



2018 GUIDELINES ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Background

1. The creation of jobs and wealth through expansions of existing companies and the attraction of new business activity to develop a diverse business environment are central to Western Colorado's long-term prosperity, protection against economic downturns, and maintaining a high quality of life. Quality of life begins with a well-paying job.
2. Various economic development partners and the business community have come together to create a county economic development plan and marketing plan.
3. The Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce believes that economic development occurs best in a highly cooperative and supportive partnership between the public sector and the business community.
4. Business needs the following to grow: an excellent infrastructure (including transportation infrastructure), a superior educational system and workforce training, rational and reasonable taxes and fees, and entrepreneurial opportunity and success.
5. Business needs a consistent and stable regulatory environment to continue to invest and create jobs.
6. Grand Junction is an important regional hub for multiple products and services which are major economic drivers in the local economy.
7. The Chamber recognizes that existing businesses form Colorado's present economic base. These businesses provide the existing jobs and tax base for local and state entities. They are also a source of new jobs, with approximately 80 percent of future job growth comes from the expansion of existing businesses.
8. The Chamber is in a unique position to provide support for policies that encourage quality job opportunities and increased income in Mesa County.
9. Mesa County and the Western Slope are significant contributors to the State's overall economic well being and budget.

Guideline Statement

The Chamber's Economic Development policy is also reflected in other specific Chamber policies: We support quality education, work force development efforts; a predictable and rational tax structure; eliminating tax policy that discourages business investment; infrastructure improvements; and other laws, ordinances, and regulations that encourage private initiative, individual incentive, competitive enterprise, and which make our community competitive.

The Chamber Supports

1. A well-funded, cohesive, and aggressive economic development effort.
2. The development of a cohesive and comprehensive economic development plan for Mesa County, in consultation with the Chamber's economic development partners.
3. A regulatory climate that is balanced, consistent, and predictable, making it easier for business to grow and thrive.
4. Meaningful programs, initiatives, tax incentives, and lower criteria for incentives to be more inclusive of rural Colorado.
5. Meaningful initiatives and efforts that assist in creating a skilled labor force, including allocation of adequate training dollars to enable local post-secondary educational institutions to meet the needs of business.
6. An expedited delivery mechanism for workforce training including the needs of a non-English speaking workforce.
7. Provisions for appropriate assistance to local businesses in their retention and expansion efforts.
8. Efforts to promote Colorado as a tourism destination, as well as the provision of funding for tourism promotion.
9. Making venture capital funds available to new or expanding businesses.
10. Right-to-Work legislation.
11. Streamlining of all business permitting processes.
12. Enhanced state incentives for distressed counties including Enterprise Zones and other tools.
13. A balanced economic development approach that acknowledges the value of all segments of our economy. This includes but is not limited to: technology development, energy, tourism, foreign trade, and small business.

The Chamber Opposes

1. Weakening of tax incentives to business.

2. Changes that weaken incentives used by rural Colorado for business investments and job creation.
3. Overly burdensome and lengthy permit processes.
4. Activism targeting specific industries (e.g. energy) with the intent to disrupt their ordinary and legal operations.



2018 GUIDELINES ON EDUCATION

Background

1. The business community recognizes the importance of K-12 education as an essential building block in a strong and vibrant community and economy. Partnerships between business and education are essential to ensuring a quality education for children in Mesa County, and a qualified workforce for employers.
2. Colorado Mesa University and Western Colorado Community College the premier post secondary institutions in our area, have a significant impact on the economy, quality-of-life, and quality and availability of the workforce in Mesa County and the region. Colorado Mesa University and Western Colorado Community College have paid special attention in recent years to the needs of the business community, creating a symbiotic relationship focused on preparing the workforce for the jobs that exist in the marketplace. In recent years, higher education has taken a disproportionate share of budget cuts in comparison to other state agencies.

The Chamber Supports:

1. Direct business involvement in education and the active involvement of Chamber members in education and workforce readiness programs, (e.g. workplace readiness, STEM programs, YEA! and Hire Me First Programs.)
2. Efforts to address the financial needs of education in Mesa County, and ensure local school districts receive full federal and state funding.
3. Local school district goals aimed at providing students with the knowledge and skills necessary for the future, for the purpose of providing career paths for skilled employees.
4. New and updated facilities to keep pace with growth and advancement.
5. Local control of our school districts and limitations of state and federal regulations and controls.
6. An evaluation system for educators that will advance and reward quality teachers and administrators, thus leading to increased student learning.

7. Enhanced student options, choice, and multiple pathways to graduation.
8. As much learning time for students as possible, with effective and efficient accountability and assessment systems that provide timely feedback mechanisms that teachers can utilize to meet student needs.
9. Efforts to incentivize local students to attend higher education institutions to become public education teachers.
10. Colorado Mesa University receiving a proportionate share of state funding (operating, financial aid and capital construction) made available to state institutions of higher education in Colorado.
11. The continued expansion of academic programs at every level at Colorado Mesa University and Western Colorado Community College designed to meet market demands and enhance the quality of the local workforce.
12. Colorado Mesa University continuing to act as a regional institution for both four year and graduate education, advancing the role of Western Colorado Community College in partnership with School District 51 and the community, and remaining responsive and connected to the needs of the business community and other sectors.
13. Continued expansion of Colorado Mesa University through the acquisition of property for future facility development, the closure of streets to gain the physical integrity of the campus, and the development of new and remodeled facilities to facilitate quality instruction and to accommodate student and academic program growth.
14. Measures that promote enhanced technological means for delivery of education to rural areas.
15. Measures that ensure that higher education is affordable and accessible to Colorado residents, particularly residents of Western Colorado.
16. Ensuring that students enrolled throughout Western Colorado have comparable state financial support as they pursue postsecondary degrees.
17. Strengthening local governing boards at each institution (rather than centralizing power in an all-inclusive system) in order to maintain a degree of autonomy and develop market driven education programs to meet the needs of our members and our region.
18. Measures designed to provide maximum flexibility and reduced bureaucratic regulations and unnecessary oversight for institutions like Colorado Mesa University (i.e. lengthy review and approval of academic programs, multiple financial reporting systems, multiple personnel systems, procurement processes, etc).

The Chamber Opposes:

1. Defunding the public higher education system in Colorado or singling out higher education in general or Colorado Mesa University in particular for disproportionate cuts in comparison to other state agencies or institutions.
2. Efforts to politicize higher education funding, tuition policies, governance and delivery.
3. Transforming the Colorado Commission on Higher Education from a statewide coordinating board into a regulatory board with authority that supersedes that delegated to local governing boards.
4. State mandated efforts to merge institutions or consolidate local governing boards.
5. Measures that would divert local mill levies to supplant state funding of K-12 schools.



Grand Junction Area
CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE

2018 GUIDELINES ON EMPLOYMENT

Background:

The Chamber recognizes that unemployment insurance and workers' compensation insurance are major expenses for Chamber's business members. The Chamber has supported, and will continue to support, reforms to the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund that aid in making the Colorado Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund financially sound, in a way that does not create undue burden to Colorado business. In doing so, the Chamber also acknowledges that the Federal government may increase the FUTA tax rates.

The Chamber Supports:

1. Continued solvency of the Unemployment Insurance system.
2. A system that places auditors to investigate fraud, the overpayment of money and the refusal of employment.
3. Efforts to limit fraudulent utilization of the system by employers and employees.
4. Efforts to reduce the unnecessary administrative and regulatory burden placed on companies with a return to work program following workplace injury(ies).
5. Legislation that improves direct communication between the adjuster and injured worker.
6. The establishment of a western slope Hearing Officer for unemployment hearings.
7. Any legislation to remove ambiguity or add clarity to unemployment insurance statutes; allowing for more clearly defined and understandable statutes on Unemployment Insurance that employers administer (e.g. the proper way to establish an independent contractor relationship).
8. Creating a clear definition and requirements for independent contractor relationships.
9. Having a workers' compensation insurance entity that is an insurer of last resort and ensures policy holder's premiums are protected.

10. Graduated reductions on unemployment benefit extensions that would not exceed the current term of benefits (26 weeks).

The Chamber Opposes:

1. Any regulations that add undue cost and burdens on employers. Undue burdens may include the addition of excess administrative, clerical, or reporting for employers.
2. Efforts to increase the flexibility of awards through enhanced opportunities for litigation or medical interpretation.
3. Efforts to reduce reserves that would negatively impact carriers' ability to pay out claims during a catastrophic loss.
4. The use of unemployment funding for anything other than its original purpose.



Grand Junction Area

**CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE**

2018 GUIDELINES ON ENERGY

Background:

1. Meeting the increased demand for energy by wisely developing resources is critical to the continued growth of the economy, fiscal health of our community, and our overall national security. Western Colorado contains a significant portion of the nation's future energy resources and stands to greatly benefit from its utilization through the intricate balance of energy development and environmental impact mitigation.
2. Colorado and Western Colorado will help the world meet a growing demand for energy by producing coal, natural gas, refined petroleum products, nuclear power and renewable resources such as wind, solar and biomass technology. Western Colorado should and will play an important role in energy exports in the coming years and decades.
3. Federal mineral lease payments and severance tax were created to mitigate local impact of energy development on communities and pay for regulatory agencies.

The Chamber Supports:

1. The development and delivery of technical training and workforce readiness programs through Western Colorado Community College and other post secondary training programs in the community for the energy industry.
2. The continued funding and development of educational and research and development efforts of state supported institutions to create energy technologies and efficiencies.
3. Public education about the energy industry and its impact on our local economy.
4. Energy industry activities that protect our environment and promote good corporate citizenship.

5. The responsible development of Colorado's energy resources, including natural and renewable energy, using the best available technology, including hydraulic fracturing.
6. A policy of distributing severance taxes and mineral lease payments that gives priority to communities impacted by energy development.
7. Recognizing the rights of both surface and subsurface owners in the regulatory and legislative environments.
8. Research and development of local energy research facilities.
9. Local participation in the development of state and federal energy policies and activities.
10. Market-based incentives and educational efforts that motivate businesses to utilize conservation practices that reduce the use of conventional energy resources in their businesses.
11. A market-based approach that allows local energy producers access to new markets including emerging overseas opportunities.
12. The development of a Colorado emissions compliance plan allowing the state to maintain control over its own energy future rather than giving the EPA more control under a federal plan.

The Chamber Opposes:

1. Energy policies that are not based on sound science and economic principles.
2. The use of energy impact funds for the purposes other than energy related mitigation measures.
3. Regulatory interference, rules, and oversight result from administrative agencies acting outside the scope of powers given to them through properly enacted statutes thereby legislating policy rather than implementing or enforcing it.
4. Cap and trade, which will drastically increase energy costs that will not only result in higher utility bills for citizens but will also be reflected in higher costs for every manufactured item produced in this country. Such a measure will put businesses in the United States at a competitive disadvantage in a global economy.
5. The distribution of energy impact funds to cities and counties that do not allow energy development.

6. Policies that place domestic energy products at a strategic trade disadvantage compared to other energy exporting countries.



2018 GUIDELINES ON HEALTHCARE

Background

1. The Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce recognizes that the health care system in the United States is a unique combination of employer-based plans, individually purchased plans, and a government-sponsored system.
2. The rapidly rising cost of health care and health insurance represents a significant burden to Colorado businesses currently providing health coverage to employees, and a significant deterrent to businesses looking to provide health coverage to employees.
3. Health insurance premium increases are driven by a number of different factors, including but not limited to:
 - a. Financial incentives or payment models that encourage excessive utilization of health care;
 - b. Overuse of emergency room services and the use of an inappropriate level of care in general;
 - c. Lack of preventative care;
 - d. Inadequate funding for government health care programs such as Medicaid, as well as the Affordable Care Act, which now mandates unfunded Cost Sharing Reductions (CSRs);
 - e. Increasing prescription drug prices;
 - f. A high level of defensive medicine (often created by filing of frivolous malpractice lawsuits);
 - g. The medical needs and demands of an aging population;
 - h. Costly new medical advances;
 - i. Government regulation that creates unnecessary burdens, duplicate requirements, and/or other inefficiencies resulting in increased costs;
 - j. Lack of pricing transparency and comparability;
 - k. Increases in administrative costs;
 - l. Benefit design;
 - m. Rapid increase in medical inflation;
 - n. Federal and State mandates (e.g. the essential health benefits package, cost sharing limitations, maternity coverage for men and pediatric dental); and
 - o. Changes to rating rules
4. The private sector is incurring an increasingly disproportionate share of the costs of health care – in particular because of insufficient government reimbursement for health care

services to hospitals, medical centers and physicians, among others. This “cost shift” has a tremendous impact on the business community for health insurance costs, as well as on providers and facilities to the extent they accept Medicaid or uninsured populations.

5. The Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce recognizes the highly regulated nature of health care and the impacts that adverse regulation has on the cost of health care.
6. The Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce emphasizes the need to structure appropriate access to health care – especially preventive care – and to optimize the provision of high quality, cost effective health care services.
7. The Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce recognizes that the health care scene is a rapidly changing landscape: for example, the rescinding of CSRs. The Chamber will continue to monitor health care activity at both the national and state levels.

The Chamber Supports:

1. Health care reform legislation and regulation that promotes greater affordability, community collaboration, and a higher level of stability that complies with all other policy positions.
2. Efforts and initiatives that emphasize healthy lifestyles including personal responsibility for lifestyle choices and encourage preventive medical care, health education awareness, early screening and detection, and disease management.
3. Partnerships with the local health care community to address local health care needs (such as Clinically Integrated Network agreements between hospitals, physicians and insurers). The Chamber encourages continuing creative and innovative approaches to better address both affordability of, and access to, excellent healthcare in our community and the Grand Valley.
4. Transparency programs and initiatives, such as Colorado SB 17-065, aimed at educating health care consumers and businesses with meaningful information on the quality and cost-effectiveness of health care procedures, providers and plans; and initiatives encouraging cost-effective and efficient utilization of the health care system.
5. Addressing the cost shift from the public sector to the private sector, with government providing adequate funding for governmental health insurance programs (i.e. Medicaid, Medicare, CHP+, and ACA Cost Sharing Reductions), taking into consideration the increased Medicaid enrollment under the requirements of the Affordable Care Act and decreased reimbursement to hospitals, medical centers and physicians, among others.
6. Addressing the cost shift within the private sector due to uncompensated care, by requiring all individuals who can afford it to have some form of health coverage.

7. A comprehensive approach to addressing the issue of the uninsured and underinsured, including increased demands on Emergency Room care, while emphasizing collaborative efforts between the public and private sectors.
8. Programs and initiatives intended to ensure appropriate access to health care and health coverage for greater numbers of individuals, especially children.
9. A coordinated effort to address the shortage of healthcare providers, particularly primary care providers, on the Western Slope and in Mesa County.
10. Expanding and implementing measures aimed at maximizing effectiveness of the State's Medicaid program, including: coordinated care programs, aggressive disease and case management protocols, additional long-term care options, and pharmaceutical cost management, while limiting the duplication and overlap of the various case management/care coordination programs being implemented by numerous entities.
11. The employer's ability to select health benefits which best meet the needs of the business and its employees.
12. More competition and fair competition in health insurance, including market expansion across state lines, so long as there is a level playing field for competitors, whether implementing state or federal standards.
13. Reevaluation of the appropriate role of the judicial process in the health care system and reform of the medical malpractice and medical liability system. Reform may include limiting non-economic damage awards in medical malpractice cases.
14. Initiatives and programs aimed at giving consumers more control and responsibility over the dollars spent on their care – i.e. tax-advantaged health savings accounts (HSAs), which are coupled with high deductibles and allow the balance of such accounts to carry over to future years.
15. Efforts that address administrative inefficiencies; including the simplification and standardization of administrative procedures inside and outside of the Health Benefit Exchange, as well as the more widespread use of efficiency increasing technology.
16. Tax credits or incentives for individuals and small businesses to help offset the cost of health insurance.
17. Greater flexibility for businesses to band together to address employee health needs and portability of coverage for employees and their families.

18. Innovation and options for business and consumers without discrimination or penalization including direct primary care.

The Chamber Opposes:

1. Shifting health care costs from the public to private sector. As such, the Chamber opposes the public healthcare option that would compete with the private health insurance market.
2. Any mandate applied to the private sector that would exempt the State of Colorado, the Federal Government or their employees.
3. Any mandate requiring employers to offer insurance or pay an assessment.
4. Legislative interventions on health care issues that would be more appropriately addressed within the health care system (e.g., mandated staffing ratios or minimum lengths of stay).



2018 Guidelines on Housing, Growth, and Development

Background:

The business community of Mesa County recognizes the importance of developing a master land use plans that encompass growth for the Grand Junction and Mesa County area. The Chamber also understand the necessity for the community to provide low and moderate income housing, with the rights of private property owner in mind, in order to spur economic growth and maintain a healthy environment. In doing so, the Chamber advocates for the free-enterprise system, the respect for private property rights and local decision making.

The Chamber Supports:

1. Planned, quality and sustainable growth that complements the development of local infrastructure.
2. Local control and decision-making on issues related to growth.
3. The strengthening of tools that allows local governments and private entities to work together to address regional growth issues.
4. The representative form of government that relies on elected officials to make decisions on complex issues related to growth and development.
5. Infill redevelopment efforts, including Brownfield redevelopment and urban renewal projects.
6. Strategies to improve the local development review process by resolving impediments to reasonably priced and orderly development, including:
 - Clear and objective standards (predictability)
 - Assuring internal consistency
 - Providing quality customer service
 - Landscaping requirements that reflect Western Colorado's dry climate.

7. Collaborative efforts between the public and private sector to provide affordable and diversified housing options for residents of Mesa County, including the use of private sector incentives in a fair and equitable manner (i.e. sales tax rebates on building materials for housing, bonuses for increased housing density, deferring payment of development and tap fees, or land donations by municipalities).
8. Use of voluntary incentive-based land conservation tools to maintain Mesa County's high quality of life and attractiveness as a business location.
9. Ongoing review of the master land use plans and involvement in and review of various other county and city policies (i.e. TCP, storm water drainage, etc.).
10. Expanding the Urban Growth Boundaries to accommodate future growth.
11. Using the Grand Junction Comprehensive plan as a guiding document and should be implemented as intended.

The Chamber Opposes:

1. Public sector competition with the private sector.
2. Any efforts to ask voters to overturn zoning decisions made by local elected boards.
3. Using overlays in the zoning process as a substitution for zoning ordinances and using the Grand Junction Comprehensive plan as a firm zoning document.



2018 GUIDELINES ON IMMIGRATION

Background

1. The United States is faced with a large and growing population of unauthorized aliens entering the country illegally, often in search of employment.
2. Some proposed legislation would require businesses to assume more responsibility for ensuring that those in the country illegally are not employed.
3. The issue of illegal immigrants and how to address those currently in the country is a national problem with social and economic implications for all involved.
4. Mesa County has a long tradition of employing seasonal laborers in agricultural and other key economic sectors.
5. Most employers are small in Mesa County and do not employ full time human resource managers.
6. Because of inaction at the Federal level, States are now trying to address what is a national issue.

Guideline Statement

The United States is a nation born of immigrants. There is a unique and strong bond between the strength of this nation and its history as a “melting pot” for those seeking a new life from all over the globe.

The role of the Chamber is to represent business and while there are multiple facets to the issue of illegal immigration, our organization is focused on how employers can and will be affected in this ongoing national debate. It is also important for the Chamber to advocate for a workable guest worker program that is currently utilized by many area employers.

The Chamber Supports:

1. Federal legislation to address immigration.
2. Measures that will ensure the Nation’s borders are secure.

3. Expansion and streamlining of the guest worker program.
4. A reliable user-friendly method whereby employers can easily verify immigration status of employees, and be held harmless in the case of errors and omissions by that system.
5. Provisions in any proposed legislation that would hold employers harmless when using a federal or state e-verify system.
6. A Guest Worker program that is employer friendly and easy to utilize.

The Chamber Opposes:

1. Legislation that would impose punitive damages on Colorado employers or burden them with administrative tasks in addition to their compliance efforts with regard to federal immigration law.



2018 GUIDELINES ON NATURAL GAS

Background:

1. The United States Geological Survey calls Western Colorado the 2nd largest natural gas reserve in America with over 100 trillion cubic feet of technically recoverable natural gas.
2. The United States has transitioned from a supply constrained, domestic natural gas market to a global market driven by global demand, not supply. This fundamental shift means Western Colorado necessarily must compete with numerous other states and regions and nations who also have burgeoning supplies of natural gas.
3. Numerous nations are building new natural gas import capacity growing the global marketplace and diversifying end-user demand. Additionally, the Energy Information Agency predicts domestic demand for natural gas will continue to grow through 2040.
4. Western Colorado has ample gathering and distribution and processing infrastructure to dramatically grow production supply new domestic and international markets
5. Residential customers for home heating are Colorado's only consumers of natural gas without access to consistent, strategic hedging of natural gas prices exposing them to spot prices.
6. Natural gas production provides significant property tax, state severance tax, federal mineral royalty payments, private royalties and local sales and use cash flows. The taxing structure around natural gas and petroleum products in Western Colorado is unique compared to any other business sectors or industry.

The Chamber Supports:

1. Integrating Western Colorado's natural gas resources into the global market place.
2. Increasing Colorado's competitiveness in natural gas production
3. Promoting economic development and policy initiatives to promote and produce Western Colorado's natural gas reserves.
4. Allowing electric cooperatives and utilities to own natural gas reserves with the proper oversight from the Colorado Public Utilities Commission.

5. Incentivizing capital investment in new and existing natural gas infrastructure with an emphasis on developing local uses for the resource
6. Policies increasing production growth, and by extension, collection of increased property taxes, severance taxes, federal mineral royalties, private royalties and local sales and use taxes.

The Chamber Opposes:

1. Disadvantaging western Colorado natural gas production in relation to other regions, states and nations
2. Regulations not based on sound science and economic feasibility.
3. Regulations that threaten western Colorado's integration into the global marketplace



2018 GUIDELINES ON TAXATION

Background

1. The Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce believes that a balanced tax policy is vital to the economic health of Colorado in general and Mesa County in particular.
2. In 1982, Colorado voters passed a constitutional amendment regarding property taxes referred to as the Gallagher Amendment. This created a gross inequity in the Colorado property tax system caused by the disparity between the tax rates for commercial, industrial, non-agriculture property and residential properties.
3. In 1992, Colorado voters passed a constitutional amendment limiting revenue and expenditures referred to as the TABOR Amendment or Tax Payers Bill of Rights. This amendment requires that any tax increases must be approved by the vote of the people.
4. In 2000, Colorado voters passed a constitutional amendment that required state based funding for public education to increase annually by the rate of inflation plus one percent, from the 2001-2011 fiscal years, and then increased by at least the rate of inflation after that.

The Chamber Supports:

1. A long-term goal of a complete overhaul of the state's tax system, including but not limited to action to simplify, clarify, and hopefully restore citizen's understanding of and confidence in Colorado's taxing structure.
2. Efforts to resolve the Constitutional conflicts created by the interaction of the current system.
3. Changes to property taxes that will establish fair, logical and equitable property taxes throughout Colorado.

4. Individual tax policies that have a beneficial outcome on Colorado's economic stability and development and make Colorado more competitive.
5. A competitive corporate income tax structure.
6. Ensuring a level playing field between bricks and mortar stores and e-commerce by taxing online purchases to support the services of local and state government.

The Chamber Opposes:

1. New taxes without voter approval.
2. Tax policies that have a negative impact on the state and local governments' credit ratings.
3. Any legislation or regulation imposing a tax or fee on service businesses.
4. Any bonded indebtedness or user fees that allow revenues to be used for general fund appropriations or to pay the cost of any governments' day to day operations.
5. Reductions in tax credits and incentives for economic development purposes.
6. The circumvention of TABOR by establishment of new fees to increase revenues.

The Chamber Will:

1. Take an active role in developing potential solutions to the Constitutional conflicts created by the interaction of the TABOR Amendment, the Gallagher Amendment and Amendment 23.
2. Closely monitor any proposal for new funding mechanisms for meeting our highway maintenance and construction needs to determine their impact on business and the State's economy.
3. Participate and support in efforts to simplify the state Sales & Use Tax process without negatively impacting local governments.



Grand Junction Area
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2018 GUIDELINES ON TRANSPORTATION

Background

1. Transportation by definition is the movement of people goods and services in, around and through our region. The development and maintenance of an efficient transportation infrastructure is an important part of a healthy local economic climate.
2. Grand Junction, as the regional hub for Western Colorado and Eastern Utah, needs transportation to continue to play a key role in the continued viability of the area's businesses and the well being of its citizens.

The Chamber Supports:

1. A statewide approach to highway funding, recognizing the importance of all Colorado roads to all citizens.
2. CDOT bonding against future revenues in an effort to maximize highway improvements but only to the extent that a dedicated funding source of revenue is identified to service the debt created by the bonding which does not negatively impact dollars for maintenance.
3. Efforts to develop an increased and sustainable source of funding for transportation infrastructure at the local, state and federal levels, placing transportation and transportation infrastructure as priority.
4. A planned local transportation infrastructure, including continued development and improvement of a system that complements growth and development, including public transit.
5. Efforts to expand and retain general and commercial air service into Grand Junction.
6. Efforts and initiatives to address mobility issues along the I-70 transportation corridor through the state with particular focus on access for western slope citizens.

7. Streamlining of federal, state and local regulations for the construction of local roads and highways so as to minimize the cost to taxpayers in terms of time, resources and money.
8. Continued dialog with citizens and businesses during all phases of transportation infrastructure improvement.
9. The use of local contractors and subcontractors in line with local government guidelines for all projects. Encouraging local governments in creating reciprocal bidder preference which spurs a level playing field.
10. Development of bicycle and pedestrian trails in coordination with other roadway improvements.
11. Efforts to increase access to rail for local businesses including adding capabilities to load and unload freight
12. Greater use of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) in government owned vehicles and the continued research and development of CNG infrastructure.
13. Term limits for state transportation commissioners.

The Chamber Opposes:

1. Any use of highway funds for non-highway purposes, including funds raised from any taxes on vehicles, motor fuels or on auto parts and accessories.
2. Altering the State's current Resource Allocation Formula (RAF) so as to reduce either real or proportional funding for Western Colorado Roads.
3. Efforts to change the composition of Colorado's Transportation Commission.
4. Tolls on existing roadways.
5. The Colorado Department of Transportation partnering in and supporting individual efforts of cities and counties that do not address statewide transportation needs.



2018 Guideline on Water

Background

1. The Grand Valley is unique and magnificent, yet delicate. On the average, the Valley receives about eight inches of moisture each year. Cycles of drought are common throughout Colorado and western Colorado's history. As Mesa County's population continues to grow, ever-increasing demands on available water resources will occur.
2. Water resources represent a vital asset to the citizens of Mesa County, western Colorado and the state of Colorado. Water is an essential component of the economic, social and environmental quality of life we enjoy.
3. The preservation and protection of private ownership and the right to use water, its conservation, and its wise use are necessary to preserve the public health, safety and welfare of the citizens of western Colorado and the entire state.
4. Seventy percent of the state's water supply is found in western Colorado. As western Colorado continues to grow, maintaining sufficient water supplies for current and future use is of crucial importance. Furthermore, industries in western Colorado such as agriculture, small businesses, tourism and natural resource development require steady, reliable, and high- quality water supplies.
5. The Colorado River within its basin is fully appropriated. Any future out of basin water resources would be a reallocation of the resource.

The Chamber Supports:

1. Local water conservation efforts, such as:
 - Promotion and application of low water consumption landscaping.
 - Reducing water use to the reasonable extent possible without adversely affecting the aesthetic and social qualities that a well-landscaped environment provides to the local community.
 - To the extent possible, putting water to use in the most efficient manner, without removing water from the use to which it was originally appropriated.
2. The concept of comprehensive watershed management as well as realistic and cost-effective programs designed to control further pollution or contamination of Colorado water supported by water quality standards that are based on factual information and supportive data.

3. Local and State planning processes that incorporate the concerns, comments and needs of irrigation and domestic water providers when responding to the Agency Review Process.
4. Projects and initiatives, including adequate local, state, federal and private sector funding needed to manage and/or eradicate the tamarisk.
5. Programs and educational information promoting conservation, use and storage of water for Colorado's current and future needs.
6. The following:
 - The security, repair and improvement of existing water storage and transmission facilities/infrastructure as needed statewide.
 - Water storage projects strategically located throughout the state as well as enlarging existing reservoirs when the water levels are low and opportunities are presented.
 - The principle of "no material injury" to existing water rights by projects that remove water from its basin of origin.
 - Mitigation in the form of compensatory storage and a financial commitment to address the economic impacts of removing water from its basin of origin to the satisfaction of the water users of that basin.
 - Using statewide resources that incorporate cooperation, collaboration and partnerships when addressing statewide water issue.
 - The expanded and effective use of the Colorado Water Conservation Board resources along with that of the Colorado Water and Power Development Authority, Colorado Water Congress and Colorado Water District.
7. Preservation of Colorado's water entitlements under interstate compacts and the protection of the state's prior appropriation doctrine.
8. Having the State of Colorado and appropriate entities participate to provide necessary water and financial support for the endangered fish recovery programs.
9. The concept that no local entity should be forced to relinquish water sources for endangered species without adequate mitigation and compensation.
10. That any reallocation must satisfactorily address concerns brought forward by the basin of origin.

The Chamber Opposes:

1. Increasing dependence on potable water supplies for outdoor use and irrigation when untreated water could be used for such purposes.
2. Mandatory requirements by public or private entities for high water consumption turf culture.

3. The continued depletion of western Colorado's water resources without mitigation, unless it is determined to be satisfactory to the water users in the donor basin of origin.
4. Any water policy actions that would diminish local government planning powers (e.g. 1041 powers).
5. Any federal action that would impair, diminish or divest any water right determined under the Constitution and laws of the state of Colorado.
6. Any federal actions contrary to Colorado Water Law.
7. Any water projects incorporating transfers of western Colorado water that diminish the quality of water in western Colorado.
8. Federal Wild and Scenic River designations or Suitability findings for Wild and Scenic River designations that are not the result of a local consensus of Mesa County based water stakeholders.



Legislative Platform

Promoting a Strong Local Economy and Being the Voice of Business

The Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce represents over 900 area businesses employing almost 37,000 people in Mesa County and Western Colorado. Our mission is to be the voice of business and to promote a strong local economy for our members and all businesses in the area. To that end we advocate for:

A Healthy Business Climate

- Support a regulatory and tax climate that seeks to identify and eliminate inefficiencies through a process that includes appropriate review of the need and cost of compliance in contemplating new regulations, taxes or fees.
- Support an equitable tax collection structure that does not put brick and mortar enterprises at a competitive disadvantage, and provides local and state governments with the sales tax revenue needed to serve businesses and citizens.
- Support multiple use of lands managed by federal agencies.
- Fostering and promoting a diverse local economy comprised of multiple diverse sectors, all of which positively contribute to the local economy.

Effective, Well-Maintained Infrastructure

- Encourage a statewide approach and innovation in funding transportation and infrastructure-related projects that make our region and the state a better place to do business.
- Encourage local investment in infrastructure that will make our community an attractive place to locate and expand businesses.
- Ensure affordable access to electricity, other utilities and broadband needed for successful business operations.

A Capable, Well-Educated Workforce

- Support the local collaboration of School District 51, Colorado Mesa University, Western Colorado Community College, the Mesa County Workforce Center and the Chamber that results in a better-educated and competitive local workforce.
- Support statewide initiatives that provide and expand workforce competencies, including career and technical training to students.
- Support an equitable distribution of statewide funding for education that insures our local education institutions have the funding they need to be successful.