



## News Release

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### **29 Road Bridge Open to Traffic Today**

#### **River Crossing links Orchard Mesa and points east to Grand Junction and Clifton**

Mesa County drivers now have a more direct way to cross the Colorado River from certain parts of the Grand Valley. The 29 Road bridge opened to vehicle traffic today—reducing congestion on other roads and creating smoother traffic flow for citizens all over Mesa County.

Mesa County's Department of Public Works completed the largest project in its history approximately 100 days ahead of schedule, and right on budget. The massive steel and concrete structure spans 800 feet as it rises from the north bank to the high bluffs on the south side of the river.

"This project is a great addition to the Grand Valley that the citizens of Mesa County can be proud of," said chairman of the Mesa County Board of Commissioners Tilman Bishop. "The bridge is a major component of the 29 Road corridor, and once the City of Grand Junction finishes the current phase of the Riverside Parkway later this year, the combined projects will be a true time saver for many of our residents."

According to traffic models from the Mesa County Regional Transportation Planning Office, the bridge is expected to experience traffic volumes of approximately 20,000 cars per day—once the D Road section of the Riverside Parkway into downtown Grand Junction is complete, and once 29 Road is extended to the Interstate 70 Business Loop.

"A hard-working crew composed almost exclusively of local workers is directly responsible for helping us complete this very significant structure," said Pete Baier, Public Works Director for Mesa County.

"The bridge was promised to the citizens of Mesa County back in 1982 before the economic bust," according to Mesa County Project Manager Louie Dorlac. "After 20 months of pouring our hearts and souls into the project—not to mention 6,500 cubic yards of concrete—our staff is very excited to see this promise fulfilled, as well as the resulting benefit to our friends and neighbors."

The 80-foot wide bridge includes barrier-protected pedestrian walkways on both sides, automated weather monitoring and de-icing equipment, and a four-foot wide center median. The structure was built to last—including room to add lanes in the future when traffic increases in the area.

Construction on the 29 Road bridge began in October of 2004. Work in the riverbed was put on hold from June 30 through October 1<sup>st</sup> in order to protect wildlife habitat. The \$10 million dollar project was originally slated to be complete in October of 2006, but today's opening puts completion well ahead of schedule.

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