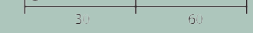


An agricultural powerhouse and crossroad of diverse cultures.

COLORADO BLUEPRINT

A bottom-up approach to economic development



Regional Data

Largest Companies by Employment

- City Market
- Town and Country Car and Truck Center
- SLV Health
- Rio Grande Hospital
- Mountain King Potatoes
- Monte Vista Co-op

Top 5 Key Industries by Employment

1. Food & Agriculture
2. Health & Wellness
3. Transportation & Logistics
4. Tourism & Outdoor Recreation
5. Construction

Top 5 Regional Assets

- Agricultural products
- Availability of land
- Renewable energy sources
- Cost of living
- Recreational opportunities
- Educational opportunities

Where the Region would like to be in 5 years

- Increase in utility scale solar to 150 MW
- Increase high school graduations rates to no less than 90% in all communities.
- Decrease unemployment rates to less than 8% in all six counties.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Region 8, located in South Central Colorado, is famously known as the San Luis Valley. Made up of six counties (Alamosa, Conejos, Costilla, Mineral, Rio Grande and Saguache), the Valley covers 8,100 square miles – an area larger than the state of Massachusetts – with just over 46,000 residents.

Surrounded by the beautiful Sangre de Cristo Mountains on the east and the great San Juan Mountains in the west, the Valley is an agricultural powerhouse famous for potatoes, barley used to brew Coors and Budweiser beer, and high-quality dairy hay. Agriculture is the region’s primary economic driver and accounts for nearly a third of region’s economic activity. Scenically and strategically situated, the Valley is blessed with breathtaking natural beauty and unique cultural diversity. Outdoor recreational opportunities abound in the Rio Grande National Forest, at the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve, and at three National Wildlife Refuges. Two rivers, the Rio Grande and the Conejos, are home to gold medal fishing; Wolf Creek Ski Area annually boasts more snow than any ski area in Colorado; and Penitente Canyon challenges world-class rock climbers.

Called the *Land of Cool Sunshine*, the San Luis Valley is at the center of solar energy development in Colorado. Because of our high altitude and cool temperatures, the Valley is one of the best locations in the U.S. for solar energy production, with over 85 mega-watts of solar electricity generated by five utility-scale solar plants. Geothermal, biomass and hydro resources are also abundant for future clean energy development.

The San Luis Valley is a crossroads of cultures. Mount Blanca, the Valley’s most prominent natural feature, has long been considered sacred by Native Americans. Early Spanish settlers established the first settlements in Colorado, including San Luis, the oldest town in Colorado. The Denver and Rio Grande Railroad made Alamosa the major supply and trade route for the silver mines in the San Juans. Families came from all over the world to mine, farm, or ranch, giving the Valley a distinctive way of life.

Home to Adams State University and Trinidad State Jr. College, we offer masters, bachelor, associate and certificate programs that provide a quality workforce for businesses choosing to locate in the valley. Transportation is easily accessed into and out of the valley via US Highway 160, running east and west, and US Highway 285, north to south. The San Luis and Rio Grande Railroad offer freight and limited passenger service out of the Valley. The San Luis Valley Regional Airport has flights to Denver three times each day.

VISION

Our vision is to create a model of regional cooperation and coordination among local governments, nonprofits, businesses, and citizens of the San Luis Valley. We do this to assure the orderly and appropriate development of the Valley resources enabling us to provide for the needs of future generations.

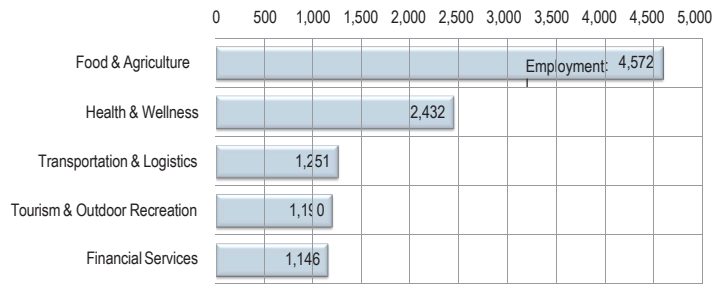
MISSION

Our mission is to develop, enhance, and promote our resources and assets in a thoughtful and self-sustaining manner so we may add value to the lives of the citizens who chose to make the San Luis Valley their home.

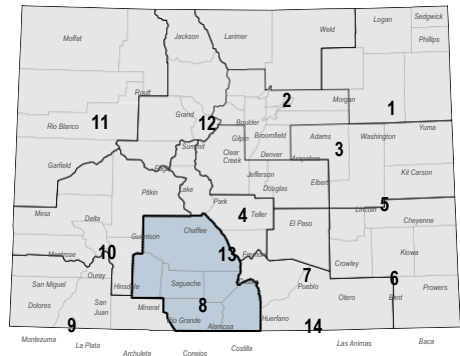
QUICK WINS

- New 50 MW utility scale solar facility in Alamosa County increasing our solar electric generation to 135 MW
- Expansion of a local malting facility to advance exportation of their customized malt, using locally grown grains
- Increase in production and availability of locally grown foods through local farmers markets and cooperatives beyond local boundaries
- Regional collaboration to complete a master plan to support, enhance, and promote outdoor recreational opportunities
- Creation of a community model that has developed an effective, coordinated approach to address fire caused hazards such as flash flooding, environmental restoration, water quality, and mitigation efforts

TOP 5 KEY INDUSTRIES BY EMPLOYMENT



Source: EMSI, 2012



State of Colorado, Region 8

CORE OBJECTIVES

1 Build a Business-Friendly Environment

GOALS

- Support infrastructure development to improve or provide redundant energy services
- Pursue funding to establish brownfields inventory for 18 communities and six counties of the San Luis Valley
- Provide assistance to SLV Broadband as they work toward improving communication and accountability of broadband service providers, and map telecom infrastructure
- Assist local governments in their efforts to upgrade infrastructure to local airports in an effort to establish FAA designation
- Work with local governments and Colorado Department of Transportation to maintain and improve the San Luis Valley regional highway network

4 Create and Market a Stronger CO Brand

GOALS

- Implement SLV Great Outdoors Trails Master Plan in six counties and eighteen communities.

2 Recruit, Grow and Retain Business

GOALS

- Complete an impact analysis to examine the regional economic effects of the loss up to 60,000 acres of crop production due to a voluntary reduction in an effort to increase the water levels of aquifers used to irrigate crop land in the San Luis Valley
- Support development of locally initiated telecommunication vendors
- Provide demographic services as an ongoing economic and community development tool

5 Educate and Train the Future Workforce

GOALS

- Work with local businesses to identify training needs
- Provide conduit for discussions and implementation strategies to address identified business training needs between Colorado Workforce Centers, Trinidad State Jr. College and Adams State University

3 Increase Access to Capital

GOALS

- Provide gap funding for businesses seeking to start-up, expand, or retain business status
- Advocate for continued existence of state tax programs that assist local businesses and non-profit organizations
- Provide on-going specialized counseling to local businesses seeking assistance

6 Cultivate Innovation and Technology

GOALS

- Become the repository for research, educational information, and training opportunities relating to renewable energy resources in the San Luis Valley
- Promote organizations that support and promote locally grown food opportunities
- Develop a business plan to create a regional food process facility

STAKEHOLDERS

Citizens of Alamosa, Conejos, Costilla, Mineral Rio Grande and Saguache Counties

San Luis Valley Board of County Commissioners

Eighteen SLV Municipalities

San Luis Valley Council of Governments

San Luis Valley Development Resources Group

Alamosa County Economic Development Corporation

Upper Rio Grande Economic Development Corporation

Monte Vista Economic Development Corporation

ScSEED – Saguache County

Concepts- Conejos County

Costilla County Economic Development Corporation

Creede/Mineral County Chamber of Commerce

Colorado Workforce Center

South Central Workforce Investment Board

Adams State University (ASU)

Trinidad State Junior College (TSJC)

Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

San Luis Valley Health Care Organizations

Early Childhood Council of SLV

Non-profit organizations of the San Luis Valley

SLV K- 12 Educational System

San Luis Valley Rural Electric Cooperative

Xcel Energy



Colorado

Office of Economic Development and International Trade

www.advancecolorado.com/blueprint