



Date: October 13, 2008

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

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

## **County Fiscally Sound Despite National Economic Woes**

### **Proposed 2009 budget allows for continued service levels in a tight economy**

Mesa County will continue to provide the services that area residents want and expect from their county government, despite the current national economic difficulties. That was the message from Mesa County Administrator Jon Peacock while presenting his proposal for the county's 2009 budget to the Board of Commissioners on Monday.

"We're a financially healthy organization," Peacock said. "Because of good planning and foresight, the county will be able to maintain its services. We're in a strong position to weather this storm." To prepare for just such a rainy day, the county has been building up sufficient reserves in its operating and capital funds since 2005.

"That's not to say the county isn't experiencing any belt tightening," Peacock added. "We will not see an increase in the total number of employees this year, despite the growth in our community. This is definitely a lean budget proposal, allowing for only conservative spending in these uncertain economic times."

Two major areas of focus for expenditures in 2009 will be: infrastructure and planning to create well-designed communities in the face of rapid growth, and promoting a variety of industries to ensure the community has a strong and stable economy.

The county will also shift some resources to boost transportation projects and road maintenance in the coming year. This includes funding to partner with the City of Grand Junction to construct a viaduct over the railroad tracks at 29 Road—completing the North-South corridor from Highway 50 to the Interstate 70 Business Loop. It also includes important safety improvements at the intersection of 25 and H Roads.

In addition, the proposed budget provides funding for a new traffic enforcement unit at the Mesa County Sheriff's Office.

"We are looking to emphasize services in areas that citizens have told us are important to them," according to Peacock. Citizens were given the opportunity to participate in the county's budgeting process through a focus group, working on results teams, and through the county's bi-annual citizen attitude survey.

In 2008, the county took a significant step toward further financial strength by paying off debts issued in 1990 and 1995 to fund construction of the Mesa County jail. Officials expect the county to be completely debt free by 2011.

This proposed budget is a recommendation from the county administrator, and serves as a starting point for further consideration. The county commissioners will now analyze the proposal, enter into discussions with other county officials, and make their own adjustments. A final budget will be adopted by mid-December.

To see the entire [proposed budget presentation](#), or watch a [webcast](#) of the County Administrator presenting the information to the county commissioners, please visit our website: [www.mesacounty.us](http://www.mesacounty.us).

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