

ENGAGING TOMORROW'S LEADERS - TODAY.



MESA COUNTY
LEADERSHIP
PROGRAM

WHAT IS THE MESA COUNTY LEADERSHIP PROGRAM?

THREE DECADES OF BUSINESS LEADER CREATION

In 1992, the Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce gathered twenty-five up-and-coming leaders to become the first-ever Mesa County Leadership Class. Tasked with learning more about what made our community operate and how they could become civically engaged to ensure future economic prosperity, this class carved the path to what has become three decades of dedicated business leaders in our community.

Graduates of the inaugural Mesa County Leadership Class included names we all have become familiar with such as Tom Benton, Lonny Suplizio, Michael Russell, Wayne Wright, and the Daily Sentinels' own – Gary Harmon.

Since then, an annual average of 20 next-generation business leaders have dedicated one day a month (sometimes more) to learning everything they can about what it means to be a leader in our business community as a participant of the Mesa County Leadership Program. That amounts to over 600 dedicated individuals who have actively taken steps to bolster and support our business community as leaders.

Known for its interactive and on-site sessions, this program “pulls back the curtain” and truly gives these future leaders an up-close look at what keeps our community thriving and the economy growing.

Spending time exploring the impact and importance of water and education in our Valley, conversing with local, state, and industry leaders about what keeps our economy thriving, understanding the impact of healthcare, and braving self-evaluation to grow personal leadership skills is only just a sample of the hard work these individuals put in to complete the course.

By discovering and learning about these essential elements in our community, participants in the Mesa County Leadership Program gain an understanding of the importance of not only being successful in their professional careers, but also finding ways to give back to this community we live, work, and play in.

Recent graduate Andrea Lopez, External Affairs Manager at the Ute Water Conservancy District says ***“The Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce’s Mesa County Leadership class was extremely beneficial to the knowledge of my community. As an individual that has lived here my entire life, I was pleasantly surprised with how much I learned about Mesa County and the pillars of our community through the leadership course.”*** Lopez went on to say ***“The course is unmatched and does a great job of connecting participants with organizations and leaders in the community who are instrumental to our thriving community.”***

Many graduates have gone on to lead a variety of non-profit boards, community initiatives, and even seek elected office. Most notably, both current Mesa County Assessor, Ken Brownlee, and Mesa County Commissioner Cody Davis are alumni of this program.

“Business leaders are more effective when they step outside their daily work environment and immerse themselves in a different perspective.” said long-time steering committee member, Dan Prinster.

It’s safe to say this program’s impact on our community is undeniable.





■ ■ Business leaders are more effective when they step outside their daily work environment and immerse themselves in a different perspective. ■ ■

- DAN PRINSTER, STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBER



IMPACT

“ The course is unmatched and does a great job of connecting participants with organizations and leaders in the community who are instrumental to our thriving community. ”

- ANDREA LOPEZ,
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MANAGER AT UTE WATER
GRADUATE 2021



EXPLORE LEADERSHIP THROUGH THE LENS OF OUR COMMUNITY

ANNUAL PROGRAM INCLUDES TWO-DAY LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT RETREAT, 10 MONTHS OF FULL DAY OF INTERACTIVE CLASSES, AN OVERNIGHT TRIP TO DENVER TO ENGAGE WITH THE DECISION MAKERS WHO IMPACT OUR BUSINESS CLIMATE, AND A VALUABLE NETWORK OF PEERS TO GROW AND LEARN WITH FOR A LIFETIME!

PROGRAM SCHEDULE INCLUDES:

EXPLORING YOUR LEADERSHIP STYLE - (2-DAY RETREAT)

Join us as you kick off the Mesa County Leadership Program with a 2-day retreat focused on exploring YOUR core motives as a leader both in the community and in your career. Learn how to navigate others on your team and within your business network who vary from your natural traits while expanding your ability to communicate by acknowledging what they need most. Through team building activities and self-aware conversations, you will quickly connect with your fellow classmates as you begin the 10-month journey towards graduation.

WATER IN THE WEST

Water is easily the most valuable natural resource to the Western Slope and the State of Colorado. Hear from experts as they discuss the impacts of the Colorado River Compact, current conservation efforts, innovative technologies, and community collaboration as we all work to protect this lifeblood of our valley. During this class you will witness these efforts first-hand as you visit the historic Roller Dam in Debeque Canyon, the Ute Water Treatment Plant, and more!



EDUCATION IS THE SEED OF OUR FUTURE WORKFORCE

Start your day with Colorado Mesa University President John Marshall as you explore the history and growth of higher education in Mesa County including a personal campus tour from President Marshall. Then travel via school bus to the headquarters of Mesa County Valley School District 51 (D51) as you hear from D51 Superintendent Dr. Brian Hill, current School Board Members, as well as faculty on how important K-12 education is to the health of our community and how businesses can get involved.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS A COMMUNITY EFFORT

Join us as we spend the day at the Business Incubator Center (BIC) learning about how the local Economic Development Partners work together to inspire healthy growth in our economy and a strong business climate that allows us to retain the primary jobs needed to keep our community vibrant. This day includes a private tour of an area manufacturer who contributes to the “ripple effect” of good revenue with our Valley.



HEALTHCARE DELIVERY SYSTEMS ACROSS THE VALLEY

A healthy community and healthy business are carefully entwined and dependent on each other. Knowing this, we are truly lucky to have the variety and complexity of health services available within our community. Spend the day with our local hospital CEOs as they welcome you behind closed doors to learn about the diverse services and keen expertise Mesa County offers to its citizens. Participants will venture out to a number of service providers, clinics, and healthcare facilities for a closer look at the resources we have while also understanding the delicate balance it takes to keep them.

LEGISLATIVE DAYS AT THE CAPITOL - (ANNUAL TRIP TO DENVER)

As regulation and policy continue to add burdens and barriers to the overall business climate in Colorado, businesses on the Western Slope face unique challenges and obstacles. Having our voice heard in the halls of the Capitol is a vital necessity to ensure we have a seat at the table and are not forgotten as new legislation takes shape. Attendees will join fellow business leaders and stakeholders from across the Western Slope as we engage with members of our General Assembly, department directors, and even the Governor to discuss topics and priorities our businesses face in Mesa County and across the West.

THE BUSINESS AND IMPACT OF NON-PROFITS

Get a snapshot of the important non-profit network that works every day to tirelessly fill the needs not being met through our local governments and for-profit businesses. By providing impactful services that better our community and assist those who need it most, you could say this day will show you that to keep our community thriving, we must give back. Whether it is volunteer work or a local board of directors, find your passion and pathway to keep Mesa County



THE RELATIONSHIPS OF OUR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

While we see the impact of State and Federal government on a regular basis, often times we forget the vital role our local governments play in the basic services, safety, and support needed to keep Mesa County moving forward. Spend the day with elected officials and staff from both the City of Grand Junction and Mesa County as they explore the various departments and initiatives they have in motion to ensure a community that is innovative, welcoming, and a place we all love to work and play in.

THE FUTURE OF YOUR LEADERSHIP GROWTH

As the class comes to a conclusion, join your fellow participants as you review the information you first learned at the retreat and explore how you have applied that over the past 10 months and how you will continue to grow those skills in the future. Learn how you can maximize the core motives that drive you, allowing you to live and lead intentionally.



2025-2026
APPLY TODAY!

BE INTENTIONAL. BE A LEADER!

APPLICATIONS DUE MAY 30, 2025

1

COMPLETE THE APPLICATION

Completed applications are due no later than 5pm on May 30, 2025.

Applicants will be notified if they have been selected to interview for the program no later than June 13th.

Final selections will be made no later than July 18th.

2

WHAT TO EXPECT

Orientation for accepted participants will be scheduled in mid to late August with the Retreat scheduled no later than mid-September.

Monthly classes will begin in October and are held on the second Thursday of each month from 7:30am to 4pm. A strict attendance policy will be enforced to ensure all participants are engaged and active throughout the class.

3

COST

\$1,500 per participant due no later than the first day of the Retreat.

Cost includes:

- Two-day retreat with meals
- 8 Full-day classes with meals
- Overnight Trip to Denver with Meals, Transportation, & Accommodations

4

SUBMIT

Completed applications must be submitted no later than 5pm on May 30, 2025.

For questions regarding applications, please email candace@gjchamber.org or call 970-242-3214.

MESA COUNTY LEADERSHIP

2025-2026 PROGRAM APPLICATION



SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION ONLINE

PLEASE BE PREPARED TO ATTACH THE FOLLOWING:

1. COVER LETTER AND RESUME
2. TWO (2) REFERENCE LETTERS:

IF YOU ARE A CEO OR EXECUTIVE, PLEASE INCLUDE LETTERS FROM A FELLOW EXECUTIVE OR BOARD CHAIR THAT IS FAMILIAR WITH YOUR PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE.

IF YOU ARE NOT THE CEO OR EXECUTIVE AT YOUR PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT, PLEASE INCLUDE LETTERS FROM YOUR DIRECT SUPERVISOR AND A FELLOW EMPLOYEE WHO IS FAMILIAR WITH YOUR PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE.



Apply Now!



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