STABILITY

*To increase employment opportunities, improve economic equity, and promote self-sufficiency.*

### SUPPORT THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IN PROVIDING SAFE, QUALITY CHILD CARE OPTIONS FOR FAMILIES MOVING TOWARD SELF-SUFFICIENCY

*See full policy statement in the Education section.*

### SUPPORT ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO MEETING THE NEW PROCUREMENT REQUIREMENTS INCLUDED IN THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT

The 2014 Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act outlined new federal requirements for the procurement of certain workforce development services at the local level. The local board and elected officials for the local area must now go through a procurement process for One-Stop operators. This requirement is lengthy, costly, and adds another layer to the system. It also duplicates the operational activities that are already in place through most Workforce Centers, such as delivering services and providing oversight for the system. Boulder County urges state and legislative support for waiving the procurement requirements and allowing the local workforce boards to continue to serve as One-Stop Operators, or leaving the option of a procurement process at the local level.

### SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOCALLY INFORMED PROGRAMS THAT PROMOTE ON-THE-JOB TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Experiential opportunities provided through on-the-job training, internships, or job-shadowing allow job-seekers to build skills and employment histories while also helping employers reduce personnel costs. Relevant work experience is crucial to unemployed workers, those entering the workplace for the first time or after an absence, and workers seeking to change fields in order to earn sufficient wages. These opportunities should be designed to serve the job-seeker and the job-providers, as well as both dislocated workers and those lacking experience in the workforce. In addition, programs should be flexible, not limited to a specific population, and should take into account the local labor market, key industry clusters, and economic conditions including variable wages. Ideally, these programs are designed to create access points and advancements within in-demand industries, such as those identified through regional Workforce Centers. For example, opportunities within high-demand professions in the health care, manufacturing, and information technology fields (Boulder County's key industry sectors) provide a pathway for living wage employment and career ladders. Training in those fields will help meet the need for workers while facilitating access to these well-paying jobs for lower-income individuals.

### SUPPORT PROGRAMS THAT IMPROVE EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES FOR INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING PUBLIC BENEFITS SUCH AS TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE TO NEEDY FAMILIES AND FOOD ASSISTANCE

Federal public benefits programs administered by counties have their own specific work requirements. The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, for example, comes with a work participation requirement mandating that recipients are engaged in certain levels and types of work activities in order to receive the benefit, and in order for Colorado to receive its share of federal



Carving by Paul Price

block grant funding. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) requires able-bodied individuals to participate in the Employment First program. Families and individuals in these programs may have unique challenges which require targeted approaches to obtaining and retaining employment. The Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act has a strong focus on serving special populations, more than ever before – and yet the accountability measures for job placement successes remain the same. This creates a challenge in that more resource-intensive populations are expected to meet the same outcomes as more experienced and work-ready clients. One example of a program which has been successful in supporting some of the hardest to employ is the Colorado Parent Employment Project (CO-PEP), which focuses on non-custodial parents having issues meeting child support payments. Boulder County supports innovative approaches to reaching the hardest to employ Coloradans to improve outcomes over the long run.

### SUPPORT STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS WAGE STAGNATION & THE WAGE GAP FOR LOW-INCOME COLORADO WORKERS

One-fourth of Americans have jobs that pay so little they are not able to support their families without public benefits. American's wages continue to lose ground to the cost of living and inflation, eroding the ability for families to become self-sufficient. In Colorado, the costs of meeting basic needs, such as housing, food and transportation, are beyond the means of those earning the minimum wage. For a family with one adult and one child, the living wage in Denver is \$20.95 per hour, and even for two adults without dependents the living wage is \$14.14. In Denver, the minimum hourly wage necessary to afford the median price of rent (at 30% of gross annual income) is \$35 per hour, and in the least expensive rural areas of Colorado, it is \$24 per hour. In 2016 Colorado voted to increase the state minimum wage to \$12 by 2020, and yet in many parts of Colorado this increase will be inadequate for families to meet their basic needs. And while the self-sufficiency wage varies from region to region, local governments do not have the ability to set their own minimum wage, in response. Increasing the minimum wage, addressing wage equity, and providing paid sick and family leave are a few strategies that Boulder County supports to address wage stagnation and the wage gap for Colorado's low-income workers.

### SUPPORT POLICY EFFORTS TO INCREASE AWARENESS OF RETIREMENT PLANNING OPTIONS

Employer-sponsored retirement investment plans have been a tool Americans have traditionally used to build their retirement savings. But today, more than half of all American workers do not have any type of employer-sponsored retirement plan. In Colorado, 64% of workers age 25-34, 50% of those age 35-39, and 74% of low-wage workers, regardless of age, are not offered a retirement plan through their place of employment. Sound financial planning for retirement years improves the self-sufficiency of our senior population and reduces the demand for public benefits and senior services. Boulder County supports efforts to explore public policy options that would increase the number of Colorado workers who are investing in a retirement plan.

### SUPPORT POLICIES THAT REDUCE THE CLIFF EFFECT FOR PEOPLE MOVING OFF PUBLIC BENEFITS

A cliff effect occurs when workers that receive public benefits experience a sudden termination of these benefits when their wages increase by even slight amounts. This creates a disincentive for those working toward self-sufficiency to earn more income, as increased income might not cover child care costs or the costs of other work supports. Boulder County supports the policy changes and funding necessary to address the cliff effect through implementation of a tiered approach to elimination or termination of public benefits, whereby workers receive incrementally less public benefits as they earn incrementally higher wages. Other strategies may include the availability of non-public benefit resources and supports for families who are nearing self-sufficiency.

### SUPPORT EXTENSION OF THE STATE CHILD CARE TAX CREDIT FOR WORKING FAMILIES


The cost of childcare presents a significant burden for families in Colorado. And yet, our economy benefits greatly from working parents and children benefit from quality child care through improved school readiness and social development. Colorado provides a permanent income tax credit for child care expenses for families with an income of \$60,000 or less. Due to inconsistencies in the federal and state tax laws, families earning under \$25,000 per year get little, if any, of a tax credit. HB 14-1072 enabled all low-income Coloradans under \$60,000 annual household income to access the tax credit by disconnecting the state tax credit from federal law for those earning under the \$25,000. Since the passage of HB 1072, approximately 32,000 working families below the \$25,000 threshold have claimed the tax credit. The tax credit is an important tool in addressing the affordability of child care for working families, and in supporting economic stability for families and Colorado.

# ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT, AND SUSTAINABILITY

To advance climate action, reduce the use of fossil fuels, promote clean energy, and reduce waste.

## ENERGY & CLIMATE CHANGE

### SUPPORT LEGISLATION, REGULATORY EFFORTS, AND OTHER POLICY APPROACHES TO MITIGATE CLIMATE CHANGE

 Climate change is leaving an indelible mark on Colorado. In Boulder County, a 2016 analysis of temperature extremes paints a picture of Colorado's future: Between 1970-1999, Boulder County averaged 5 days per year of high temperatures of 95°F or higher; between 2000-2016, that number more than doubled, to 11. Under current global emissions trends, projections by the Rocky Mountain Climate Organization forecast that the Boulder area will average 38 days of 95°F or hotter by mid-century, and 75 such days by late century. (See *Future Climate Extremes in Boulder County* at <http://rockymountainclimate.org/images/extremes/BoulderExtremesFinal.pdf>.) Recognizing that local governments are the first responders in the fight against climate change, Boulder County has taken numerous steps to reduce its own heat-trapping emissions and to assist its residents and businesses to do the same. Boulder County has also joined with numerous other Colorado local governments to advocate for expanded efforts at all levels of government to mitigate climate change, through Colorado Communities for Climate Action ([see www.CC4CA.org](http://www.CC4CA.org)).



DeLonde Barn at Caribou Ranch by W. F. (Bill) Daniel

State-level actions such as the establishment of new goals for reductions in statewide heat-trapping emissions, completion of a new state emissions forecast, and development of substantive actions to implement the 2015 Colorado Climate Plan will both contribute to development of a national climate change solution while also supporting the efforts of Colorado's local governments.

### SUPPORT LEGISLATION, REGULATORY EFFORTS, AND OTHER POLICY APPROACHES TO ADVANCE AN AGGRESSIVE ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND RENEWABLE ENERGY AGENDA FOR COLORADO


Colorado is a national leader in building a policy and administrative framework to support energy efficiency and renewable energy as key strategies in the fight against climate change. Since 2004, recent governors, the General Assembly, and Colorado's voters have championed efforts to capitalize on the economic and environmental benefits of energy efficiency and renewable energy, by establishing a strong Renewable Energy Standard for all Colorado utilities; creating electricity and natural gas savings goals for the state's investor-owned utilities; supporting the rapid deployment of electric vehicles and development of associated charging infrastructure; supporting legislation to retire coal-fired power plants; and developing a Colorado Climate Plan, amongst a host of other policy and programmatic initiatives to help Colorado become more energy efficient and hasten the transition to renewable energy.

During this time Boulder County has also been active, adopting its own Sustainable Energy and Environmental Sustainability plans; adopting aggressive greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals; investing in renewable energy and energy efficiency upgrades throughout county facilities; creating programming to reduce energy consumption and increase energy efficiency throughout the county's commercial and residential sectors; and joining with other Colorado local governments to advocate

for expanded efforts at all levels of government to mitigate and prepare for climate change.

Moving forward, Boulder County supports continued pursuit of an aggressive energy efficiency and renewable energy agenda for Colorado. Strategies that should be considered include increasing the Renewable Energy Standard; extending and expanding the Colorado Energy Efficiency Resource Standard beyond 2018; providing authority for Colorado local governments to implement community choice aggregation; supporting further construction of alternative-fuel vehicle fueling infrastructure; increasing state support of and engagement with weatherization efforts; and taking the necessary steps to implement the Colorado Climate Plan and achieve the state's emission reduction goals, amongst others.

### SUPPORT STATE GOVERNMENT ACTION TO REDUCE EMISSIONS FROM ELECTRICITY GENERATION AND CONSUMPTION IN COLORADO AT LEAST EQUIVALENT TO THE LEVELS REQUIRED BY THE U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY'S CLEAN POWER PLAN

 Under Governor Hickenlooper's leadership, Colorado state government has consistently stated that it will develop a rule to comply with the federal Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Power Plan (CPP), and has reiterated its intent to proceed even in light of the current judicial stay and existing uncertainty regarding executive branch support for the rule. Boulder County urges Governor Hickenlooper and other state officials to proceed in developing state actions to reduce heat-trapping emissions in Colorado to levels at least equivalent to those required by the CPP, and to move forward regardless of federal judicial or executive branch action or inaction on the CPP.

### SUPPORT THE USE OF FINANCING TOOLS, INCLUDING RATEPAYER-BACKED BONDS, TO SPEED THE DEVELOPMENT OF RENEWABLE ENERGY PRODUCTION

Colorado has crossed an important threshold: The costs for deploying new, clean electricity generation from wind are now low enough to replace the generation from most of Colorado's aged coal-fired power plants, while saving money for ratepayers. But many of these old plants, or stranded assets, still have capital investment debt that must be paid off by the utilities that own them, even if they are retired. Boulder County supports the use of financing tools, including those that need approval from the General Assembly, such as ratepayer-backed bonds, to relieve utilities of this capital investment debt in order to speed the development of new clean energy electricity generation and lower costs of repayment for consumers.


### SUPPORT PROGRAMMING AND OTHER EFFORTS TO ASSIST COMMUNITIES IMPACTED BY THE REDUCED USE OF FOSSIL FUELS FOR POWER PRODUCTION

The climate imperative is clear: According to U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration data, 2015 was our planet's warmest year since at least 1880, when such figures were first recorded. 2014 was the next warmest, and the hottest five years also include 2013, 2010, and 2005. Closer to home, by the late 2000s Boulder County will see a 1,500% increase in the number of days per year of high temperatures of 95°F or higher, in comparison to the late 1900s. (See *Future Climate Extremes in Boulder County* at <http://rockymountainclimate.org/images/extremes/BoulderExtremesFinal.pdf>.)

To reduce heat-trapping emissions and avoid the worst effects of climate change, the world must rapidly transition to a clean energy future, one built upon the pillars of energy efficiency and renewable energy, while dramatically cutting its reliance on oil, coal, and natural gas for energy production. Such a transition will without question result in large-scale social and economic impacts on people and the communities in which they live. While increased investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy will generate millions of new jobs, workers and communities whose livelihoods depend on the fossil fuel industry will unavoidably face challenges. Colorado is already experiencing the effects of the clean energy transition, as coal-fired power plants are retired and coal mines dramatically reduce production or shutter altogether.

Boulder County strongly supports programming and other efforts to assist workers and communities impacted by reductions in the use of fossil fuels for power production. Programs should be designed to ensure high participation rates, and could include such strategies as transitional income and benefits support, education and training, and community and economic development. Strategies to advance a rapid transition to a clean energy future must include programs that serve as catalysts for bringing displaced workers and communities into the clean energy economy.

**SUPPORT STATE LEGISLATION TO REQUIRE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION TO CONSIDER ALL ENVIRONMENTAL AND HEALTH COSTS OF THE FUELS USED BY INVESTOR-OWNED UTILITIES TO GENERATE ELECTRICITY**

 Existing electric resource planning standards as applied by the Colorado Public Utilities Commission (PUC) fail to include the financial costs associated with the externalities of the carbon dioxide emissions that result from the burning of fossil fuels for electricity generation. Requiring investor-owned utilities, those that are legally under the regulatory authority of the PUC, to include a “social cost of carbon” when developing their long-term integrated resource plans will provide regulators with critical information for assessing the costs and benefits of regulations or measures designed to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. By requiring utilities to generate at least one scenario that assesses and recognizes the social cost of carbon, ratepayers and decision-makers will be better able to understand the true costs to society associated with electricity generation.

**SUPPORT CLIMATE CHANGE PREPAREDNESS AND RESILIENCY EFFORTS**

The anticipated impacts of climate change will affect Colorado through increased heat, more extreme weather events and, likely, reduced winter snowpack and other changes to precipitation patterns. Boulder County supports the development and implementation of plans that can help the state and its communities prepare for and become more resilient to the impacts of climate change, and the development of improved strategies through ongoing planning efforts. The county will look to the Colorado Climate Network’s Local Resilience Project report (<http://www.coclimatenetwork.org/images/ColoLocalResilienceProjectRpt-lowres.pdf>) and preparedness planning efforts being conducted by the state and others for legislative and other policy guidance in support of this goal.

**SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE COLORADO COUNTIES WITH PERMISSIVE AUTHORITY TO IMPLEMENT A CARBON TAX**

Carbon dioxide is the primary greenhouse gas that is contributing to climate change. Human activities, including the burning of fossil fuels, release large amounts of carbon to the atmosphere, increasing carbon dioxide concentrations and exacerbating the greenhouse effect. A carbon tax is a fee assessed on the carbon content of a fossil fuel. Because the current pricing structures of gasoline, electricity, and fuels in general include none of the long-term costs associated with climate change, or even the well-quantified near-term health costs of burning fossil fuels, there is little incentive to develop and implement measures to reduce carbon emissions. A properly designed carbon tax will incentivize decision-makers at all levels to reduce carbon emissions through conservation, substitution, and innovation strategies, for example through energy efficiency, renewable energy, and conservation-based behavioral change. In Colorado, home rule cities have authority to present a carbon tax to their citizens, which the city of Boulder did with success in 2006. Boulder County supports state legislation to provide the same permissive authority to Colorado’s statutory cities, towns, and counties.

**SUPPORT ONGOING AND SUSTAINABLE FUNDING FOR THE WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

Low-income and vulnerable households spend a disproportionately large percentage of their income on energy utility bills. The federal Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP), created forty years ago, is designed to address this problem, by improving the energy efficiency of homes to reduce home energy consumption and lower energy utility bills, helping to offset the high cost of housing. Colorado’s eight WAP programs serve about 3,000 homes statewide each year with an energy audit, furnace tune-up, and carbon monoxide testing, and additional services such as adding insulation, air sealing, furnace replacements, and provision of high-efficiency light bulbs. Closer to home, Longs Peak Energy Conservation, Boulder County’s weatherization program that serves the residents of Boulder, Larimer, Broomfield, and Gilpin counties, weatherizes about 300 homes per year, with average annual energy bill savings approaching \$500. Because of the significant infrastructure associated with weatherization programs, including equipment and trained, experienced work crews, swings in WAP funding can dramatically affect the ability of programs to remain viable, as programs must stop and start based on allocations. With Colorado’s WAP programs funded through federal allocations and state severance tax dollars, both of which can be volatile sources of revenue, stability in annual WAP appropriations can be difficult to achieve. Boulder County supports long-term sustainable funding for Colorado’s state weatherization program, in support of the dual goals of assisting families in reducing their energy bills while promoting safe, comfortable, and energy-efficient housing.

**\$500**  
Average annual savings in bills after weatherization.

**SUPPORT ENABLING LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE COUNTIES AND STATUTORY CITIES AND TOWNS WITH AUTHORITY TO IMPLEMENT LOCAL ENERGY CONSERVATION POLICIES AND PROGRAMS**

Unlike their home rule municipal peers, Colorado counties and statutory cities and towns in many cases lack authority to adopt and implement energy conservation policies and programs. For example, energy conservation ordinances are proven policy tools for improving the energy efficiency and performance of the existing residential and commercial building stock, but only Colorado home rule cities have statutory authorization to enact such ordinances. Boulder County supports enabling legislation to provide Colorado’s counties and statutory cities and towns with the authority necessary to enact policies and programs that can support and promote energy conservation within their jurisdictions.

**SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT OF A STATEWIDE GREEN BUILDING CODE AND RELATED POLICIES AND INITIATIVES TO IMPROVE THE ENERGY PERFORMANCE OF NEW AND EXISTING BUILDINGS IN COLORADO**

Residential and commercial buildings account for more than 44% of the electricity and natural gas consumed in Colorado. Research suggests that, through the use of such tools as green building codes, energy consumption disclosure requirements, and demand-side management programming, energy use in Colorado’s buildings could be effectively reduced by more than 30%. Within this context, Boulder County supports efforts that will lead to improvements in the energy performance of Colorado’s building stock. Such efforts could include a statewide “green building” code, to require new and existing commercial and residential buildings to improve their energy performance over time and ultimately meet green building standards such as the U.S. Department of Energy’s Zero Energy Ready Home Program standard or the U.S. Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) commercial building standards; building energy use disclosure requirements for raising awareness in building owners, managers, and tenants about the impacts and costs of a building’s energy consumption; and the provision of demand-side incentives for all building owners, including those in jurisdictions with green building codes or other energy performance requirements.

**OPPOSE STATE LEGISLATIVE, REGULATORY, OR ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION TO WEAKEN COLORADO’S NET METERING POLICIES**

Colorado’s net metering policies ensure that electricity customers who own renewable energy facilities, primarily rooftop solar systems, receive a fair credit on their utility bills for the clean power that they contribute to the electric grid. In place in 43 states, net metering is a critical state-level policy for supporting renewable energy at the consumer, versus utility, level. Colorado’s multi-pronged policy and programmatic approach in support of renewable energy, including solar, has seen the state rise to ninth in the nation in installed solar capacity, enough to power over 100,000 homes. In addition to supporting the widespread use of distributed generation – small generation units typically located at customers’ homes and businesses – net metering helps foster the voluntary reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, contributes to the reliability of the electricity supply and distribution systems, supports the residential and small-commercial renewable energy industry, and helps to more quickly replace coal-fired power plants with cleaner sources of energy. For these reasons and in alignment with the adopted goals of its Sustainable Energy Plan and Environmental Sustainability Plan, Boulder County will oppose any legislative, regulatory, or administrative action to weaken Colorado’s net metering policies, and encourages the application of these policies to all Colorado utilities.

**RECYCLING & WASTE MANAGEMENT****SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO ESTABLISH A STATEWIDE TARGET FOR DIVERSION OF SOLID WASTE FROM LANDFILLS, AND THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE AND LOCAL POLICIES AND PROGRAMS TO ACHIEVE THE TARGET**

Recycling and composting are proven to reduce carbon dioxide and methane emissions, and are key strategies in the fight against climate change. But Colorado’s waste diversion rate (the combination of recycling and organics diversion as a proportion of the solid waste stream) of 23 percent lags behind the national average of 35 percent. And according to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment’s 2016 Integrated Solid Waste and Materials Management Plan, approximately 30 percent of the total materials currently sent to Colorado landfills are recyclable, and another 30 percent is organic material. Challenges to improving Colorado’s diversion rate include practical issues such as the limited authority of CDPHE to regulate and incentivize waste reduction as opposed to landfill disposal, and logistical issues such as transportation and lack of waste diversion infrastructure across Colorado.

Clearly there is work to be done. Boulder County supports the establishment of a meaningful and achievable statewide solid waste diversion goal as a tool for galvanizing statewide efforts, accompanied by legislation that grants CDPHE the authorities it needs to administer diversion programs, including but not limited to economic and technical assistance for local and regional waste diversion programs and facilities. A legislative package to achieve increased diversion and capture the benefits of such could include such strategies as statewide bans of specific materials from landfills, such as the ban on electronic devices adopted in 2013; advanced disposal fee and other product stewardship policies for certain products, such as those already enacted for paints and waste tires; and local government authority to implement market-based pricing strategies similar to those used in the energy and water sectors, including “pay-as-you-throw” pricing.

## ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

*To protect and enhance the health of the environment.*

### SUPPORT LEGISLATION AND OTHER POLICY APPROACHES TO ADDRESS THE AIR AND WATER QUALITY IMPACTS ASSOCIATED WITH OIL AND GAS OPERATIONS

*See full policy statement in the Oil & Gas section.*

### SUPPORT STATE REGULATION AND OTHER POLICY MEANS TO PROTECT AIR QUALITY

Outdoor air quality is a serious concern in Boulder County. Boulder County is included in the nine-county Denver Metro area that currently exceeds the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) health standards for ozone. Impacts from increased ozone, and the pollutants that form ozone, lead to or cause poor air quality, decreased visibility, damage to crops, and increased acid rain in Rocky Mountain National Park. Under the Clean Air Act, the EPA establishes air quality standards to protect public health, with special attention to the health of “sensitive” populations (children under 10 years, adults over 65 years, and asthmatics). Poor air quality has significant public health and environmental impacts, from increasing doctor and hospital admissions, to compromising the unique value of our parks and open space lands, to negative effects on wildlife and habitat. Boulder County supports state legislative, regulatory, and other efforts to protect public and environmental health by reducing the emissions of harmful pollutants.

### SUPPORT STATE REGULATION AND OTHER POLICY MEANS TO PROTECT WATER QUALITY

Protecting the quality of Colorado’s water is vital to its environment, economy, and people. In 2016 the state and federal governments and other public agencies will conclude a number of policy-making and regulatory efforts – from new municipal separate storm system and sediment rules, to state gray water implementation rules, to a new definition of waters of the U.S. – that could impact Boulder County and all Colorado local governments. During these processes Boulder County will advocate for legislation, regulations, and other policy approaches that focus on the critical goal of protecting water quality.



*Quilt of Two Miners* by Barbara Yates Beasley



Caribou Ranch Bouquet by Theresa Haberkorn

## FOOD AND NUTRITION

To support access to healthy food and nutrition for individuals and families, and promote healthy eating and active living opportunities within communities.

### SUPPORT LEGISLATION AND INCREASED FUNDING TO EXPAND HEALTHY EATING AND ACTIVE LIVING PROGRAMMING

Healthy eating and active living have been identified as priorities in many public health improvement plans. Although Colorado remains one of the healthiest states in the nation, the rates of obesity for children and adults are climbing. Fostering health and well-being from the earliest stages of life helps build a lifetime foundation for overall health. Healthy eating and active living will reduce heart disease and cancer, which are the two leading causes of death in Boulder County. Boulder County supports healthy eating and active living policies that will increase physical activity, improve access to healthy foods, increase alternative transportation utilization, and increase breastfeeding initiation and duration.

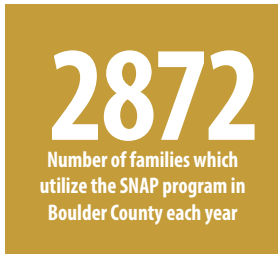
### SUPPORT THE EXPANSION OF PROGRAMS THAT INCREASE ACCESS TO HEALTHY, LOCALLY GROWN FOODS, SUCH AS SNAP DOUBLING PROGRAMS

Boulder County's Double Up Food Bucks Program provides customers who rely on the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) with an incentive to purchase locally grown, healthy foods from farmers' markets. The Double Up Food Bucks Program not only increases low income residents' access to healthy, local produce, it also supports our local economy and farmers. This program exemplifies an equitable three-tiered approach to sustainability: socially, by providing underserved residents with the opportunity to take part in the local food culture; environmentally, by increasing the viability of our small acreage fruit and vegetable farmers; and financially, by increasing the purchasing power of underserved residents so that they can access locally grown produce. This program has effectively increased SNAP sales at the Boulder and

Longmont farmers' markets by over 100%, excluding the matching Double Up Food Bucks. Boulder County supports policies that seek to expand implementation and increase funding for this program locally and statewide.

### SUPPORT OUTREACH EFFORTS THAT INCREASE ACCESS TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND OTHER SERVICES TO IMPROVE FOOD SECURITY IN COLORADO

Although the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) reaches approximately 19,000 recipients in Boulder County at any given time, food security remains an issue for many children and families. In Boulder County at least half of all households receiving SNAP have one or more children under 18, and nearly a quarter have at least one person over sixty. SNAP is the largest public program available to individuals and families whose income isn't enough to provide for basic food needs. Other programs such as Free and Reduced School Lunch and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) can help supplement income to ensure food and nutrition are available to those in need. Boulder County has established a local collaborative aimed at strategic outreach efforts to link those in need with the appropriate food assistance option. Currently, the state does not fund county outreach efforts. Boulder County supports state investments in outreach through grants or funding of county-level initiatives that demonstrate increased utilization of SNAP and other food security programs.



### SUPPORT LEGISLATION AND OTHER EFFORTS TO REDUCE THE CONSUMPTION OF SUGAR-SWEETENED BEVERAGES

Scientific evidence demonstrating the negative health effects of sugary drink consumption is growing. Drinking just one sugary drink a day increases a person's risk for type 2 diabetes by 25%, for childhood obesity by 55%, and for death from heart disease by 30%. In Boulder County, 14.5% of Latinos have been diagnosed with diabetes as compared with 4% of non-Latinos. And sugary drinks are linked to dental extraction surgeries in very young children: Children's Hospital Colorado is performing 3,000 surgeries each year to address rotten or infected baby teeth at a cost of \$10-15,000 per surgery. Boulder County Public Health is taking a number of steps to reduce the consumption of sugary drinks, including actively supporting public education about the negative health impact of these beverages; developing workplace policies for healthy meetings and replacing sugary beverages in vending machines and concessions; and supporting public policy strategies to reduce the risks associated with the consumption of sugary drinks. Colorado and 38 states and the District of Columbia apply sales taxes to sugary drinks sold through vending machines. Boulder County and Boulder County Public Health will oppose legislation to eliminate this sales tax, and continue to support legislative and other efforts to reduce the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages.

Food & Nutrition

Food & Nutrition



# HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

To protect and enhance the health of the public and ensure that Coloradans have access to high-quality, comprehensive, and affordable public health services.



Switzerland Trail by Valeria Meyers

## INCREASE ACCESS TO LOW-COST HEALTH CARE, PREVENTIVE CARE, SPECIALTY CARE, AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR MEDICAID-INSURED COLORADANS

Boulder County Medicaid enrollment has increased from 16,000 individuals in 2008 to 58,000 individuals in 2015. With Medicaid eligibility now set at 130% of the federal poverty level, the primary expansion population is adult individuals. Connecting these clients to preventive health services is critical to saving money within both the Medicaid system and the health care system as a whole. In pursuit of this goal, Colorado administers the Accountable Care Collaborative (ACC), designed to improve the health outcomes of adult Medicaid clients by helping them secure the services they need to stay healthy. The ACC supports a holistic approach to health by focusing on wellness and preventive care. Another example includes the Healthy Communities program, which coordinates healthcare for children enrolled in Medicaid and CHP+. But gaps still exist: Across the state access to preventive care, specialty care, and mental health services is limited, forcing patients to wait for or even forgo care. Boulder County supports expansion of the Accountable Care Collaborative, Healthy Communities, and other programs aimed at strengthening access to preventive health services for Medicaid clients, both adults and children.



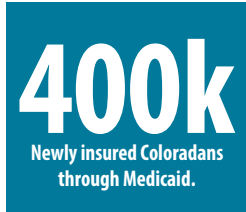
## SUSTAIN THE HIGH RATE OF HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE IN COLORADO

Due to expanded eligibility, Colorado saw 289,000 residents enroll in Medicaid in FY 2013-14 and 2014-15, and by 2017 that number is projected to increase to 363,000. This expansion was a significant investment on the part of Colorado and the federal government, at a cost of \$1.6 billion in its first two years. The majority of Colorado's expansion costs were paid for through the Hospital Provider Fee, and these investments are already starting to pay off: the coverage gained by previously uninsured individuals has increased the use of preventive care, increased diabetes detection and management, reduced expenses for indigent care and other programs for the uninsured, and expanded care for pregnant mothers. The most significant impacts are seen in the economic well-being of individuals and families who previously were not covered (and were avoiding care), or were paying for coverage that compromised their ability to provide for their family's basic needs (food, clothing, housing, etc.). In 2013, 66% of uninsured Colorado residents had trouble paying medical bills, as compared to 18% for the population overall. Since implementation of the Affordable Care Act, the rate of medical-related

bankruptcies has plummeted by 50%. The outcomes of these investments cannot be understated. While costly, the expanded health insurance coverage has resulted in increased access to health care, preventive care, mental health and dental care, and has improved the economic self-sufficiency of thousands of Coloradans. Boulder County supports the continuation of this coverage that has resulted in a stronger economy and a healthier Colorado.

## SUPPORT THE GROWTH OF THE PROVIDER COMMUNITY TO INCREASE ACCESS TO CARE FOR MEDICAID CLIENTS

The Affordable Care Act has resulted in nearly 400,000 newly insured Coloradans through Medicaid. Although Colorado has seen growth in the number of health care providers that accept Medicaid clients, many parts of urban and rural Colorado remain underserved and unable to meet the medical, dental, and behavioral health needs of their residents on Medicaid. Boulder County supports efforts to expand the Medicaid provider base through strategies such as increased provider rates and incentives for medical, dental, and behavioral health career paths like loan forgiveness in order to increase access for all patients receiving Medicaid benefits and improve the overall health of Colorado.



## INCREASE RESOURCES FOR FEDERALLY-QUALIFIED HEALTH CARE CENTERS TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY-BASED, PRIMARY HEALTH CARE SERVICES

Although the expansion of Medicaid has resulted in an infusion of federal funds into the medical system, the provider community cannot fully meet the demand for services. Private providers are not expanding their practice to include newly eligible Medicaid clients at the rate expected, resulting in increased demand for the services provided by community clinics and Federally Qualified Health Care Centers (FQHCs). FQHCs are also essential partners in local community safety nets, having developed strong prevention service programs and a whole-client health approach that supports the medical, dental, and behavioral health needs of patients. FQHCs recognize the importance of the social determinants of health, and structure care to include linkages to critical social supports such as housing, food, and child/family well-being. While many FQHC clients are covered through Medicaid, these clinics also remain the only option for care for those who remain uncovered in our communities; additional sources of funding are necessary to sustain these essential community health clinics.

## SUPPORT ACCESS TO COMPREHENSIVE FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES AND EVIDENCE-BASED SEXUAL HEALTH INFORMATION TO PROMOTE FAMILY STABILITY

Family planning is an integral component of health. Unplanned, mistimed, or unwanted pregnancy can result in poor health outcomes for both the parents and children. Boulder County supports legislation that maintains or increases access to affordable, medically-accurate family planning services and birth control methods. While the Affordable Care Act mandates contraception coverage with no cost sharing to the consumer, there are loopholes that create gaps in coverage for some women. Confidentiality is another critical concern in reproductive health. Teens and women in abusive relationships have the right, under Colorado law, to access confidential family planning services. However, current Explanation of Benefits (EOBs) procedures do not safeguard privacy. Legislation that supports adequate reimbursement for all contraceptive options, confidential health services, and comprehensive, science-based sex education will improve the ability of Boulder County adults and adolescents to plan their family when the time is right for them.

## INCREASE ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE HEALTHCARE FOR UNINSURED AND UNDERINSURED COLORADANS, AND PROMOTE PROVIDER TRANSPARENCY AND CONSUMER EDUCATION ABOUT HEALTH SERVICES

The Affordable Care Act has significantly reduced the number of uninsured individuals in Colorado. While Colorado's uninsured rate has dropped from 14.3% to 6.7% since 2012, 350,000 Coloradans remain uninsured, and Colorado's underinsurance rate – the number of people with health plans that don't meet their needs – has risen from 13.9% to 16.4% over the same time period. Most uninsured individuals cite the cost of insurance as the biggest barrier to obtaining coverage, and view even the least expensive plans as unaffordable. As a result, individuals are turning to high-deductible health plans that feature low monthly premiums but more out-of-pocket spending. With 54% of the un- and underinsured reporting they have no place to go when they are sick, high-cost services are emerging in the healthcare market. One such example is free-standing emergency rooms. These ERs, which are not affiliated with a hospital, typically charge two to three times the prices of urgent care centers for comparable levels of care. In addition, hospitals often charge uninsured patients much higher rates than those paid by patients with private or public health insurance, since the rates are not negotiated. A lack of cost transparency, hidden costs, and the proliferation of emergency rooms as the easiest-to-access care has resulted in

many Coloradans facing unexpectedly high medical bills. Boulder County supports efforts to increase access to affordable, preventive health care for the uninsured and greater transparency around the cost of care, particularly for those services which are easily accessible to un- and underinsured Coloradans.

**SUPPORT INTEGRATED PUBLIC HEALTH AND HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE CARE ACT FUNDING IN ORDER TO IMPROVE THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH**

The success of the health care system at reducing costs and improving health outcomes is dependent upon the strength of the community safety net which provides food, housing, employment, and family services supports to those Coloradans in greatest need. Current funding structures for the Affordable Care Act support direct health care services, administrative services, and navigation services that link people to insurance, Medicaid, and health care. These funding structures do not reflect the critical role that the human services safety net or public health prevention programs play in supporting the health of individuals within our communities. These foundational programs help Coloradans in need meet their basic needs, and reduce costly behaviors like smoking, unhealthy eating, and substance abuse that require expensive health care interventions. Boulder County supports increased funding for programs that support the social determinants of health.

**SUPPORT EFFORTS TO IMPROVE CLIENT CORRESPONDENCE REGARDING MEDICAID AND OTHER PUBLIC BENEFITS PROGRAMS**

In 2016, a legislative interim committee was formed to examine issues associated with Medicaid client correspondence. The committee identified a number of problems, including duplicate correspondence, incomprehensible messages, conflicting requirements and requests for clients, and use of terminology not familiar to a lay person. Boulder County supports efforts to improve client correspondence across multiple benefits systems, so that Medicaid, Food Assistance, TANF, and other program correspondence can be better coordinated to fully inform clients. In addition, client correspondence should use clear and accurate language so that counties do not have to spend additional time problem-solving with clients who cannot understand the meaning of the correspondence.

**SUPPORT LEGISLATION, FUNDING, AND OTHER EFFORTS THAT EXPAND SERVICES FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROMOTION, PREVENTION, SCREENING, AND TREATMENT**

Mental health and substance use disorders have a significant effect on the health of individuals, their families, and the broader community. Many residents of Boulder County struggle with episodic and ongoing mental health and substance use issues. In a recent survey, some 95% reported that they or someone they know has struggled with mental health or substance use issues. In the United States, 15.7 million adults (aged 18 or older) and 2.8 million youth (aged 12 to 17) have had a major depressive episode during the past year, and 22.5 million Americans aged 12 and older reported needing treatment for alcohol or illicit drug use. These disorders are among the top conditions that cause disability and disease, resulting in high costs to families, employers, publicly funded programs and the health care system. Data shows that early interventions in mental health illness can make an impact. While there are many services in place to support individuals with mental health and substance use disorders, significant barriers exist to successful promotion and prevention efforts, such as integration of mental health screenings in primary care, stigma associated with mental health, and limited support within systems where children and youth interface, such as schools. Gaps in accessing screening, diagnosis and treatment, and retaining care also exist. Research supports the cost-effectiveness of early treatment and prevention programs for addictions and mental illness. Cost-benefit ratios range from 1:2 to 1:10, meaning a \$1 investment yields \$2 to \$10 savings in health costs, criminal and juvenile justice costs, educational costs, and lost productivity. Boulder County supports efforts to expand services for mental health and substance use disorders in Colorado.

**95%**  
Of people reported that they or someone they know struggles with mental health or substance abuse.

**SUPPORT STATEWIDE STRATEGIES THAT REDUCE THE STIGMA ASSOCIATED WITH MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ACCESS**

As defined by the Mayo Clinic, stigma occurs when someone views you in a negative way because you have a distinguishing characteristic or personal trait that's thought to be, or actually is, a disadvantage (a negative stereotype). A recent survey of Boulder County residents reveals that negative attitudes and beliefs toward people who have a mental health condition are common. There is a clear need to educate the public about how to better support individuals with mental illness and to reduce barriers for those seeking or receiving treatment. Stigma can result in a reluctance to seek treatment; lack of understanding on

the part of friends, family and employers; fewer opportunities at work, school and social environments; and discrimination. In many cases, health systems do not adequately reduce stigma, insurance carriers do not always provide adequate coverage for mental health services, and mental health screenings are not always conducted during routine check-ups. A number of programs have been implemented that help address mental health stigma, such as the alignment of physical and behavioral health services for Medicaid clients, Mental Health First Aid training to assist community members in responding to mental health issues, and Project AWARE to support the ability to identify mental health issues in schools. Boulder County supports state and local efforts that promote mental health awareness, education, and screenings in various settings to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness.

**SUPPORT FUNDING FOR EXPANDED MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS STABILIZATION SERVICES STATEWIDE TO REDUCE PLACEMENT OF MENTALLY ILL INDIVIDUALS IN HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOMS AND JAILS**

*See full policy statement in the Community Justice & Safety section.*

**SUPPORT FUNDING FOR RESEARCH AND EDUCATION TO REDUCE HEALTH DISPARITIES AND PROMOTE HEALTH EQUITY**

Boulder County supports the development, expansion, and monitoring of programs to reduce health disparities. Systemic inequities across all segments of society contribute to health disparities, meaning that millions of Americans suffer from a disproportionately high burden of disease, disability, and premature death. These disparities also impose an unacceptable fiscal cost. Efforts must support funding for effective strategies that work to reduce health disparities and support research initiatives to better understand the root causes of inequities.

**SUSTAIN ADEQUATE FUNDING TO PUBLIC HEALTH PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAMS**

Boulder County strongly supports the Amendment 35 funding stream, which provides much-needed programming to support prevention, early detection, and treatment of cancer, cardiovascular and pulmonary diseases; tobacco prevention and cessation; and funds health disparities grants to prevent, screen, and treat diseases that disproportionately affect minority populations. In addition, Boulder County supports prevention and early intervention policies and programs to strengthen early childhood development and support family stability, including family-friendly workplace policies, funding for early care and education programs, and home visitation programs.

**SUPPORT EFFORTS TO PREVENT AND REDUCE TOBACCO USE AND EXPOSURE TO SECONDHAND SMOKE**

Boulder County supports proven interventions that reduce tobacco-related disparities, reduce youth access to and use of tobacco, encourage tobacco use cessation, and/or protect individuals from the health hazards of secondhand tobacco smoke. Priority interventions include: state tobacco retailer licensing with enforcement provisions for violations or removal of the existing tax loophole that penalizes local jurisdictions that choose to license tobacco retailers; increasing the excise tax on tobacco products; restricting the sales and/or marketing of products (including new and novel products) that are flavored and/or broadly appeal to youth; expanding smoke-free and vapor-free areas; and raising the age of purchase to 21. Boulder County supports legislation that enhances local authority to regulate tobacco products sales, advertising, and use as appropriate, and opposes legislation that would restrict or preempt local jurisdictions from passing ordinances or regulations addressing tobacco use. Addressing minors in possession of tobacco products without meaningful retailer licensing is not supported by evidence, nor is a state registry of tobacco retailers (versus licensing with enforcement provisions).

**21**  
Suggested new age limit for purchasing tobacco products.

**SUPPORT LEGISLATION AND OTHER EFFORTS TO PREVENT FOODBORNE ILLNESS**

Boulder County and Boulder County Public Health actively engaged in the stakeholder process that led to HB 16-1401, which, amongst other things, resulted in the first increase in retail food establishment licensing fees since 2009. These fee increases, to be phased in over three years, will better balance the public and private investment in food safety programming, allow Colorado's public health agencies and its restaurant industry to move closer to national best practices for food safety programs, and better protect the public from food-borne illnesses. But more work needs to be done: While Boulder County and Boulder County Public Health remain committed to the full implementation of HB 16-1401, we will advocate for continued improvement to the Colorado Food Protection Act, including changes to the enforcement and civil penalty process for facilities that repeatedly violate food protection regulations.

**SUPPORT EFFORTS THAT EXPAND MANDATORY VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS AND LIMIT EXEMPTIONS**

Population-based programs and services focus on delivering resources that are proven to achieve a more positive health impact than individual interventions alone. The use of vaccinations to control against the spread of communicable disease is a prime example of this strategy. Colorado’s vaccination rate routinely ranks amongst the lowest in the nation, and Boulder County’s amongst the lowest in the state. Mandatory vaccinations have been recommended by multiple national organizations as a best practice to increase herd immunity and therefore improve protection of our population against communicable disease. While HB 14-1288 was a step in the right direction, Boulder County supports expanded mandatory vaccination requirements including the removal of ‘personal belief’ exemptions.

**SUPPORT FUNDING AND OTHER APPROACHES TO EXPAND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COLORADO IMMUNIZATION INFORMATION SYSTEM**

The Colorado Immunization Information System (CIIS) is a confidential, population-based, computerized system that collects and disseminates consolidated immunization information for Coloradans of all ages. Operated by the Colorado Immunization Program at CDPHE, CIIS works to increase and sustain high immunization rates by consolidating immunization records from multiple providers, allowing providers to generate notices for individuals who are not up-to-date, minimizing over-immunization, and identifying missed opportunities for immunization. First implemented in 2011, CIIS has struggled with technical and other issues that have limited its acceptance and use by health care providers, an outcome which ultimately compromises its effectiveness. Broad, statewide implementation of CIIS will meet multiple public health priorities, especially for children. Boulder County supports increased state funding and other efforts to achieve this goal.

**SUPPORT REQUIREMENT OF MANDATORY LABELING OF USE OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS IN FOOD PRODUCTS**

Since the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) first approved the use of genetically altered material in food in 1992, the growing of genetically-modified (GMO) crops – primarily soybean, corn and cotton – has increased significantly. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 94% of 2016’s U.S. soybean crop and 89% of 2016’s U.S. corn crop was genetically modified; 60 – 70% of all conventionally processed food in the United States contains GMO ingredients, reports the Center for Food Safety. Despite widespread agriculture and food industry acceptance of GMOs, significant public concern exists in respect to the human health and environmental risks associated with the genetic engineering of crops. Consumers have the right to know what is in their food in order to make informed choices about whether or not to purchase good with GMO ingredients. However, FDA’s voluntary GMO food labeling program has proven inadequate in this regard, with minimal industry participation. In response, bills requiring the mandatory labeling of GMO foods have been introduced in the U.S. Congress and 16 states, including Colorado as recently as 2014. Boulder County supports state and/or federal legislation to require the mandatory labeling of food and food products derived from or containing genetically modified organisms prior to sale to consumers.



**SUPPORT EFFORTS TO ENSURE THAT COLORADO PEACE OFFICERS, CHILD WELFARE WORKERS, AND OTHER COUNTY FIRST RESPONDERS RECEIVE BEST PRACTICE TRAINING AND TREATMENT FOR POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER**

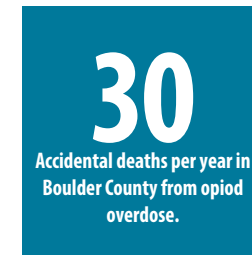
Boulder County strongly supports the efforts of Colorado’s sheriffs, police chiefs, and public safety managers to bring best practice treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), both pre- and post-event, to Colorado’s peace officers and first responders. The Boulder County Sheriff’s Office is seen as a leader in implementation of PTSD treatment best practice, and works directly with other public safety agencies to expand these practices statewide. Boulder County supports legislative, funding, operational, and administrative efforts to ensure that all Colorado peace officers have access to best practice PTSD training and treatment, and urges policy makers to look to the 2014 interim study completed by the Peace Officer PTSD Task Force for guidance. In addition, child welfare caseworkers often experience secondary trauma, which may contribute to the high turnover rate within the profession. Several efforts are underway at the state and national level to better understand the scope and effect of secondary trauma within the child welfare profession, and identify effective approaches to addressing the needs of caseworkers working with traumatized children and families. Boulder County supports efforts to better understand and address this issue, by utilizing existing data, programs, and projects as a basis for system improvements.

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**SUPPORT HARM REDUCTION LEGISLATION AND OTHER PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACHES AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORMS TO ADDRESS DRUG USE**

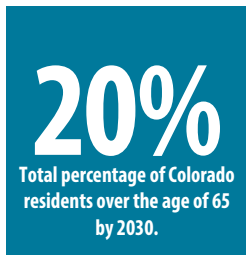
Drug use and misuse continue to create public health challenges in Boulder County, leading to overdose deaths, HIV and hepatitis C infections, and other chronic health conditions. As one example, opioid overdose deaths have reached crisis level, with Boulder County averaging over 30 accidental deaths per year. Unfortunately, substance misuse treatment is too often unavailable or unaffordable for the people who want it. And a criminal justice response, including requiring arrest to access health services, is ineffective and leads to other public health problems.

Public health approaches offer effective, evidence-based responses to address these challenges, but some of the many effective interventions are not currently allowed in the United States owing to outdated drug laws, attitudes, and stigma. Boulder County supports legislation that takes a public health approach to drug use, including prioritizing proven treatment and harm reduction strategies and expanding and removing barriers to treatment and harm reduction services. For example, community-based overdose education and naloxone distribution programs demonstrate promising approaches with the potential to be scaled up and adapted to a range of settings and populations at risk for overdose from prescription opioid analgesics and heroin. Boulder County will support efforts that promote public education and training, development and dissemination of best practices, and broader implementation of promising interventions as a core element of a comprehensive approach to drug use and misuse, including opioid overdose.



**INCREASE FUNDING FOR THE OLDER COLORADANS FUND TO SUPPORT SERVICES FOR COLORADO’S GROWING AGING POPULATION**

The population of those 65 and older in Colorado is expected to double to 1.3 million by 2030 — representing about 20% of the state’s total projected population. Among the most significant impacts of this demographic surge will be increased Medicaid and Medicare costs, along with long-term care costs. The Older Coloradans Fund provides financial support to regional Area Agencies on Aging, whose programs help prevent costly institutional placements by supporting seniors in their homes and communities. These programs have proven invaluable in reducing the growth of Medicaid expenditures in assisted living and nursing home care, but funding has not kept pace with the growth in the senior population. Currently, one key area of need is in Long-Term Care Ombudsman oversight of nursing homes and assisted living homes. The number of these facilities is growing, and the complexity of cases is increasing. Additional staff resources are needed to maintain the safety and quality of life of facility residents. Increased funding for the Older Coloradans Fund would provide the necessary Ombudsman staff at the local level to address this need, and to expand the programming and services that are relied upon by Colorado’s growing aging population.



**SUSTAIN INCREASES IN STATE FUNDING FOR SENIOR SERVICES**

State Funding for Senior Services (SFSS) is a state budget item comprised of general fund dollars provided to the State Unit on Aging. These funds are distributed to Colorado’s sixteen geographical Area Agencies on Aging (AAA), and are used to provide a host of services to seniors, including transportation, personal care, congregate meals, home-delivered meals, homemaker services, adult day care, and legal assistance. These services support seniors in living independently in the community and also support families struggling to care for elderly relatives in the home. The SFSS funding has directly reduced the number and timing of nursing home admissions – for several years the Medicaid Nursing Home Census has stayed flat while Colorado’s senior population has increased significantly. Recent funding increases have allowed for AAAs to expand the type and quantity of services, so that more needy seniors can receive assistance while staying in the community. Funding for these services should increase or remain at current levels so that needy seniors can continue to get the support services they depend upon.

**SUPPORT POLICIES THAT PROMOTE END-OF-LIFE DECISION-MAKING TOOLS AND THE ABILITY TO DIE WITH DIGNITY**

End-of-life decision-making and communicating those decisions to families, physicians, and others is becoming an increasingly important issue for Colorado’s seniors. Living wills, advanced directives, do not resuscitate orders, medical orders for scope of treatment, and other tools guided by medical standards provide aging adults with some ability to influence health care decisions at the end of their lives. These tools can provide comfort and dignity while assisting family members and physicians in understanding the desires of patients. While Colorado voters approved Proposition 106 to expand the

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end-of-life options for terminally ill patients, Boulder County supports efforts to increase the use and availability of a broader set of end-of-life decision-making tools and other approaches to support dying with dignity to Colorado’s growing aging population.

**SUPPORT THE RIGHTS AND HEALTH AND WELL BEING OF TRANSGENDER PEOPLE**

Transgender people, including transgender young people, need and deserve equitable access to healthcare, education, and a variety of other public services. Examples include access to adequate health insurance and care for transition surgeries and associated therapies; public bathrooms that align with the gender with which an individual identifies; identity support in schools and other public institutions; and policy changes such as the Birth Certificate Modernization Act, which will allow transgender individuals to hold a birth certificate that accurately reflects their identified name and gender. Denial of these services has been shown to have negative outcomes physically, mentally, financially, and socially throughout the lifetime of transgender individuals. Boulder County supports legislative and other efforts to protect and advance the rights of transgender Coloradans, and opposes legislation that restricts these rights.

# HOUSING

*To secure and maintain safe and affordable housing, and to protect homeowners and residents in Boulder County.*

**INCREASE FUNDING TO THE COLORADO HOUSING TRUST FUND TO PROVIDE AN ON-GOING, SUSTAINABLE SOURCE OF STATE FUNDING FOR PERMANENTLY AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

**\$** According to Housing Colorado, the supply gap for housing for low income households with less than \$20,000 in annual income exceeds 110,000 homes. At current rates of affordable rental housing construction in Colorado of 823 homes per year, it will take well over 100 years to eliminate this gap. In 2014 the General Assembly passed legislation which, among other things, repurposed the Colorado Home Investment Fund to create the state’s first housing trust fund. The new Housing Trust Fund expanded the number of sources that can be used to support affordable housing production, including federal grants, and made housing production funds available to any qualified applicant, including for-profit developers, all in an effort to increase private investments and equity. However, state financial investment in the Housing Trust Fund is limited. Additional funds are necessary to increase the pace and scale of affordable housing development and address the affordable housing crisis facing Colorado.

**INCREASE STATE SUPPORT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A DIVERSE STOCK OF PERMANENTLY AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND SUPPORT POLICIES THAT INCREASE ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

**\$** Boulder County supports state and local policy efforts that increase the development of and access to a diverse range of affordable, market-rate or below market-rate rental housing, including apartments, mobile homes, single-resident occupancy units, family homes, and more. Approaches include housing voucher programs, incentives such as property tax breaks for landlords that provide reduced rents to low-income renters, and incentives for the development of homeless transitional housing. Boulder County supports policies that increase the development of affordable and market-rate housing and the repurposing of buildings to accommodate affordable and market-rate housing.

**SUPPORT FUNDING FOR PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE HOUSING AND MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS EXITING THE CRIMINAL AND JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEMS**

According to the Justice Department, about 1.2 million people in state, local, and federal custody reported some



*Golden-Mantled Squirrel* by David Bahr

kind of mental health problem. National reports indicate mental health problems among 64% of inmates in local jails, 56% of state prison inmates, and 45% in the federal prison system. The Colorado Legislative Committee on Mental Illness in the Criminal Justice System has explored options for addressing this issue. Boulder County has proposed the establishment of integrated local collaboratives to develop an evidence-based, tenant-based supportive housing and comprehensive case management program to reduce recidivism of individuals with mental illness in the criminal and juvenile justice systems. Similar to other successful cross-jurisdictional collaborative programs such as the 1451 Collaborative Management Program, a program such as this would create a comprehensive approach to stabilizing individuals as they are released from incarceration.

**SUPPORT STATE EFFORTS TO END CHRONIC, YOUTH, FAMILY, AND VETERANS HOMELESSNESS THROUGH COMMUNITY-BASED, COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAMS**



The 2015 Metro Denver Homeless Initiative point-in-time survey identified approximately 6,130 homeless individuals in the metro Denver area, with 650 in Boulder County. Because this survey is a one-time snapshot of those living on the streets, it does not count homeless individuals who may be sleeping in their car, staying with friends or family, or “doubling up” with other families. In 2016, Boulder County participated in a homeless planning effort with a host of government and non-profit leaders across the metro-Denver region as part of an IBM Smarter Cities Challenge project. This planning work resulted in the development of a comprehensive plan to address homelessness across the region, and includes 10 recommendations that, if implemented, could transform the way counties and municipalities collaborate on efforts to address homelessness. Boulder County supports this effort as homelessness is known to be a regional problem that cannot be meaningfully addressed through the efforts of individual jurisdictions. Investments by the state to support this effort would advance a multi-jurisdictional approach to solving homelessness, and result in improved approaches to service delivery, integration of critical information systems, shared and coordinated uses of data, innovative technology applications, and ultimately, a more efficient and effective use of public resources.

**MODIFY COLORADO’S MOBILE HOME STATUTES TO SIMPLIFY COLLECTION OF PROPERTY TAXES AND DECREASE THE LOSS OF HOME OWNERSHIP FOR UNPAID TAXES**

Under current Colorado law, mobile homes are treated differently than real property and are subject to more stringent timelines when property tax payments are delinquent. When a homeowner does not pay property taxes, a tax lien may be sold on the property through a public sale. Mobile home owners whose tax liens are purchased, usually by an investor, have only about a year to redeem them before the tax lien holder can start paperwork to take ownership. Owners of real property (homes, fixed buildings, and land) have about three years to repay the debt. Due to the lower valuation of mobile homes, the unpaid taxes are typically low (under \$500). Consequently, mobile home owners lose their homes, or have been forced to buy back their homes at a much greater cost, over a relatively small amount of unpaid property taxes. Boulder County supports efforts to simplify property tax collections and support homeowner responsibility in paying property taxes on mobile homes in a timely manner, and to examine both short- and long-term statutory remedies that would reduce home-losses among mobile home owners.

**HUMAN SERVICES GOVERNANCE, SYSTEM EFFICIENCY, AND INTEGRATION**

*To support legislative, administrative, and funding decisions that increase efficiencies, decrease costs, and promote innovation in the delivery of human services programming.*



Caribou Ranch Wildflowers by Linda Gerstle

**SUPPORT ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR COUNTY ADMINISTRATION OF HUMAN SERVICES**



The County Administration appropriation has historically been severely underfunded to meet the needs of counties in delivering critical public benefits. A state workload study conducted in 2007 concluded that County Administration was underfunded by 33% at that time. The total dollars appropriated for state fiscal year 2015-16 remained short of the necessary amount identified back in 2007 – prior to significant increases in caseloads and other stressors to the benefits system. While caseloads increased, counties demonstrated vast improvements in the timeliness and accuracy of benefits administration, improving the timeliness from 44% to 94%. For several years many counties have overspent their County Administration allocation: In 2016 forty-five counties were overspent on County Administration and the statewide three-year average for over-expenditures is \$14.7 million. The over-expenditures are covered by a mix of federal and local funds – no state funds. The Governor’s FY 2017-18 Budget includes a request for a \$5 million increase in General Fund dollars for the County Administration program, equalizing the share of the counties and state in covering the over-expenditures. This funding is critical to ensuring that counties are able to continue to provide timely, accurate and appropriate services to Coloradans in need.

**SUPPORT EFFORTS TO INTEGRATE DATA ACROSS SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEMS TO IMPROVE INTERVENTIONS AND OUTCOMES OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

The state, counties, and their partners utilize multiple data systems to track clients receiving various services and benefits. In most cases, these systems are not integrated and cannot “talk” to one another; in others, confidentiality requirements restrict the sharing of data, even amongst practitioners. The ability to share data while maintaining confidentiality across systems such as public health, human services, mental health, school districts, workforce, criminal justice, aging, and others will greatly improve these agencies’ ability to integrate services and provide the most impactful interventions to clients. In addition, data sharing allows agencies to measure the effectiveness of prevention and early intervention services, ensuring that public investments are generating the highest returns. Furthermore, the ability to share data promotes the “any door is the right door” approach to service delivery, easing the client experience and maximizing program efficiency.

**SUPPORT LOCAL ADMINISTRATION AND DELIVERY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICE PROGRAMS, INCLUDING ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION AND ENROLLMENT**

Health and human services programs are best delivered through locally relevant approaches and programs that leverage partnerships to meet the needs of individuals within the community. The human services networks at the county level are comprised of public/private partnerships that include non-profit agencies, schools, human services agencies, housing agencies, law enforcement, and more. Boulder County opposes efforts to shift to a state-administered system for delivering health and human service programming or a system which diverts clients seeking benefits to a private vendor that has little or no familiarity with local services. Data shows that counties perform better in terms of timely enrollment and are better equipped to answer clients' questions about services available in their community. Experience shows that community based safety-net strategies are the best approach to addressing human services needs.

**ENSURE THAT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATEWIDE STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN ON AGING INTEGRATES THE PLANNING WORK OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AGING PARTNERS**

The number of Coloradans aged 65 and over is projected to rise by more than 508,000, or 68%, by 2030. In 2015, Colorado became the first state to approve the development of a comprehensive, long-term strategy on aging. The first-phase plan was completed in late 2016, and establishes a path forward for Colorado to begin to address some of the more pressing concerns that accompany the significant growth in the aging demographic. The scope of the planning group included a review of the impacts of this growing population on families, communities, housing, public systems and public finance, education, transportation, the state and local economies, and most notably health and healthcare systems. The plan's recommendations were developed with the guidance and input of local communities across the state, and the implementation of the plan should follow the same approach. Many local and regional partners may have plans in place to address the growth of the aging population – around service delivery, community development and planning, health services and more. In order for this cross-systems approach to be successful, the state effort must continue to leverage existing local and regional planning to address the aging population.

*Break of Dawn* by Julie Bender**IMMIGRATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

*To improve social, environmental, and economic justice and equality.*

**OPPOSE LEGISLATION THAT INCREASES RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT AT THE STATE OR LOCAL LEVEL, AND SUPPORT A CONSISTENT, COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE POLICY TO ADDRESS DETAINER REQUESTS BY IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT**

Colorado has worked hard to ensure that the constitutional and human rights of all residents is considered by local law enforcement. In 2013, Colorado banned the unconstitutional practice of police detainment beyond release date for ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) holds. Since that time, increased action on the part of ICE has forced information sharing between local and federal law enforcement for the purposes of targeting immigrants. This has impacted community trust in local law enforcement and has increased the fear among detained and released individuals, who are avoiding probation appointments and court hearings. Additional mandates on local governments for immigration enforcement result in an increased expense at the local level, during a time when jails are over-capacity and funding is limited. The current immigration system is the purview of the federal government; it is ineffective, unwieldy and backlogged, and already paces an unnecessary burden on local jurisdictions and their residents. New mandates for increased local enforcement may have detrimental impacts not only through increased expense to local governments and law enforcement but also to local economies, through decreases in labor force, production, consumption of goods, and tourism. Colorado needs a consistent approach to address federal detainer requests regarding immigration, which would create a continuity of trust between local law enforcement agencies, immigrant communities, and federal immigration agencies. Boulder County supports

comprehensive federal immigration reform and opposes new state-legislated mandates for state and local government enforcement of federal immigration laws.

**OPPOSE EFFORTS TO IMPEDE VOTING RIGHTS OF UNITED STATES CITIZENS IN COLORADO, INCLUDING REQUIREMENT OF IDENTIFICATION AT POLLING PLACES, LIMITATION OF ABILITY TO MAIL BALLOTS TO VOTERS, AND SIMILAR MEASURES**

Voting is one of the greatest privileges and responsibilities that we enjoy in the United States. But for many United States citizens, access to their right to vote is being obstructed by unnecessary and overly-burdensome requirements intentionally designed to create barriers to registering to vote and voting. Voter identification laws deny voting rights to students, minorities, the elderly, and the disabled, and restrict citizens' ability to rightfully participate in elections. Same day registration and the use of student identification cards, utility bills, and documentation other than driver's licenses, passports, and state identification cards provide secure and viable options for verifying voter identity and allowing any legal adult American to vote. Boulder County opposes efforts to roll-back mail ballot laws, same-day voter registration, and other measures that have expanded the opportunity to vote to all legal United States citizens while maintaining election security and integrity.

**IMPROVE ACCESS TO THE PROVISION OF COLORADO DRIVERS LICENSES AND IDENTIFICATION CARDS**

SB 13-251 created a pathway for immigrants in Colorado to access a driver's license and identification card through a self-funded, fee-for-service process. Any Coloradan who has temporary status or is undocumented can apply for a Colorado identification card or driver's license through this program. The program is self-funded, with Coloradans who qualify for the program paying more than three times the amount paid by citizens and permanent residents. The program has been highly popular – among applicants, law enforcement, and local communities. However, access is impeded by the small number of locations and the huge demand to obtain the licenses and ID cards, resulting in a statewide appointment cap and regulations against predatory practices on those seeking the appointments. Little has been done to address the high cost of the services, the huge backlog and demand for the cards, and the geographic disparity in accessing the cards. Boulder County supports efforts to improve access to driver's licenses and identification cards across Colorado.

**SUSTAIN AND STRENGTHEN RIGHTS FOR LGBTQ PEOPLE IN COLORADO**

Boulder County supports continued efforts to ensure adequate protections and rights for LGBTQ Coloradans. Protections such as civil unions, anti-bullying programs in schools, and anti-discrimination in health care and the workplace have demonstrated that Colorado is committed to protecting its LGBTQ population. These protections must remain intact, despite the influence and pressure of local and national efforts to limit these rights. Boulder County also supports ongoing efforts to ban the dangerous and discredited practice of conversion therapy, and opposes statewide religious exemptions from discrimination.

Immigration & Human Rights

# LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION

To improve upon the built environment and quality of life for Coloradans by promoting well-planned communities.



Two Aspen Trees by Geoffrey Agrons

## LAND USE

**SUPPORT LEGISLATIVE EFFORTS TO PROMOTE WILDFIRE MITIGATION AND REDUCE THE STRUCTURAL IGNITABILITY OF HOMES IN THE WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE**

Recent wildfires in Boulder County and across the state have reinforced the need for collaborative landowner participation in the planning and implementation of mitigation efforts in the wildland urban interface. In particular, Boulder County supports legislative efforts that promote forest health and restoration projects that improve overall forest conditions; forestry projects that reduce fuels for fire and create fuel breaks and safe escape routes; increased private homeowner awareness and participation in the creation and maintenance of defensible space and a safe home ignition zone; and increased use of ignition-resistant building materials in residential construction, renovations, decks, and additions in the wildland urban interface. Boulder County's nationally recognized Wildfire Partners program, which provides wildfire mitigation assessments, technical assistance, and financial incentives to private homeowners interested in reducing their wildfire risk, is one example that supports these goals. Through the Colorado Department of Natural Resources Wildfire Risk Reduction Grant program, Boulder County has assisted nearly 750 homeowners in reducing their wildfire risk. Boulder County supports increased legislative activity in this arena.



**SUPPORT LEGISLATIVE AND OTHER EFFORTS TO LINK LAND USE, HOUSING, AND TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND INVESTMENT**

Consistency and coordination between land use planning, housing development, and transportation investment will result in decreases in greenhouse gas emissions, fossil fuel consumption, and transportation infrastructure costs while increasing mobility for all. States around the country are forming agencies and offices to support such coordination between state, regional, and local stakeholders, with the goal of developing and implementing shared visions to guide local land use plans and investments in housing and transportation infrastructure. These offices typically work to strengthen state/regional/local collaboration on transportation decisions by facilitating stakeholder communication and other strategies. Boulder County supports legislative and other efforts to ensure that Colorado and its local communities are maximizing funding and other investments in support of a transportation system that increases the mobility options for all Coloradans.

Land Use & Transportation

**OPPOSE LEGISLATION TO EXPAND THE USE OF EMINENT DOMAIN BY PRIVATE PIPELINE COMPANIES**

In past legislative sessions Boulder County has opposed failed legislative attempts proposed to “correct” a 2012 Colorado Supreme Court decision that rescinded eminent domain authority that private pipeline companies had been utilizing for decades. In short, the court ruled that this authority was being exercised through a misinterpretation of state statute. Boulder County will continue to oppose legislative efforts to overturn the Supreme Court decision, as the county believes that negotiation between the private pipeline companies and private property owners and public entities will guarantee the best results to balance pipeline siting needs with private and public interests.

**TRANSPORTATION****SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE, MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS AND ALTERNATIVE MODES OF TRANSPORTATION**

Boulder County supports transportation planning and funding with a strong multi-modal focus and investment in a regional transportation system that reduces reliance on fossil fuels. Examples include timely completion of a transit system that connects the entire Denver metropolitan region (such as FasTracks, approved by voters in 2004), development of multi-modal infrastructure through safe bikeways and walkways, managed HOV/transit lanes, transportation demand management, and other transit services and alternative modes programs that provide people with modal choice.

**SUPPORT INCREASED FUNDING FOR TRANSPORTATION, INCLUDING FUNDING FOR TRANSIT, BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE, AND OPERATIONS**

Boulder County supports legislative approaches, such as conversion of the state’s Hospital Provider Fee into an enterprise fund, and other strategies to generate revenue for funding of transportation improvements in Colorado, as long as equitable and sufficient funds are committed to multi-modal and alternative modes of transportation, and the funding generated does not supplant current CDOT funding. Priorities for new funding should include completion of the U.S. 36 bus rapid transit project, completion of FasTracks and build-out of transit improvements in the Northwest Corridor, and local and regional multi-modal and alternative modes infrastructure, including final mile connections. Boulder County believes that any new road capacity funding should be invested in managed lanes that place prioritization on maximizing the travel of people (not just vehicles), and that managed lane projects must provide equitable travel choices in order to ensure that lower-income residents benefit from the public investment in a toll road (low-income residents are more likely to use public transit and carpools, and much less likely to be regular users of toll roads). Boulder County continues to support the SB 09-108 FASTER funding mechanism, as well as funding sources that are tied to transportation use, including vehicle miles traveled-based approaches. Lastly, Colorado’s federal and state transportation funds are distributed through a Metropolitan Planning Organization prioritization process administered by the Denver Regional Council of Governments; Boulder County strongly supports preservation of this process.

**SUPPORT LEGISLATION AND OTHER TOOLS TO INCREASE ELECTRIC AND FUEL-EFFICIENT VEHICLE USAGE, INCLUDING INVESTMENT IN RELATED TECHNOLOGY AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

Expanding the use of electric and fuel-efficient vehicles and the necessary infrastructure to support them will play an important role in achieving greenhouse gas emissions reductions from the transportation sector, advancing Colorado’s statewide carbon reduction goals, and reducing dependence on foreign oil. Policy approaches that support the use of electric and fuel-efficient vehicles include: Investment in electric and plug-in hybrid electric vehicle charging infrastructure; fee-bate and other incentives for the purchase of electric and highly fuel-efficient vehicles; and vehicle-to-grid technology, which enables electric and hybrid-electric vehicles to “plug” into the electric grid and provide power during the many hours that those vehicles sit idle.

**SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO AFFIRM COUNTY AUTHORITY TO IMPOSE A TRANSPORTATION MAINTENANCE FEE**

Colorado home rule cities currently have the authority to impose a Transportation Maintenance Fee to fund the ongoing maintenance of local roads. Counties, however, do not possess the authority to impose such a fee. Boulder County supports legislation that would enable county governments to collect a Transportation Maintenance Fee to provide revenue for the maintenance of county roads. This is especially necessary in instances where specific users cause increased deterioration of county roads, for example through the use of local roads for the movement of heavy drilling equipment or the hauling of water to drilling sites.



Caribou Cow Camp by Julia Moritz

**MARIJUANA**

*To ensure local authority to appropriately regulate marijuana uses and ensure effective public health education, treatment, and youth prevention programming.*

**HEALTH AND WELL-BEING****SUPPORT FUNDING AND PROGRAMMING FOR RECREATIONAL MARIJUANA EDUCATION, TREATMENT, AND YOUTH USE PREVENTION**

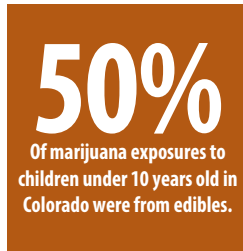
Marijuana legalization, approved by Colorado voters in 2012, has the potential to negatively impact certain residents in our communities, particularly youth, children, and those vulnerable to substance abuse and mental health disorders. Consequences of marijuana use and production can include increased risk for mental health issues, risk behaviors, school failure, addiction, accidental poisoning, foodborne illness, and unintended injuries. The commercialization of marijuana



facilitates easy access to the drug and a decrease in perceptions of harm related to its use. Boulder County continues to support the sharing of state marijuana sales tax revenues with those communities that allow the commercial sales of marijuana within their jurisdictions, both to support their regulatory and enforcement infrastructure and to promote a multi-faceted approach to prevention, early intervention, and treatment of marijuana use in order to reduce negative health and safety impacts.

**SUPPORT EFFORTS TO ENACT AND MAINTAIN EFFECTIVE REGULATION OF MARIJUANA PRODUCTION, SALE, PROMOTION, AND USE**

Three years' experience with legalized marijuana in Colorado has demonstrated the benefits of thoughtful and cautious regulation. Research on the public health impacts of marijuana use points to concerns related to brain development through young adulthood, exacerbation of conditions for persons with mental illness or brain disorders, and the impact on the fetus during pregnancy. The risk to the health of children is also of particular concern. A study published in 2016 in JAMA Pediatrics reports that the rate of marijuana exposure in children under 10 years old in Colorado, as measured through the calls to the regional poison center and visits to a children's hospital, increased significantly between 2009-2015, and at a higher rate than the rest of the United States. About 50% of exposures involved edible marijuana products, which frequently look like foods that are attractive to children. Boulder County supports continued efforts to address the potency and identification of edible marijuana products and how these products are marketed to the public, especially youth and children. An additional issue of concern is creation of public venues for marijuana use, with potential exposure to secondhand marijuana smoke in indoor and outdoor spaces, including for employees. Legal sanctioning of so-called marijuana 'consumption clubs' also reinforces the message that marijuana is an acceptable and even necessary part of socializing, which has important implications for youth marijuana use and reduced perception of harm. If Colorado moves toward allowing public marijuana use, Boulder County supports maintaining protections of the Colorado Clean Indoor Air Act, eliminating the opportunity for sharing marijuana with underage persons by enforcing age restrictions (21+) in all venues, allowing local ordinances to be more restrictive than state law, and creating clear and consistent enforcement mechanisms.



**SUPPORT LEGISLATIVE AND OTHER APPROACHES TO FACILITATE INFORMATION SHARING BETWEEN STATE AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES REGARDING CAREGIVER CULTIVATION OPERATIONS**

Colorado's local governments regularly receive complaints from residents regarding non-licensed marijuana cultivation operations, but have no knowledge of whether a large cultivation at a given address is an illegal cultivation or a legal caregiver cultivation. Current state statute requires cultivating caregivers to register the location of the cultivation with the State Medical Marijuana Licensing Authority. While the Authority is required by statute to verify the location of a primary caregiver cultivation operation when receiving an address-specific request from a local government or law enforcement agency, it has interpreted this statutory language to mean it is required to respond only to law enforcement agencies, and not zoning or other code enforcement officials. Further, the statute only requires verification of the location of a cultivation, not the size of the cultivation. Requiring the state to share with local government code enforcement officials the location of each cultivation operation and the number of plants allowed for that operation would allow local governments to more adequately investigate and respond to resident complaints in order to determine if a cultivation violates the local zoning code. For example, this information could be shared each time the state receives a registration for a caregiver cultivation. Boulder County supports legislative and other efforts to facilitate this kind of information sharing to benefit our communities.

**LAND USE**

**SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO REMOVE STATUTORY RESTRICTIONS ON AMORTIZATION FOR MARIJUANA OPERATIONS THAT ARE NON-CONFORMING UNDER LOCAL LAND USE CODES**

The ability for local governments to gradually eliminate land uses that no longer comply with local zoning regulations, known as amortization, is a common land use tool that is used effectively in many states. In 2003, however, Colorado made it illegal for local governments to require a non-conforming property owner to terminate or eliminate a use by amortization. When both medical and retail marijuana became legal in Colorado, no local jurisdiction had regulations in place that established the appropriate location for marijuana-related businesses, and by the time such regulations were in place, many had established

themselves in locations that subsequently became illegal. Because nonconforming marijuana businesses can have a profoundly negative effect on the community, Boulder County supports state legislation to allow the limited use of amortization, in order to provide Colorado local governments with an important tool to remedy these negative effects.

**SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF FINES A COURT MAY IMPOSE IN A COUNTY ZONING ENFORCEMENT ACTION AGAINST ILLEGAL MARIJUANA CULTIVATION OPERATIONS**

The ability for Colorado counties to enforce local zoning ordinances is limited by state statute. As a result, the most common statutory-allowed enforcement remedy employed by counties facing a zoning infraction is a county court civil action seeking fines of up to \$1,000 plus a continuing penalty of \$100 per day. Given the profitability of marijuana businesses, these limits on civil penalty fine amounts for zoning infractions are often viewed by the industry as "the cost of doing business." Boulder County supports legislation to allow counties to seek, and courts to impose, ever-increasing fines with respect to illegal marijuana cultivation operations, to create a greater incentive for these businesses to comply with local law.

**SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE COLORADO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS WITH AUTHORITY TO LICENSE OR BAN MARIJUANA CONSUMPTION CLUBS, SHOULD SUCH CLUBS BE PERMITTED BY STATE LAW**

Colorado's local governments currently have authority to allow or ban medical and retail marijuana businesses. While neither the Colorado Constitution or the state's Retail Marijuana Code speak to the concept of marijuana consumption clubs, generally defined as spaces where people can consume medical or retail marijuana onsite, the constitution does prohibit the consumption of marijuana "that is conducted openly and publicly," and the Colorado Clean Indoor Air Act prohibits smoking, including the smoking of marijuana, in most indoor areas. The November 2016 passage of Initiative 300 in Denver, allowing for marijuana consumption clubs in the city under certain circumstances, has made issues regarding the legitimacy and regulation of consumption clubs more urgent. If consumption clubs are to be allowed in Colorado, local governments should be given the option to allow or ban these clubs and the ability to license them in a manner similar to establishments that serve alcohol or establishments that sell or produce marijuana, in order to provide for the safety and welfare of their residents.

Marijuana

Marijuana



South Boulder Creek by Daniel Joder

Oil and Gas

## OIL AND GAS

To support expanded ability for Colorado local governments to regulate the oil and gas industry in concert with community needs and desires.

### SUPPORT LEGISLATION AND OTHER POLICY APPROACHES TO ADDRESS THE AIR AND WATER QUALITY IMPACTS ASSOCIATED WITH OIL AND GAS OPERATIONS

While much attention is being paid to the increasing number of concerns raised in respect to hydraulic fracturing, “fracking” is just one contributor to impacts that oil and gas industry activity has on air and water quality. Impacts from fracking and other operations include air toxin and volatile organic compound emissions close to population centers; dust resulting from the use of silicates; and surface water and shallow groundwater contamination from abandoned or improperly lined ponds that hold brine and fracking water. Boulder County supports legislative and other efforts to address these and other impacts using an approach that appropriately balances public health and regulation.



### SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO AFFIRM AND EXPAND THE AUTHORITY OF COLORADO COUNTIES AND MUNICIPALITIES TO REGULATE LAND USE ACTIVITIES OF THE OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY, AND WHICH CLARIFIES ANY STATE REGULATION IN THIS ARENA AS MINIMUM STANDARDS THAT LOCAL GOVERNMENTS CAN STRENGTHEN AS NECESSARY TO ADDRESS LOCAL CONCERNS AND CONDITIONS

Three years’ experience with legalized marijuana in Colorado has demonstrated the benefits of thoughtful and cautious State statutes and case law have established that local governments in Colorado have express authority and jurisdiction to regulate land uses, including the land use aspects of oil and gas operations. Statutes such as the county zoning enabling statutes from 1939 and the Local Government Land Use Control Enabling Act of 1974 provide local governments with broad authority to regulate and plan for the use of land, and authorize Colorado counties to provide for the physical development of the unincorporated territories of the state. Similarly, case law such as Board of County Commissioners, La Plata County,

Colorado v. Bowen/Edwards Associates, Inc., (1992) has established that this authority is a legally protected interest that may not be infringed upon by any other governmental entity absent an express preemption right that is granted by the General Assembly. Equally as important, the Oil and Gas Conservation Act (OGCA), from which arises the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission’s (COGCC) authority, does not expressly preempt county land use regulatory authority. Subsequent General Assembly-adopted amendments to the OGCA have been clear to state that the legislature had no intention to expressly or implicitly preempt county land use regulatory authority. Boulder County supports this well-established regime, which clearly affirms that the COGCC has not been delegated land use regulatory authority over oil and gas operations. Rather, through the OGCA, COGCC authority is directed to: Regulate the technical aspects of oil and gas to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the general public; protect the health, safety, and welfare of any person at an oil or gas well; and prevent and mitigate adverse environmental impacts on air, water, soil, and other biological resources, including the environment and wildlife.

Drawing upon its own experiences in regulating the oil and gas industry and engaging with numerous efforts over the years to improve the COGCC’s regulatory regime, Boulder County urges the General Assembly to adopt state legislation that achieves the following:

- Clarifies that Colorado counties and municipalities have express authority to regulate the land use activities of the oil and gas industry, including authority to impose setbacks greater than those required by the COGCC, and other measures such as noise or visual impact requirements designed to mitigate land use or surface impacts of oil and gas development;
- Permits Colorado counties and municipalities to require oil and gas operators to first attempt to resolve any operational conflict claims at the local jurisdictional level before appealing to district court, and requires operators to demonstrate burden of proof that no possible construction of the local regulations may be harmonized with the state regulatory scheme;
- Permits Colorado counties and municipalities to take such actions as limiting oil and gas operations to certain zoning districts or prohibiting certain oil and gas activities from within their jurisdictional boundaries on health and safety grounds or standard land use criteria such as unreasonable impacts to nearby uses or other resources on the surface; and
- Makes clear that any COGCC regulation in the area of land use are minimum standards above which local governments can modify or strengthen as necessary to address local concerns and conditions.

### SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO AMEND THE OIL AND GAS CONSERVATION ACT TO REFORM VARIOUS OPERATING PRACTICES OF THE COLORADO OIL AND GAS CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The OGCA mandates the COGCC, when regulating the oil and gas industry, to “Foster the responsible, balanced development, production, and utilization of the natural resources of oil and gas in the state of Colorado in a manner consistent with protection of public health, safety, and welfare, including protection of the environment and wildlife resources;” and “Protect the public and private interests against waste in the production and utilization of oil and gas.” (C.R.S 34-60-102) Changing the COGCC mandate as spelled out in the OGCA and reforming various practices of the COGCC to increase both collaboration with Colorado’s local governments and accountability to the people of Colorado will help ensure that goals of the oil and gas industry are appropriately balanced with the values of Coloradans. In pursuit of COGCC reform, Boulder County will support legislation that achieves the following:

- Amends C.R.S 34-60-102 to ensure that surface impacts are adequately protected even if this means oil and gas operators cannot recover 100 percent of the resource or if 100 percent recovery must be phased in order to minimize surface impacts;
- Amends C.R.S. 34-60-103 to include compliance with government regulation as an exception from the definition of waste, as proposed in House Bill 13-1269;
- Amends C.R.S. 34-60-106 to better balance the “cost effectiveness and technical feasibility” test in respect to the other goals of the OGCA;
- Changes the definition of “operational conflict” as interpreted by the courts so that operational conflict arises

Oil and Gas

only when application of local or state regulations causes a permanent reduction in the quantity of all oil and gas ultimately recoverable from a pool under proper and prudent operation;

- Increases the people of Colorado’s trust in the work of the COGCC by reducing conflicts of interest for COGCC members, as proposed in House Bill 13-1269; and
- Increases COGCC oversight over the fracking process.

**SUPPORT INCREASING COLORADO’S SEVERANCE TAXES AND PURSUING OTHER APPROACHES TO INCREASE STATE REVENUES RECEIVED FROM THE OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY**

Severance taxes are taxes that states levy on minerals “severed,” or removed, from the ground. Every major energy-producing state, including Colorado, levies severance taxes to make up for the permanent loss of nonrenewable natural resources and to mitigate the impacts of energy and mineral development on local communities. By almost every measure – annual collections, annual collections as a percentage of total state tax collections, actual tax rates – Colorado’s severance tax regime lags those of other energy-producing states. In combination, Colorado’s low severance tax rate, stripper well exemption, and severance tax credit of 87.5% of ad valorem taxes both reduces the revenues available to the state and its local governments to address the impacts of oil and gas development and provides no opportunity to leverage this burgeoning – and ultimately finite – industry for the benefit of Colorado’s people and environment. Boulder County supports increasing Colorado’s severance tax rates and pursuing other policy approaches – for example, eliminating industry tax credits – to increase state tax revenues collected from oil and gas development, end taxpayer subsidization of oil and gas producers, ensure better mitigation of the industry’s near- and long-term impacts, and provide broader benefit to Colorado for the extraction of nonrenewable energy resources.

**SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO AFFIRM AND EXPAND THE AUTHORITY OF COLORADO COUNTIES AND MUNICIPALITIES TO IMPOSE IMPACT AND OTHER FEES ON OIL AND GAS ACTIVITIES**

Local governments face numerous challenges in regulating the oil and gas industry in concert with the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission. Recent lawsuits against a number of Colorado local governments – including Boulder County communities Lafayette and Longmont – from both industry and the state of Colorado itself are prime examples of the need for General Assembly affirmation and expansion of county and municipal authority to regulate oil and gas activities, as necessary, to address local concerns and conditions. Local ability to impose an impact fee to address transportation infrastructure needs and impacts or a well inspection fee to ensure compliance with local regulations are but two examples where Colorado local governments need General Assembly assistance. Boulder County supports General Assembly action to both affirm and expand the authority of Colorado counties and municipalities to impose impact and other fees on oil and gas activities as part of their local regulatory efforts to ensure that oil and gas development within their jurisdictions is compatible with the needs and desires of their communities.

**SUPPORT CREATION OF A SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO PROVIDE INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF AND ADVICE REGARDING THE TECHNICAL BASES FOR THE REGULATIONS PROMULGATED BY THE COLORADO OIL AND GAS CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

In 1978, the U.S. Congress directed the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to establish a Science Advisory Board to provide independent, science-based advice to the EPA administrator. The Science Advisory Board is charged with reviewing the quality and relevance of scientific and technical information that is used by the EPA as the basis for agency regulations; reviewing EPA research programs and plans; providing science advice as requested by the administrator; and advising the agency on scientific matters in general. Similarly, the EPA’s Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee, created through the Clean Air Act, provides independent, science-based advice on the technical bases for the National Ambient Air Quality Standards while also advising the EPA on air quality research, sources of pollution, and strategies to attain and maintain air quality. Boulder County supports the creation of a scientific advisory committee based on these models to provide independent, science-based review of the technical bases for the regulations promulgated by the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (COGCC). Such a committee would provide COGCC with the capacity to review the ever-growing body of data and research regarding the impacts of oil and gas development in Colorado, for example in relation to public and environmental health, and assist the COGCC in developing regulations that best serve to protect Colorado’s people and its land.

Oil and Gas



Autumn Wetland by Virginia Unsel

**PUBLIC LANDS AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

*To promote land conservation and preservation and outdoor opportunities for Coloradans.*

**SUPPORT LEGISLATION AND FUNDING THAT PROMOTES FOREST RESTORATION AND WILDFIRE MITIGATION, INCLUDING THE USE OF PRESCRIBED FIRE, IN THE WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE**

Wildfire mitigation measures modify the forest environment surrounding a structure that is at risk from destruction by a wildfire, while forest health efforts improve the conditions of Colorado’s forests to restore ecosystems to a healthier state. Together, these efforts have the benefit of minimizing the destructive effects of wildfire on Colorado’s communities, land, and environment. Activities such as developing and maintaining defensible space and a safe home ignition zone around homes, forest thinning, and prescribed fire are common and proven tools for reducing wildfire risk. Local governments have access to an array of tools to reduce the risk of wildfire by considering the amount and type of development that occurs in areas at risk for wildfire and establishing requirements for wildfire mitigation measures for any development within these areas. Boulder County supports the expansion of wildfire mitigation and forest restoration efforts across Colorado’s forests.

State-level actions such as the establishment of new goals for reductions in statewide heat-trapping emissions, completion of a new state emissions forecast, and development of substantive actions to implement the 2015 Colorado Climate Plan will both contribute to development of a national climate change solution while also supporting the efforts of Colorado’s local governments.

**OPPOSE LEGISLATION AND OTHER EFFORTS TO TRANSFER FEDERAL PUBLIC LANDS TO STATE OWNERSHIP**

Boulder County supports the protection of Colorado’s federal public lands including national parks, wildlife refuges, forests, historic sites, and wilderness areas, and will oppose legislation that attempts to authorize state control of these lands. Public lands provide economic, environmental, ecological, recreational, and health benefits to the state



Public Lands & Natural Resources

and local communities. Over the years, numerous polls have consistently shown that Coloradans appreciate and support the opportunities these benefits provide, and that a large majority of Coloradans believe that federal public lands should continue to be owned and managed by the federal government. Research consistently shows that public lands serve as economic drivers for local communities by increasing tourism, income and employment opportunities, and land and home values. Colorado's outdoor recreation economy alone contributes more than \$13 billion annually to the state's economy, supports over 120,000 jobs across Colorado, and generates nearly \$500 million in annual state tax revenue. Additionally, western states, including Colorado, woefully lack the resources to manage the millions of acres of federal public lands located within their borders. The transfer of these lands to state control raises legitimate concerns that the land will be sold to private interests or the natural resources exploited to pay for firefighting and other management costs. Finally, existing case law and constitutional interpretation strongly suggest that states have no constitutional authority to force federal land transfers. Theories based on state enabling acts do not circumvent the fact that the U.S. Constitution's Property Clause and Supremacy Clause make state legislation intending to force federal land transfers unconstitutional. For all these reasons, Boulder County will strongly oppose state legislation or other efforts to transfer Colorado's federal public lands to state ownership.

**\$13B**  
Amount contributed to the state's economy from outdoor recreation.

#### **INCREASE STATE CAPACITY AND RESOURCES TO RESPOND TO THE EMERALD ASH BORER INFESTATION**

In September 2013 the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) was discovered within the City of Boulder. The presence marked the western-most infestation of the federally-quarantined EAB, and the first in Colorado. Since that time, the EAB has spread throughout Boulder County, including to unincorporated parts of the county and Longmont. In Colorado, impacts of this pest will be felt across all ages and socioeconomic demographics, and management of the pest will require significant financial resources from institutions and individuals trying to save trees or remove and replace them. For example, Boulder County has identified nearly 1,000 ash trees on county-owned property alone. Within the City of Boulder there are approximately 98,000 ash trees, mostly on private land and right of ways, and an estimated 1.45 million ash trees within the Denver metro area. Consequently, local governments, the State Department of Agriculture, and U.S. Department of Agriculture will be required to work collaboratively to address the impacts and slow the spread of this pest. Boulder County has been working with a coalition of local agencies to respond to the EAB through public education, homeowner awareness, and agency planning for tree removal and replacement. However, the state has limited resources to assist local governments in managing the infestation, which is likely to spread throughout Colorado.

#### **SUPPORT LEGISLATION THAT PROMOTES THE EFFICIENT UTILIZATION AND CONSERVATION OF WATER**

Colorado's lakes, rivers and streams, and water delivery systems provide clean drinking water for our cities and towns and are critical to supporting the state economy, fish and wildlife populations, and our way of life. Within this context, state and local government water policy must result in water supply and management decisions that are environmentally and economically sustainable in order to conserve, protect, and restore Colorado's rivers. Boulder County staff participated directly in the two-year long effort to draft Colorado's Water Plan, the state's first comprehensive water plan. The inclusion of conservation, land use, and watershed health metrics in the plan will move the state toward sustainable water resource management practices and create public policy incentives to achieve greater conservation and more efficient use of Colorado's water supply. State legislation and other policy approaches will be important tools in this effort.

#### **SUPPORT RESOLUTION TO CONFLICTS BETWEEN THE FEDERAL ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT AND STATE WATER LAW**

Currently, the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) prohibits certain modifications to endangered species habitat. Designed to protect and enhance the quality of habitat for federally-listed species, these restrictions describe the specific kinds of activities allowable within habitat areas. Meanwhile, state water law establishes maintenance standards for ditches and stream corridors, including the removal of vegetation for enabling stream flows. At times, these state maintenance standards come into conflict with the federal ESA restrictions. Boulder County supports bringing resolution to these conflicting requirements.

#### **SUPPORT THE PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF TOOLS THAT THE STATE, LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND OTHERS USE TO CONSERVE AND PROTECT COLORADO'S LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

Colorado's environment defines its quality of life and economy. Recognizing this, the state and its local government partners have developed an array of public policy and programmatic initiatives designed to preserve and protect Colorado's land and

natural resources; examples include the Conservation Easement Tax Credit and Great Outdoors Colorado. Boulder County will continue to utilize these tools to protect our local environment and will advocate for their continuation and expansion to ensure the preservation of the environment and quality of life that Coloradans have grown to expect.

#### **PROMOTE BROAD ACCESS TO PUBLIC LANDS TO DEVELOP A STRONG STEWARDSHIP AND CONSERVATION ETHIC AMONG A DIVERSE POPULATION OF COLORADANS**

Colorado's natural environment depends upon the next generation of residents and visitors to sustain and promote the health of local, state, and federal public lands. Boulder County supports programs and efforts that foster stewardship and long-term support for our public lands, such as youth corps programs, programs to get children, seniors and multicultural populations outdoors, and efforts to link urban areas to parks and open spaces. Boulder County supports initiatives aimed at establishing an appreciation for our public lands among all of the diverse populations of Coloradans.

#### **SUPPORT STATE EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH AND COMPLETE REGIONAL TRAIL SYSTEMS THAT LINK COMMUNITIES AND CONNECT VISITORS TO IMPORTANT LANDMARKS AND AMENITIES**

In 2015 the Colorado Governor's Office initiated an effort through the Department of Natural Resources to work in conjunction with Great Outdoors Colorado, the Colorado Department of Local Affairs, the Colorado Department of Transportation, local governments, non-profits, and foundations to identify funding, ownership, access, and other obstacles to the completion of regional trails throughout Colorado. In Boulder County, regional trails link communities and local and federal public lands to provide transportation and access to outdoor amenities and active outdoor recreation. In many areas gaps exist in regional trails due to funding constraints, varying land ownership, access issues, and other obstacles. Examples include the St. Vrain Trail which would connect Lyons and Longmont, and trail connections from Boulder to Lyons; both trail corridors include incomplete segments requiring additional funding, land and easement acquisition, and other resources for completion. Boulder County supports statewide efforts to assist with the completion of regional trail systems that have been identified and supported by communities through local planning processes.

#### **SUPPORT THE USE OF BIOMASS AS A RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCE, AND THE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT OF BIOCHAR TO INCREASE BIOMASS UTILIZATION AND IMPROVE SOIL HEALTH AND PRODUCTIVITY**

Forest fuels reduction and wildfire mitigation projects are important tools in reducing the risks to communities from wildfire. One of the biggest barriers to increasing the pace and scale of forest fuels reduction efforts is the lack of end uses for forest products and biomass: costs of removal, transport, and treatment of biomass quickly turns a forest treatment best practice into an uneconomical endeavor. Expanding markets for biomass locally in Colorado will reduce the costs of forest treatments and will ultimately support increased fuels reduction projects. One promising technology in pursuit of this goal is the development of biochar – an organic soil amendment made by heating biomass at an extremely high temperature in the absence of oxygen. The technologies are currently being researched and applied in a variety of ways across Colorado, including soil amendments to reclaim and restore land, biofuel co-production, and boosting soil fertility for agriculture and horticulture. Boulder County supports efforts to increase biomass utilization through biochar and other technologies.

#### **SUPPORT ONGOING FUNDING FOR THE COLORADO STATE FOREST SERVICE TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO PRIVATE LANDOWNERS IN IMPROVING FOREST CONDITIONS AND REDUCING WILDFIRE RISK**

The Colorado State Forest Service helps treat thousands of acres of forested lands across Colorado, educates landowners and homeowners about forest stewardship and wildfire mitigation, and partners with federal and local entities on forest restoration and resiliency efforts – all with the goal of achieving healthy and resilient forests in Colorado. For local governments, CSFS is a critical partner in helping residents of forested lands better understand their role in the forest health and wildfire challenges we face, and regional field offices and staff provide local governments with technical assistance and support with regard to local forest related challenges. Funding for the CSFS comes from the state and federal government, through various sources, including state severance tax funds. With reductions in these funds, the CSFS will face significant program and staff cuts, which will reduce the capacity of the organization to continue to facilitate forest health efforts at the local level. Boulder County supports ongoing funding for the CSFS to support wildfire mitigation efforts and community engagement around forest health and wildfire issues.

# STATE FISCAL AND GOVERNANCE

*To improve the fiscal position of the state to sustain services to Coloradans today and into the future.*

## **SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO IMPROVE THE LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY OF THE COLORADO PUBLIC EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT ASSOCIATION THAT DOES NOT PLACE COSTLY BURDENS ON EMPLOYER MEMBERS OR UNDULY COMPROMISE THE BENEFITS OF EMPLOYEE MEMBERS**

With the 2012 sale of Memorial Health System by the City of Colorado Springs to the University of Colorado, Boulder County became the largest member of the Public Employees' Retirement Association (PERA) Local Government Division. The PERA benefits package is an important contributor to Boulder County's ability to compete in the marketplace for high-quality employees. Recognizing the need to ensure the long-term sustainability of PERA, the county has supported legislative efforts to reduce the Association's accrued liability and move it closer to full funding, including such bills as SB 06-235 and SB 10-001. More recently, the county has supported legislation that required study of PERA's benefit offerings and other aspects of the PERA system, to inform the Association's ongoing efforts to achieve solvency. If further legislative reforms are necessary to stabilize PERA's funds for the long-term, Boulder County will support such reforms only if they do not place costly burdens on local government employer members or unduly compromise the benefits received by local government employees.

## **SUPPORT EFFORTS TO BRING FISCAL STABILITY TO THE STATE OF COLORADO**

The state and its counties are intertwined in many different, significant ways when it comes to the delivery of services to Colorado residents. As a result, Boulder County will continue to engage with any substantive effort to evaluate and address the ongoing structural and budgetary challenges that negatively impact the fiscal stability and sustainability of the State of Colorado, and by extension, its local government partners. Such an effort should: Examine the "Gordian Knot" created by the conflicting priorities of the Gallagher Amendment, Amendment 23, and the Taxpayer Bill of Rights; explore creative solutions such as local government revenue sharing, service taxes, and repeal or modification of the three-percent TABOR reserve requirement; and conduct a periodic review and assessment of Colorado's tax credits and exemptions to ensure that these benefits create public value. More specifically, the General Assembly should collaborate with Congress to solve the problem of collecting taxes on internet retail sales, and convert the Hospital Provider Fee to an enterprise fund, to remove the HPF from the state TABOR cap, as a strategy for bringing additional revenue to state government and increasing the ability of the governor and General Assembly to budget for the many pressing needs facing Colorado.

## **SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO RE-ESTABLISH THE RIGHTS OF COLORADO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO PROVIDE BROADBAND TELECOMMUNICATION SERVICES**

Boulder County stands behind the principle of local control and the ability of local government to determine the services and amenities it will provide to its residents, without state intervention. This includes the provision of low-cost, high-speed broadband telecommunications services. However, state law is a barrier in pursuit of this goal. Signed into law in 2005, SB 152 preempts local governments from providing telecommunication services, without a vote of the people. In the case of Longmont, the city completed a 17-mile fiber network shortly after SB 05-152 became law. As a result of the bill, the city was forced to keep the network "dark" until a November 2011 vote allowed the city to move forward with its plans. And more and more communities are taking the Longmont route: In 2015 and 2016, 69 Colorado counties, cities, and towns asked voters for authority to invest or partner in broadband infrastructure, and the voters said yes on every occasion. Boulder County believes that SB 152 is an unnecessary and misguided barrier, and will support legislative efforts to re-establish the right of local governments to provide broadband telecommunication services, from small and simple free Wi-Fi hotspots in public buildings to large and complex city-wide fiber networks.

# NOTES:

State & Fiscal Governance