

A scenic landscape at sunset with mountains and a river. The sun is low on the right, casting a golden glow over the scene. The sky is filled with wispy clouds. In the foreground, there is a river with a dam or barrier, and the water is flowing over it. The background shows rolling hills and mountains under a clear sky.

The BRECC Action Challenge

Building Community Resilience

Norwood Board of Trustees Meeting

Special Session - 04.23.2024



AGENDA

- **Introductions**
- **Building Resilient Economies in Coal Communities (BRECC)**
 - About Community Builders
 - BRECC Action Challenge Overview
 - Process Steps & Timeline
 - Progress Update & Next Steps
 - Board Role
- **Q & A**
- **Discussion & Input**



BRECC OVERVIEW



Building Resilient Economies in Coal Communities (BRECC) is an Economic Development Administration (EDA) Community of Practice.

BRECC Partners:



ABOUT COMMUNITY BUILDERS



**community
builders**

PEOPLE | PLACE | PROSPERITY

Let's make communities more livable - for everyone.





Our Approach

We empower communities and local leaders with tools, information and support to create more livable places.

We work shoulder to shoulder with community partners to craft practical solutions that fit their specific challenges and opportunities.

We build civic capacity so communities are better equipped to plan for growth, shape inclusive and resilient economies, and expand housing choices and affordability.

BRECC COMPONENTS



BRECC National Network

Open forum and peer network for coal community stakeholders

Commitment Coalition

Leadership and peer-learning network

Action Challenge

Technical assistance and capacity-building cohorts

Storytelling

National campaign to capture educational and inspirational stories of coal communities



ACTION CHALLENGE OVERVIEW

A technical assistance
and capacity-building
community program

Participants

Team-based technical assistance for coal communities in need

Activities

- Tailored coaching
- 12 month support process
- Create economic diversification and community revitalization plan
- In-person capstone event

Goal

Create and advance fundable economic revitalization and diversification projects



THE WEST END TEAM APPROACH

A Regional Team for a
Regional Challenge

WEEDC the applying entity

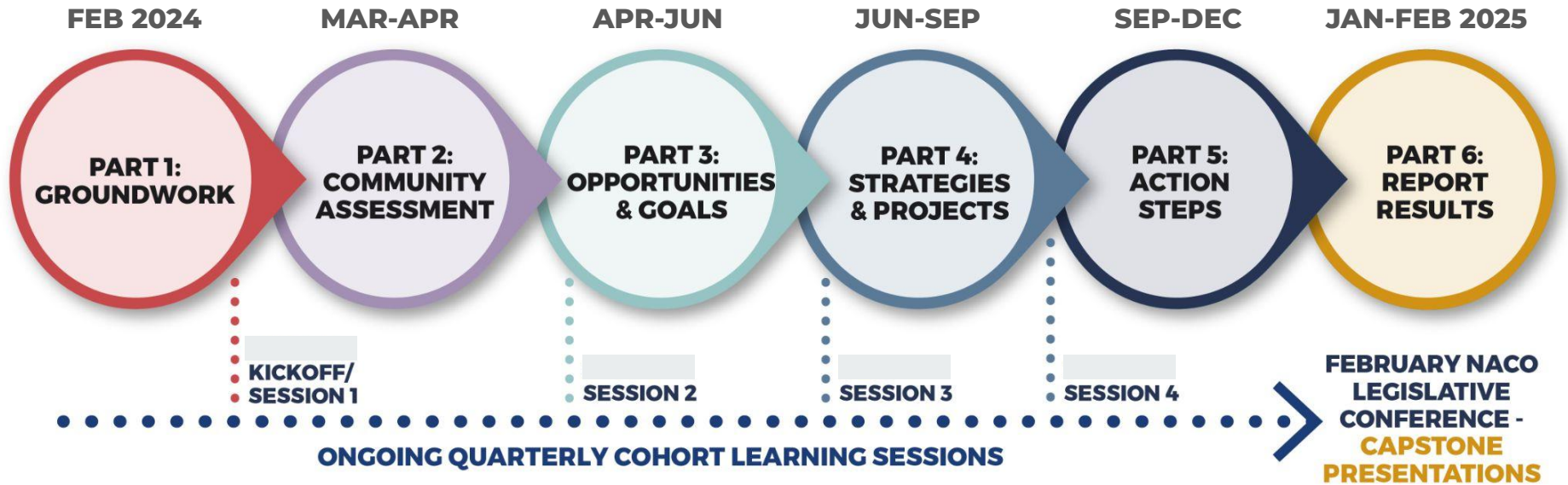
Team includes representatives from Naturita, Nucla, Norwood, and Montrose County

Value of a Regional Approach

- The need for economic diversification impacts the entire region
- Regional funding applications are often more successful than targeted ones
- Communities are interconnected, the strategies to support them should be too



PLANNING PROCESS



PLANNING PROCESS



PROGRESS UPDATE

Where we are now?

Completed:

1. Created a **scope** to focus the team's efforts for the year-long process.
2. Completed **community assessment** with the following deliverables:
 - a. **Policy Scan & Alignment**
 - b. **Data Collection & Review**
3. Starting to identify Opportunities & Goals
 - a. Tour of existing **local assets**
 - b. Stakeholder conversations





Policy Scan:

- Reviewed 12 regional & local policy and planning documents
- Compared them across 8 categories:
 - Economic development, workforce development, infrastructure, housing, quality of life, agriculture, energy/extraction, & tourism

PROGRESS UPDATE

Where we are now?

Plan Name	Coal Transition Framework Elements				Additional Community Values Categories		
	Economic Development & Diversification	Workforce Development & Retraining	Infrastructure	Housing	Quality of Life / Place	Agriculture	Energy & Extraction
Overall Alignment	High - Even documents not focused on economic development (like parks and rec plans, the byway plan, land use codes, etc) state the region's desire to diversify and stabilize its economic base. However, most primarily focus on tourism and outdoor recreation as the avenue for economic development.	Medium - While there are strong workforce-related recommendations in the CEDS and WEEDC strategies, this topic is notably absent from the Business Development Strategy and receives little mention in the region's other documents. Unclear what workforce reskilling was done for the coal workforce during closure.	Medium-High - While most of the documents mention infrastructure in some form or another, the scope of recommended improvements tends to be somewhat limited to transportation, tourism, and basic utilities. The regional documents do address the tie-in of foundational infrastructure to economic development opportunities.	Medium-High - The degree to which housing and specifically affordability, are addressed is dependent on the age of the document. Almost all the relevant documents mention housing in some regard and most align on a desire for diverse housing types, but there is less alignment on the need for affordability or the mechanisms for new workforce housing development. Preserving existing affordable housing stock is also not well addressed.	Medium - While most documents include improvements that would benefit the quality of places in the West End, there is less alignment in the specific mechanisms (ex. only one addresses healthcare, only a few speak to downtowns, while others speak to parks and rec). Several of the documents frame these improvements as primarily for tourists and don't address the nexus of high-quality of life for residents and economic development.	High - Almost all documents speak to the importance of agriculture to the region's heritage, character, and economy. The preservation of agricultural lands is strongly emphasized with actionable policies across most documents, though many lack specificity in how to further grow this industry. Several include guidance on value-added agriculture as a growth area.	Medium - There is not strong alignment among the documents in how they address energy and extraction industries. While several include it as an element of the region's economy, only a few provide tangible recommendations on balancing growth and impacts for these industries. Some documents have general recommendations for renewable energy but few include detail on where and how it would be appropriate.
Region 10 CEDS (2021)	High - Economic development and diversification is placed front and center in the document. Recommends multiple avenues for development and highlights key industry clusters for the region. Seems in-line with West End needs and priorities.	Medium-High - Speaks clearly to the need to reskill, upskill, and next-skill workers in the region, particularly where underemployed, which likely applies to those left behind by the coal industry. Lacks some specificity as to how to retrain and to what fields.	High - Infrastructure is a key strategy with a number of detailed actions addressing both needed improvements to aging infrastructure and development of economically-supportive infrastructure. Addresses most components of infrastructure improvement.	Medium - While a lack of housing options, specifically affordable ones, is identified as a major barrier for employers, housing is only partially addressed in Strategy 3, which calls for preserving attainable housing but mechanisms for new affordable development are not addressed.	Medium-High - While the document primarily focuses on economic strategies a number of quality of life factors are addressed in Strategy 3 and a third component of the vision statement. Preserving the small-town character is also emphasized.	High - Agriculture is highlighted as a key part of the region's history and heritage as well as a major industry for economic development. The West End's heritage agriculture is given as an example of creating a value-added niche.	High - The report speaks to the importance of extraction industries given the high prevalence of public land while balancing with other uses and preservation. It also notes opportunities to creatively reuse the West End's existing energy assets.
West End Economic Development Strategies Plan (2021)	High - Takes a very diverse and multi-faceted approach to developing the region's economy and provides clear action steps for WEEDC to work towards these goals. The plan is fairly brief but the diversity of strategies and actions are robust and forward thinking.	High - Provides a specific and actionable strategy to build the local workforce through apprenticeships and training with recommended programs. Also includes potential reclamation or firelighting jobs training and the need for workforce transportation opportunities.	High - Strongly ties the need for critical supportive infrastructure to enhance economic development. Also notes the importance of broadband and the airport in these efforts. Takes a balanced approach to improving existing systems vs pursuing new opportunities.	Medium-High - Includes a key workforce housing strategy with a specific goal and time frame for developing more attainable housing units. Lacks some context on the need for and benefit of increased housing options.	Medium - The document addresses quality of life through downtown improvements and senior/health care (notably, the only document to address this), but does not speak to other aspects of quality of life/place or provide context for how the strategies will improve livability.	High - Value-added agriculture development is a top strategy with several actionable steps and strong partnerships.	Medium - Includes a recommendation for mine remediation and materials testing but does not speak to continued extraction uses. Could use additional details and actions for remediation and related industries.



PROGRESS UPDATE

Where we are now?

Data Review:

- Consolidated data metrics to communicate the ongoing impacts of coal transition
- Will create easy-to-read infographics to tell the regional story of impact, resilience, and ongoing goals and need

Coal Transition Indicator	Montrose County	San Miguel County
County Location Quotient for Utilities (2021)		
	25th Percentile	50th Percentile (Median)
CO Power Plant Operators, Percentile Annual Wages (2022)	\$79,410	\$96,050
Wages All Coal Mining Jobs, National Percentile Wages (2022) (NAICS 212100)	\$54,780	\$66,390
All Power Plant Operators, Distributors, and Dispatchers Jobs, National Percentile Wages (2022)	\$71,160	\$93,060
Census Data - Mining County Annual Payroll in Mining Except Oil and Gas & Support Activities for Mining - 2019 - Total Annual Payroll	\$3,146	No Data
County Annual Payroll in Mining Except Oil and Gas & Support Activities for Mining - 2021 - Total Annual Payroll	\$3,052,000	No Data
Number of Employees Mining Except Oil and Gas & Support Activities for Mining - 2019	46 (Should probably get this number from individual facilities)	No Data
Number of Employees in Mining Except Oil and Gas & Support Activities for Mining - 2021	30 (Should probably get this number from individual facilities)	No Data
Census Data - Utilities County Annual Payroll in Utilities - 2019 - Total Annual Payroll	\$24,150	\$1,268,000
County Annual Payroll in Utilities - 2021 - Total Annual Payroll	\$20,314	\$1,196,000
Number of Employees in Utilities - 2019	273 - From Census. Should probably get this number from individual facilities	12
Number of Employees in Utilities - 2021	229 - From Census. Should probably get this number from individual facilities	10

LOOKING AHEAD

Where we are going?

Key Outcomes:

- Build team consensus around **economic diversification strategies**
- Identify **projects and action steps**
- **Match projects to funding opportunities** based on need, readiness, feasibility
- Create an **Economic Diversification Plan**
- **Provide tools to successfully pursue funding**, including data, infographics, communications materials, and **connections to federal entities**



LOOKING AHEAD

Where we are going?

Previous cohort examples:

COAL TRANSITION GOALS

During the planning process the BRECC Team identified five high-level goals that act as overarching guides for future economic diversification efforts.



- » Increase the tax base and replace lost revenue to continue a high quality of service.
- » Champion industries, technologies, and projects that provide more and higher-wage jobs.
- » Retain the region's workforce and stem population erosion.
- » Support existing businesses first, then attract new industries.
- » Create a more diverse and resilient economy.



Infrastructure Enhancement

Deploy missing components of foundational infrastructure for business and industry expansion.



Target Industry Development

Support business expansion and development in industries that have been a fit across the region.



Housing Access & Affordability

In order to attract and retain a skilled workforce, expand the supply and diversity of housing options.



Workforce Development

Deploy new technologies for energy development and workforce training.



Clean Energy

Encourage development of clean energy technologies in the region.



Transition Capacity

Increase NWCD's organizational, staffing, and funding capacity for regional coal transition and economic diversification.



Building Regional Economic Coal Community
Economic Diversification
Northwest Colorado District

Economic Diversification Plan
February, 2024

The Case for Assistance

As part of the NWCD region's community assessment, key data metrics summarized to assist the region in making a succinct case for eligibility for coal transition support and funding. The following indicators, primarily economic report¹ indicate that the coal industry makes up a substantial economy, employment, wages, and tax base, and that the closure of coal put a significant strain on the region.

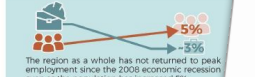
The coal industry makes up a substantial share of

An economic study of the Northwest Colorado¹ used a nutrient data for direct coal employment, severance taxes, and mineral to create an economic contribution model. The economic report¹ showed that for the combined region the elimination of both result in an estimated \$621,433,360 for about 22% loss in regional tax revenue.



...and accounts for a very large share of the regional tax base.

The model measures the economic contribution of coal in the region. It estimates a total of \$6.2 million in tax revenue lost and accounts for severance tax, FLM, contributions, and coal-related ad valorem tax.



¹ NOTE: This data was sourced from the economic model Economic Report (DIER), published by AGNC and National

ECONOMIC STRATEGIES

The goals helped to guide the creation of six strategies, under which the economic diversification initiatives are nested. These strategies shown below represent the six main areas of focus for NWCD's coal transition efforts.

Initiatives

The initiatives listed below each strategy are specific projects and programs that were identified and vetted by local economic development leaders and partners through the BRECC coaching process. The initiatives are not an exhaustive list of potential steps, and rather were pragmatically selected based on potential impacts and implementation readiness. Future initiatives may be added that will further advance the strategies as new opportunities arise.

Economic Diversification Plan
February, 2024

Implementation Guidance

Initiative: Expand meat processing and cold storage.
Provide support and regional coordination for the local agricultural industry by pursuing and managing grant funding for the expansion of meat processing and cold storage in order to grow the value-added agriculture industry, support and retain businesses and ranchers, and create new jobs.

- ROLES**
- Lead: NWCD
 - Partners: The Community Agricultural Alliance (CAA), Fitch Ranch, USDA and the USDA
 - NWCD Role: Identify and pursue funding opportunities

- ACTION STEPS**
- Collaborate with Fitch Ranch on the completion of their expansion, identify opportunities to replicate the approach or expand the market
 - Collaborate with CAA to identify priority needs and opportunities in meat processing
 - Prioritize and pursue relevant funding opportunities
 - Distribute funding to relevant local business and other agricultural entities
 - Administer grant reporting
 - Explore demand for an shipment of highest quality cuts and advocate for continued rail service and access for local meat processing businesses

FUNDING / ASSISTANCE OPPORTUNITIES					
Opportunity	Eligibility	Timing	Terms	Competitiveness	Notes
USDA Rural Development Meat and Poultry Processing Provides grants to help eligible processors expand their processing capacity, which creates new, better and more processing jobs for meat and poultry processors. Intend to encourage competition and growth in the processing sector, and improve supply chain resiliency.	Eligible: Yes, for those who are able to engage in meat and poultry processing. Eligible: Private, non-profit, gov. among others. Eligible: Meat processing must be independently owned and operated. Applicants must process (or plan to process) meat or poultry products subject to the Federal Meat Inspection Act. Have (or plan to get) USDA Food Safety	2023 application closed November 22. Reopen annually. Look for re-opening in fall 2024.	Type: Grant Amount: Maximum award amount is \$10 million, or 30 percent of total project costs. The minimum project amount is \$200,000. Match: No match, but can only use 10% of project total cost.	Fairly competitive (given national scale). Approximately \$12 million available in funding this cycle, appearing in at least 12 awards, but many may be awarded. More than that will be awarded.	Though fairly competitive, the funding is significant and can be used for many aspects of meat processing expansion, including equipment, facilities, skilled workforce training & retention, etc. with the potential for job-creating entry in this, this may be worth pursuing.

YOUR ROLE

Going forward:

- We want you involved!
- Your buy-in is key to successful economic development
- Share goals and help set direction tonight
- Provide feedback on draft Economic Diversification Plan this Fall
- Town to provide other updates as needed
- Help champion the Plan's implementation



QUESTIONS?



FACILITATED DISCUSSION

Foundational
elements of
economic
development



FACILITATED DISCUSSION

Foundational
elements of
economic
development

- **What kinds of businesses and livelihoods are valued in the West End?**
- **What do you have that you want to keep and build on?**



FACILITATED DISCUSSION

Foundational
elements of
economic
development

- **Thinking about the West End's economy in 10+ years - what do you want it to look like?**
- **What do you wish was true about your local economy?**



THANK YOU!

