

JEFFERSON COUNTY



2012 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The year 2012 was busy and productive for the Jefferson County Board of Commissioners, made up of Donald Rosier, chairman; John Odom and Faye Griffin. Here is a sampling of the many accomplishments during the year:

Preservation of a Front Range Legacy

The last day of the year brought the long awaited closing of a land exchange in partnership with Boulder County, Boulder, Arvada, Broomfield, private landowners, the State Land Board and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The agreement transfers Section 16, north of Highway 72 and adjacent to Highway 93, to USFWS to expand the Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge. In exchange, the Jefferson Parkway Public Highway Authority acquired a 300-foot right of way essential to the completion of the parkway. This agreement will improve transportation, protect wildlife habitat and provide economic development opportunities in unincorporated Jefferson County.

Financial Highs and Lows

The year began with tight revenues and a lean budget, but by streamlining operations and not spending more than the county takes in, the county was able to provide quality services to citizens. One of the toughest years economically the county has faced, it ended with a balanced budget and many accolades throughout the year for the county's fiscal soundness.

The county received outstanding ratings from Standard & Poor's, Fitch Ratings, and Moody's Investors Services in spite of the decline in revenue. Fitch, the global rating agency with headquarters in New York and London, affirmed its "AA" rating. Fitch concluded Jeffco's rating outlook is stable, and wrote, "The rating reflects the county's strong general credit characteristics, evidenced by a history of large financial reserves, conservative budgeting, and effective cost controls."

In 2012, an external audit of the county's financial statement received the "highest and best opinion an auditor can give," according to partner Kim Higgins of

Edie Bailly, the independent auditing firm.

A budget for 2013 was adopted by the commissioners after numerous public meetings. The adopted budget, which includes interdepartmental transfers, is \$468.3 million; a decrease of 1.7 percent from the 2012 adopted budget. The mill levy is 24.346, which continues the temporary reduction of 1.632 mills and maintains the same mill levy as last year. Salaries and benefits are the county's biggest expense, representing 55 percent of the expenditure budget. The 2013 budget does not include any salary increases for employees.

Transportation Enhancements

LIGHT RAIL NEARLY HERE

While construction of a new parking garage and train tracks made parking a premium at the county campus, the beginning of light rail service that will connect the county campus with the entire light rail network moved steadily towards completion. Train service will officially open April 26. The commissioners worked to ensure that shuttle buses will be provided to transport Human Services' clients from the train station to the Human Services facility.

BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN PLANS

An updated Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan was adopted following a public input process to guide the development of a network of on- and off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities that connect municipalities and neighboring counties. It incorporates public and agency feedback to make realistic regional recommendations with the hopes of fostering a bicycle and pedestrian network that is continuous and consistent across boundaries in cities, towns and unincorporated areas.

NEW TOWER AT COUNTY AIRPORT

A brand new Air Traffic Control Tower at Rocky Mountain Metropolitan Airport went in to operation. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) dedicated the \$23.7 million, state-of-the-art tower, which provides air traffic controllers with better airfield views and with the latest radar and communications technology. It will ensure the airport can continue to

provide the safest, most efficient service to flights in and out of the Jefferson County owned and operated airport. The new facility includes a 124-foot-tall air traffic control tower topped by a 525-square-foot tower cab with four air traffic controller positions and one supervisor position; with a 6,000 square-foot, single-story base building that houses training rooms, administrative offices and equipment rooms.

INVESTMENTS IN TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

The county commissioners kept a keen focus on transportation, serving on the board as a founding member of the Jefferson Public Parkway Authority; on the C-470 Coalition working towards improvements to that crowded major roadway; on the board of the Denver Regional Council of Governments; and working with state and federal legislators, voicing the county's concerns and making sure Jeffco's interests are heard.

The Transportation and Engineering Division enhanced many county roadways. Among those improvements were the Kipling Parkway/Quincy Avenue intersection and Quincy from Kipling to Simms Street; rehabilitation of the Myers Gulch Road bridge over Bear Creek; monitoring the construction of Moss Street north of Golden Road associated with the expansion plans for the National Renewable Energy Laboratory; and upgrading all traffic signals to LED technology to improve visibility and safety while reducing energy costs.

Commissioners Recognized for Leadership

NATIONAL AND STATE

Commissioner Donald Rosier was one of only 23 county government leaders across the U.S. chosen to participate in a national leadership institute developed by the National Association of Counties (NACo) and the Cambridge Leadership Associates. The four day Institute, held in Washington challenged the county officials to consider innovative approaches to address key issues facing their home county and residents. Commissioner Rosier also was elected president of the

Front Range District of Colorado Counties, Inc. (CCI), and serves on the National Association of Counties Community and Economic Development Committee, which represents counties before Congress.

WEST CHAMBER

Commissioner Faye Griffin was honored by the West Chamber as a “Women 2 Watch” at an awards ceremony in November. Wells Fargo Bank Senior Vice President Kirsten Anderson noted “Commissioner Griffin is involved in multiple community initiatives from serving on the Urban Drainage and Flood Control District Board to the E-911 Board” and “was the driving force behind the Child and Youth Leadership Commission and pioneered the statute that brought it into being.”

Services for Children and Families in Need

CHILD WELFARE AWARD

Human Services Director Lynn Johnson continued to garner awards for her work and that of the Human Services staff. She was honored as the “best child welfare administrator in the country” by the National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators and the American Public Human Services Association.

INCREASED NEED

The award comes at the same time that the numbers of families, children and adults seeking help continued to grow. In 2012, there was a 20 percent increase in families needing food assistance; more than 8,000 reports of child abuse, and a 14 percent increase in calls for potential abuse or neglect of at-risk adults. The Workforce Center helped a record 34,000 job seekers and businesses through this past tough economic year.

Wildfire Recovery

The Lower North Fork Fire in March killed three people and destroyed 23 homes. The county opened a Disaster Recovery Center in Conifer to help residents

dazed by the sudden loss of their homes and property to get immediate assistance and information. The liaison put them in touch with resources for everything from debris removal to health inspectors who would evaluate damage to well and septic systems. The commissioners and county staff also assisted the Sheriff’s Office and emergency responders as they fought to control the fire.

Citizen Outreach

MEETINGS ONLINE

Jefferson County government continued its efforts to be open and transparent providing more and more information on the county website including posting online video of BCC meetings and hearings.

TELEPHONE TOWN HALL

To gather information and start the 2013 budget process, the commissioners made use of the latest technology, holding their first telephone town hall meeting. In one hour they connected with more than 7,000 citizens, who engaged in a live phone conversation with the commissioners about county services.

SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

The county’s social media program, which won a national award, continued to grow. Because of frequent tweets of information during and following the Lower North Fork Fire, the number of citizens following the county on twitter and Facebook grew exponentially.

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Several departments continued their outreach with community meetings on topics ranging from the county’s growing population of senior citizens to land use cases, bicycle and trails plans and other issues.

AWARD WINNING VIDEOS

The Public Information Office partnered with the city of Arvada to create informational videos on county programs from transportation to parks to the 4-H program and Fairgrounds. The videos were recognized

with several national awards for excellence. The Parks Department also earned a national award for an innovative video annual report.

WEB-BASED MAPPING

The Information Technology Services Division won an international award for its web-based mapping system, which allows the public to access maps of the county and search them for land parcel information, locations of county services and much more.

Enhanced Parks, Open Space and Land Use

COMMUNITY PLANS

Planning & Zoning sought citizen input and completed five community plans: the South Jeffco, North Plains, Central Plains, C-470 Corridor and General Land Use Plans, which were rolled into the county's Comprehensive Master Plan

AMENDED ZONING

The commissioners amended the Zoning Resolution to allow for breweries and indoor sports training facilities. An amendment to allow for a mixed-use zone district began moving through the public process. It would enable a quicker and more predictable development process and allow residential uses above commercial uses and greater building heights and densities when additional design elements are implemented.

LAND USE CASES

The commissioners held public hearings and made difficult decisions on several land use cases.

APPLICATIONS ONLINE

Making use of technology advances, most Planning and Zoning applications are now accepted electronically and routed to internal and external agencies, homeowner associations and other groups in the same manner, saving an immense amount of time and money for all involved.

ACCESS TO NATURE

A joint application with Clear Creek County resulted

in a \$4.6 million grant from Great Outdoors Colorado to build a segment of creek-side trail in Clear Creek Canyon, which will span both county boundaries. The trail segment, to be completed by 2016, will provide greater, safer access to the spectacular canyon and be part of a regional trail that will eventually span from Denver International Airport to Glenwood Springs.

NORTH TABLE

The final segment of North Table Loop trail was completed and the North Table Mountain Park trail system now stretches more than 14 miles. A new trailhead and parking lot off Highway 93 north of Golden provides additional public access to the scenic park.

DOGS OFF LEASH

The Elk Meadow Park dog off leash area was restored with 3.5 miles of new trail, improved parking and a water source for dogs has been created.

HISTORIC LODGE

At Pine Valley Ranch Park the initial restoration of the Baernden Lodge was completed and will be open to the public next summer for the first time since it was purchased by Jeffco Open Space in 1986. This project was done in partnership with Historicorps, a nonprofit historic restoration organization, and the Jefferson County Road and Bridge Division.

NEW TRAILHEAD

At Reynolds Park a new trailhead with expanded parking, new restrooms and a new kiosk were created. This work was done in anticipation of the 2013 completion of the North Fork Trail, a 10 to 12 mile multi use trail that will connect Reynolds Park to the Colorado Trail. The North Fork Trail will provide mountain biking opportunities at Reynolds, which is currently a hiking and equestrian-only park.

