

SOUTHWEST COLORADO



**PAGOSA SPRINGS
JUNE 11-13, 2014**

**ARCHULETA - LA PLATA - MONTEZUMA
DOLORES - SAN JUAN**

**SOUTHWEST COLORADO RURAL PHILANTHROPY DAYS
LISTENING TOUR REPORT
FEBRUARY 5 - 7, 2014**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Southwest Colorado Rural Philanthropy Days (SWRPD) Listening Tour (LT) allowed executive level staff from statewide and regional grantmaking foundations to learn more about the broad challenges and issues facing Southwest Colorado communities. The SWRPD region is comprised of five counties and two sovereign Native American tribal nations¹. The Tour was conducted in preparation for the SWRPD Conference, which is scheduled for June 11-13, 2014 in Pagosa Springs, Colorado.

Where did we go? The LT took place on February 5 – 7, 2014. It included meetings with Archuleta County, the La Plata County communities of Ignacio, Bayfield, and Durango, the Southern Ute Indian Tribe, Montezuma County, Dolores County, the Ute Mountain Ute Indian Tribe, and San Juan County. The delegation also stopped in Mancos (Montezuma County) to discover the community impact of hosting the 2010 SWRPD Conference. The LT closed by meeting with the Southwest Colorado Council of Governments to solicit its feedback about regional issues and emphasize the importance of elected officials’ participation at the SWRPD Conference in June.

What did we do? In open discussions, community leaders described the region’s character, existing needs and current actions to address them. Representatives working in the arts and culture, business and economic development, education, agriculture and environment, government, health care and housing sectors participated.

What did we hear? While there are clear differences among communities in the region, there are also many similarities. A number of participants used the same terms to describe the character of the region and its inhabitants: *remote, diverse, frontier spirit and rugged individualism*. As well, at each stop on the tour, participants spoke of six common regional needs: *economic diversity, housing first, transportation, healthcare (including mental health and dental care), and broadband internet*.

- 1. Economic Diversity:** While the rest of the country and state are recovering from the recent recession, the southwest Colorado region experienced a delayed decline and resurgence. The region’s economy depends largely on tourism, real estate and resource extraction. These sectors are subject to boom and bust cycles that make it challenging to sustain a robust economy. The region is striving to diversify its economy by embracing “green” energy technologies such as geothermal and biomass harvesting; however, developing these technologies requires significant investments of time and money and does not meet the region’s immediate need for jobs that pay a livable wage.
- 2. Housing First:** A high proportion of the region’s homeowners are part-time residents who typically purchase a second home with income earned outside of the local economy. This trend is greatly skewing the regional housing market. Rising housing costs force full-time residents to live further from town centers, making reliable transportation a must in order to access work and services. The lack of affordable housing, both for rental and purchase, discourages many new businesses from relocating to the area.
- 3. Transportation:** Public transportation is extremely limited throughout the region. Those that need these services often live far from population centers, further limiting their access. This absence of basic infrastructure, particularly for senior citizens, negatively affects access to preventive services and contributes to generational poverty.

¹ Archuleta, Dolores, La Plata, San Juan, and Montezuma Counties and the Southern Ute and the Ute Mountain Ute Tribes.

4. **Early Childhood Care and Education:** Many Southwest Colorado families lack access to childcare and early childhood education programs. Licensed childcare facilities are few, forcing many working families to rely on friends or family as caregivers. The lack of childcare discourages new families and businesses from relocating to the area. Children who do not receive quality childcare and early education services often struggle with lifelong learning challenges, have lower graduation rates and contribute to a less skilled workforce.
5. **Healthcare, Mental Health and Dental Care:** Each community spoke to the lack of affordable and accessible healthcare. Contributing to this issue are: a) a shortage of primary health, mental health and dental care providers; b) a limited number of agencies willing to accept Medicare, Medicaid and uninsured patients; and c) the difficulty of travel to and from population centers. These challenges often impact seniors and children disproportionately. Following a national trend, the senior population in the region is growing rapidly. Telemedicine can be used to overcome these challenges, but its success depends upon substantial broadband infrastructure, which is not yet available in much of the region.
6. **Broadband Internet:** Reliable internet connections and high-speed data transmission are essential to the success and vitality of rural communities. It is a factor not only in attracting businesses and telecommuters, but also plays a major role in the operational support of government, hospitals, schools, libraries and other community anchors. The difficult terrain and widely dispersed population of the southwest region makes the installation of broadband infrastructure expensive. While recent improvements have brought broadband to many rural communities in the region, Archuleta and San Juan counties still do not have adequate access. Until further investments in telecommunication infrastructure are made, this basic resource in the state's metro-areas will remain unavailable to many residents of Southwest Colorado, and persist as a hindrance to economic development.

What is next? Each of the regional needs explored in this report is important and significant. The SWRPD LT delegation selected two issues to explore in greater depth given the sufficient groundwork that exists to aid in advancing positive social change within the areas of: 1) early childhood care and education, and 2) housing first.

In preparation for the SWRPD Conference in June, information collected during the SWRPD LT is being used to structure several regional meetings. Our purpose is to begin exploring how the region can work collaboratively to effectively address early childhood care and education and housing first needs as identified on the LT. Conference organizers are holding two *preconference strategy meetings*, which you can attend:

- **Housing First:** April 24, 2014 | 9:30 - 11:30 AM | Durango Recreation Center
- **Early Childhood Care & Education:** April 30, 2014 | 9:30 - 11:30 AM | Durango Recreation Center

On June 12th, the second day of the SWRPD conference, executive directors, topic experts, funders and state and local government officials will gather to develop collaborative, regional solutions to these two challenges. Representatives of over 20 Colorado foundations will join the discussion on the topic that most resonates with their funding priorities and interests. Participants will compare and contrast each county's needs and resources, and identify potential collaborative solutions. In the afternoon, participants will develop action plans to implement these identified solutions. The sessions are designed to strengthen relationships and encourage dialogue across sectors. Recommendations will be summarized and added to this report.

Introduction

The purpose of the Southwest Colorado Rural Philanthropy Days (SWRPD) Listening Tour (LT) is to allow executive level staff from statewide and regional grantmaking foundations to learn more about the broad challenges and issues facing Southwest Colorado communities. On November 28, 2012, at a Rural Funders' Forum hosted by Sue Anschutz-Rodgers, Chair and President of the Anschutz Family Foundation, funders expressed a desire to better understand the region's overarching needs and the actions underway to address these issues prior to attending a RPD conference. The LT concept was developed as a solution to address this information gap so that grantmakers would arrive at a RPD conference better prepared to collaborate with nonprofit organizations and local governments to support community needs.

Chris Wiant, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Caring for Colorado Foundation, and Gay Cook, Vice President of Strategy and Philanthropic Relations of The Colorado Trust, co-chaired the SWRPD LT, on February 5-7, 2014. Senior leaders from 10 foundations, representatives from the Colorado Department of Local Affairs, the Community Resource Center, and SWRPD Steering Committee members attended the tour (Appendix B).

The goal of the LT was to allow funders to hear from community leaders, in open discussions, about the characteristics of the region, existing needs and current actions to address them. Two primary questions were asked at each meeting:

1. How would you describe the personality and culture of your community?
2. What do you see as a key issue or need in your community?

With substantial support from the Community Foundation Serving Southwest Colorado, Onward! A Legacy Foundation, and the Southern Ute Community Action Program (SUCAP), the Southwest Colorado nonprofit community organized the LT itinerary (Appendix C). Community leaders working in the arts and culture, business and economic development, education, agriculture and environment, government, health care and affordable housing sectors were invited (Appendix D). The delegation met with over 100 people across seven meetings.

This report summarizes the community characteristics, issues and needs that were heard in these meetings. It is not intended to be a comprehensive summary of all regional characteristics and needs.

Characteristics of Colorado's Southwest Region

Shared Jurisdictional Borders and Unique Topography:

Colorado's southwest region is comprised of five counties and two sovereign Native American tribal nations, the Southern Ute Indian Tribe (SUIT) and the Ute Mountain Ute Indian Tribe (UMU). The SUIT and UMU nations are considered Sister Tribes, but operate separately.

- The SUIT spans 1,059 square miles over three counties - Archuleta, La Plata and Montezuma. Tribal headquarters are located in the Town of Ignacio in southeast La Plata County. SUIT is one of the county's largest employers and a significant economic engine, with investments in gas and oil operations, tourism, gaming, housing and commercial development.
- The UMU has its headquarters in Towaoc, just south of Cortez in Montezuma County. Tribal lands are mainly in Southwest Colorado but also extend into Northwest New Mexico. The UMU consider themselves to be very traditional, allowing change slowly and cautiously.
- Both tribes are sovereign nations that have an independent relationship with the U. S. government. Each has its own laws, government and citizenship.
- San Juan County, much of which is located above 10,000 feet, boasts the highest mean elevation in the United States. It is sparsely populated by 700 year-round residents and is comprised of 88 percent publicly owned lands.
- The Town of Silverton is one of only 20 towns in the U.S. that is designated as a National Historic Landmark.
- Montezuma County is home to the Four Corners National Monument, marking Colorado's shared border with New Mexico, Arizona and Utah.



Strong Community Values: While there are defined differences among the region's communities, several common sentiments were used to describe the character and spirit of the region, including: *remote, diverse, rugged frontier spirit* and *individualism*. Additionally:

- Southwest Colorado is separated from the rest of the state not only by geography, but also by topography. Residents must travel long distances over often-treacherous mountain passes to reach the Front Range. The feeling of isolation created by geography is enhanced further by social and cultural differences.
- Collaborative ventures among communities in Southwest Colorado have emerged as a direct result of isolation. County and municipal governments collaborate in an effort to provide sufficient services. Nonprofit and service organizations have a strong commitment and history of collaborating to improve communities, not only by providing for basic human needs, but strengthening cultural values through arts and culture.
- The southwest culture emphasizes strong community values, a dedication to teamwork, and civic responsibility. For example, San Juan County boasts an 80 percent average voter turnout rate. Community leaders "wear many hats" which enhances collaboration and better addresses needs within their town, county and region.
- There is an eclectic mix of multi-generational working class and ranching families; transplants that relocate to raise families in small towns; and retirees and second homeowners. These variations fuel the extremes often seen in rural resort communities. Priorities align very differently between these groups and sometimes create friction and difficult decisions for community leaders.

- A significant tri-ethnic population of Hispanics, Native Americans and Anglos, as well as many multi-cultural families, defines the personality of the region. Nearly 40 percent of the Montezuma-Cortez School District is composed of ethnic minorities.
- The City of Durango provides a vibrant hub of central services. Fort Lewis College, located near its downtown, is a great financial asset and educational resource. Residents throughout the region utilize city resources such as the Durango Recreation Center.

Rich Natural Resources: A high percentage of the region's land is publicly owned, including expansive national forests and other public lands. Residents take immense pride in the natural beauty and diversity of the region, which provides abundant natural resources and a high quality of life.

- The region's natural beauty contributes significantly to its economic base, which is driven by tourism, outdoor recreation and second homeowner, part-time residents. The region contains three ski resorts: Durango Mountain Resort, Kendall Mountain Recreation Center and Silverton Ski Mountain. The latter is the newest U.S. ski area to be built in 30 years. Additionally, Wolf Creek Ski Area lies immediately east of Archuleta County.
- New businesses throughout the region are utilizing its abundant natural resources to create sustainable companies that are less vulnerable than those based on tourism. Some of these innovative companies are exploring geothermal, helium extraction and biomass ventures.
- Traditional agriculture and ranching are strong, but often overlooked sectors of the regional economy. The region has a long history of multi-generational families that live and work off the land. Some families have experienced difficulty transitioning farm and ranch operations to younger generations.
- Geographical isolation is most apparent in Dolores and Montezuma counties, making the export of agricultural products difficult. These communities lack access to a railroad, while major highway shipping routes and commerce centers are hundreds of miles away.
- Water is a precious commodity and a major concern for agriculturally-driven communities, municipalities and environmental protection agencies. Changes to the allocation of this commodity can negatively impact the region and local livelihoods. A prolonged drought is negatively affecting the availability of municipal and irrigation water supplies, although dryland farms dominate the western portion of the region.
- Pagosa Springs is close to the Rio Grande headwaters and surrounded by 400,000 acres of wilderness.
- Given the region's vast national forests, the threat of wildfire is omnipresent. Hundreds of thousands of acres need restoration in order to reduce risks.
- Much of Southwest Colorado's land is owned by public land management agencies such as the National Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management. Nearly 70 percent of all land in Montezuma County and about 50 percent in Dolores County is publicly held. This high ratio of public-to-private land limits not only the tax base, but also the amount of land that is available to fuel economic growth in the private sector.
- Southwest Colorado is home to abundant oil, gas and geothermal resources. At times, it is challenging to find a balance between resource extraction and conservation. Many residents and businesses demonstrate a strong desire to protect natural resources rather than exploit them for immediate profit.
- Eroding federal budgets are causing federal agencies to increase partnerships with nonprofit organizations in order to supplement labor and cover budget shortfalls for resource protection and tourism management. For example, a four-county Alpine Ranger position was noted at-risk of elimination because of budget cuts.

Cross-cutting Regional Issues

Economic Diversity: While the rest of the country and state are recovering from the recent recession, which began in December 2007 and lasted 18 months, this region experienced a delay in decline and recovery, and has not yet seen the same resurgence. Boom and bust cycles in tourism, real estate and resource extraction make it challenging to maintain a robust economy. There is an immediate need to develop jobs that pay a sufficient wage to cover the increasing costs of living in the region. There is a strong sense of entrepreneurial creativity in the region as well as the desire to attract young, unique companies and business ventures. The region is striving to diversify its economy around new types of natural resource extraction, including geothermal energy and biomass harvesting. While tourism will always be an economic base, these new industries can help provide additional high-wage employment opportunities and move the region away from its boom and bust cycle.

Residents often depend on lower paying retail, service and tourism industry jobs. The cost of living continues to rise as part-time and seasonal resident populations increase, rendering the wages paid by these jobs insufficient to support a family. As the cost of living rises, the divide between the rich and poor continues to expand. Many communities have single-source economies that leave the population vulnerable to natural disasters, economic downturns, and seasonal cycles of employment and economic instability. For example, the Town of Silverton relies heavily on the Durango-Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad, which attracts about 150,000 people during the summer and fall. Interruptions in this service could have devastating effects on the town's economy.

A common frustration is the difficulty in implementing long-term, solution-based projects because of the ebb and flow of the economy. Government officials lead strong periods of planning and strategizing when the economy is growing, but are forced to shelve projects in order to focus on crisis relief when budgets are cut.

The Facts:

- ❖ The recession led to a population decrease from 2010 to 2012 in all counties except La Plata, which saw a modest increase of 2.1 percent. The State of Colorado overall saw a 3.1 percent increase in this same time period.
- ❖ Unemployment rates range from 8.5 to 9.5 percent in four of the counties, with a slightly lower rate of 6.6 percent in La Plata. The state average is hovering around 6.8 percent.
- ❖ In Montezuma and San Juan Counties, 19.5 percent of residents earn wages that are at or below the poverty level (\$22,048). The estimated livable wage for a family of four is \$36,171.
- ❖ The service sector employs 36 percent of the working population in Montezuma County, 42 percent in Archuleta County, and 36 percent in La Plata County.
- ❖ The median household income for the five counties in the southwest region (\$47,249) is 82 percent of the state average (\$57,685) and 77 percent of the five county Denver metro area (\$63,668).
- ❖ Three counties report more than 20 percent of children living in poverty and at least 50 percent of students in four counties rely on free and reduced lunches, a direct reflection of a lackluster economy.
- ❖ Prior to the economic downturn, the Archuleta County School Board intended to build a new school to address overcrowding issues. They have since seen a decline in enrollment as families move out of the county to obtain employment.
- ❖ The lack of job opportunities can contribute to increases in recidivism rates of offenders.
- ❖ The only major employer in the Town of Bayfield is its school district.

Housing First: Throughout the region, a high proportion of homeowners are part-time residents. This population typically purchases homes using income that is earned outside the local economy, which has skewed the regional housing market. A high demand for the construction of new homes increases the cost of available housing by limiting inventory and inflating costs. Builders typically have less financial incentive to build affordable housing rather than lucrative mountain homes. For those with lower-wage jobs, downtown housing is often priced out of reach. A local resident's income may be as much as two to three times lower than that of second homeowners. This often forces full-time residents to live outside of town centers, who then need reliable personal transportation to travel an increased distance to obtain necessary resources and services. The lack of affordable housing, both for rental and purchase, can discourage new businesses from relocating to the region. There are often more affordable housing options in outlying communities such as Bayfield and Ignacio, which forces many residents to make the long commute into Durango for work. This separation of "bedroom communities" and employment hubs in city centers also limits the growth of smaller towns that often cannot provide the economic incentive to live and work in one place.

The Facts:

- ❖ Rental properties make up a mere 1.2 percent of the Durango housing market. Within this rental pool, there is a 1.5 percent vacancy rate.
- ❖ The median price for a Durango home was \$364,500 in fourth quarter 2013, up 15 percent from 2011.
- ❖ The median price for a Bayfield home was \$244,750, in fourth quarter 2013, up 17 percent from 2011.
- ❖ Single family home prices range from \$230,000 to \$300,000 in Ignacio.
- ❖ Approximately 72 percent of families living in the City of Durango do not qualify for a median-priced home. In Archuleta County, the number increased to 75 percent, and to 79 percent for San Juan County.
- ❖ In Archuleta County, 50 percent of private property owners are part-time residents who earn their income outside of the region. This is one of the highest rates statewide.
- ❖ A single person renting a one bedroom apartment in the region will typically need to work 1.5 full time jobs at minimum wage to meet their basic living expenses. A family of four that is renting a three bedroom home will typically need four full time jobs at minimum wage to meet basic living expenses.²

² Region 9 Livable Wage data – June 2013.

Transportation: Public transportation is extremely limited in Southwest Colorado’s rural communities. Those that need transportation services often live far from city and town centers, limiting their access to public transportation of any kind. Inter-county public transportation is almost non-existent, although the majority of basic health services are only located in Durango and Cortez. Those seeking healthcare services that are not available in Southwest Colorado often have to travel significant distances over mountain passes that can become hazardous in winter. Air travel is often outside the means of those with low incomes, making private transportation the only option for travel to the closest major cities of Denver, Albuquerque or Phoenix. Those that cannot afford a car, insurance, or good tires must rely on the good will of friends and family if they need healthcare outside the region. This lack of available transportation, particularly for senior citizens, negatively affects access to preventive services and contributes to increasing generational poverty.

The Facts:

- ❖ The Southern Ute Community Action Program (SUCAP) offers the only public transportation service in the region. Its shuttles run between eastern La Plata County (Bayfield and Ignacio) and Durango and the Mercy Regional Medical Center.
- ❖ There is no bus or train service in or out of the region, and the only train service within the region is the tourist train connecting Durango and Silverton in the summer.
- ❖ Both Dolores and San Juan Counties are sparsely populated with less than two persons per square mile, making reliable transportation extremely necessary for day-to-day activities.
- ❖ No county or regional public transportation system serves the Durango-La Plata County Airport.
- ❖ The Town of Pagosa Springs does not have a public transportation network, or public pathways, to connect its “downtown” and “uptown”. This divide can separate residents from crucial resources like groceries.
- ❖ In Dove Creek, 20 percent of the population is senior citizens. The average trip to access preventive, chronic and acute health services for these individuals is approximately 100 miles.
- ❖ In 2012, the Town of Silverton underwent a community assessment by Downtown Colorado, Inc. It stated the town lacks ADA compliant sidewalks, signage and directional information for pedestrians.

Early Childhood Care and Education: Many families in Southwest Colorado do not have access to early childhood education programs and often rely on friends or family for childcare services. The region's limited licensed childcare facilities are often unable to meet the demand of working families for quality care. This often discourages new families from relocating to the area and businesses are left without childcare for their employees. The Ignacio Head Start program demonstrates a regional trend as the only licensed childcare facility in the town, with a waiting list of 36 (20 infants and toddlers, 16 older children). The program has anchored the community since 1967, but operates out of a 200 year-old building in an area with congested traffic. Across the region, waiting lists often exceed the number of available slots. Licensed facilities are limited or nearly non-existent in some communities. For children who do not receive proper early childhood education services, the struggle to catch up once enrolled in school often leads to lifelong learning challenges. This situation contributes to lower graduation rates and a less skilled workforce, which, in turn, create less incentive for new employers to relocate to the region.

While early childhood education surfaced as a major issue, several communities also voiced the need for alternative education resources. Residents often need workforce readiness training, as well as education in life skills such as conflict resolution, budgeting and time management. For students that graduate high school and leave the region to pursue higher education, an improved job market is necessary to encourage and support their return. There are few targeted programs to recapture at-risk youth into educational systems, although the Southern Ute Community Action Program has recently implemented a successful parenting program in partnership with the Nizhoni Center in Gallup, New Mexico. A regional strategic plan is needed identify and prioritize educational needs in order to prevent future demand for basic human services. There are also few foster care resources throughout the region, especially on the reservations, requiring many children to be placed with Front Range families. Native children that are placed in non-native foster homes often lose their connection to the community and culture.

The Facts:

- ❖ The shortage of early childhood learning centers is resulting in a pattern where at least 45 percent of the region's kindergarteners are not considered "ready to learn" when they begin elementary school.
- ❖ The Bayfield Early Education Program (BEEP) recently built a \$1.3 million preschool with the assistance of many Colorado funders; however, the community still has a shortage of licensed home daycare providers. BEEP has no infant or toddler programs.
- ❖ Only 35 percent of Ute Mountain Ute students graduate from high school, with most dropping out around tenth grade. La Plata County has a 30 percent high school dropout rate, while the Montezuma-Cortez School District has rates from 50 to 70 percent. In Ignacio, more students obtain a GED than graduate high school.
- ❖ Children in Montezuma and Dolores County test behind their peers as early as kindergarten, a gap that only increases in later years.
- ❖ The San Juan School District serves just 65 students. In 2009, when the Denver Post ran a front-page article about its broken boiler with a picture of students wearing coats and hats indoors, they received \$9 million for a facilities upgrade.
- ❖ Silverton is recognized for having an exceptional expeditionary learning program. There are only three similar projects in Colorado, all of which are located on the Front Range.
- ❖ Pagosa Springs is home to Seeds of Learning, the only National Association for the Education of Young Children accredited early care and education center in the southwest corner of the state.

Healthcare, Mental Health and Dental Care: Access to affordable healthcare is a need voiced in every community. Contributing to this issue is a shortage of primary care providers, a limited number of agencies willing to accept Medicare, Medicaid or uninsured patients, and the difficulty of travel for residents in remote communities. These challenges often impact seniors and children disproportionately. Because the region is recognized as an outdoor recreation and sports mecca, there are many world-class medical specialists (e.g. orthopedic surgeons). The region; however, lacks primary care physicians, which results in an increased number of visits to Urgent Care centers and emergency rooms at a higher cost to both providers and clients. There is an immediate need for health literacy education in outlying communities to improve a patients' ability to understand his/her condition, practice a healthier lifestyle and choose healthcare providers and insurance options.

Telemedicine is increasingly used to provide medical care to outlying rural communities. The effectiveness of telemedicine is dependent on substantial broadband infrastructure and advanced technologies, which does not yet exist in much of the region.

Lack of quality mental health care has surfaced as an endemic issue throughout rural Colorado. The high incidence of neglect, domestic violence, substance abuse, and homeless populations places a substantial strain on human service and law enforcement agencies. Severely limited treatment and prevention options contribute to a high level of recidivism. In La Plata County, the lack of access to dental care for uninsured or low-income patients is considered a critical issue, as very few dentists are willing to accept Medicaid.

Following a national trend, the number of senior citizens in the rural communities of Southwest Colorado is increasing rapidly and resulting in a "Silver Tsunami." Not only are current Baby Boomer residents aging, but the region is also experiencing an influx of retirees. There is a corresponding increase in demand for medical services. Many of these retirees have sufficient health insurance or means to pay for care, resulting in fewer physicians accepting under- or un-insured patients. This is leading many hospitals and clinics to alter their services to meet the needs of older patients, leaving many young families without necessary medical resources.

The Facts:

- ❖ Archuleta County does not have a pediatrician, forcing new parents to travel to Durango for pediatric care. There is also a lack of prenatal care and obstetric services in Archuleta County.
- ❖ San Juan County has no licensed physicians and one nurse to serve the entire population. Volunteers provide all emergency medical and ambulance services. Additional service options are being explored, including partnering with La Plata County's Mercy Regional Medical Center and retrofitting Miner's Union Hospital to serve as a rural health clinic.
- ❖ Tribal members have access to the region's Indian Health Service (IHS) clinics. Outside of IHS, which serves only Native Americans, Ignacio has no licensed doctor or pharmacy, and just one nurse practitioner. Non-native family members must go to Durango and Farmington for healthcare.
- ❖ More than 20 percent of the population in Archuleta and Dolores Counties is age 65 and older, compared to a state average of less than 12 percent.
- ❖ Many service providers such as AXIS Health System plan to cut services significantly in 2014 due to decreased funding and increased operational costs.
- ❖ There are no designated mental health facilities in the region, including Mercy Regional Medical Center.
- ❖ The lack of youth mental health services has been identified as a major concern for the region.

Broadband Internet: Reliable internet connections and high-speed data transmission are essential to the success and vitality of rural communities. They not only help attract and retain successful businesses, but also support the operations of government, hospitals, schools, libraries and other essential community services. Difficult terrain and a widely dispersed population make the installation of broadband infrastructure an expensive challenge for the Southwest region. The State of Colorado set a goal of 100 percent coverage and increased capacity and speed that is cost effective and reliable. While recent improvements have brought broadband to many rural communities in the region, Archuleta and San Juan Counties still do not have adequate broadband infrastructure, discouraging economic development. Companies and school systems require reliable high-speed internet connections to conduct business in the global marketplace and meet the state’s educational standards. New businesses are prevented from relocating to the region, while established businesses are unable to grow. Without further investment in telecommunication infrastructure, this basic resource in the state’s metro-areas, will remain unavailable to many residents of Southwest Colorado.

The Facts:

- ❖ The region’s libraries provide free computers and internet access, which are an invaluable resource for residents who do not have private access to this technology. These public computers are commonly used for job applications, GED testing and tax preparation and submission. An increased demand; however, requires faster internet connections which are often unavailable or cost prohibitive.
- ❖ Public schools invested in hardware but many still need increased connectivity to meet state standards.
- ❖ Telemedicine services will remain limited in the region’s target markets given a lack of sufficient bandwidth and infrastructure outside of city and town centers.
- ❖ Learn more about the State of Colorado’s broadband expansion plan by downloading “Bridging the Digital Divide” from the Southwest RPD website: <http://bit.ly/1fbMmy3>.

Next Steps

Each regional issue discussed in this report is important and significant. The SWRPD LT delegation has selected two issues to explore in greater depth given the existence of sufficient groundwork that will aid in advancing positive social change. They include: 1) early childhood care and education, and 2) housing first. In preparation for the SWRPD Conference in June, information collected during the SWRPD LT is being used to structure several regional meetings. Our purpose is to begin exploring how the region can work collaboratively to better address regional early childhood care and education and housing first needs. Conference organizers are holding two *preconference strategy meetings*, which you can attend: 1) Housing First on April 24, 2014; and 2) Childcare and Early Childhood Education on April 30, 2014. Both meetings will be held at the Durango Recreation Center from 9:30 – 11:30 am.

On June 12th, the second day of the SWRPD conference, executive directors, topic experts, funders and state and local government officials will gather to develop collaborative, regional solutions to these two challenges. Representatives of over 20 Colorado foundations will join the discussion on the topic that most resonates with their funding priorities and interests. Participants will compare and contrast each county’s needs and resources, and identify potential collaborative solutions. In the afternoon, participants will develop action plans to implement collaborative solutions. The sessions are designed to strengthen relationships and encourage dialogue across sectors. Recommendations will be summarized and added to this report.

Appendix A: Regional Statistics

	Archuleta	Dolores	La Plata	Montezuma	San Juan	Colorado
Population 2012	10,070	1,194	52,401	25,431	690	5,187,582
Population 2010	10,084	2,064	51,344	25,535	699	5,029,196
Percent Change	-0.1%	-3.4%	2.1%	-0.4%	-1.3%	3.1%
Unemployment Rate	9.4%	9.5%	6.6%	8.5%	8.5%	6.8%
Uninsured Rate	19.4%	19.4%	19.4%	19.4%	19.4%	14.3%
Uninsured 0-18 years	16.6%	16.3%	16.5%	16%	17.9%	10.3%
Under 18 years	19.0%	21.4%	19.8%	22.5%	15.8%	23.7%
65 years and older	20.3%	20.3%	12.9%	17.9%	15.2%	11.8%
Language other than English spoken at home	10.0%	1.2%	9.2%	12.5%	7.3%	16.7%
Below poverty	8.8%	13.9%	11.1%	19.6%	19.5%	12.5%
Under 18 in poverty	23.1%	14.7%	14.1%	26.5%	22.9%	17.1%
Free & Reduced Lunch	49.6%	50%	34.5%	58%	61.5%	40.9%
HS Graduation Rates	81.8%	66.7%	71.7%	64.3%	N/A	73.9%
Bachelor degree or higher	36.1%	18.8%	41.6%	27.2%	30.2%	36.3%
Median household income	\$54,007	\$43,398	\$57,407	\$44,102	\$37,330	\$57,685
Size by square miles	1,350	1,067	1,692	2,029	387	103,641
Persons per square mile	8.9	1.9	30.3	12.6	1.8	48.5
Number of "Nonprofits" 501c3 Public Charities	81	13	265	113	14	17,860

Data collected from:

National Center for Charitable Statistics, The Colorado Health Institute, U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012 Kids Count in Colorado.

Appendix B: Southwest Listening Tour Delegation

Adolph Coors Foundation

**4100 E. Mississippi Avenue, Suite 1850
Denver, CO 80246**

- John Jackson, Executive Director

Anschutz Family Foundation

**555 17th St., Suite 2400
Denver, CO 80202**

- Debbie Jessup, Executive Director

Ballantine Family Fund

**P.O. Drawer A
Durango, CO 81302**

- Nancy Whitson, Executive Director

Caring for Colorado Foundation

**4100 E. Mississippi Ave., Suite 605
Denver, CO 80246**

- Chris Wiant, President and CEO
Listening Tour Co-Chair

Colorado Department of Local Affairs

**Fort Lewis College, 1000 Rim Dr.
Durango, CO 81301**

- Jennifer Lopez, Development Specialist
Western Slope
- Ken Charles, Regional Manager

Colorado Health Institute

**303 E. 17th Avenue, # 930
Denver, CO 80203**

- Jeff Bontrager, Director of Research on
Coverage and Access

Community Resource Center

**789 Sherman St., Suite 210
Denver, CO 80203**

- Maria Fabula, Executive Director
- Crissy Supples, RPD Program Manager
- Leah Rausch, RPD Program Associate

Gates Family Foundation

**1390 Lawrence Street, #400
Denver, CO 80204**

- Beth Conover, Senior Program Officer

Helen K. and Arthur E. Johnson Foundation

**1700 Broadway
Denver, CO 80290**

- Jack Alexander, President

The Colorado Health Foundation

**501 S Cherry Street, Suite 1100
Denver, CO 80246**

- Amy Latham, Healthcare and Health
Coverage Portfolio Director

The Colorado Trust

**1600 Sherman Street
Denver, CO 80203**

- Gay Cook, Vice President of Strategy
and Philanthropic Relations
Listening Tour Co-Chair

Southwest Rural Philanthropy Days Steering Committee Members

- Briggen Wrinkle, Community Foundation Serving Southwest Colorado, *Event Co-Chair*
- Mary Jo Coulehan, Pagosa Springs Chamber of Commerce, *Event Co-Chair*
- Lynne Bridges, Seeds of Learning Preschool
- Tracy Cornutt, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southwest Colorado
- Chris O'Shea Heydinger, Native Peaks Consulting/KSUT Four Corners Public Radio

Appendix C: Southwest Listening Tour Itinerary

Wednesday, February 5th

2:30 PM-4:00 PM: Listening Tour with Archuleta County

- Host: Community Foundation Serving Southwest Colorado
- Southern Ute Cultural Center & Museum, Ignacio

4:15 PM – 5:30 PM: Listening Tour – Southern Ute Tribe, Ignacio & Bayfield communities, Ignacio

- Hosts: Southern Ute Community Action Program (SUCAP) and the Pine River Learning Center
- Southern Ute Cultural Center & Museum, Ignacio

5:30 PM - 6:30 PM: Hosted Tour of Southern Ute Cultural Center & Museum

- Southern Ute Cultural Center & Museum, Ignacio

7:00 PM - 8:30 PM: Dinner

- Seven Rivers Steaks Seafood Spirits, Sky Ute Casino Resort, Ignacio

Thursday, February 6th

8:00 AM – 8:30 AM: Coffee and Art Stroll with a docent

- Sky Ute Casino Resort, Ignacio

8:30 AM-8:45 AM: Travel from Ignacio to Durango

9:00 AM – 11:00 AM: Listening Tour with La Plata County

- Host: Community Foundation Serving Southwest Colorado
- Mercy Regional Medical Center, 1010 Three Springs Blvd, Durango

11:00 AM – 12:00 AM: Travel from Durango to Mancos

12:00 AM – 1:15 PM: Lunch in Mancos at Mancos Public Library

- “What has changed in Mancos post-RPD” Presentation by Tami Graham & Betsy Harrison
- Tour of Mancos Public Library Host: Lee Halberg, Library Director

1:15 PM – 1:45 PM: Travel from Mancos to Cortez

2:00 PM – 4:00 PM: Listening Tour, Montezuma and Dolores Counties and Ute Mountain Ute Tribe

- Hosts: Onward! A Legacy Foundation and the Cortez Heart and Soul
- Crow Canyon Archeological Center, 23390 Road K, Cortez

4:00 PM – 5:15 PM: Travel to Durango and lodging at the Rochester Hotel

6:00 PM – 7:30 PM – Dinner at Cyprus Café, Durango

- Host: Ballantine Family Fund, Richard Ballantine

Friday, February 7th

9:45 AM -11:00 AM: Listening Tour with San Juan County

- Host: Community Foundation Serving Southwest Colorado
- Rochester Hotel, Durango

11:00 AM – 12:15 PM: Travel to Durango

12:15 PM – 1:15 PM: Lunch at El Moro, Durango

1:30 PM – 2:00 PM: Southwest Council of Government (COG) Meeting

- Durango Public Library, 1900 E. Third Ave, Durango

Appendix D: Southwest Listening Tour Invitation List

Archuleta County

Name	Job Title	Organization
Bob Eggleston	Branch President	Bank of Colorado
Clifford Lucero	County Commissioner	Archuleta County
David Mitchum	Town Manager	Town of Pagosa Springs
Ken Fox	District 1 Director	La Plata Electric Association
Kristine MacNeill	Librarian	Pagosa Public Library
LeeAnn Goebel	Board Member	Pagosa Makers
Lynne Bridges	Executive Director	Seeds of Learning
Matthew Dodson	Executive Director	Dept. of Human Services
Michael Whiting	County Commissioner	Archuleta County
Rich Valdez	Undersheriff	Archuleta County
Ross Aragon	Mayor	Town of Pagosa Springs
Todd Starr	Attorney	Archuleta County
Mike Hayward		Veterans for Veterans

Dolores County, Montezuma County, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe

Name	Job Title	Organization
Bob Bragg	Agricultural Consultant	
Chris Burkett	Economic Development Specialist	Montezuma Economic Development
Shawn Collins	Corporate Relations Officer	Crow Canyon Archeological Center
Keenan Ertel	County Commissioner	Montezuma County
Tess Forth	Owner	Pepperhead Restaurant
Lori Haukeness	Assistant Superintendent	RE-1 School District
Kent Helwig	Chief Executive Officer	Southwest Health System
Laura Herrick	Board Member	Onward! A Legacy Foundation
Rose Jergens	Executive Director	Four Corner Child Advocacy Center
Bruce Johnson	Community Relations Officer	United Way of Southwest CO
Matt Keefauver	Mayor Pro-Tem	City of Cortez
Tawnie Knight	Economic Development Director	Ute Mountain Ute Tribe
Laurie Knutson	Executive Director	Bridge Emergency Shelter
Abby Locke	Member	Heart & Soul Project
Chuck McAfee	Member	El Pomar Southwest Regional Council
M. B. McAfee	Board Member	Onward!; Bridge Emergency Shelter
Pete Montano	Treasurer	RE-1 School District
Rocky Moss	Coordinator	Heart & Soul Project
Monica Palmquist	Community Health Organizer	Live Well Colorado
Trish Peters	Coordinator	Family Leadership Training Institute

Jeff Pope	Executive Director	KSJD
JoDee Powers	Director	Live Well Montezuma
Nita Purkat	Director	Dolores County Senior Services
Julie Bell	Archaeologist	Bureau of Land Management
Joyce Stevenson	Board Member	Southwest Colorado Concerts
Dennis Story	Director	Mont/Dolores Social Services
Peggy Tennyson	Director	School Community Youth Collaborative
Kellie Willis	Director	The Piñon Project Family Resource Center
Donna Steward	Artist/Owner	Heart and Soul Cortez; Cortez Works!
Deborah Gangloff	President and CEO	Crow Canyon Archeological Center

Ignacio, Bayfield, and the Southern Ute Indian Tribe

Name	Job Title	Organization
Tom Atencio	Town Council Member	Town of Ignacio
Carol Blatnick	Executive Director	Bayfield Early Education Programs
Cathy Calderwood	Executive Director	Pine River Community Learning Center
Linda Campbell	Board Member	Pine River Community Learning Center
Pat Conley	Rancher	
Dixie Cook	Facilities Manager	Ignacio Library
Kasey Correia	Artist	Dancing Spirit Community Arts Center
Stella Cox	Mayor	Town of Ignacio
Dennis Dahlke	Director, PSSATC	SUCAP
Ron Dunaunt	Board President	Pine River Community Learning Center
Charley Flagg	Manager	Sky Ute Casino Resort
Rocco Fuschetto	Superintendent	Ignacio School District
Pathimi Goodtracks		Southern Ute Tribe
Chris La May	Town Manager	Town of Bayfield
Beth Lamberson-Warren	Marketing & Grant Writing	Southern Ute Cultural Museum
Melanie Mazur	Editor	Pine River Times
Katie Middleton	Compliance Manager	Pine River Valley Bank
Lee San Miguel	Town Manager	Town of Ignacio
Char Schank	Director	Southern Ute Montessori
Loren Sekayumtewa	Department Director	Southern Ute Tribal Services
Nathan Strong Elk	Executive Director	Southern Ute Cultural Center and Museum
Aaron Torres		Southern Ute Tribe
Julie Westendorff	County Commissioner	La Plata County

La Plata County

Name	Job Title	Organization
Bryan Dear	Founder, President	Payroll Department
Gretchen Fitzgerald	Forester	San Juan National Forest
Thomas Gessel	President and CEO	Mercy Regional Medical Center

Debra Greenblatt	Artist	Dumpster Beautification
Joy Hess	Development Officer	Mercy Health Foundation
Nancy Hoyt	CNO	Mercy Regional Medical Center
Liane Jollon	Director	San Juan Basin Health Dept.
Caroline Kinser	Board Member	Manna Soup Kitchen
Charles Leslie	Director	Community Concert Hall
Jack Llewellyn	Executive Director	Durango Chamber of Commerce
Sweetie Marbury	Mayor	City of Durango
Lezlie Mayer	Dir. of Human Services	La Plata County
Will McConnell	VP of Operations	Mercy Regional Medical Center
Karen Midkiff	Chief Development Officer	Mercy Health Foundation
Bill Plauth	CMO/VP of Marketing	Mercy Regional Medical Center
Christine Scott	Board President	Durango Arts Center
Dan Snowberger	Superintendent	La Plata County School District
Lynn Urban	CEO	United Way of Southwest CO
Tim Walsworth	Executive Director	Business Improvement District
Andy White	Director	Durango Public Library
Dick White	Mayor	City of Durango
Lauri Wilson-Lacy	Administrative Assistant	Mercy Health Foundation

San Juan County

Name	Job Title	Organization
Beverly Rich	Director	San Juan County Historical Society
Bob Nevins	Town Planner	Town of Silverton
Chris Landry	Director	Center for Snow and Avalanche Studies
Christine Tookey	Mayor	Town of Silverton
Fritz Klinke		NA Graphics
Gina Rosato	Owner	
Holly Pratz	President	Silverton Family Learning Center
Kim White	Superintendent	Silverton School District
Lois Mackenzie	County Nurse	San Juan County
Natalie Riebolt	Director	Silverton Family Learning Center
Rose Raab	Manager	Silverton Chamber of Commerce
Scott Fetchenier	County Commissioner	San Juan County
Sue Kurtz	Sheriff	San Juan County
Tom Grant	Field Officer	Mountain Studies Institute
William Tookey	County Administrator	San Juan County