



ASSOCIATED GOVERNMENTS  
OF NORTHWEST COLORADO

# 52

ANNUAL REPORT

IT'S A NEW FRONTIER.

*We Champion Pioneers.*

2024 Operations | [AGNC.org](https://AGNC.org)

Table of Contents

Page 2 Letter from Cody Davis, Chair of AGNC's Board of Directors  
Page 3 Executive Summary from Tiffany Dickenson, Executive Director of AGNC  
Page 5 Mission, Brand Pillars  
Page 6 Financial Overview  
Page 8 Council of Governments  
Page 10 2024 Legislative Update  
Page 12 Economic Development District  
Page 16 Regional Grant Navigator Program  
Page 18 Northwest Colorado Energy Initiative (NCEI)  
Page 21 Area Agency on Aging of Northwest Colorado (AAoA)  
Page 22 Northwest Enterprise Zone  
Page 24 Collaborations and Partners  
Page 24 In The News  
Page 25 Looking Ahead  
Page 27 AGNC Board of Directors  
Page 28 AGNC Staff and Contractors  
Page 29 Contact AGNC



## Letter from the Chair

Dear Members and Partners,

Northwest Colorado is a place of resilience, grit, and strong communities. We fight for what matters, we stand up when our way of life is threatened, and we work together to ensure our future remains strong. This past year, AGNC has embodied that spirit—leading the charge on key issues, pushing back when necessary, and securing real wins for the region.

AGNC is built on the belief that local voices should be heard, rural communities should not be overlooked, and the future of our region should be shaped by the people who live and work here. Through advocacy, collaboration, and determination, AGNC has ensured that challenges were met head-on and that our region remained strong.

But AGNC is about more than just defense—it’s about laying the groundwork for a thriving future. By bringing people together, securing resources, and ensuring that the needs of Northwest Colorado are prioritized, AGNC continues to be a powerful force for the region.

What makes AGNC so effective isn’t just the policies we fight for or the funding we help secure—it’s the people behind it. Our counties, local governments, and communities are the driving force behind everything we accomplish. When we stand together, our voice is stronger, our impact is greater, and our region is better for it.

It has been an honor to serve as AGNC’s Chair during this pivotal time. I want to thank our board, our staff, and every member who stands with us. Together, we will continue to fight, build, and lead—because Northwest Colorado deserves nothing less.



Cody Davis

Chair, Associated Governments of Northwest Colorado (AGNC)

## Executive Summary from the desk of the Executive Director

2024 was a year of hard-fought battles and major wins for Northwest Colorado. From advocating for the region's rights and needs, growing our voice, navigating the complexities of government and funding, and convening and collaborating—bringing partnerships together to champion the pioneers of our region—AGNC remained steadfast in its mission.

### **Defending Rural Colorado**

AGNC took a stand on critical issues affecting our communities:

- Prop 127: Stood with the opposition against ballot-box biology that ignored science-based wildlife management, hosting rallies in Grand Junction and Denver.
- USPS Relocation: Pushed back against the decision to move the Grand Junction distribution center, which threatens rural mail service and delays essential deliveries.
- Dolores Canyon National Monument: Stood with impacted communities to oppose the designation, ensuring local voices were part of the discussion.
- AQCC GEMM Phase 2: Fought against overreaching environmental regulations that would have placed unnecessary burdens on industry.
- West Springs Psychiatric Hospital: Advocated to keep the region's only psychiatric hospital open, ensuring continued access to critical mental health services.
- Senior Nutrition Programs: Successfully fought against proposed cuts to the Area Agency on Aging's (AAA) nutrition programs, protecting vital resources for older adults.
- CPW Commissioner Nomination: Led a coalition of 20 organizations opposing an anti-rural CPW commissioner nominee. Following Senate confirmation hearings, the nominee withdrew—a nearly unheard-of victory against a governor-appointed nominee.

### **Strengthening the Regional Economy**

AGNC drove major economic development initiatives to ensure the long-term resilience of Northwest Colorado:

- Northwest Colorado Energy Initiative (NCEI): Secured \$1.1 million in funding to advance regional energy transition efforts, including nuclear, hydrogen, and other innovative energy solutions.
- 9th Annual Economic Development Summit: This year's summit focused on businesses in our region and the resources available to support them. As part of this effort, AGNC developed and unveiled the Business Toolkit, a new resource designed to connect local businesses with funding opportunities, workforce programs, and other critical support to help them succeed.

- Regional Grant Navigator Program: Relaunched the program in March and achieved tremendous success in securing millions in funding for projects in healthcare, water infrastructure, and economic transition.

**Advocating at the Capitol**

AGNC remained a strong voice in legislative affairs, working closely with our lobbyists to track and engage on over 129 bills, taking official positions on 72 bills. When necessary, AGNC’s Executive Director provided testimony in committee to influence key policy decisions:

- HB24-1001 – Supported the Rural Jump-Start Program, ensuring continued incentives for rural business growth.
- SB24-039 – Advocated for nuclear energy to be recognized as a clean energy source, expanding future energy options.
- SB24-230 – Opposed new oil and gas production fees, which would have placed additional financial strain on rural energy producers.
- SB24-190 – Supported Enhanced Rural Enterprise Zones (EREZ) and freight rail incentives, securing critical resources for transitioning coal communities.

AGNC’s lobbying team successfully secured amendments, pushed back on harmful policies, and worked behind the scenes to protect the interests of Northwest Colorado.

**Looking Ahead**

AGNC is setting the stage for long-term impact in 2025:

- 10-year Enterprise Zone Boundary Redesignation: Ensuring distressed communities continue to receive targeted economic development incentives.
- 5-Year CEDS Update: Preparing for the comprehensive update to the region’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) to guide long-term planning and funding opportunities. initiatives and secure continued federal funding.
- Developing a strategic plan to refine AGNC’s vision and expand our reach.
- Overhauling our website to be more engaging and useful for members.
- Expanding Economic Development District (EDD) memberships to bring additional communities into AGNC’s network and funding opportunities.

**Conclusion**

This year proved once again that when we fight for our region, we win. AGNC will continue to stand up, push back, and drive forward—because Northwest Colorado deserves nothing less.

In service to Northwest Colorado,



Tiffany Dickenson, Executive Director

## AGNC's Mission and Brand Pillars

*Previous Mission:* The mission of the AGNC is to communicate with, inform, and reflect the needs of its members and promote the values, industries and economies of Northwest Colorado.

*Proposed Mission:* AGNC Advocates for the Growth and resilience of our region by Navigating resources, convening Collaborations, and promoting the values, industries, economies, and spirit that define us.

### Brand Pillars

- Advocate
- Grow
- Navigate
- Collaborate

*We Champion Pioneers in the New American West.*



COUNCIL OF  
GOVERNMENTS

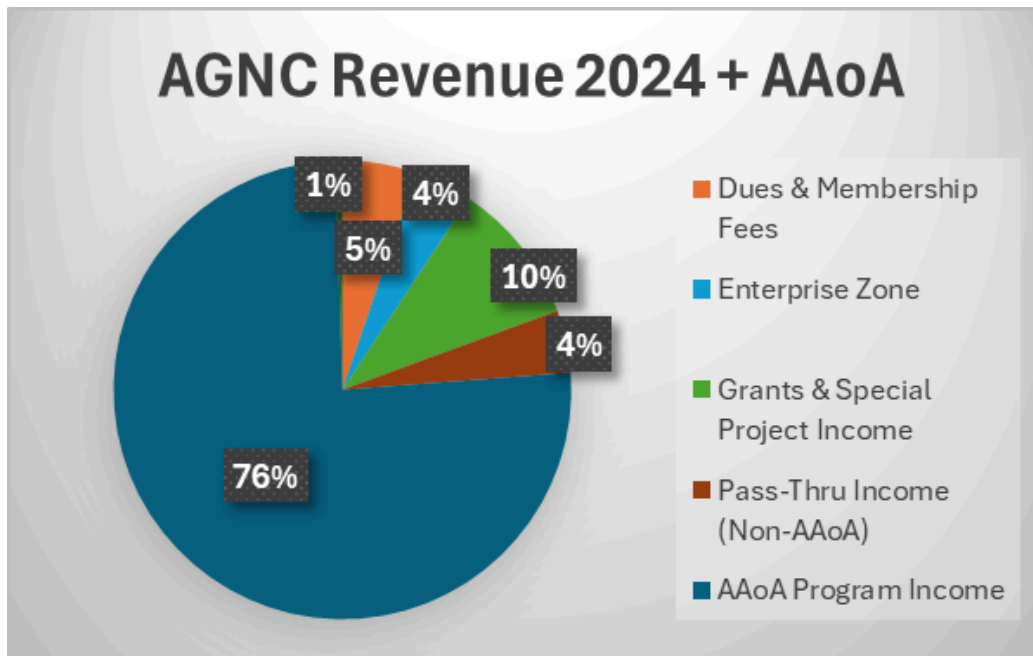


ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

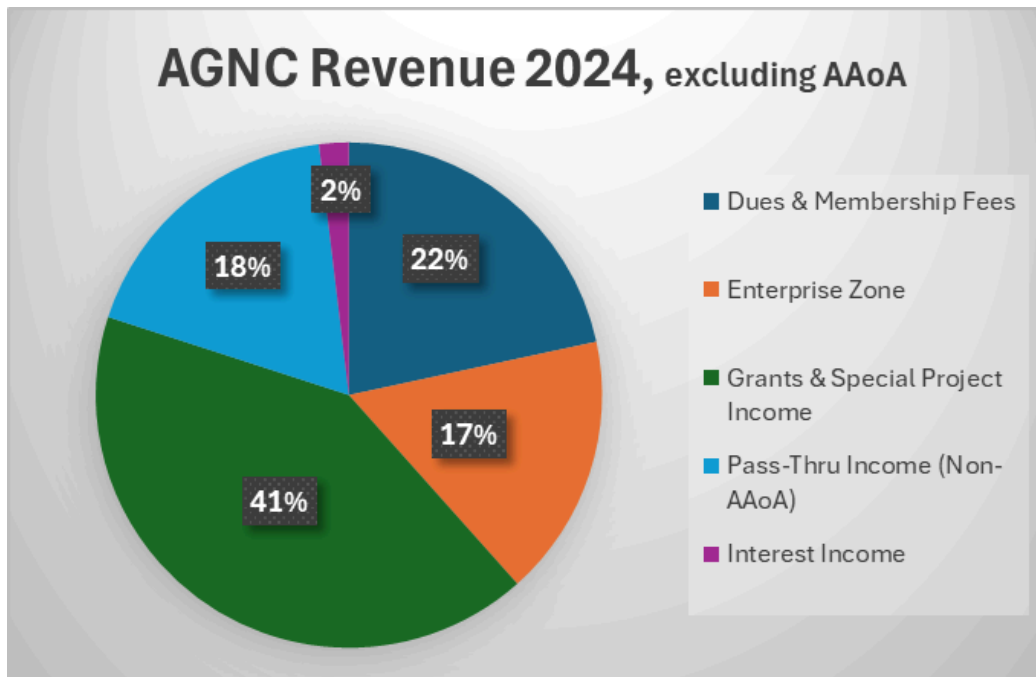


NORTHWEST  
ENTERPRISE ZONE

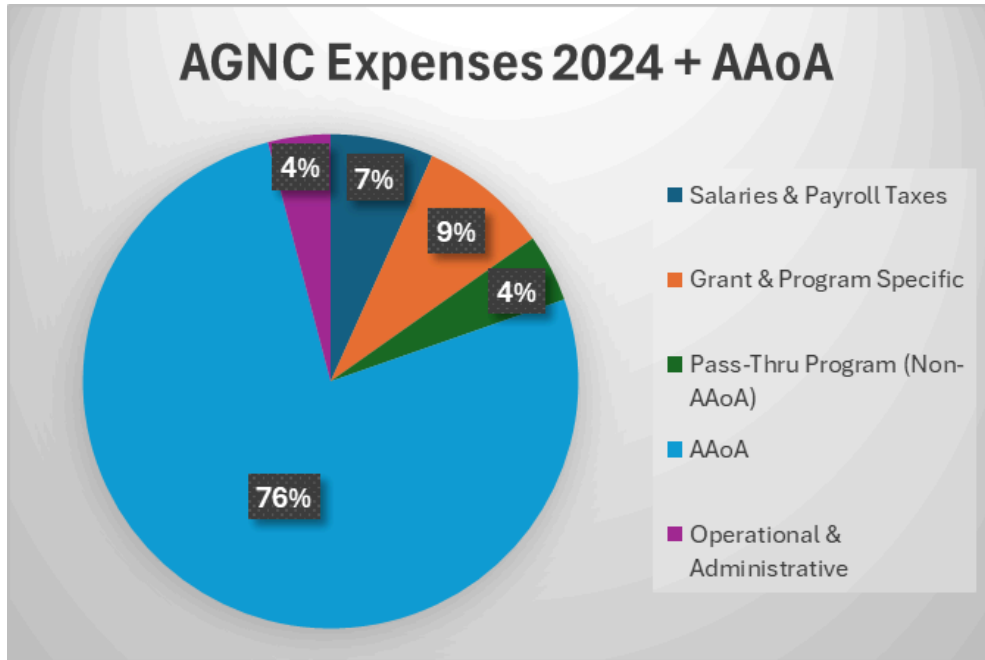
2024 Financial Overview



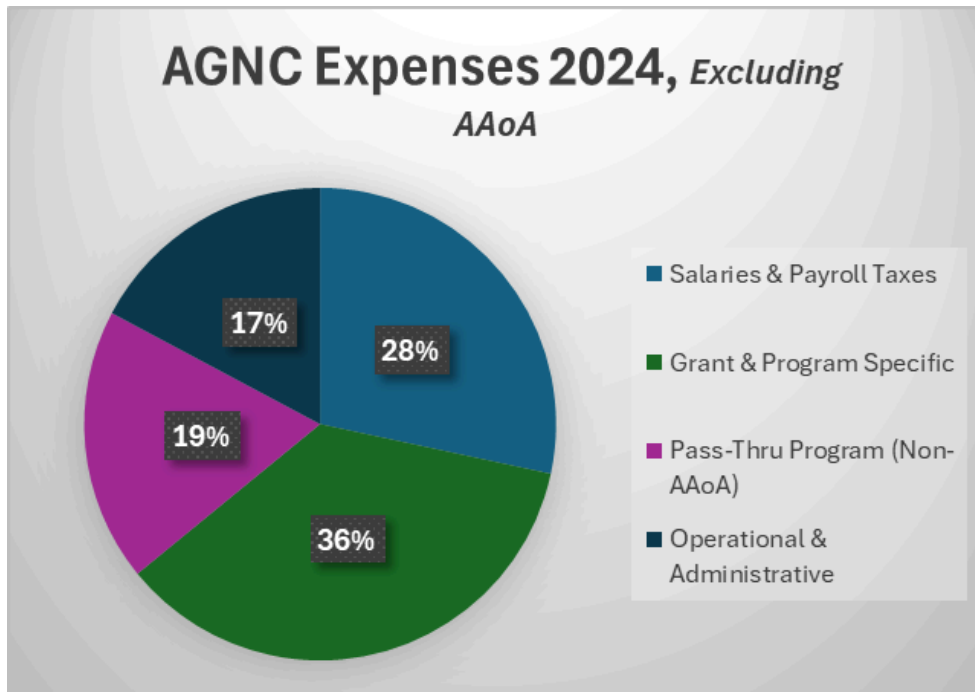
\$2,899,132.35



\$703,320.80



\$2,890,576.81



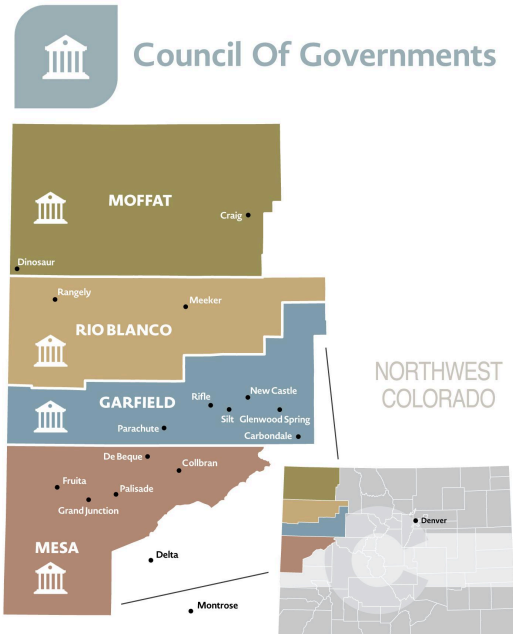
\$685,393.77

**Audit:** AGNC undergoes an annual audit conducted by Paul Miller to ensure transparency and financial accountability. To request a full audit report, please visit our contact page at [agnc.org](http://agnc.org) and submit a request.



Council of Governments

As the **Council of Governments (COG) for Region 11**, which include Garfield, Mesa, Moffat and Rio Blanco Counties, AGNC advocates for policies that support regional growth, economic resilience, and community development. We work with local, state, and federal leaders to influence legislation, secure funding, and address key issues affecting Northwest Colorado. Through collaboration and strategic planning, AGNC ensures that the region’s needs are represented and prioritized in government decision-making.



Core counties: Garfield, Mesa, Moffat, and Rio Blanco. Associate counties: Delta, Grand, Montrose.

**Key Achievements**

In 2024, the Associated Governments of Northwest Colorado (AGNC) achieved significant milestones in its work for Region

11, demonstrating its ongoing commitment to advocacy, regional development, and community well-being.

Highlights included testimony delivered by Executive Director, Tiffany Dickenson, at the State of Colorado Capital on critical legislative matters impacting Northwest Colorado, such as air quality regulations. AGNC organized rallies against ballot box biology, and spoke out on behalf of members regarding the Dolores Canyon designation and mail delivery service in Western Colorado.

VOTE NO ON PROP 127

YOUR VOTE IS YOUR VOICE!

2 OPPORTUNITIES TO MEET - GRAND JUNCTION AND DENVER

Who:

Held in collaboration with local government agencies, sportsmen's groups, and outfitter organizations, working together to support science - public welcome.

What:

Rally to Show Opposition to Prop 127

Stop the Prohibition of Hunting Mountain Lion, Bobcat and Lynx

Where & When:

October 10, 2024 - Noon to 2pm, Old Mesa County Courthouse, 544 Rood Ave, Grand Junction, CO 81501

October 18, 2024 - 10 am to Noon, Colorado State Capitol - West Stairs, 200 E Colfax Ave, Denver, CO 80203

Support Conservation \* Trust CPW's Science \* Support Herd & Pack Health  
Responsible Management is Safe Management

AGNC issued resolutions and letters of opposition under our Council of Governments to advocate for policies aligned with local economic and environmental priorities, including a resolution supporting West Springs Hospital to address regional mental health needs, pause on the wolf release program, and Dolores Canyon.

**RESOLUTION**  
**AGNC 24-1**

A RESOLUTION OF THE ASSOCIATED GOVERNMENTS OF NORTHWEST COLORADO  
(AGNC) TO OBJECT TO THE DESIGNATION OF THE DOLORES CANYON AS A  
NATIONAL MONUMENT



**RESOLUTION**  
**AGNC 24-2**

A RESOLUTION OF ASSOCIATED GOVERNMENTS OF NORTHWEST COLORADO  
REQUESTING A PAUSE ON THE RELEASE OF WOLVES IN COLORADO

WHEREAS, the Associated Governments of Northwest Colorado (AGNC) represents the counties of Mesa, Moffat, Rio Blanco, and Garfield as the council of governments for Colorado Planning and Management Region 11, and also serves as the economic development district for the four core counties and Routt County; and

WHEREAS, AGNC has associate members in Delta, Montrose, and Grand Counties, all of which have significant agricultural and ranching interests that are potentially affected by the reintroduction of wolves; and

WHEREAS, the reintroduction of wolves in Colorado, as mandated by Proposition 114, has raised substantial concerns among local communities regarding the potential impacts on livestock, wildlife, and the broader ecosystem; and

WHEREAS, AGNC recognizes the importance of a comprehensive and well-implemented wolf management plan that adequately addresses the concerns of rural and agricultural communities; and

WHEREAS, the current implementation of the wolf reintroduction program has been met with challenges, including insufficient clarity on the definition of chronic depredation, and the need for more robust support measures for livestock owners affected by wolf predation; and

WHEREAS, there are concerns that communities on the east side of the Continental Divide are not adequately prepared for the presence of wolves in their counties; and

WHEREAS, non-lethal and mitigation tactics have proven ineffective in preventing wolf depredation, the wolves are habituated, and there is a need for immediate intervention to protect the livelihoods of local producers; and

WHEREAS, the failure to define "chronic depredation" within state regulations has allowed for a flexibility that benefits the wolves and endangers livestock, while disregarding the voices of those most affected; and

WHEREAS, depredation by wolves has resulted in significant livestock losses, causing financial and emotional stress to local ranchers, as evidenced by continued incidents of wolf attacks on cattle, sheep, and dogs in Grand, Jackson, and Routt Counties; and

WHEREAS, it has been observed that wolves with a history of livestock depredation were released, and these wolves continue to kill livestock, which goes against the assurances given during the development of the Colorado Wolf Restoration and Management Plan;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by Associated Governments of Northwest Colorado as follows:

1. **Request for Pause on Wolf Releases:** AGNC requests a pause on the release of wolves in Colorado until a more effective and comprehensive management plan can be implemented.
2. **Call for Improved Management Plan:** AGNC insists that the State of Colorado refine the current wolf management plan to address the following key areas:
  - Clearly define chronic depredation and establish concrete criteria for its determination.
  - Develop and implement more effective measures to mitigate the impact of wolf predation on livestock, including fair and timely compensation for affected livestock owners.
  - Ensure that the concerns of rural and agricultural communities are adequately addressed in the planning and implementation phases.
3. **Engagement with Stakeholders:** AGNC calls for enhanced engagement and collaboration with local stakeholders, including ranchers, farmers, wildlife experts, and local governments, to ensure that the wolf management plan is inclusive and considers the diverse perspectives and needs of all affected parties.
4. **Monitoring and Review:** AGNC requests that the State of Colorado establish a robust monitoring and review process to regularly assess the impact of wolf reintroduction on local communities and ecosystems, and to make necessary adjustments to the management plan based on empirical evidence and stakeholder feedback.
5. **Public Awareness and Education:** AGNC advocates for increased public awareness and education initiatives to inform Colorado residents, particularly those in the Front Range, about the implications and challenges of wolf reintroduction in rural areas.
6. **Access to Wolf Location Data:** AGNC urges Colorado Parks and Wildlife to provide timely and accurate wolf location data to ranchers and local officials to enable effective management and protection of livestock.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Governor of Colorado, the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission, and the members of the Colorado General Assembly representing the AGNC region.

DATED this 26<sup>th</sup> day of June 2024.

ATTEST:

BOARD OF ASSOCIATED GOVERNMENTS OF  
NORTHWEST COLORADO, STATE OF COLORADO

By:   
Cody Davis, AGNC Chairman

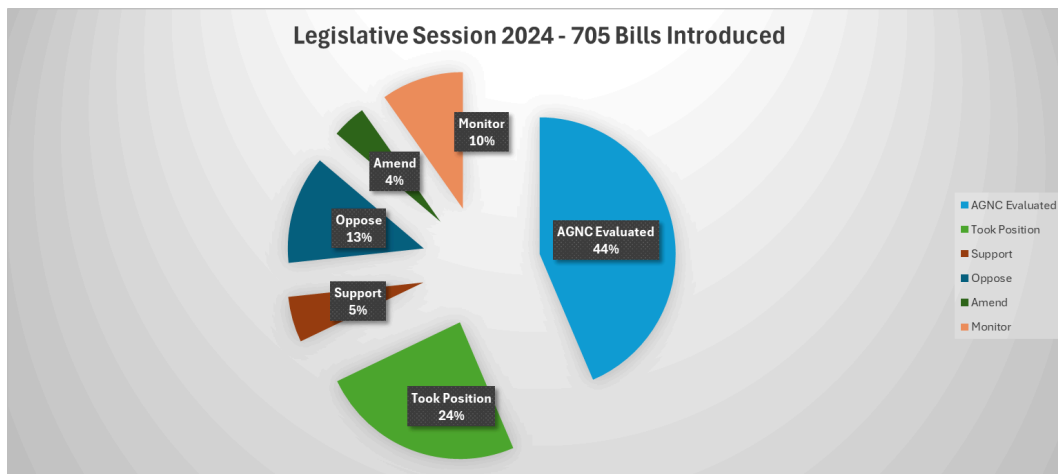
PO BOX 593 GRAND JUNCTION, CO. 81502 PHONE 970-665-1095 WWW.AGNC.ORG

## Legislative Report

**Thanks to the services of Orf & Orf, P.C.**, the needs of Northwest Colorado are represented at the State Capitol in Denver. The General Assembly adjourned on May 8, with the Governor finalizing bill signings on June 7. Notably, several key bills, including the Coal Communities Rail Bill (SB 24-190), the Wolverine Reintroduction Bill (SB 24-171), and multiple workforce opportunity bills, were signed on the Western Slope as part of the Governor's statewide tour.



In total, **705 bills were introduced**, of which 519 were signed into law, 180 failed to pass, and 6 were vetoed. AGNC closely monitored the legislative process, evaluating 129 bills during Thursday morning policy calls and taking official positions on 72. When possible, AGNC provided testimony in committee on bills they supported, recommended for amendment, or opposed.



## Legislative Looking Ahead in 2025

One-third of the way into the 120- day legislative session, AGNC is currently reviewing 70 bills to determine their impact on the AGNC region and its members. The bills include a range of Issues from building codes to wildlife management, and adjustments to existing economic development programs. With the state's extreme budget shortfall in General Fund spending authority, trends are emerging that attempt to maneuver through the fiscal process – all impacting AGNC members.

- Programs that are created but would not become effective for another two years – outside the current budget cycle and fiscal note predictions.
- Programs that are created with implementation handed over to counties without accompanying funding, resulting in unfunded mandates on local governments.

- Programs that are created and implemented by Enterprises – state operated businesses funded by fees and that are not subject to TABOR spending limits.

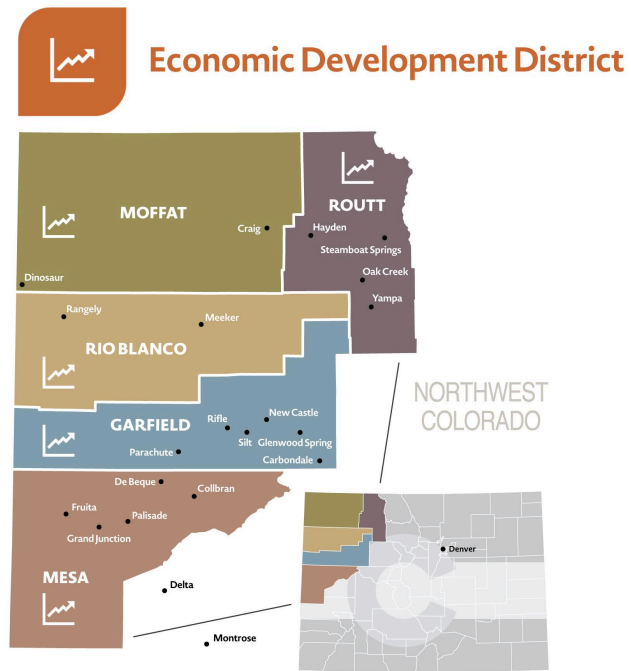
Within AGNC’s legislative efforts, built upon last year’s success in drawing additional attention and resources to the region, AGNC is taking a proactive stance to improve the *Just Transition* administration and to open pathways for additional types of energy development in the region. AGNC continues to move forward with policies that diversify the economy by harnessing the region’s resources, new and existing infrastructure, and skilled workforce. **AGNC supports measures driven to build and sustain our rural way of life.**



## Economic Development District

**Region 11’s Economic Development District (EDD)**, a prestigious status obtained in 2019 by the Economic Development Administration (EDA), provides the five counties served by AGNC with critical access to federal funds through the Economic Development Administration (EDA).

AGNC supports economic growth, resilience, and sustainability across Northwest Colorado. Specific counties served include Garfield, Mesa, Moffat, Rio Blanco and Routt Counties. We collaborate with local governments, businesses, and stakeholders to develop and implement strategies that drive regional prosperity, secure funding opportunities, and strengthen infrastructure. Our role includes facilitating the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and advancing projects that enhance workforce development, business expansion, and community vitality.



Core counties: Garfield, Mesa, Moffat, Rio Blanco, and Routt.

### Key Achievements:

- **Support for Rural Jump-Start** is proving key to attracting new businesses and creating jobs.
- The **CEDS Implementation Committee** meets quarterly to drive regional economic development, collaborating on initiatives to execute the federally recognized Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), which is recognized by the Economic Development Administration (EDA) under the Department of Commerce.
  - CEDS Priorities Include
    - Robust Economy
    - Healthy Communities
    - Ready & Willing Workforce
    - Extraordinary Infrastructure

- **Supported the DOLA Roadshow** in Moffat and Rio Blanco Counties with OEDIT leadership, showcasing regional strengths and fostering connections with key state stakeholders.
- **Supported the CNCC Aviation Summit** which underscores the region’s commitment to aviation education, workforce development, and sector innovation.
- **Supporting the Shoshone Water Rights**, highlighted by the historic deal from the Colorado River District, ensures long-term water access and protects local stakeholder rights in the Colorado River Basin.



ensures long-term water access and protects local stakeholder rights in the Colorado River Basin.

- **Backing the JOLT Annual Energy Summit** to drive innovation in the energy sector, bringing together leaders to explore sustainable solutions and boost economic growth.

- **Mini-Grant Program:** AGNC’s mini-grant program is designed to help offset membership dues. This funding is part of AGNC’s commitment to offsetting costs wherever possible for all members. \$48,678 distributed in

2024 to 11 projects in Region 11, including the Town of New Castle (shown in above photos).

- **Wrote 30+ Letters of Support**



July 30, 2024

Colorado Department of Energy  
Eric Lowe  
Eric.lowe@state.co.us

RE: Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program Awards

Dear Mr. Lowe,

The Associated Governments of Northwest Colorado, AGNC, is pleased to provide a letter of support submitted by the Colorado River Valley Economic Development Partnership (CRVEDP). CRVEDP is applying for \$80,000 per year over a 3-year period for capacity building and technical support funding for the Western Garfield County region, totaling \$240,000.

October 14, 2024

The Honorable Camille Touton  
Commissioner  
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240

RE: Letter of Support: Shoshone Water Rights Preservation

Dear Commissioner Touton:

The Associated Governments of Northwest Colorado, AGNC, is pleased to provide a letter of support for the Colorado River Water Conservation District’s (Colorado River District’s) application for funding through the Upper Basin Environmental Drought Mitigation (B2E) program to acquire and permanently protect the historic Shoshone water rights in Western Colorado.

As a council of governments and designated Economic Development District for Northwest Colorado’s Region 11, AGNC has outlined key economic development priorities to support as part of its federally approved [Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy \(CEDS\)](#), which is recognized by the Economic Development Administration (EDA) under the Department of Commerce. Specifically, the Shoshone Water Rights funding request addresses AGNC’s CEDS:

**Strategy B) GOAL B: VIBRANT & HEALTHY COMMUNITIES.**

6B. Healthy Community/Healthy Lifestyle: Support clean air and water through infrastructure modernization efforts, monitoring/enforcement, and strengthened partnership with federal and state regulatory agencies.

**Strategy D) GOAL D: EXTRAORDINARY INFRASTRUCTURE**

4D. Regional Cooperation: The preservation of the Shoshone water rights exemplifies AGNC’s commitment to regional cooperation, as outlined in Strategy 4D of the CEDS. This initiative brings together local governments, water conservation districts, environmental groups, and stakeholders across the Western Slope in a unified effort to safeguard one of the most critical natural resources—water.



# Overview of the 9th Annual AGNC Economic Development Summit

*Pathways to Prosperity: Supporting Small and Emerging Businesses*

Date: Wednesday, August 14, 2024

Location: Grand River Hospital Conference Center, Rifle, CO

The **9th Annual AGNC Economic Development Summit brought together over 80 business leaders, economic experts, and community stakeholders** to discuss key strategies for driving growth and resilience across Northwest Colorado. The event provided valuable insights, practical tools, and opportunities for collaboration to support the region’s evolving economy.

## Key Sessions & Takeaways

- **Welcome: Embarking on Our Journey to Success**  
Cody Davis (AGNC Chairman) and Alicia Gresley (CRVEDP Director) opened the summit, emphasizing regional collaboration and innovative economic strategies.
- **Economic Update: Mapping the Economic Terrain of Northwest Colorado**

Dr. Nathan Perry (Colorado Mesa University) provided an in-depth analysis of regional economic trends, challenges, and opportunities.



- **Navigating State Programs for Business Success**  
Che Sheehan (OEDIT) (photo) outlined state programs and resources supporting business growth, including grants and development incentives.

- **Capital Access: Paving the Way for Business Growth**  
Tanya Perea Doose (First Southwest Community Fund) & Helen Roe (Grand Junction Business Loan Fund) discussed loan programs and financing strategies for local businesses.

**PATHWAYS TO PROSPERITY:**  
Supporting Small and Emerging Businesses

Please Join Us For AGNC's  
**9th Annual Economic Development Summit**

**Guest Speakers Include:**

- Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT)
- Colorado Housing and Finance Authority (CHFA)
- Grand Junction Business Incubator Center (BIC)
- Small Business Development Center (SBDC)
- Revolving Loan Fund
- Economic Update by Dr. Nathan Perry, CMU

\$25\* early bird registration - private business  
\$50\* early bird registration - all others  
\*RSVP by July 31, 2024 for Early Bird Pricing

**AUGUST 14, 2024**  
**9AM - 3PM**  
**RIFLE, CO**

[www.agnc.org/economic-development-district](http://www.agnc.org/economic-development-district)    admin@agnc.org    970-665-1095

- Guiding Comprehensive Growth: CHFA's Financial Tools  
*Margie Joy & Terrance Grady (CHFA)* introduced financial tools for business expansion, focusing on loans for housing, infrastructure, and economic growth.
- Finding Your Business Path: SBDC's Expert Consulting  
*Erin McCuskey (Northwest SBDC)* highlighted SBDC's free consulting services for entrepreneurs in business planning, marketing, and finance.
- Incubating Success: How Business Incubators Empower Entrepreneurs  
*Dalida Sassoon Bolig (Grand Junction Business Incubator Center)* discussed the role of incubators in supporting startups through mentorship, training, and resources.

**Conclusion: Reflecting on Our Journey**

AGNC Executive Director *Tiffany Dickenson* closed the summit by reinforcing the importance of partnerships, innovation, and community-driven growth. Attendees were encouraged to apply the tools and insights gained during the event to strengthen local economies and support a prosperous future for Northwest Colorado.

The event served as a powerful reminder of the region's potential when businesses, government, and community organizations work together toward a shared vision of sustainable growth and resilience.

**Key Achievement:**

The launch of AGNC's Online Business Toolkit at the 9th Annual Economic Development Summit was a major success, marking a key step in empowering local businesses and entrepreneurs. The toolkit, praised for its user-friendly design, provides easy access to essential resources, funding opportunities, and expert guidance. Attendees recognized its immediate value in streamlining business support, underscoring the region's need for practical, accessible tools to foster sustainable economic growth. The summit served as the ideal platform to showcase this innovative resource, reinforcing AGNC's role as a proactive partner in regional economic development.





## AGNC Regional Grant Navigator Program: 2024 Achievements & Impact

**The Regional Grant Navigator (RGN) Program** is a statewide initiative helping Colorado communities secure funding for economic development, infrastructure, and community resilience. As part of this effort, AGNC’s Co-Regional Grant Navigators support Northwest Colorado (Region 11) by:



Identifying funding opportunities aligned with regional priorities



Assisting with grant writing to improve success rates



Providing technical support throughout the grant lifecycle



Facilitating regional collaboration to maximize funding impact

### 2024 Key Achievements



The RGN program supported over \$3.7 million in federal, state, and local funding



12 successful grant applications.



The team engaged with over 400 stakeholders, driving funding efforts for infrastructure, energy transition, water management, and economic development.

**AGNC’s RGN Program notable successes include:**

- \$240,000 Colorado Energy Grant (IIJA) for CRVEDP, supporting regional economic diversification and energy transition.
- \$1 million EIAF grant for South Routt Medical Center, enhancing rural healthcare infrastructure.
- Funding for Wolf Creek Reservoir via OJT, supporting regional water infrastructure.
- \$100,000 DOE Energywerx Grant to advance Northwest Colorado Energy Initiative (NCEI) and clean energy projects.

**Strengthening Collaboration & Overcoming Challenges**

AGNC built trust with state, regional, and local partners, securing rapid approvals and fostering public-private partnerships. Key collaborations with DOLA, OJT, and the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) strengthened technical support and funding access.



At the local level, AGNC’s consistent presence and results-driven approach earned widespread recognition. The Town of Meeker’s Administrator praised the program’s impact, stating, *“The AGNC team’s diligence in finding, presenting, and securing funding opportunities has provided our local governments with resources we wouldn’t otherwise have access to.”*

Challenges included capacity constraints and duplication in grant tracking, prompting process improvements to enhance efficiency and communication. These efforts positioned AGNC to better serve communities of all sizes.

**Looking Ahead to 2025**

Building on 2024’s success, AGNC aims to:

- Expand outreach to underserved communities
- Secure \$5 million in additional funding
- Advance coal transition, water management, and energy resilience projects

With a proven track record and strong partnerships, AGNC’s RGN program remains a critical driver of growth and resilience for Northwest Colorado.

## Northwest Colorado Energy Initiative (NCEI)

### 2024 Progress & Outlook

The Northwest Colorado Energy Initiative (NCEI) achieved several key milestones in 2024 as it supported region’s transition from a coal-dependent economy to a diversified energy future. NCEI’s efforts have focused on engaging communities, leveraging technical expertise, and fostering regional collaboration.

### Key Achievements

In 2024, NCEI advanced three major initiatives: surveys, technical modeling, and work sessions to explore federal partnership opportunities. Each initiative has brought us closer to realizing our overarching goal of a regional energy hub that integrates multiple energy sources, supports local economic resilience, and addresses the unique challenges of the energy transition. These efforts reinforce that community-driven, fact-based conversations have been the guiding pillar of anything done with NCEI.



A breakdown of the three grants is as follows:

- Energywerx Capacity Building Grant:** Two community surveys engaged over 650 residents across five counties, revealing 85.67% support for a regional energy hub and 88.58% favorability toward nuclear energy in a national energy mix. The findings gained national recognition and informed policy discussions.
- Communities Local Energy Action Plan (Communities-LEAP):** In partnership with the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), NCEI initiated workforce and tax impact modeling to support HB23-1247, defining the benefits of a regional energy hub.
- Energy Community Alliance (ECA):** NCEI received funding to facilitate discussions on potential projects like spent fuel storage. These preliminary conversations are crucial for us to understand community concerns, gauge interest, and explore economic and workforce opportunities that could benefit our region.

**NCEI Community Engagement & Challenges**

NCEI prioritized community engagement through public forums, screenings of *Nuclear Now*, and partnerships with economic development groups, utilities, and academic institutions. However, funding constraints have limited outreach expansion and in-person engagement. Misconceptions about emerging energy technologies, particularly nuclear power, remain a challenge.

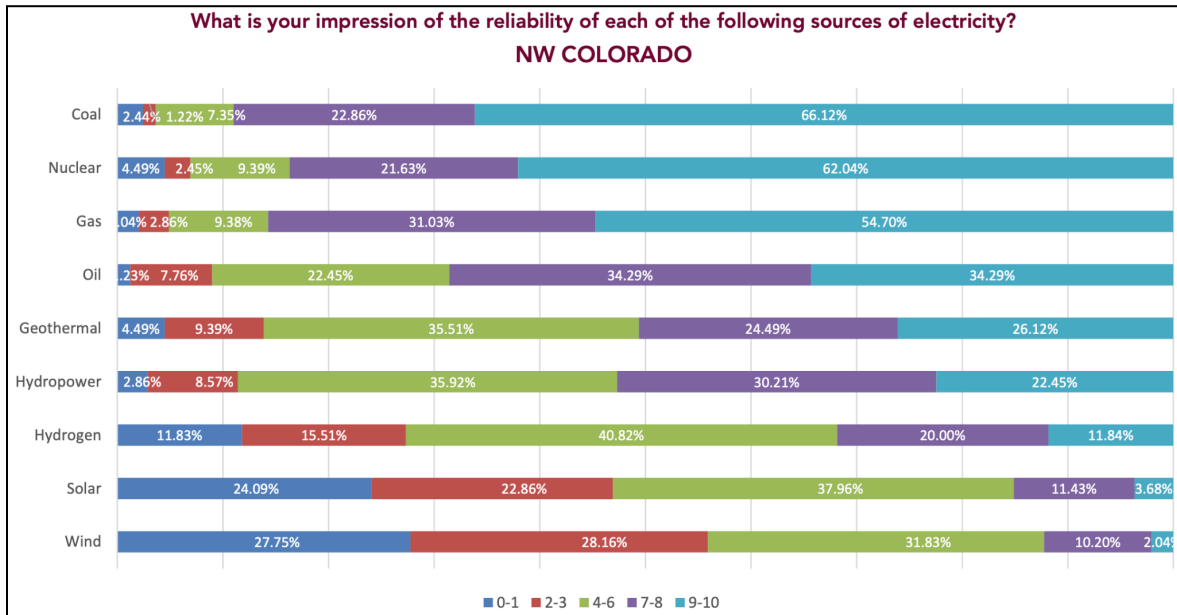
**And do you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the use of nuclear energy as one of the ways to provide electricity in Northwest Colorado? Select one answer.**

Answer Choice	NW Colorado		Somewhere Else	
	Before	After	Before	After
Strongly favor	58.78%	66.12%	52.78%	63.89%
Somewhat favor	25.71%	17.96%	31.11%	24.44%
Somewhat oppose	6.53%	6.94%	13.33%	9.44%
Strongly oppose	8.98%	8.98%	3.33%	2.22%

**Looking ahead to 2025, NCEI aims to:**

- Secure a fourth grant to enhance regional collaboration and infrastructure development.
- Continue technical modeling under Communities-LEAP to refine economic and workforce strategies.
- Strengthen stakeholder engagement and expand outreach efforts, ensuring inclusive participation in shaping Northwest Colorado’s energy future.

With ongoing collaboration among AGNC, community partners, and federal agencies, NCEI remains committed to a resilient, innovative, and sustainable energy transition for the region.



**NCEI’s advisory board** includes: Tim Foster (former Colorado State House Majority Leader and CMU President Emeritus), Bob Rankin (former Colorado State Senator), Cody Davis (Mesa County Commissioner), Mike Samson (Garfield County Commissioner), Doug Overton (Rio Blanco County Commissioner), Ray Beck (former Moffat County Commissioner), and Tiffany Dickenson (AGNC Executive Director). Matt Solomon (former Town of Eagle Council Member) serves as the Project Manager, with Wade Haerle as the Field Coordinator.

Area Agency on Aging of Northwest Colorado

The Area Agency on Aging (AAoA) of Northwest Colorado, serving Mesa County, is dedicated to supporting older adults and their caregivers in maintaining independence and



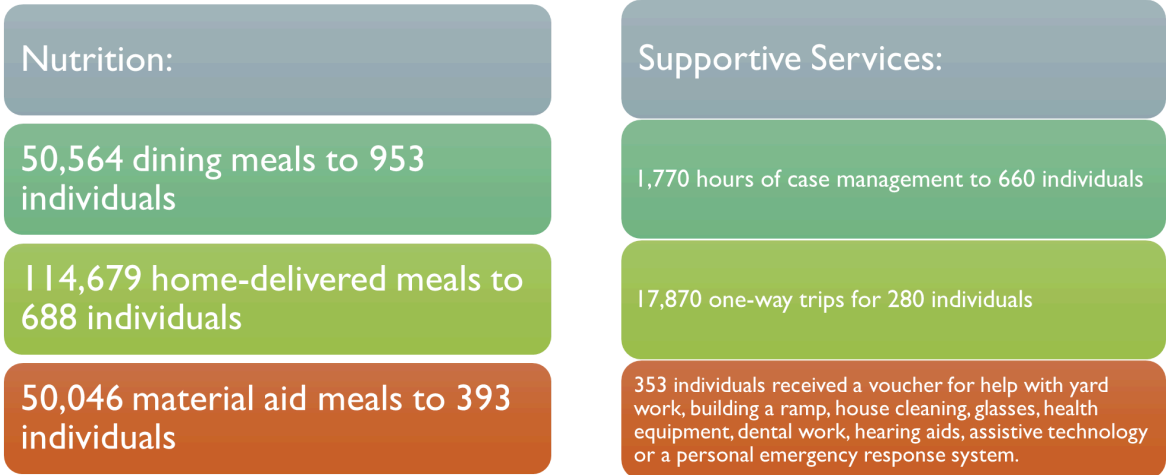
# AREA AGENCY ON AGING OF NORTHWEST COLORADO

quality of life. Established under the Older Americans Act, the AAA offers services such as Meals-on-Wheels, homemaker assistance, and options counseling to help seniors remain in

their homes. They also provide access to legal services, health promotion programs, and transportation assistance. By coordinating with public and private organizations, the AAA ensures that older individuals can choose the services and living arrangements that best suit their needs. For more information or assistance, contact the AAA at 970-248-2717 or visit their website.



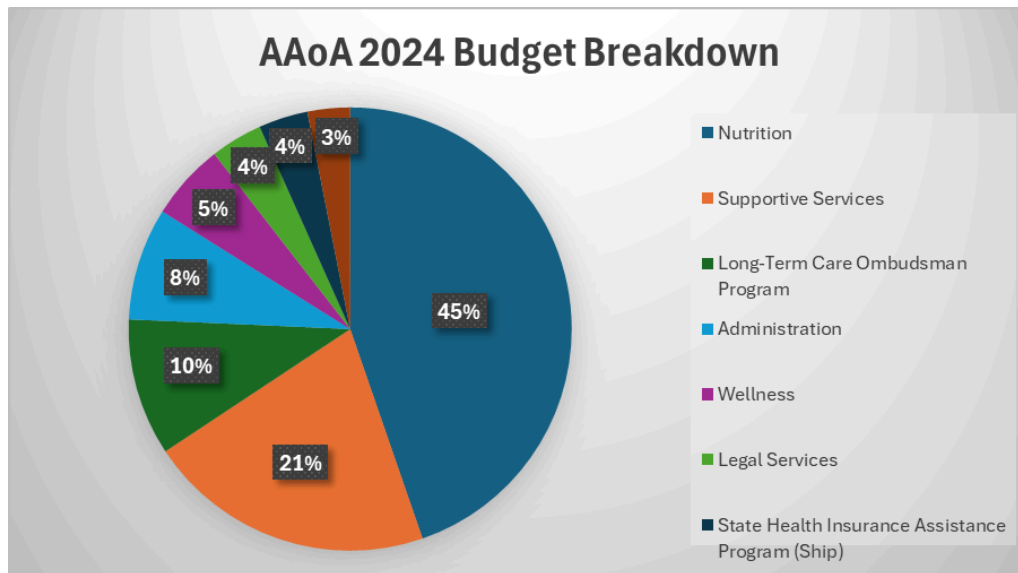
The AAA, through contracted providers, **served 5,317 unduplicated individuals** in 2024!



### Long-Term Care Ombudsman Data 2024:

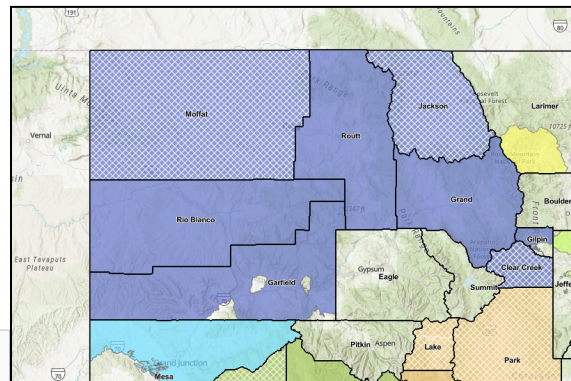
- 262 Consults with Facilities
- 377 Consults with Residents, Family or Community Members
- Attended 184 Resident Council Meetings
- Completed 500 visits to assisted livings and/or skilled nursing facilities
- Received 198 cases with 305 complaints

AAoA 2024 Financial Breakdown



Northwest Enterprise Zone

Colorado's Enterprise Zone (EZ) Program is designed to encourage business development and economic growth in



New Employees 4,766

ITC Capital Total \$208,323,076

ITC Non-Renewable Energy Tax Credit \$3,397,534

Total EZ Credits \$3,589,367

designated economically distressed areas by offering tax incentives to businesses and investors. Businesses located within an Enterprise Zone, such as those in Northwest Colorado, may qualify for state income tax credits for activities like job creation, capital investment, and workforce training.

**AGNC serves as one of the 19 local administrators** overseeing the Northwest region. The Enterprise Zone (EZ) Program,

established by the Colorado legislature, aims to promote development in economically

challenged areas of the state. These designated enterprise zones, numbering 16 in total, are characterized by high unemployment rates, low per capita income, or slow population growth. The program helps support local businesses, attract new investment, and stimulate economic activity by reducing the cost of doing business in rural and underdeveloped areas. By leveraging these incentives, companies can reinvest in their operations, expand their workforce, and contribute to the region’s long-term economic sustainability.

**The Northwest Enterprise Zone consists of an 8 county region:** Garfield, Rio Blanco, Routt, Grand and Gilpin designated as *regular* EZs, with Moffat Jackson and Clear Creek designated as *enhanced* EZs as noted on the map on page 22.

**Colorado’s Enterprise Zone (EZ) Contribution Project Program** encourages private-sector investment in community and economic development initiatives by offering state income tax credits to donors. Approved projects within designated Enterprise Zones focus on job creation, business expansion, workforce development, infrastructure improvements, and community revitalization.

AGNC is managing **40 active Contribution Projects!**

809 Individual EZ Contributions in 2024

Total 2024 Contribution Amount \$3,662,061

Administered by AGNC for Region 11, this program allows businesses and individuals to receive a 25% state tax credit on cash donations and 12.5% on in-kind contributions made to eligible projects. By participating, donors not only reduce their tax liability but also directly contribute to strengthening Northwest Colorado’s economy.





AGNC is proud to collaborate and support the following organizations, *\*list is not exhaustive.*



In The News

**From the Rockies to the Beltway: Colorado’s Influence in Washington**

By Tiffany Dickenson, Executive Director of Associated Governments of Northwest Colorado

Colorado has long punched above its weight in shaping national policy, and this administration is no different. With the appointment of Chris Wright as Secretary of Energy, our state once again finds itself in a key position of influence in Washington, D.C.

Our state has a proud history of representation at the highest levels of government. Over the years, several Coloradans have taken the lead on national issues, leaving a legacy of strong, values-driven leadership:



For a list of all media stories, visit us at [In the News | Associated Governments of Northwest Colorado](#)

## Looking Ahead - Key Initiatives & Strategic Developments

### Revamping AGNC's Marketing & Branding

AGNC is collaborating with **Sync Strategic** to **strengthen our communications and marketing work**. This initiative includes a new website funded by an OEDIT grant. A comprehensive refresh of our mission, vision, and branding will keep our voice crisp, current, and relevant. These updates will improve member services, strengthen



engagement, boost visibility, align with our long-term goals, and reinforce AGNC's leadership in regional economic development.

### Strategic Planning for the Future

In collaboration with **Prosono**, AGNC is **undertaking a comprehensive strategic planning process** to refine our organizational priorities and maximize our impact. This effort includes conducting market landscape research and analysis to assess economic trends, emerging opportunities, and competitive positioning. Through an exploration of different pathways for organizational growth, we aim to align AGNC's resources with the region's evolving economic landscape. This initiative will ensure that we continue to drive sustainable growth and create meaningful opportunities for our communities. The strategic planning process is scheduled to be completed by the end of the second quarter of 2025.



### Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CES)

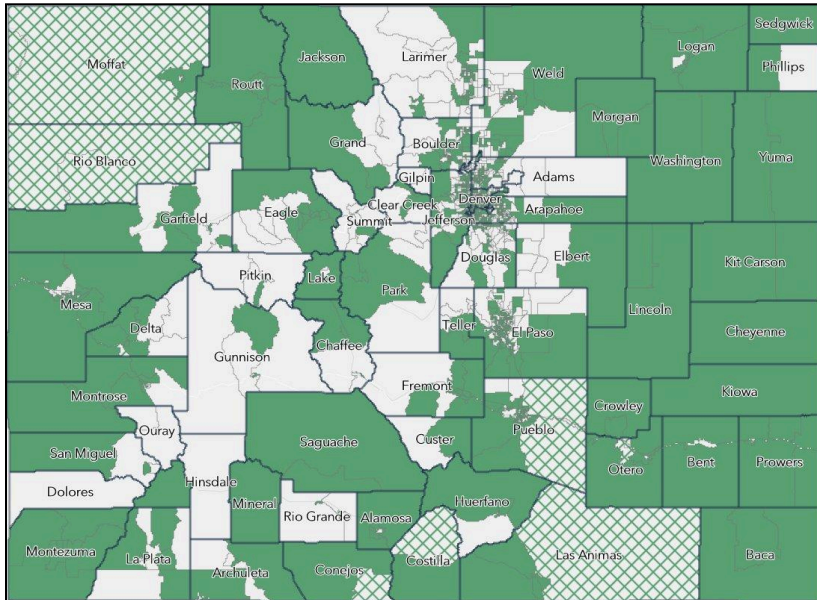
AGNC is required to rewrite the **Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) in 2026** to comply with the Economic Development Administration (EDA) requirements for maintaining its designation as an Economic Development District (EDD) for Region 11. This update will ensure that the strategy aligns with evolving regional priorities, economic conditions, and federal guidelines, enabling AGNC to continue supporting economic

resilience, infrastructure development, and workforce growth across the region. The revised CEDS will incorporate stakeholder input, data-driven analysis, and actionable strategies to strengthen the economic future of Northwest Colorado.

**2026 EZ Boundary Redesignation: House Bill 14-1163**

The 2026 redesignation updates Enterprise Zone (EZ) boundaries, focusing on distressed communities. Eligibility is based on three criteria and is proposed below in the green map.

- Unemployment Rate: 25% above the state average.
- Per Capita Income: Below 75% of the state average.
- Population Growth Rate: Less than 25% of the state average.



**Regional Breakdown:**

- Moffat: 1 tract qualifies.
- Rio Blanco: Both tracts qualify.
- Garfield: 7 tracts qualify based on unemployment and population growth.

**Enhanced Rural Enterprise Zone (EREZ) Criteria:**

Counties must meet at least two of the following:

- Unemployment rate 50% higher than the state average.
- Population growth rate less than 25% of the state average.
- Per capita income below 75% of the state average.
- Nonresidential assessed value in the lower half of counties.
- Population of 5,000 or fewer.

**SB24-190 designates rural Tier One Coal Transition Counties as Enhanced Rural Enterprise Zones (EREZ) for 10 years.** This redesignation targets economic resources to the most distressed areas and will greatly impact Moffat, Rio Blanco, and Routt counties. Newly expanded tax credits will encourage business investment, while freight and rail incentives aim to maintain critical transportation infrastructure, supporting long-term economic stability in these transitioning communities.

## 2024 Board of Directors

### Board Members

- Cody Davis, Chair, Mesa County
- Chris Nichols, Vice-Chair, City of Craig
- Mike Samson, Treasurer, Garfield County
- Tony Bohrer, Moffat County
- Grady Hazelton, Town of New Castle
- Doug Overton, Rio Blanco County
- Lisa Piering, Town of Rangely
- Stan Harbaugh, Town of Palisade
- John Bristol, Routt County Economic Development Partnership\*  
\*EDD Board Only

### Members and Associate Members

- Sue Hansen, Montrose County
- Travis Day, Town of Meeker
- Michael Clancy, City of Rifle
- James Williams, City of Fruita
- Lori Malsbury, Town of Silt
- Merrit Linke, Grand County
- Travis Elliot, Town of Parachute
- Care McInnis, Town of De Beque
- Town of Collbran
- David Torgler, Town of Oak Creek
- William Dearing, Battlement Mesa Service Association
- Wendell Koontz, Delta County
- Sheila Symons, Town of Yampa
- Mathew Mendisco, Town of Hayden
- Richard Blakely, Town of Dinosaur



Staff & Contractors



Tiffany Dickenson, Executive Director

Toni Barrett, Administrative Assistant

Mistalynn Meyeraan, Economic Development Coordinator + Co/Regional Grant Navigator

Matt Solomon, NCEI Program Manager + Co/Regional Grant Navigator

Heather Jones, AAoA of Northwest Colorado Director



Orf & Orf: Diana Orf, Ted Orf and Richard Orf



Sync Strategic: Teri Cavanagh



Prosono: Andrea Stiles Pullas, David Thurow,  
Margaret Dioguardi, Kylie Wetnight



ASSOCIATED GOVERNMENTS  
OF NORTHWEST COLORADO

### Contact Information

- P.O. Box 593
- Grand Junction, CO 81502
- [admin@agnc.org](mailto:admin@agnc.org)
- 970-665-1095
- X, Facebook, LinkedIn : @agnc

Thank you to our *Members, Partners, and Citizens* of Northwest Colorado,  
it is an honor to serve you.



ASSOCIATED GOVERNMENTS  
OF NORTHWEST COLORADO

195 14th Street Bld. D • Rifle, CO 81650 • (970) 665-1095