



Region-wide Issues

Welcome to Northwest Colorado! All five counties in the Northwest Colorado region share similarities, yet each has unique social, economic and environmental challenges and opportunities. Each county has written a profile to describe their communities, interests and unique aspects to help you understand the place we call home. The counties of [Grand](#), [Jackson](#), [Moffat](#), [Rio Blanco](#) and [Routt](#) comprise the area of Northwest Colorado. The social, economic and environmental components of each county vary greatly and demonstrate the unique qualities of their communities including citizens, jobs, wages, recreation, environment, geography, and civic aspects.

Economy

The economic opportunities in Northwest Colorado include significant natural resources for recreation, tourism and energy exploration and development. Energy exploration and development and agriculture have long been part of our economy, while the recreation and tourism are a newer and growing industry. The construction industry fluctuates with the economic shifts and changes in the incoming population and demographics. In the past twenty years, the healthcare and education sectors have also grown to be able to care for and educate the region's residents. Our community colleges of Colorado Mountain College and Colorado Northwestern Community College provide a transition to four year college education and a variety of technical and trade certificate programs, which assist workforce development.

Workforce

In our region, there is a great deal of interdependence between counties, noted by the movement of people to live, work and play. The economic sectors may rely on neighboring counties for workforce. Often workers in the region's smaller towns or counties may not possess the appropriate skills necessary to fill the jobs within their own county. This impacts transportation on our highways. Families may also feel the effects of this because caregivers, parents and wage-earners are living and working miles apart.

Regional Challenges

Our regional challenges include a higher cost of living, especially in the resort areas, long commuter travel times due to the distance between jobs and an "affordable community," and the fact that we might live in one community and work elsewhere. Access to healthcare is a challenge related to income and cost of living and the ability of communities to provide important services. Another regional challenge—and opportunity—is the population shifts in each county, such as the influx of the baby boomer generation and the out migration of our population ages 18 - 40. Each of our communities is challenged by the ability to adapt to these changes.

Northwest Colorado's nonprofit organizations are a community asset. They provide services for people and promote the overall "health" of our communities in the areas of social, recreation, education, healthcare and general well-being. Our continued ability to communicate and cooperate will determine the future of our corner of Colorado.

Regional needs assessments and community indicator reports are available on at <http://northwestrpd.org/RegionwideIssues.htm>.

Grand County

Grand County is located just 67 miles from Denver via Highway 40 over Berthoud Pass, which reaches an elevation of 11,315 ft. The county is 1,870 square miles located in a high mountain park known as Middle Park. Approximately 75% of the land in Grand County is publicly owned. The county includes Arapaho National Forest land and three Wilderness areas: Indian Peaks, Byers Peak and Vasquez. The City of Denver Water Board owns 17,000 acres of land, and nearby Rocky Mountain National Park sets aside 265,727 acres of natural land and wildlife habitat for the public to enjoy. The town of Grand Lake in northeast Grand County is at the western entrance to Rocky Mountain National Park. Highway 34, known as Trail Ridge Road, runs from Grand Lake, through the park, to the town of Estes Park at the eastern entrance to the park. The road reaches an elevation of 12,183 feet and is closed by snow in winter.

Grand County Demographics

The population of Grand County is primarily white non-Hispanic (93%). The next largest ethnic group is Hispanic (4.4%). The majority of residents of Grand County (93.9%) speak English at home.

Grand County Economy

Tourism is the main source of industry in eastern Grand County (referred to as the Fraser Valley), and jobs in the retail and service sector dominate the workforce. Ranching and agriculture are the primary industry in western Grand County. Industries providing employment for the county as a whole are as follows: arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services (22.8%), construction (14.2%), retail trade (11.5%), and educational, health and social services (11.4%). In Grand County, the median household income in 2007 was \$55,862. (Colorado median household income is \$55,212.) The 2008 cost of living index in Grand County was 90.8. (U.S. average is 100.)

Grand County History

Originally, the area was inhabited by both the Ute and Arapaho Indian tribes and was discovered by pioneers around 1820. Grand County was created on February 2, 1874 and was

named after Grand Lake and the Grand River, an old name for the Colorado River, which has its headwaters in the county.

Grand County has a rich skiing history. The first ski hills in the county were built in Hot Sulphur Springs in 1911, and Carl Howelsen introduced ski jumping to the town before coming to Steamboat Springs. In 1912, Hot Sulphur Springs hosted the first official winter sports carnival in Colorado to include a ski jumping tournament. A special train brought spectators from Denver. The Denver press reported on the event, and the sport of skiing was born in Colorado.

Winter Park Resort was also one of Colorado's first ski areas, beginning during the 1920s. During the early 1930s, George Cranmer of Denver Parks and Recreation suggested a plan to create a winter sports area at what was then known as West Portal. By 1937, Grand County Skierthe United States Forest Service (USFS) had built a ski jump with a few trails at Cooper Creek nearby the railroad. The following year, ski trains from Denver shuttled skiers to the area. In 1939, West Portal was renamed Winter Park, and the first J-bar tow went into operation. Lift tickets for the first season cost \$1, with a total of 10,692 skier days.

Today, Grand County is also home to SolVista Basin ski area at Granby Ranch, which offers beginner to intermediate terrain for skiers and boarders. Like many other ski areas in Colorado, the entire region is now marketed as a four-season vacation destination to a national audience.

Grand County Health Services

Grand County is served by Kremmling Memorial Hospital, a Level IV Trauma Center with physicians staffing the Emergency Room 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Several medical clinics serve the eastern portion of the county.

Grand County Nonprofit Organizations

- Advocates: Victim Assistance Team of Grand County
- American Cancer Society, Grand County
- Community Alliance of Libraries and Museums
- East Grand Educational Foundation Fund
- East Grand Middle School
- Eternal Hills Christian Preschool
- Flying Heels Rodeo Association
- Forward Motion Project Committee
- Fraser Creative Learning Center
- Fraser Valley Elementary School
- Fraser Valley Metropolitan Recreation District
- Fraser/Winter Park Police Department
- Friends of the Grand County Library, Inc.
- Girl Scouts Mile High Council, Troop 56
- Grand Arts Council
- Grand County Blues Society
- Grand County Business & Economic Development Association (BEDA)
- Grand County Characters
- Grand County EMS
- Grand County Historical Association
- Grand County Housing Authority / Cliffview Assisted Living Residence
- Grand County Library District
- Grand County Little League
- Grand County Pet Pals
- Grand County Rural Health Network
- Grand County Water Information Network (GCWIN)
- Grand Foundation
- Grand Futures Prevention Coalition
- Grand Huts Association
- Grand Lake Area Historical Society
- Grand Lake Chamber (Snowshoot)
- Grand Lake Recreational Foundation - GLMRD
- Grand Lake Trailgrooming, Inc.

- Grand Theatre Co., Inc.
- Grand Youth Adventures
- Greater Granby Area Chamber of Commerce
- Habitat for Humanity of Grand County
- Grand Headwaters Trails Alliance
- Health & Human Services Heart of the Mountain Hospice, Inc.
- Horace Button Ski Foundation
- Horizons Specialized Services
- Inter-Mountain Youth Soccer Association
- Medicine Waters Story Tellers
- Middle Park Fair & Rodeo
- Middle Park High School Science Camp
- Middle Park Land Trust
- Middle Park Music Education Foundation
- Mountain Family Center
- Mountain Musicians
- National Sports Center for the Disabled
- Northwest Rocky Mountain CASA
- Notes at 9,000: Emerging Artist Series
- Planned Parenthood of Rocky Mountains
- Granby Health Center
- Rocky Mountain Repertory Theatre & Youth Theatre Program
- Rotary Club of Grand Lake
- Shining Stars Foundation
- Sluice Box Records
- Winter Park Alpine Art Affair
- Winter Park Christian School
- Winter Park Horsemen's Association
- Winter Park Sports Foundation
- Winter Park/Fraser Valley Chamber of Commerce

Links to these 63 nonprofits can be found at <http://northwestrpd.org/GrandCounty.htm>

Jackson County

Most of Jackson County is a high, relatively broad intermountain basin known as North Park which covers 1,613 square miles. This basin opens north into Wyoming and is rimmed on the west by the Park Range, on the south by the Rabbit Ears Range and the Never Summer Range, and on the east by the Medicine Bow Range. Elevations range from 7,800 to 12,953 feet and the county is the site of the headwaters of the North Platte River. Walden, the county seat, is located 145 miles northwest of Denver.

Jackson County Demographics

There are approximately 1,300 people residing in Jackson County. The racial makeup of the county is 90.4% White, 0.3% Black or African American and 1 % Native American. The Hispanic population is 8.3%.

Jackson County Economy

Ranching is the main source of industry in Jackson, followed by logging and tourism. Other employers include the Pellet Mill, Session & Sons, Praxair, various loggers, recreation based businesses (hotels, restaurants, lodges), and retail stores.

Jackson County History

In November, 1861, Colorado set up 17 counties for the state, including Larimer County. This was where Jackson County would be carved out of in 1909. Before then, both Grand and Larimer Counties claimed the North Park area. In the beginning, no one paid much attention to North Park because it was hunting grounds of the Ute and Arapaho Indians. They fiercely

defended these lands, and the white settlers were often afraid to venture in. When valuable minerals were discovered in North Park, Grand County claimed the land because they wanted the revenue it would provide. The residents of North Park didn't care much because the county seat for Grand County was closer than the one for Larimer County, and all official business needed to be done at the county seat. But, Larimer also claimed North Park, and it was contested all the way to the Colorado Supreme Court. In 1886, the court decided in favor of Larimer. This did not make the North Park residents very happy, and they pushed for their own county until Jackson County was formed.

Jackson County Health Services

Jackson County is served by the North Park Medical Clinic. The nearest hospital is located in Steamboat Springs, 60 miles southwest of Walden. The Yampa Valley Medical Center is a Trauma IV facility.

Jackson County Nonprofit Organizations

- Jackson County School District
- Walden Chamber of Commerce

Moffat County

Take a short drive from Denver and in just four hours, you can be in Moffat County, where you can still experience the real Old West! Moffat County is located in the rolling hills and high plains of the western slope of the Colorado Rockies. We are in the northwest corner of Colorado, bordered by Wyoming on the north and Utah on the west. Moffat County, the second largest county in Colorado with an area of 4,743 square miles, is about the same size as the state of Connecticut. The county is rich in Western and Native American heritage, including petroglyph sites and historic homesteads. It is a very rural and sparsely populated area with less than three people per square mile, and more than 1.7 million acres of public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

The City of Craig, the county seat, is located on the Yampa River at the intersection of U.S. Hwy 40 and Colorado Hwy 13. Moffat County's only large community, Craig has a population of 9,317 which is the majority of the 13,928 county residents (CO DOLA Estimates 2007). Craig is a "blue-collar" town of hard working folks with a strong work ethic and old-fashioned values. Craig is proud of our local community college, Colorado Northwestern Community College's Craig Campus, and we are excited to announce that the construction of a new campus is underway.

Moffat County is home to Dinosaur National Monument, Brown's Park National Wildlife Refuge, the Museum of Northwest Colorado, and world-class hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation opportunities.

Our rural and remote location is one of our greatest assets, but it also presents special challenges to our nonprofit organizations and community. Our unique challenges mean that our nonprofit organizations fulfill multiple functions, and that they must — and do — cooperate among our agencies to help to stretch our dollars and expand our services.

Moffat County is a wonderful and challenging place to live and do business. We appreciate your interest in our rugged, beautiful, and remote part of the state.

Moffat County Economy

Moffat County's economy is heavily influenced by traditional extractive energy industries and the historic and current booms and busts of those industries have many impacts on our region. We have had a very strong economy for the last several years; however, like the rest of America, we are currently seeing serious recessionary impacts. We continue to work to diversify and strengthen our economy because we want to improve the standard of living for our community. We tend to trail our neighbors and state in several important statistic. For example, our average weekly wage is \$737 compared to \$858 for Colorado (2009 CO LMI), and our unemployment rate tends to be ½-1% higher than our two neighboring counties and is currently rapidly rising. Our per capita income of \$37,841 trails Rio Blanco and Routt Counties. Our income is substantially less than Routt County by more than \$13,000/year (Yampa Valley Partners, Community Indicators Report, 2007 data).

Energy generation, oil and natural gas extraction, and coal mining comprise a significant portion of our total economy. Construction has also comprised an important portion of our economy and was one of the highest grossing industries in labor income in 2006. Public sector employers are an important source of labor income in the county, with employers such as the Moffat County School District, Colorado Northwest Community College, the Bureau of Land Management, National Forest Service, City of Craig, Moffat County, The Memorial Hospital, and the USDA Rural Development representing a majority of public employers.

The annual "livable wage" or self-sufficiency wage for Moffat County is \$16,563 for a single adult and \$45,214 for a family of four. Only our top three industries of mining, wholesale trade and manufacturing pay above that range (\$45,214). The average annual wage in Moffat County was \$37,841 in 2007 (YVP: CI).

Two important elements of our economic infrastructure in Moffat County are our Moffat County General Aviation Airport and the Yampa Valley Regional Commercial Airport.

Many areas of our county enjoy excellent cellular and internet service. However, other areas have marginal or no service. Ongoing efforts are needed to improve our telecommunications infrastructure.

Moffat County History

The Utes were the last Native American tribe inhabiting the Yampa Valley before settlers moved into the area in the 1800s. Earlier tribes left records of their existence with petroglyphs in various sites. Cattle and sheep ranchers carved out their niche, leaving a colorful Western history complete with range wars and gunfights.

The city of Craig was incorporated in 1908 when the town was just 20 years old. W.H. Tucker first came to the area in 1887, looking for a place to establish a town site. After a few years of growth, the community became the trading and social center for a large area. A fire destroyed the community hall and many buildings on Yampa Avenue (the town's main street) in 1897. By 1904, much of Yampa Avenue was rebuilt. In 2008, Craig celebrated its centennial with a year-long celebration.

Moffat County's history is closely tied to the expansion and use of rail transportation and the railroad. On the east side of Craig, visitors can see the historic Marcia Car, a private luxurious railroad coach built in Chicago in 1906 for David Moffat, a Denver banker, businessman and railroad financier. Named after Moffat's daughter, Marcia Moffat McClurg, the car is a reminder that Moffat planned a railroad from Denver to Salt Lake. Although the rail line ended in Craig, it served as a vital link for the cattle and shipping industries in Northwest Colorado and continues to be a critical economic link for the community, sending low-sulfur coal to communities throughout the country. There is currently an effort underway to save our historic railroad depot.

Moffat County Health Services

Memorial Hospital is owned by the people of Moffat County and operates as a nonprofit organization. Currently a new hospital is being constructed and is scheduled to open in late 2009. The hospital is equipped with state-of-the art cardiac monitoring and resuscitation equipment. Laboratory and radiology departments and obstetrics and surgical capabilities allow patients to complete routine procedures, same-day surgery and also receive emergency services within a wide geographic area. Relationships with metropolitan hospitals allow for rapid transfer of patients requiring more specialized care. A variety of medical and sports medicine clinics, dental and alternative healthcare offices are located in town. Rehabilitation therapy is available at local agencies and the CNCC health club, and the assisted living center includes special programs for Alzheimer's patients. The Visiting Nurse Association provides assisted living services in Hayden at the Haven. We are also serviced by the Moffat County Clinic, the Kinder Clinic and the Yampa Valley Clinic.

Additionally, a significant portion of county residents receive health care services provided by the Visiting Nurse Association. The Northwest Colorado Community Health is a primary care clinic delivering quality and affordable health care to Moffat County residents. The clinic has been in operation by the Northwest Colorado Visiting Nurse Association for many years.

Unfortunately, despite the ongoing collaborative efforts of our health care community, Moffat County, like many rural areas, is experiencing a critical shortage of primary care physicians. We continue to work toward efforts to address this shortage.

Sources of data: Colorado Labor Market Information, Colorado.gov (DOLA), Yampa Valley Partners Community Indicators Report, Craig Chamber of Commerce, Moffat County Tourism Association. A special thank you to the Craig Daily Press for the use of their wonderful photos on the website edition of this information: northwestrpd.org/MoffatCounty.htm.

Moffat County Nonprofit Organizations

- 14th Judicial District Attorney's Office
- AARP Inc. Craig Chapter 1418
- Adult Learning Assistance Program, Colorado Northwestern Community College
- Advocates Crisis Support Services
- Bad Dogs Youth Wrestling
- Boy Scouts, Western Colorado Council
- Boys and Girls Club of Craig
- Center of Craig
- Child and Adult Protective Services, Moffat County Department of Social Services
- Christmas for Kids
- Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, CDHS
- Colorado Northwestern Community College
- Colorado Preschool Program, Moffat County School District
- COMA (Communities Overcoming Meth Abuse)
- Community Budget Center, Inc.
- Community Health, Northwest Colorado Visiting Nurse Association Inc.
- Compassionate Friends of Northwest Colorado
- Comunidad Integrada/Integrated Community
- Craig and Cedar Mountain Lions Clubs
- Craig Animal Shelter
- Craig Chamber of Commerce
- Craig Kiwanis Club
- Craig Mental Health
- Craig Moffat Economic Development Partnership
- Craig Rotary Club
- Craig Sea Sharks
- Craig Youth Baseball
- Craig Youth Football
- Craig Youth Hockey
- Ducks Unlimited
- Friends of the Craig/Moffat County Library
- Girl Scouts of Chipeta Council
- Grand Futures
- Horizons
- Human Service Volunteers
- Independent Life Center
- Interfaith Food Bank
- Maybell Fire and Ambulance
- Moffat County 4H
- Moffat County Cancer Society
- Moffat County Humane Society
- Moffat County Search and Rescue
- Moffat County Tourism Association
- Moffat County United Way
- Needy Assistance Program
- Northwest Colorado Council for Children and Families
- Northwest Colorado Dental
- Northwest Colorado Legal Services
- Northwest Colorado Visiting Nurses Association
- The Memorial Hospital Foundation: Phone
- Yampa Valley Partners

Links to these 51 nonprofits can be found at <http://northwestrpd.org/MoffatCounty.htm>.

Rio Blanco County

Rio Blanco County is located in rural northwestern Colorado. The climate ranges from semiarid to alpine with significant daily temperature changes. The county is 3,228 square miles, and approximately 75% of county lands are federally owned and include parts of the White River and Routt National Forests.

Meeker is the county seat of Rio Blanco County. The population is about 2,400 people within the city limits. The elevation is 6,249 feet. The Flat Tops Wilderness Area and White River National Forest are only 30 miles away. Meeker is a short drive from Craig, Rifle, Glenwood Springs, Grand Junction, US Hwy 40 and Interstate 70. It also has a modern general aviation airport with full-service fixed base operations and charter service.

The Town of Rangely is located in western Rio Blanco County. The quality of living is high and the crime rate is low in this town of 2,500 people. Colorado State Highway 64 runs through Rangely making easy access for travelers. In addition, state Highway 139 (south to the Grand Junction area) intersects with State Highway 64 one mile east of Rangely. In Rangely, 88 percent of workers commute, and Rangely features shorter commuting times than most similar rural areas. Rangely is located on a high-desert plateau at an elevation of 5,200 feet, and the White River provides fishing and canoeing opportunities and runs through the Town of Rangely in an east-to-west direction. Rangely is located 54 miles from Vernal, Utah, 90 miles north of Grand Junction, and 280 miles from Denver.

Demographics

In 2000, the population of Rio Blanco County was 5,986.

Economy

The main industries of Rio Blanco County are agriculture, coal, nahcolite, natural gas, oil, oil shale and recreation. In 2002, the per capita personal income in Rio Blanco County was \$27,439. This was an increase of 22.2% from 1997. The 2002 figure was 89% of the national per capita income, which was \$30,906. Rangely boasts a large number of college graduates in town. About 68 percent of the homes in Rangely are occupied by their owners, and property taxes are low by Colorado standards.

History of Meeker

In 1868, Major John Wesley Powell, his wife, and about 20 others came to the valley and established winter quarters in this wide-open space, now called Powell Park. The first Indian Agency was established here a year later, nine miles east of the present town.

Nathan Meeker arrived as the Indian agent in 1878, determined to convert the resident Ute Indians from "primitive savages" to hard-working, God-fearing farmers. When Meeker plowed up the Indian's racetrack, it was the final insult. The Indians attacked in what was the last major Indian uprising in the United States. Meeker and the 10 men employed by the agency were killed, the agency burned to the ground, and the women and children captured and held hostage for 24 days.

In response, the Army arrived quickly and established the Camp on the White River, banishing the Indians to a reservation in eastern Utah. The army moved out in 1883, selling all the buildings to those settlers eager to take the land and build a town named after the slain Indian Agent. Four of these buildings still stand on their original locations.

The first community Fourth of July celebration was held in 1884, and Meeker was incorporated a year later. For the next twenty years, Meeker was the only incorporated town in northwestern Colorado.

History of Rangely

Rangely is a young town as towns in Colorado go. It was not incorporated until 1947. The first paved roads did not make it to Rangely for another decade. However, people take pride in the

community, and senior citizens recall with pleasure and nostalgia how their lives were in the early days.

There are three distinct periods: Native American and Prehistory (from the distant past until 1883), Pioneer and Ranching (from 1883 until 1946), and Energy Development (from 1946 to the present day). There are overlaps in these periods: Native Americans returned periodically from Utah to hunt and trade well after the turn of the century, shallow oil wells and deep exploratory wells were drilled well before 1946, and ranching still continues as an important contribution to the economy of the region.

The Fremont Indians lived in the Rangely area until about 1200 AD when they left, either as a result of a long period of drought or from pressure from other tribes entering the region. The Utes followed the Fremonts and were one of the last Indian Nations to lose their independence.

The first Europeans to pass through what is now Rangely were Fathers Dominguez and Escalante who in 1776 led a Spanish expedition to find a way from Mexico to California. In the early 1800s, trappers penetrated the area, and, on rock ledges not too far away, some of these trappers inscribed their names.

In 1882 Charles P. Hill and Joseph Studer brought in herds of cattle and established a trading post where Douglas Creek enters the White River. Other cattle and sheep ranchers soon followed. Pioneers came by wagon to establish homesteads.

As more people moved into the area, a town center gradually developed. In 1913, the townspeople got together and built a new school. This attractive clapboard building was turned over to the Rangely Museum Society in 1971 and was moved to the Outdoor Museum in 1993. It houses a series of exhibits that reflects the life of the Town in those early days.

It was known from the earliest of times that there was oil in Rangely. Indians used oil seeping out of the ground for medicinal purposes. There are place names such as Stinking Water Creek where surface waters mixed with oil. However, it was not until after World War II that an oil boom took place. Thousands of people descended on the town. Many lived in tents or dugouts. A local entrepreneur hauled in abandoned trolley cars from Salt Lake City and rented them out to people for shelter.

There are also vast deposits of natural gas and coal around Rangely. Only recently have natural gas deposits been extensively developed. However, coal from the earliest pioneer days was mined for home consumption. Later, coal was hauled from mines to serve the needs of neighboring communities in Utah, and coal was used to fire steam-operated rigs and engines in the early exploratory days of the oilfield.

Health Services

Meeker has a modern, 15-bed hospital, Pioneers Medical Center, which offers 24-hour emergency room service and is equipped with modern facilities. Attached to Pioneers Hospital is a 33-bed skilled nursing home facility. Rangely Hospital District is dedicated to providing primary and emergency healthcare services for the residents and visitors of Northwestern Colorado. Services include Emergency Medicine, a Family Clinic, and Home Health. Other

service providers include Eagle Crest Assisted Living, Columbine Medical Clinic, and Long-Term Care Unit.

Rio Blanco County Nonprofit Organizations

- Colorado Northwestern Community College Foundation
- Colorado West Mental Health
- Dinosaur Diamond Inc
- Eastern Rio Blanco County Health Service District
- Horizons
- Meeker Town Council
- Rangely School Foundation Inc
- Rio Blanco County Department of Social Services
- Rio Blanco County Historical Society Inc
- Rio Blanco Social Services
- Upper Colorado Environmental Plant Center

Routt County

Routt County is a diverse environment offering breathtaking mountain vistas and picturesque ranch lands. Located in northwest Colorado, the county encompasses 2,231 square miles. Communities include Clark, Hahns Peak, Milner, Phippsburg and Toponas, the towns of Hayden, Oak Creek and Yampa, and the city of Steamboat Springs.

About 50% of the land in Routt County is publicly owned. The Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest makes up a large portion of the county. This includes the Mt. Zirkel, and Sarvis Creek Wilderness areas. Local State Parks are Stagecoach Reservoir, Steamboat Lake, Elkhead Reservoir and Pearl Lake. These public lands provide residents and visitors with scenic recreational areas for hiking, picnicking, boating, hunting, fishing and waterskiing.

During the winter months the resort town of Steamboat Springs thrives due to a world-class ski resort, while ranching, agriculture, forestry, mining and power generation provide a year-round economy in the surrounding areas. The entire county abounds with a variety of cultural events, outdoor activities and educational facilities, including two community colleges, three public school districts, several private schools and a renowned performing arts summer camp.

History

The Yampa Valley's hard winters and deep snows made year-round settlement difficult. The area long served as the Ute tribe's summertime hunting grounds; later, trappers and mountain men pursued small game, selling the hides to the fur industry. James Crawford arrived with his family in 1875 to file a homestead claim and establish what would become the town of Steamboat Springs.

More homesteaders soon followed. Some raised cattle or sheep, while others worked in the county's gold and coal mines. Still others settled in towns, opening shops, businesses, even "spa" facilities at the mineral springs. Almost everyone relied on skis (then called "snowshoes") for essential wintertime transportation, but with the arrival of famed ski jumper Carl Howelsen in 1912, people started skiing for fun and recreation. Routt County has the West's longest running Winter Carnival. Traditions such as ranchers bringing in their horses to pull kids on skis down Steamboat Spring's main street have

remained virtually unchanged for nearly a century. These same kids and ranchers gather each August for the Routt County Fair in Hayden.

Since 1915, Howelsen Hill has hosted breathtaking Winter Carnival stunts and competitions. In 1961, the opening of Storm Mountain, later renamed Mt. Werner, attracted skiers from around the world. Residents as well as tourists enjoyed skiing "Ski Town USA" and its trademark champagne powder, and, before long, Steamboat Springs held the record of producing more Olympic athletes than any other town in North America.

The Yampa root was a dietary staple of the local Ute Indians for centuries. Their beloved Bear River was later renamed the Yampa River in their honor and flows through the middle of Steamboat Springs, one of the last of the wild rivers of the American West. This water feeds the irrigated hay meadows of Routt County. For decades, agriculture formed the backbone of the Routt County community. High altitudes, short growing seasons and cool nights make this area ideal for growing greens such as spinach and lettuce and strawberries. South Routt was a major origination point for spinach in the 50s.

The image of a skiing cowboy continues to represent a typical Routt County resident—willing to work hard and enjoy the area's natural resources through all of the seasons.

Demographics

According to the 2008 U.S. Census, Routt County has a total population of 22,880 people. Its population is 93.6% White, 0.6% African American, 0.8% Asian, 1.4% Other, and Hispanic or Latino of any race was 4.2% of the population. Females count for 46.3% of the population, while males make up the remaining 53.7%. In 2007, the median household income was \$63,797, while the median single family home sold for \$849,500.

Economy

Routt County's economy is dominated by tourism, mining, agriculture and location-neutral businesses. In 2007, Routt County had an economic gain in personal income due to migration of \$23.5 million, equal to the personal income of the county's entire retail sector for the same period. In Routt County, construction, accommodations, food services and real estate/leasing account for 42% of all private sector jobs. Over the past six years the construction trades have become the county's largest source of new jobs (1,054 companies in 2006). However, the recent economic downturn has seen many of these jobs disappear.

An increasing number of full and part-time residents throughout the county do not depend on the economic activity occurring within the region to make their living. This group has become an economic driver, and yet does not yet approach tourism, healthcare, construction or the nonprofit sector in terms of percentage of workforce. Agriculture's share of Routt County's total personal income has gone from almost 5% in 1970 to less than a half of one percent today. However, agriculture has been relatively stable in all three nearby counties over the past 35 years.

Routt County's economy is interdependent on neighboring Moffat County; it draws significant employees from the city of Craig, who in turn imported \$62 million in wages into their county in 2006, much of which came from employers in Routt and Rio Blanco counties. Obviously, this also impacts transportation, housing and other workforce issues. Traffic has increased 40% in the Yampa Valley, with the highest concentration of traffic in the region recorded in downtown Steamboat Springs.

Health Services

Yampa Valley Medical Center (YVMC) is a regional medical center and is the only nonprofit, non-tax-supported hospital in Northwest Colorado. With 89 physicians representing 33 specialties, the hospital delivers an average of 430 newborns, performs 4,200 surgeries and procedures, and sees more than 9,000 emergency patients annually. YVMC's Emergency Department is designated by the State of Colorado as a Level IV Trauma Center.

In late 2009, YVMC will celebrate its 10th anniversary at its current campus on Central Park Drive, as well as the grand opening of its \$13 million expansion project. The 32,000-square-foot addition will enhance Surgical Services and double the Family Birth Place, providing five new patient rooms, a family waiting room, and an expanded Special Care Nursery.

YVMC continues to expand other services, notably Cardiology and Cancer Care. With new diagnostic imaging equipment and a full-time cardiologist on the medical staff, YVMC performs full echocardiography services, nuclear stress testing and calcium scoring exams.

Nonprofit Organizations: In and Serving Routt County

- Advocates Building Peaceful Communities
- AGNC
- Animal Assistance League of NW CO
- Born Free Wildlife Rehabilitation
- Community Agriculture Alliance
- Community Alliance of the Yampa Valley
- Comunidad Integrada/Integrated Community
- Emerald Mountain Partnership
- Family Development Center
- Habitat For Humanity International
- Healthcare Foundation for the Yampa Valley
- Historic Routt County
- Horizons Specialized Services, Inc.
- Humble Ranch Education and Therapy Center
- Integrated Community
- Lift-Up of Routt County
- Main Street Steamboat Springs Inc
- Northwest Colorado Legal Services
- Northwest Colorado Visiting Nurse Association
- Partners In Routt County
- Perry Mansfield Performing Arts Camp
- Rocky Mountain Youth Corps
- Routt County Council on Aging
- Routt County Department of Social Services
- Routt County Habitat For Humanity
- Routt County Humane Society
- Routt County Search and Rescue Inc
- Steamboat Art Museum
- Steamboat Dance Theatre
- Steamboat Springs Chamber of Commerce
- Steamboat Springs City Manager
- Steamboat Springs Orchestra
- Steamboat Springs Winter Sports Club
- Steamboat Springs Youth Soccer Association
- Strings in the Mountains
- The Emerald City Opera
- Totally Kids Inc
- Tread of Pioneers Museum
- United Way of Routt County
- Yampa Valley Autism Program
- Yampa Valley Community Foundation
- Yampa Valley Land Trust, Inc.
- Yampa Valley Medical Center
- Yampatika

Links to these 46 nonprofits can be found at <http://northwestrpd.org/RouttCounty.htm>