

NEWS RELEASE



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Mesa County to Build New Workforce Center

Helping people train for—and find—jobs is highest priority for local economy.

Mesa County is moving forward with plans to build a much-needed new Workforce Center next year. Today the Board of Commissioners approved a construction contract for the new facility in Grand Junction.

"Jobs are a top priority for Mesa County," said Craig Meis, Chair of the Board of Commissioners. "That's why we've increased our funding in recent years for efforts to boost the local economy."

Mesa County's most direct economic impact in the community is through our work developing a skilled local workforce. "In today's economy, we're stepping up to ensure that our residents are well-trained and qualified for work," added Commissioner Meis. "Helping people find jobs—and helping businesses hire, develop and grow—is our main focus."

"Constructing a new facility is a smart investment of county capital dollars," said County Commissioner Janet Rowland. "The additional space, better layout and essential technology will provide more and better services to job seekers and local businesses."

The existing Workforce Center is located at 2897 North Avenue. The current facility is aging and overcrowded, and has infrastructure problems that would require significant spending to repair. With the completion of the 29 Road overpass and development along the North Avenue corridor, the current owner plans to eventually sell the property for commercial development.

"Moving forward with the project now makes good financial sense," added Commissioner Rowland. "Construction costs are currently relatively low, and now is the time to invest these dollars back into our community."

The contract approved today authorizes local company FCI Constructors to build the 32,000 square-foot facility at a cost of \$5.4 million, which is slightly less than the amount budgeted for the construction project.

Mesa County expects to build the new facility on county-owned property at 512 29 ½ Road, next to the county's existing Community Services Building. Providing the Workforce Center's services in close proximity to other county programs will make access more convenient for residents.

"This one-stop-shop model is working well for the county," said County Administrator Chantal Unfug. "Having multiple programs in a civic campus location is efficient, and more convenient for everyone involved." The new facility will also allow the county to eliminate other leases, which will help defray the costs of the project.

The Mesa County Workforce Center is a unique collaboration with the State of Colorado and local non-profit Hilltop Community Resources. The county also provides financial support for a number of other local economic development efforts—including business attraction and retention. A true collaborative coalition exists in Mesa County, involving partners such as the State of Colorado, Hilltop, the Grand Junction Economic Partnership, the Business Incubator Center, and local chambers of commerce.

"Mesa County—Creating a community of opportunities for all residents with a focus on the future."