



## NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Jessica Peterson  
Public Relations Director  
(970) 244-1640

[Jessica.peterson@mesacounty.us](mailto:Jessica.peterson@mesacounty.us)

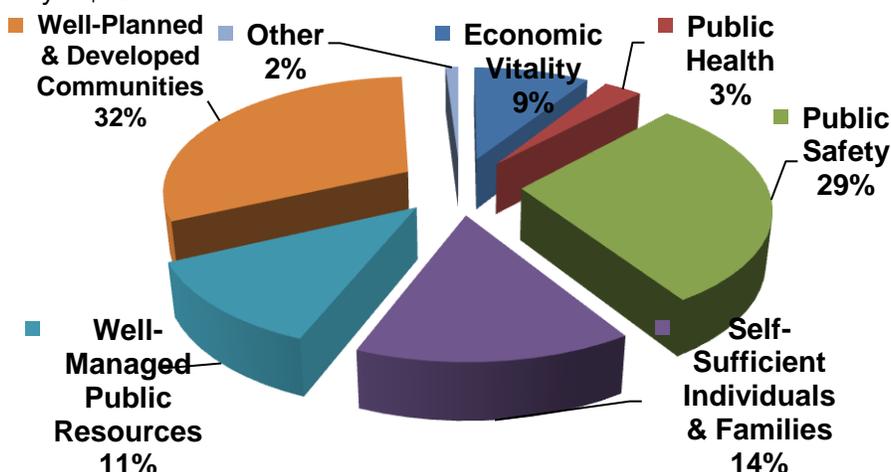
### Investing in Our Infrastructure and Our Economy

*The 2013 county budget will fund needed safety and capital improvements.*

Mesa County's budget for next year puts a focus on keeping our residents safe and funding essential infrastructure improvements that will strengthen our community and our economy. Today the Mesa County Commissioners approved a balanced budget for 2013 that stabilizes county programs and services, and continues to increase efficiency across the county.

The overall county budget for 2013 will be slightly more than \$157 million. These dollars are invested in five core areas:

- Infrastructure and Community Planning—\$44.5 million
- Public Safety—\$41.3 million
- Healthy and Self-Sufficient Individuals and Families—\$21.4 million
- Excellent, Efficient Services—\$15 million
- Local Economy—\$12.5 million



“One important way we invest in our infrastructure is through our capital plan,” said Craig Meis, Chair of the Board of Commissioners. “Next year our capital budget includes projects that improve road safety, upgrade law enforcement facilities, help job seekers and businesses, and maintain critical infrastructure.”

The 2013 county budget invests \$41 million in capital projects, including:

- Road and public safety infrastructure—\$8.6 million
- Public transit—\$3.4 million
- Riverfront Trail—\$6.7 million
- New Workforce Center—\$1.7 million

The funding for these infrastructure projects comes from Mesa County's two percent sales tax, a large portion of which was designated by voters specifically for capital construction. (These dollars cannot be used for any other purposes, such as funding general county operations.)

In 2012 sales tax revenues increased by four percent over the previous year, providing additional funding for needed improvements. “Moving forward with these projects now makes good financial sense because construction costs are currently low,” Meis added. “Now is a good time to invest these dollars back into our community.”

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

One of the significant capital investments for 2013 is construction of a much-needed new Workforce Center in Grand Junction. “Our highest direct economic priority is developing a skilled workforce,” said Commissioner Janet Rowland. “In this economy, we’re stepping up to ensure people are well-trained and qualified for work. We also want to help businesses find the qualified workers they need.”

Despite the economic challenges of recent years, the county remains fiscally healthy. Local economic indicators continue to be mixed. “Our direction has been to budget conservatively, and we’re working to maintain responsible reserves,” added Commissioner Steve Acquafresca. “This ensures that the organization can continue to provide essential services, no matter what the future brings.”

“Today we are a smaller, more flexible government organization,” said County Administrator Chantal Unfug. “We’re streamlining our operations by making services available online. This makes access for our users easier, faster and more convenient—and allows us to work faster and smarter, while still providing excellent services to our community.”

*For more details, see the County Administrator’s full [Proposed Budget Presentation](#) on our website: [www.mesacounty.us](http://www.mesacounty.us). More details will be available soon on our [Finance Department](#) webpage.*