

# PROWERS COUNTY

# ECONOMIC

# PROSPERITY PLAN

*September 2016*

*Prepared for Prowers County*

*by Progressive Urban Management Associates (P.U.M.A.)*





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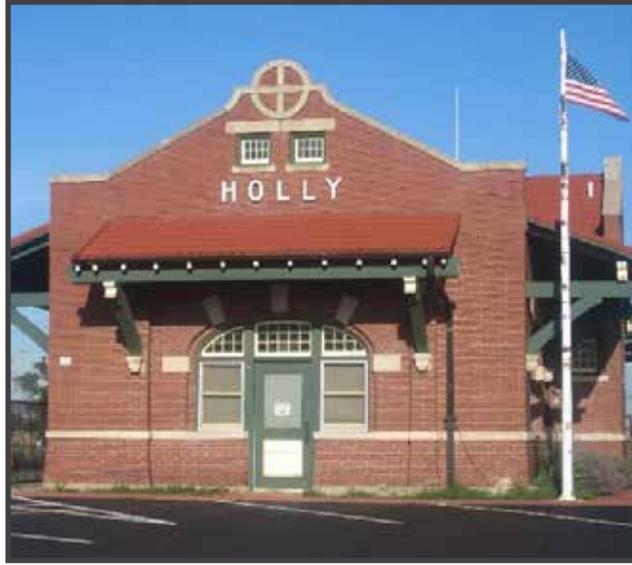
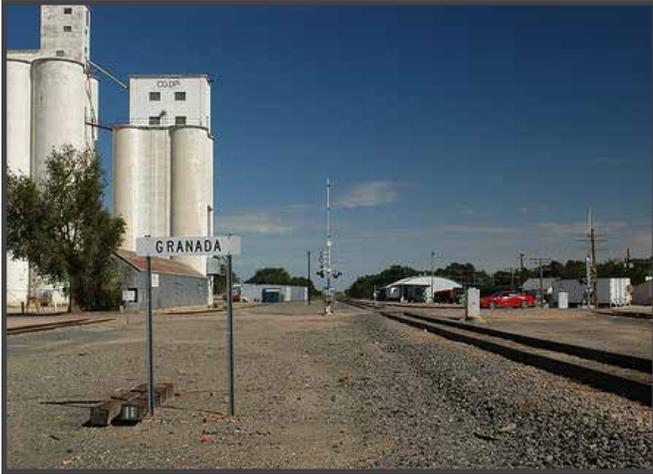
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# 01 INTRODUCTION

In 2016, Prowers County is confronting a set of economic challenges that are shared by many eastern Colorado communities. After enduring more than 20 years of gradual decreases in population and jobs, Prowers County government and business leaders are seeking pro-active strategies to generate new growth and investment. County leaders welcome innovative approaches to economic development and a refreshed business model for organizing and mobilizing resources to stimulate new investment. The Prowers Economic Prosperity Plan identifies strategies and tactics for economic prosperity in the County and its communities: Lamar, Wiley, Holly, Granada, Bristol and Hartman.

Prowers County contracted with Progressive Urban Management Associates (P.U.M.A.), a Denver-based consulting firm specializing in community and economic development and organizational strategic planning, to complete the Plan.



photo source: P.U.M.A. staff

The term *economic prosperity* is used throughout this document in lieu of economic development. It means not only new jobs, investment and success of existing businesses but also good quality of life for residents in Prowers County. Business recruitment and retention are inextricably tied to quality of life as businesses are increasingly looking to locate in places where people want to live.

## THIS PLAN INTENDS TO

**DIVERSIFY** the economic base to ensure Prowers County is able to withstand economic downturns. This Plan does not provide 'one big solution' but rather a number of smaller-scale strategies across multiple industries that can scale over time.

**LEVERAGE** local resources, including specialized knowledge, community connections to outside entities, natural assets and existing businesses, to attract additional jobs and investment. Businesses that necessitate or utilize local resources are more likely to stay rooted in Prowers County.

**SPUR ACTION** and implementation. The final chapter of this plan is dedicated to providing recommendations for a revamped organization, Prowers Economic Prosperity (PEP), that is able to carry forward the recommended strategies and further economic prosperity in the County.

# PROCESS

## 1. Review Prior Plans; Gather Background Information

P.U.M.A. reviewed prior economic development reports to ensure this Plan built upon past efforts. A brief summary of past reports is included in the Appendix. P.U.M.A. also gathered basic background information about the County including demographic data, assets and challenges. An initial site visit was arranged to meet stakeholders and tour each community.

## 2. Opportunity Areas Identified – ‘the What’

Building on information gleaned from background materials and the initial site visit, P.U.M.A. conducted additional research to identify specific opportunities for economic prosperity in Prowers County. Pages 12-23, detail the top opportunities identified under five general categories.

## 3. Site Visits & Community Engagement

Throughout the Plan process, P.U.M.A. staff made multiple trips to the County to conduct stakeholder interviews, tour businesses, and receive feedback on the strategies being developed. To gain broad community input, an online survey was developed and administered County-wide. A summary of community engagement efforts is included in the Appendix.

## 4. Action Plan

After identifying and refining the top opportunities, P.U.M.A. created an Action Plan that provides the rationale, actions steps, partners and funding sources for each opportunity. The Action Plan can be found on pages 26-37.

## 5. Implementation – ‘the How’

The final, critical, element of this Plan is implementation, or how the recommended strategies will be carried forward. P.U.M.A. met with the Prowers County Development Inc. (PCDI) board and staff on multiple occasions to understand the strengths and challenges of the existing economic development organization. The implementation section of the Plan starting on page 38, provides recommendations for a retooled economic entity, Prowers Economic Prosperity (PEP), which will be capable of moving forward the Plan recommendations.



# TOP TEN REASONS TO LOCATE IN PROWERS COUNTY



*There are many reasons Prowers County is a desirable place to live, work, and play.*



*Part of economic prosperity is being able to effectively tell the story of Prowers County. What makes Prowers County unique? Why is it a good place to live and do business? Based on information gathered from stakeholders and site visits, P.U.M.A. suggests the following reasons residents and businesses should locate in Prowers County. This list should be modified or further customized depending on the targeted business or industry being recruited.*

## 1 Middle of Everywhere

- Crossroads of Hwy. 287 and Hwy. 50
- Ports to Plains Corridor connecting Mexico to Canada
- 2,400 trucks a day on Hwy. 287 through Lamar; ample backhaul opportunities
- Lamar Municipal Airport
- BNSF rail line
- Amtrak service
- 3 hours to Denver; 3 hours to Amarillo

## 2 Colorado's Most Affordable Place to Live

- Denver Business Journal rated Lamar the #1 most affordable city in Colorado in 2016
- Prowers is the third most affordable county in Colorado<sup>1</sup>
- Prowers home prices are nearly one third the cost of Colorado home prices<sup>2</sup>

## 3 Small Town Atmosphere

- Strong sense of community
- Easy, non-congested commutes
- Quaint Main Streets
- Rural character
- Agricultural roots

## 4 Family-Friendly

- Regional hub for youth sports
- Parks
- Community events; fairs
- Safe place to raise kids

## 5 Quality Education

- Top notch K-12 schools
- Holly High School recognized as one of U.S. News Best High Schools in 2016
- Lamar Community College (LCC) enrolls 1,200 students annually
- LCC is widely recognized for many top notch programs (including agriculture)

## 6 Resourceful & Entrepreneurial Workforce

- Many Prowers businesses started with very little and scaled over time to become nationally and internationally recognized for their products
- Young population ready to enter the workforce; Prowers' largest population cohort is ages 15 to 24
- More than 25% of the population has an Associate's degree or higher

## 7 Bringing Back the Boomerangs

- Prowers is making an effort to welcome back Boomerangs, young people who left the County but are looking for opportunities to come back home

## 8 Healthy Places Community

- Part of a nationally recognized movement to create healthier communities
- Lamar Loop, a new 9-mile multi-use trail
- New skatepark - coming soon!
- Fitness center; parks, swimming pool
- Hospital, medical clinics and senior care facilities

## 9 Available Incentives

- Prowers County business tax credits
- Enhanced Rural Enterprise Zone tax credits

## 10 Opportunity to fill the gaps!

- Unmet demand for retail goods and services
- Affordable & available commercial and industrial properties
- Community support for new initiatives



<sup>1</sup> Colorado State Demography Office – Cost of Living Index

<sup>2</sup> ESRI BAO Community Profile

# 02

## KEY THEMES

*After conversations with a range of Prowers County stakeholders about the assets and desires for economic prosperity, some key themes emerged that influence the selection of opportunities and actions. The four themes are briefly described below.*



photo source: P.U.M.A. staff

### SCALE UP

A number of the longstanding, successful employers in Prowers County described their history as a small, family enterprise that has grown over time. Meanwhile, other stakeholders spoke of a preference for a diversified economic base, rather than hoping for a “silver bullet” solution of attracting a single large employer. Many of the economic strategies recommended in this Plan seek to create conditions that spur a diverse range of businesses even if the concept would initially be modest. Over time, the businesses can grow to add products and services similar to W.H.O., Colorado Mills, and Gateway Products. Businesses that scale up are more likely to remain firmly rooted in Prowers.

### LEVERAGE LOCAL

Prowers County has a range of assets – some obvious and some less so – that are resources and advantages for economic prosperity. These include areas of specialized knowledge, a “middle of everywhere” location, local agricultural production, training through Lamar Community College, heritage assets, potential for alternative energy sources, and a water “banking” system unique in Colorado (and perhaps the nation). Business concepts that are uniquely tied to Prowers County through one of these assets reduce the likelihood that a successful venture will move elsewhere as it scales up.



## NEXT GEN

Like many places, Prowers County suffers from the loss of a younger generation. There are many large-scale forces that underpin these population losses, and housing is a specific concern in Prowers. However, as the Millennial generation increasingly have children of their own, the allure of cities is wearing thin for some. This Plan seeks economic opportunities and strategies that connect with this generation and encourage them to stay or come back to a place they love. Certain amenities, and a sense that there are opportunities for not just one but perhaps two careers, can help encourage enough returns to stem population decline. In addition, strategies are considered that can let the others know that Prowers County is a place that pragmatically embraces innovation.

## TAKE INITIATIVE

Economic prosperity can falter when it lacks clear leadership. Implementation of this Plan depends on a group of strong leaders to communicate Prowers strengths and openness in a targeted and proactive manner. To make the most of the suggestions in this Plan, it will require that collective interest is placed as the foremost priority over individual advantage. Recommended strategies include a number of initiatives that require Prowers County leaders to reach out to entities elsewhere and show them an open door. Detailed recommendations are offered on how to create, fund and staff an organization that can endure political season and personal differences to move ahead. Ultimately, the success of this Plan hinges on leaders and an organization that have the backing of the community.

# 03

## OPPORTUNITY AREAS

*Through research, community engagement and stakeholder interviews, P.U.M.A. identified a number of opportunities to further economic prosperity in Prowers County. The opportunities are grouped into five general categories: Processing/Manufacturing/Distribution, Agriculture, Retail & Restaurants, Services, and Tourism & Recreation. The following pages provide a brief description of each category and the top opportunities within each. Specific details and action steps for the top opportunities are provided in the Action Plan on pages 26 to 37.*





**PROCESSING/  
MANUFACTURING/  
DISTRIBUTION**



**SERVICES**



**AGRICULTURE**



**TOURISM &  
RECREATION**



**RETAIL &  
RESTAURANTS**



# PROCESSING, MANUFACTURING & DISTRIBUTION

## OVERVIEW

*Prowers County is an attractive location for industry that needs significant space to operate and the ability to easily move products. It sits at the nexus of Highway 287 and 50, has access to rail, available infrastructure, and land that is inexpensive compared to the Front Range. Plus, there are already a number of successful industrial businesses that can be built upon. The opportunities in this section include attracting new businesses that add value to existing industry, new processing operations that utilize local products, and services that support and take advantage of the 2,400 trucks that pass through Lamar on Hwy. 287 each day*

## TOP OPPORTUNITIES

### ***1. Complementary Businesses & Training***

There is an opportunity to attract new manufacturing or processing businesses that support and add value to existing industries in Prowers. While independently, one business may not generate enough volume to support a new business venture, identifying common needs among multiple Prowers businesses can generate sufficient demand for new ventures. A packaging facility, for example, could create efficiencies for multiple Prowers businesses that currently have their goods packaged outside of the County. The more businesses can utilize local products and services; the more money stays in the local economy. In addition to complementary new businesses, there are opportunities for trainings to strengthen existing businesses. One example P.U.M.A. heard during



community outreach efforts was management training to help employee work ethic and retention.

### ***2. Local Products Processing***

Prowers County should seek new businesses that utilize, and add value to, local products. This creates a new and diversified outlet for producers' products and keeps more money in the local economy. Additionally, new businesses that rely on local inputs have a reason to be in Prowers County and will be less likely to relocate at a later date. Sorghum and millet, for example, are popular crops grown in Prowers. While these grains are currently used for livestock feed, both are gluten free and gaining popularity for human consumption with the growing awareness of gluten intolerance and expanding market for gluten-free products. A food-grade

mill that produces gluten-free flours from the sorghum and millet grown in Prowers, would utilize local inputs, create new jobs and add a diversified stream of income for producers should they choose to use a portion of their crop for such use. A facility like this may also spur interest in new crops that make sense for the County. The yellow field pea, for instance, is extremely water efficient and an excellent source of protein. It can be used for cattle feed as well as processed into flour for human consumption. There is a burgeoning market for pulses (protein flours) which could be made from the yellow field pea at a mill like this. A new mill should start small and scale over time as demand permits. With growth there may be opportunities for ancillary businesses such as a bakery or cooking class.

### 3. Trucking Services

2,400 trucks pass through Lamar each day on Highway 287 and this number is expected to grow. Prowers County should seek new businesses that support the trucking industry. One suggestion that arose during community outreach was a truck wash that offers specialized sanitary washes needed to transport a variety of food products. There are also ample backhaul opportunities for Prowers businesses to connect with empty return trucks that can distribute their products. As a standalone operation or in conjunction with other trucking services, Lamar could develop a trucking depot, similar to the service offered in Pritchett, CO that allows drivers to drop a trailer once they reach their maximum hours and acquire a new driver to continue the trip.

## BUILD ON ASSETS



New businesses that support and add value to existing industries in Prowers.



New businesses that use and add value to local products.



New businesses that support the trucking industry.



# AGRICULTURE

## OVERVIEW

*Agriculture is the backbone of Prowers County and a critical industry to keep vital. Water pressures from the Front Range, drought conditions, and a decline in commodity crop prices are among the challenges facing the County's agriculture community. The opportunities in this section look to stem the loss of agriculture jobs and land by diversifying producers' income, connecting with the next generation of farmers and ranchers for succession planning, and building off of the existing base to attract new jobs in agriculture research, technology and distribution.*

## TOP OPPORTUNITIES

### 1. Research & Technology

There is an opportunity to build from the deep agricultural knowledge inherent to Prowers and attract research units interested in addressing the area's agricultural challenges. New technologies and practices can make agriculture more efficient and profitable and producers are more likely to be early adopters of such practices in locations where the research takes place. Prowers County owns a building and a small amount of acreage outside of Lamar that could be used as a research facility for testing new crops and growing techniques. Providing such a space could be an incentive for attracting researchers.

There are also opportunities to pair agricultural knowledge with new technologies, such as smartphone apps. Agricultural software is a growing field and was identified as one of the best new industries for starting a business in 2015. Lamar Community College already has a well-respected



agriculture program and could explore adding a software development curriculum to prompt students to explore the intersections of such fields.

### 2. Distribution

Due to transportation access and available and inexpensive land, Prowers County can market itself to agricultural distributors. Strong targets are expanding mid-sized distributors operating in the west, southwest, or midwest. For example, a company like Ben E. Keith Foods serves 11 states throughout the southwest but does not yet have a distribution or sales office in Colorado.

### 3. Diversification

Diversifying producers' income is important for the long term success of the agriculture industry. There are many opportunities for diversification including introducing new crops, using existing crops in new ways (e.g. growing grain for food vs. feed); specialty agriculture, or non-agricultural activities that take place on producers' land. Specialty agriculture can be

done on a small scale using a portion of a producers' total acreage. This gives producers the chance to continue 'business as usual' while testing a new market on a small scale. Perhaps even more importantly, specialty agriculture is appealing to the next generation of farmers and ranchers due to its potential for good profits without a large investment in land, machinery or infrastructure. It can be a way reconnect with children who have left or an opportunity to lease a small amount of land to a beginning farmer or rancher who is looking for a way to break into the industry. Opportunities for additional revenue streams that are not directly related to agriculture but that take place on agricultural lands can include activities such as fee-based hunting access, hunting cabins or other guest cabins, private birding trails, and alternative energy generation depending on the location

#### 4. Alternative Energy

Prowers County has natural assets including wind, sun and (canal) water that can be harnessed for energy. With most land in private ownership, these opportunities would likely take place on private lands, meaning perpetual new revenue streams for land owners who are interested. Utility scale solar or wind developments are large endeavors that require transmission studies that may or may not be feasible. However, the County can and should indicate to energy development companies and utilities that Prowers is open to renewable energy development and tout that the County was one of the first in Colorado to site a wind farm, which remains one of the largest in the country. On a smaller scale and potentially more feasible, canal owners could explore building a small hydro plant to captures energy through water leaving the canal system for irrigation.

## PROUD HERITAGE. INNOVATIVE FUTURE



photo source: pexels.com

Place Prowers at the cutting edge of agricultural innovations.



photo source: USDA

Prowers is a logical location for agricultural distribution services.



photo source: P.U.M.A. staff

Diversification is important for the long term vitality of the industry.



photo source: wikimedia commons

Harness Prowers natural assets through new renewable energy generation.



# RETAIL & RESTAURANTS

## OVERVIEW

*Prowers County has a number of great retail and restaurant establishments within its towns. However, data and resident feedback reveal unmet demand for certain retail goods and food services, meaning residents are spending money elsewhere to fill these needs. The opportunities in this section seek to fill gaps, generate additional employment opportunities, fill vacant storefronts and add amenities needed to help retain and attract young people back to the County.*

## TOP OPPORTUNITIES

### 1. Food Services

A survey of County residents revealed significant interest in new restaurants with a majority of respondents saying new restaurants would make Prowers County a more desirable place to live and work. Specific interest was shown in locally-owned, upscale establishments; many mentioned a steakhouse specifically as well as restaurants with outdoor seating options. In addition to restaurants, craft beer is a growing staple in many Colorado communities, both large and small. A Prowers brewery is recommended within the processing/manufacturing/distribution category, and an associated small brew pub with outdoor seating would be an attractive amenity for residents, in particular young adults who have grown accustomed to living near such amenities. Del Norte, with a population less than 2,000, has one of Colorado's smallest craft breweries, and has been largely successful. The family owned and operated business started in 2005 and utilizes locally grown malt, hops



photo source: P.U.M.A. staff

*Three Barrel Brewing, Del Norte, Colorado*

and honey from the San Luis Valley. They also have a limited food menu to pair with their beer.

Prowers Economic Prosperity (PEP) can help showcase opportunities in new food and beverage businesses by arranging an "Opportunity Fair." This event would serve as a platform to match business ideas with entrepreneurs, funding, and sources of technical assistance. This event can and should be used to promote many new business opportunities, not just those in food services. Holding this event around the holidays or school alumni events can help capture an audience that has left Prowers but may be interesting in moving back for the right opportunity.

### 2. Cottage Industries

There is a renewed and growing interest among consumers for purchasing local products and restaurants and shop owners are increasingly keen to

carry and market such products. Cottage industries, using local inputs, is a way for people in rural areas to make a living from self-employment that does not require a large capital outlay. Additionally, the Colorado Cottage Food Act has made it easier to sell small batch, home production food products. Locally made food products (honey, jams, sunflower butter), crafts, and personal care items like salves and lotions can be sold initially through existing retailers or restaurants that have extra space and the desire to carry a small offering. As the market for these products grows, a group of local artisans may want to open a new shared retail space dedicated to selling 'Prowers Proud' products. In addition to selling products in-store, online platforms have enabled artisans to reach a much larger audience, helping to supplement more modest in-store revenues. Etsy is a popular platform for selling individuals' crafts and Amazon recently launched a new online store called 'Handmade'. A plethora of online tutorials and 'how-to' websites help inform new artisans how to get started. As crafts are perfected, artisans have additional revenue opportunities through workshops and classes that teach others.

### 3. Retail Goods

The County survey and stakeholder interviews identified retail gaps. The large majority of respondents reported leaving Prowers County to purchase clothing and a number of respondents also listed groceries, home furnishings and pet supplies as items that they purchased elsewhere. The Lamar Market Niche Assessment conducted in 2013 by Arland Land Use Economics also identified retail gaps in clothing and home furnishings as well as sporting goods. Prowers County should look for ways to fill retail gaps to keep more money spent locally. Filling vacancies with new retail adds vibrancy to the community and enables residents to attain most of what they need locally, thereby improving quality of life. New hybrid in-store/online retail formats may be effective models for new retail in Prowers. For example, a showroom style retail outlet for men's clothing would have a store location for the customer to try on the clothes but instead of leaving the store with their purchase, an order is placed online and shipped to their home. This provides efficiencies for the store owner who does not have to carry as much inventory, while still providing a pleasant in-store experience for the customer. As many rural business owners know, diversifying is key. Business owners should get creative about combining retail, services and/or activities into one storefront, for instance, a laundry mat combined with a small arcade near Lamar Community College or a café with an adjacent dog park.

## FILL THE GAPS



photo source: P.U.M.A. staff

Identified demand for additional restaurants.



photo source: Pixabay

Opportunity for self-employment with homemade products.



photo source: Pixabay

Local demand for clothing.



# SERVICES

## OVERVIEW

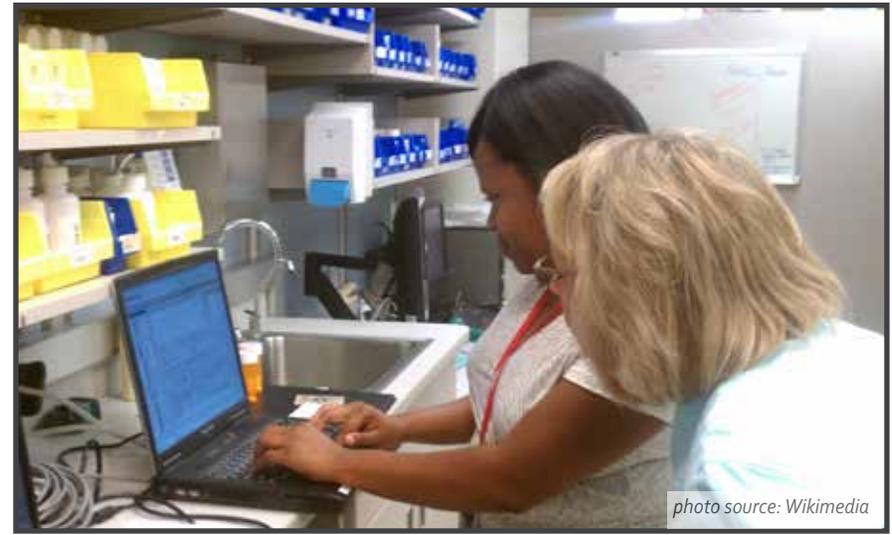
*The services sector provides opportunities for a range of skill sets. The opportunities in this section seek to fill gaps in services to increase dollars spent locally, utilize the trades offered through Lamar Community College to retain students after graduation, and take advantage of lifestyles trends such as aging in place and remote workplaces.*

## TOP OPPORTUNITIES

### 1. Health & Medical Services

Access to adequate medical care is a major factor when considering where to live. Prowers County is fortunate to have two major medical facilities, High Plains Community Health Center (High Plains) and Prowers Medical Center (PMC) that serve as economic anchors. P.U.M.A. also heard from stakeholders that there is significant leakage in medical services, with many residents leaving the County to have their medical services provided elsewhere. Prowers medical facilities are aware of the leakage and are working together to better communicate the services that are offered and recruit additional medical professionals to fill gaps in service where feasible. While Prowers Economic Prosperity (PEP) cannot directly recruit new medical professionals, the organization can ensure that supporting the County's medical facilities is a priority. Additionally, PEP will be working to bring new amenities (retail, restaurant, entertainment) to the County that may help in employee recruitment.

According to the medical community, one of the biggest challenges to recruiting new medical professionals is quality housing. PMC and High



Plains may want to explore operating a housing program to help with employee recruitment and retention. One option is to provide credit enhancements such as leasing commitments or loan guarantees to help property owners rehab and upgrade their properties for rent. The medical facilities could have a special certification program, which signals to prospective employees that these homes meet certain standards. Alternatively, to encourage a longer commitment from medical professionals, PMC and High Plains could initiate a rent-to-own program where they acquire a small number of properties, rehab them and rent to new employees. If the employee stays with the hospital for 5 years or another determined duration, the prior rent payments are converted to a down payment on the home. If the professional chooses to leave, they lose their option to buy the home and it is rented to another employee, who has a similar option to buy. PEP could assist PMC and High Plains in convening housing working groups, researching similar initiatives, identifying potential partners and ultimately helping to market the program.

Senior care is a growing area of opportunity as the population ages. More seniors are choosing to age in place and the Bureau of Labor statistics predicts 70% job growth for home health and personal care aides over the coming decade. In-home caregivers earn good hourly wages and the care is generally less expensive for the elderly than assisted living facilities. Prowers should explore the possibility of attracting an in-home care

businesses or seek an entrepreneur interested in opening a franchise of an expanding organization like Visiting Angels. Given the demographic make-up of Prowers it would be important that the franchise is capable of accepting Medicare and Medicaid, in addition to private insurance.

## 2. Prowers-Based Services

There are service gaps in Prowers that, if filled, can keep more money spent locally and improve quality of life for residents. In addition to medical services detailed above, demand has been indicated for electricians, plumbers and other repair services. Prowers should utilize Lamar Community College (LCC) as a resource for young talent in these trades and seek to match these students as they graduate with opportunities in the community. PEP can help facilitate these opportunities by encouraging local companies to create a shared position for an electrician or other trade to help kick-start a new service business. PEP can also explore whether there is unmet demand for services that do not have courses offered at LCC and whether there are opportunities to add this curriculum at the community college or high school level.

## 3. Outsourced Services

A growing number of services can be provided remotely, meaning they can be done anywhere – including Prowers County. Nationally, remote jobs are growing in bookkeeping, accounting, sales, advertising, and computer support. The beauty of such jobs is their ultimate flexibility, however, this can also be a downfall if Prowers is trying to recruit businesses that are not prone to leave. For this reason, Prowers may want to grow remote work opportunities in areas that relate to Prowers industries. The medical billing office in Holly is a successful example.

Freelance contract work is another growing field, in large part due to new online talent-matching platforms that help to connect freelancers with job opportunities in their field, as well as co-working spaces that make remote workers feel less isolated. Providing a co-working space in Prowers that also serves as a place for residents to get connected with resources and opportunities for remote work would be a great asset - particularly for spouses who have not been able to find a job in Prowers

# THINK OUTSIDE THE CUBICLE



Support medical facilities in recruiting new services.



Identified need for services in Prowers, including electricians



Growing opportunity in remote work and freelance jobs that can be done anywhere.



# TOURISM & RECREATION

## OVERVIEW

*Prowers County has unique historical and cultural assets and a number of recreational opportunities to draw visitors. While many places compete for visitors during the summer, Prowers could look to attract visitors during the shoulder season (spring and fall) when its temperature is most pleasant. Opportunities in this section build off of Prowers natural assets and augment initiatives already taking place. While these opportunities may create a few direct jobs, their primary intent is to grow tourism, which supports existing and potentially new businesses. In addition to drawing visitors, top notch recreation options add to the desirability of Prowers County as a place to live, which in turn helps to draw new businesses.*

## TOP OPPORTUNITIES

### 1. Hunting

Small game is readily found in Prowers County and hunting for small game is a great starting place for youth to develop their skills and an appreciation for the outdoors. Growing Prowers reputation as a place where the whole family can enjoy a hunting experience will generate a greater number of visitors and reinforce Prowers image as a family-friendly community. In addition to the Two Shot Celebrity Goose Hunt (21+), Prowers should consider hosting an annual small game tournament that is inclusive of youth to further build its hunting reputation. Youth hunting clinics have been held on occasion in State Wildlife Areas in Prowers and are reported to be quite popular. There could be a new business opportunity for a youth hunting camp that teaches skills like dog handling, archery, and game cleaning. Prowers should also seek opportunities for ancillary businesses,

such as a hunting lodge or cabins in proximity to State Wildlife Areas.

### 2. Birding

Southeast Colorado has the largest concentration of North American birds on the continent.<sup>1</sup> While there are public areas that have good birding, such as the Willow Creek Park Trail in Lamar and a number of State Wildlife Areas, some visitors prefer a more private experience that could be offered on private lands for a fee. There are some property owners in Prowers who already offer private birding trails on their property. There is an opportunity for an experienced birder to package and lead a tour of the best places for birding among Prowers County parks, lakes and private lands. Additional marketing of birding opportunities, attracting birding conventions or tours, and working with local and regional birding associations to promote Prowers sites, can further raise Prowers' profile in the birding community. Plus, birders have been found to enjoy heritage activities, which is another area of opportunity in Prowers.



photo source: P.U.M.A. staff

*Music Meadows Ranch: Colorado Dude Ranch & Horseback Riding in Westcliffe, CO*

### 3. Heritage

Heritage tourism is a growing industry of travelers interested in experiencing places and activities that embody the past. Research shows 76% of all leisure travelers nationwide participate in cultural and/or heritage activities while traveling.<sup>2</sup> Visitor surveys consistently show that

1. Canyons and Plains of Southeast Colorado

2. Mandala Research LLC, 2013

visitors to Colorado are particularly drawn to destinations with historic character and authenticity. Prowers County has an interesting history and several well-known historical assets that can attract visitors. The key is packaging activities together to create a larger draw. Camp Amache, for example, is already attracting visitors but could have even higher visitation if it was cross marketed with other historical sites like Bent's Old Fort and Sand Creek Massacre. This creates *three* reasons to visit southeast Colorado, a 'triangle of heritage tourism.'. In addition to historic sites, Prowers western history lends itself to new businesses that offer experiential opportunities such as horseback riding, archery, and chuck wagon cook-outs. These activities can be marketed and packaged as weekend itineraries for visitors who want to experience the 'wild west'. The fact that the Santa Fe Trail crosses through the County adds to its western image and appeal.

#### 4. Trails

According to a Sport & Fitness Industry Association survey, adventure racing and trail running are two activities showing large increases in popularity. Prowers can develop unique trails that not only improve quality outdoor recreation for current and future residents but also help attract visitors. There is a growing national movement to convert abandoned railways into multi-use trails. An abandoned railway runs from Holly in Prowers County to Swink in Otero County. While the total distance is over 80 miles, a segment of this railway could be converted to a multi-use 'Sugar Trail' in tribute to the two sugar companies responsible for building the line. The trail would be a great asset for County and regional residents and visitors. Prowers could host adventure races or elite running races along the trail to draw exposure.

## NATURAL ASSETS



photo source: Southeastern Outdoors

Prowers County has abundant small game.



photo source: wikimedia

Southeast Colorado has the largest concentration of North American birds on the continent.



photo source: flickr

Colorado visitors are drawn to places with historic character and authenticity.



photo source: P.U.M.A. staff

High quality outdoor recreation options are attractive to visitors and improve quality of life for residents.

# 04

## OPPORTUNITY MAP

### WILEY

- Gluten-Free Food-Grade Mill
- Housing Rehab and Conversion of Commercial Properties
- Live/Work Accommodations for Craft/Artisan
- Commercial Kitchen

### LAMAR

- Packaging Facility
- Trucking Services
- Hemp Fiber Processing
- Agriculture Distribution Center
- Sports Style Family Restaurant
- Sports Apparel & Equipment
- Showroom Style Retail
- Health & Medical Services
- Ag Tech @ LCC
- Host Tournaments, Conventions
- Remote Work

*The map below indicates where specific initiatives can take place in Prowers County. This is not meant to be prescriptive but rather to highlight locational strengths for certain initiatives.*



### BRISTOL, HARTMAN, UNINCORPORATED

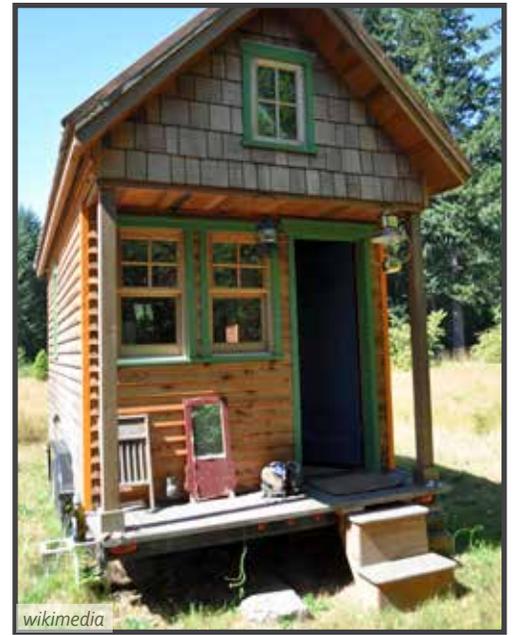
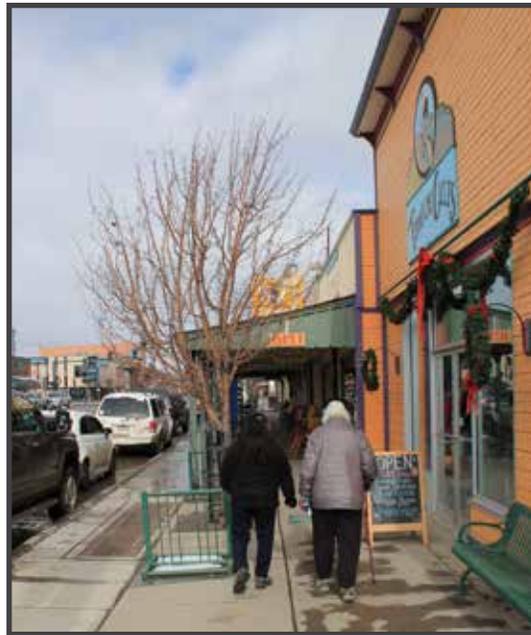
- Home-Based Craft/Food Production
- Remote/Freelance Work
- Hunting/Birding Fee-Based Access
- Hunting Cabins
- Heritage-Based Tourism (e.g. Horseback Riding)
- Agriculture Diversification
- Alternative Energy
- Rail Trail

### GRANADA

- Brewery/Brew Pub
- Mobile Services
- Senior Facility/Home Care
- Food Service
- Tourist Information/Gift Shop
- Hunting Lodge or Cabins; Youth Camps

### HOLLY

- Dairy Processing Plant
- Food Services & Retail on Main Street
- Boomerang Service Businesses/Co-Working Space
- Remote Work/Home-Based Businesses
- Hunting Lodge or Cabins; Youth Camps



# 05

## THE ACTION PLAN

P.U.M.A. heard from stakeholders a desire for a Plan that is specific and actionable. The action plan on the following pages provides a high level of detail for each of the top opportunities identified within the five categories of the Plan, including: the goal, relationship to key themes, why it is important, suggested targets, action steps, possible partners and funding sources. The suggested targets are a list of specific businesses or initiatives, within more general opportunities, that came out of community input and P.U.M.A. research. The action steps are broken into two phases, initial steps and further steps. Initial steps are intended to happen within the first one to two years following the hire of a new Executive Director for PEP. **Quick wins** are indicated in bold and were identified as actions that can be completed in short order with a tangible outcome. Further steps will happen in subsequent years and should be re-evaluated based on the outcomes of initial steps. While some action steps are unique to one opportunity, others, such as the "Opportunity Fair," apply to multiple opportunities and are listed accordingly.





PROCESSING/ MFCT/DISTRIB.	AGRICULTURE	RETAIL & RESTAURANTS	SERVICES	TOURISM & RECREATION
1. COMPLEMENTARY BUSINESSES & TRAINING	1. RESEARCH & TECHNOLOGY	1. FOOD SERVICES	1. HEALTH & MEDICAL SERVICES	1. HUNTING
2. LOCAL PRODUCTS PROCESSING	2. DISTRIBUTION	2. COTTAGE INDUSTRIES	2. PROWERS-BASED SERVICES	2. BIRDING
3. TRUCKING SERVICES	3. DIVERSIFICATION	3. RETAIL GOODS	3. OUTSOURCED & REMOTE WORK	3. HERITAGE
	4. ALTERNATIVE ENERGY			4. TRAILS



# PROCESSING, MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION | ACTION PLAN

Complementary  
Businesses & Training

Local Products Processing

Trucking Services

GOAL(S)	KEYTHEMES	WHY IMPORTANT	PROWERS ASSETS	SUGGESTED TARGETS
Recruit new businesses that support and add value to existing industry. Provide trainings that strengthen existing businesses	Leverage Local  Take Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Businesses support one another; provide efficiencies</li> <li>Enables existing businesses to use more local products and services, keeping more money spent in the County</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business clusters and similarities</li> <li>Common needs among businesses</li> <li>Gravel pit/sand for glass making</li> <li>Discarded tires</li> <li>Lamar industrial park vacancies</li> <li>Lamar Community College</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Packaging facility</li> <li>Hydraulics</li> <li>New manufacturing businesses related to existing businesses</li> <li>Used tire grinding for County road re-surfacing</li> <li>Advanced certified welding course through LCC; other vocational courses with demand</li> <li>Management training for existing businesses</li> <li>Local regulatory staff/consultant to work with manufacturers</li> </ul>
Attract new businesses that utilize and add value to local products	Leverage Local  Scale Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creates new markets for producers' goods</li> <li>Businesses that rely on local inputs are less likely to relocate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Precedent of existing businesses using local products, e.g. Colorado Mills</li> <li>Abundant sorghum and millet (gluten-free grains)</li> <li>Lamar industrial park vacancies</li> <li>New dairy locating near Holly</li> <li>Arkansas River (perpetual water source)</li> <li>Good municipal water in Granada</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food Grade (gluten free) milling facility</li> <li>Hemp fiber/meal processing</li> <li>Dairy processing plant</li> <li>Brewery/Brew Pub</li> </ul>
Grow new businesses that support the trucking industry	Leverage Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Builds on Prowers "middle of everywhere" location and existing truck traffic</li> <li>New distribution channels for Prowers businesses through backhaul</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2,400 trucks daily on Hwy. 287 through Lamar</li> <li>Ports-to-Plains corridor</li> <li>Port of Entry</li> <li>Lamar industrial park vacancies</li> <li>Road-to-Rail opportunities</li> <li>Truck wash infrastructure near Wiley</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specialized truck wash (e.g., Kosher, sanitary washes)</li> <li>Backhaul logistics</li> <li>Trucking depot (trailer drop off/pick up)</li> <li>Distribution center</li> </ul>

INITIAL STEPS (1-2 YRS)	FURTHER STEPS	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Prepare County information profile to market to prospective companies (utilize City of Lamar template)</b></li> <li>• Partner with existing businesses in pitch/recruitment efforts.</li> <li>• Initiate conversations with potential local partners (e.g. LCC for new courses or W.H.O. for tire grinding)</li> <li>• Explore forming a sector partnership to convene local/regional manufacturers and public partners to address common needs and challenges (e.g. NoCo Manufacturing Partnership)</li> <li>• Attend a manufacturing trade show or conference with local manufacturing representatives (e.g. FABTECH)</li> <li>• Solidify business concepts for the "Opportunity Fair"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote and host the first Prowers "Opportunity Fair"</li> <li>• Assess desire for a Community Venture Fund concept</li> <li>• Explore feasibility of a County incentive to encourage Prowers businesses to purchase local inputs where possible</li> <li>• Continue to convene partners and recruit businesses</li> </ul>	<p>LCC, Northern Colorado (NoCo) Manufacturing Partnership, existing businesses, SCEDD, SECED, SEBREA, County, city and town leadership, entrepreneurs, PEP board</p>	<p>DOLA waste tire recycling incentives, private sector, County incentive, OEDIT incentives and financing, Enterprise Zone tax credits, USDA business loans &amp; grants, SECED business loan fund, Prowers banks, Prowers Community Venture Fund, PEP staff time</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Contact existing companies looking for expansion that use current or proposed local products (e.g. Fort Lupton PureHemp)</b></li> <li>• Evaluate sites that could accommodate a small scale brewery</li> <li>• <b>Host a pop-up brewery/brew pub event to showcase possible location and generate excitement about the concept</b></li> <li>• Research business feasibility and case studies for a gluten free mill (e.g. Hodgsons, Dakota, Hayden)</li> <li>• Convene meeting with Dairy Farmers of America to pitch Prowers as the location for a new dairy processing facility.</li> <li>• Solidify business concepts for the "Opportunity Fair"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Host Prowers "Opportunity Fair".</li> <li>• Assess desire for a Community Venture Fund</li> <li>• Seek private investor partners for a mobile test unit for milling or other desired processing to prove the market for a permanent facility</li> <li>• Explore coop business models for new facilities that allows producers or a third party to purchase shares over time from the initial investors</li> <li>• Targeted business attraction efforts</li> <li>• Assist businesses with resources and guidance for scaling up</li> </ul>	<p>Agriculture community, entrepreneurs, Dairy Farmers of America, Coloradoboy.com for brewery guidance, Grow Hemp Colorado, SCEDD; SECED, SEBREA, County, city and town leadership, entrepreneurs, PEP board</p>	<p>Private sector, Enhanced Rural Ag Processing Enterprise Zone Jobs Tax Credit, Farm Credit, County incentive, OEDIT incentives and financing, USDA business loans &amp; grants, SECED business loan fund, Prowers banks, Prowers Community Venture Fund; PEP staff time</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research case studies of successful trucking related businesses (e.g. truck depot in Pritchett)</li> <li>• <b>Prepare County information profile to market to prospective companies (utilize City of Lamar template)</b></li> <li>• Research companies driving empty return trucks and explore distribution needs of local businesses</li> <li>• Match companies seeking cargo to backhaul with Prowers businesses looking for distribution opportunities.</li> <li>• Solidify business concepts for the "Opportunity Fair"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote and host the first Prowers "Opportunity Fair"</li> <li>• Assess desire for a Community Venture Fund concept</li> <li>• Targeted business attraction efforts</li> <li>• Assist businesses with resources and guidance for scaling up</li> <li>• Work with Port of Entry to improve perceptions of customer service</li> </ul>	<p>Trucking companies, local businesses, apps like TruckerPath, American Trucking Associations, SCEDD; SECED, SEBREA, County, city and town leadership, entrepreneurs, PEP board</p>	<p>Private sector; County incentive, OEDIT incentives and financing, Enterprise Zone tax credits, USDA business loans &amp; grants, SECED business loan fund, Prowers banks, Prowers Community Venture Fund, PEP staff time</p>



# AGRICULTURE | ACTION PLAN

Research & Technology

Distribution

Diversification

Alternative Energy

GOAL(S)	KEYTHEMES	WHY IMPORTANT	PROWERS ASSETS	SUGGESTED TARGETS
Place Prowers at the cutting edge of new agriculture innovations	Leverage Local Take Initiative Next Gen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New technologies can make Agriculture more efficient and profitable</li> <li>Producers are more likely to be early adopters of new technologies in locations where research is taking place</li> <li>Agricultural software identified as one of the best new industries to start a business in 2015</li> <li>Innovations in agriculture appeal to the next generation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Well regarded LCC agriculture program</li> <li>Deep agricultural knowledge among producers</li> <li>County land and facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>USDA-Agricultural Research Services (ARS) unit</li> <li>'Ag Tech' track with LCC</li> <li>Ag-tech start-ups</li> </ul>
Attract an agriculture distributor. Grow other distribution channels	Leverage Local Take Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilizes locational strengths including highway and rail access – which is increasingly important to the agriculture industry.</li> <li>Possible efficiencies for local producers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agriculture industry</li> <li>Available, inexpensive land (industrial park)</li> <li>Hwy. 287 &amp; Hwy. 50</li> <li>Truck route and traffic</li> <li>Port of Entry</li> <li>BNSF Rail line</li> <li>Road-to-Rail opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional ag distributor (e.g. Ben E. Keith Foods/ Winn Meat)</li> <li>[See Trucking Services]</li> </ul>
Diversify revenue streams. Connect with the next generation of farmers and ranchers for succession planning	Next Gen Scale Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aging Farmers and ranchers need to connect with next generation for succession planning</li> <li>Diversifying the range of products grown strengthens long term vitality of the industry</li> <li>Specialty agriculture has potential for a greater return per acre than traditional commodities</li> <li>Specialty ag opportunities can be enticing to young farmers, as they have potential for good profits without as large of an investment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Farm and ranch land</li> <li>Resourceful; entrepreneurial producers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New water efficient crops (e.g. hemp; yellow field pea)</li> <li>Specialty agriculture (e.g. aeroponics/greenhouses; goat dairy; quail meat)</li> </ul>
Attract new investment in alternative energy	Take Initiative Leverage Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides additional streams of revenue</li> <li>Utilizes Prowers natural assets</li> <li>Prowers was the first county in Colorado to install a wind farm; can continue to cultivate its image as a leader in wind energy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Excellent wind resources</li> <li>Abundant sunshine</li> <li>Canals</li> <li>Colorado Green Wind Power Project</li> <li>General community/county support for renewables</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wind Farm</li> <li>Small hydro plant at canal</li> <li>Solar and Wind Assessment Pivots (SWAP) program</li> </ul>

<i>INITIAL STEPS (1-2 YRS)</i>	<i>FURTHER STEPS</i>	<i>POTENTIAL PARTNERS</i>	<i>POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Convene meeting with USDA-ARS and interested producers to discuss research needs/opportunities</b></li> <li>• Explore feasibility of using a piece of County land as a crop research location; market to researchers through USDA-ARS and other outlets</li> <li>• Assess LCC's interest in developing and funding an 'Ag-Tech' track; to include software development courses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek opportunities to support emerging entrepreneurs.</li> <li>• Share information on best practices/lessons learned with new technologies, crops etc.</li> <li>• Market accomplishments.</li> </ul>	Farmers/ranchers, LCC, USDA- ARS, SBDC (La Junta), County, PEP board	SARE (sustainable agriculture) grants for research and education, PEP staff time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Prepare County profile/information to use in outreach to prospective companies (utilize City of Lamar template)</b></li> <li>• Outreach to agriculture community to identify possible connections to distributors</li> <li>• Research agriculture distribution companies; specifically, companies with networks in proximity to CO but not yet in the market</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to seek opportunities; recruit distribution business</li> </ul>	SCEDD, SECED, SEBREA, agriculture community; rail owners, County, City of Lamar, PEP board	Private sector; County incentive, OEDIT incentives and financing, Enterprise Zone tax credits, SECED business loan fund, Prowers banks, PEP staff time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Share information about Land Link Colorado w/ farmers/ranchers.</b></li> <li>• <b>Host hemp seminar to provide producers with information on how to get started. Invite entrepreneurs looking for land to grow hemp</b></li> <li>• <b>Convene a group of producers interested/willing to test small amounts of new crops that make sense for the area</b></li> <li>• Explore interest in an agriculture sector partnership, to convene local farmers/ranchers and public partners to address common needs and challenges in the agriculture industry (See Alamosa Value Added Ag Sector Partnership as example)</li> <li>• Advocate for water solutions that keeps water in Prowers and allow flexibility of use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Host regular seminars for topics of shared interest (e.g. regulations for growing food vs. feed)</li> <li>• Continue to advocate for water solutions that keep water in Prowers and allow flexibility of use</li> <li>• Share lessons learned from crop trials</li> </ul>	Land Link Colorado; Colorado Farm Bureau, agriculture community; USDA -RD; Grow Hemp Colorado, Colorado Seed Growers Association, PEP board	Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, Farm Credit, Liquid Assets Project, PEP staff time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Reach out to utilities and let them know Prowers is interested and open for business in renewable energy</b></li> <li>• Identify whether there are energy development companies that own or lease land in Prowers; understand their needs</li> <li>• Share information with producers about CSU Extension's SWAP program which places solar panels on fallow corners of pivot irrigation to off-set costs</li> <li>• Reach out to Colorado Department of Agriculture for small hydro feasibility study. Convene working group of agriculture producers with water conveyance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refresh contacts, continue research and outreach for renewable energy development</li> </ul>	Lamar Light and Power, Arkansas River Power Authority, Xcel, Tri State, CSU Extension, energy development companies, Colorado Department of Agriculture; private land owners, PEP board	Private sector; utilities, Farm Credit, Colorado Department of Agriculture for small hydro feasibility study, USDA community facilities program for solar garden, PEP staff time



# RETAIL AND RESTAURANTS | ACTION PLAN

Food Services

Cottage Industries

Retail Goods

GOAL(S)	KEY THEMES	WHY IMPORTANT	PROWERS ASSETS	SUGGESTED TARGETS
<p><i>Meet identified demand for food services; fill vacant storefronts</i></p>	<p>Next Gen</p> <p>Leverage Local</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identified food service gaps that, if filled, will generate more money spent locally</li> <li>New food service establishments can fill vacancies and add community vibrancy, making Prowers an even more desirable place to live</li> <li>New food and beverage services can be attractive amenities for young people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrated demand for new restaurants</li> <li>Existing turn-key businesses for sale (e.g. Triple T Steakhouse)</li> <li>Affordable, available commercial properties</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Steakhouse (upscale; date night)</li> <li>Family-friendly sports style restaurant ('where you go after the game')</li> <li>Brew pub</li> <li>New locally-owned restaurants; with outdoor seating option</li> </ul>
<p><i>Generate interest and production in cottage industries; retail products locally</i></p>	<p>Leverage Local</p> <p>Scale Up</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cottage industries are a way for people in rural areas to supplement income from self-employment that does not require a large capital outlay</li> <li>Renewed interest among consumers in purchasing 'local'</li> <li>New online retail outlets catering to homemade products create avenues to reach a wider market</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Underemployed skilled population</li> <li>Affordable, available commercial properties</li> <li>Lamar Main Street Pocket Park as possible vendor space</li> <li>Existing retail businesses with space to carry additional products</li> <li>Easily accessible online tutorials to teach homemade crafts</li> <li>Closed school kitchen in Granada</li> <li>Wiley meat processing facility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local food products</li> <li>Personal care products (e.g. soaps, lotions, salves)</li> <li>Heritage-based crafts (e.g. custom saddles)</li> <li>Commercial kitchen</li> <li>Prowers Flea</li> </ul>
<p><i>Meet identified demand for retail goods; fill vacant storefronts</i></p>	<p>Next Gen</p> <p>Scale Up</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are identified retail gaps that, if filled, will generate more money spent locally and better satisfy residents' needs</li> <li>New retail establishments can fill vacancies and add community vibrancy, making Prowers an even more desirable place to live</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrated retail demand</li> <li>Affordable, available commercial properties</li> <li>Quaint main streets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Men and women's clothing (professional attire for men)</li> <li>Sports apparel &amp; equipment (additional variety)</li> <li>Home improvement, furnishings</li> <li>Prowers Virtual Mall</li> </ul>

<i>INITIAL STEPS (1-2 YRS)</i>	<i>FURTHER STEPS</i>	<i>POTENTIAL PARTNERS</i>	<i>POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Help market for sale, turn-key businesses to new operators</b></li> <li>• <b>Help prove the market for new food services by supporting temporary 'pop-up' demonstrations (e.g. BBQ after sports games and survey families about interest and price points for an 'after the game' restaurant)</b></li> <li>• Research other rural towns successful food services and share lessons learned (e.g. Three Barrel Brewing in Del Norte)</li> <li>• Begin solidifying business concepts for the "Opportunity Fair"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote and host the first Prowers "Opportunity Fair"</li> <li>• Assess desire for a Community Venture Fund concept</li> <li>• Connect new food service businesses with planning assistance and financing resources</li> <li>• Continue to lend support to and advocate for new business that fill gaps and meet residents and visitors' needs</li> </ul>	<p>SECED, SCEDD, SEBREA, SBDC (La Junta), Main Street Lamar, Coloradoboy.com (Aspiring Restaurateur Guide), existing businesses, County, city and town leadership, entrepreneurs, PEP board</p>	<p>Private sector, County incentive, Main Street Lamar, SCEDD, Enterprise Zone tax credits, USDA business loans &amp; grants, SECED business loan fund &amp; façade improvement program, Prowers banks, Prowers Community Venture Fund, PEP staff time</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Host a cottage industry workshop to engage potential artisans</b></li> <li>• Facilitate connections between cottage industry producers and existing vendors, i.e. local shops, museums, restaurants</li> <li>• Encourage vendors to carry and market local products</li> <li>• Educate consumers on the benefits of shopping locally</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate feasible locations and cost out options for a commercial kitchen</li> <li>• Explore locations for a new storefront where a collection of vendors can sell their "Prowers Proud" products</li> <li>• Consider establishing a "Prowers Flea" that rotates to each town one weekend a month during the summer</li> </ul>	<p>Local artisans, entrepreneurs, SEBREA, SECED, SCEDD, SBDC (La Junta); Main Street Lamar; existing businesses with extra retail space, commercial property owners, County, city and town leadership, PEP board</p>	<p>USDA business loans and grants (commercial kitchen); Main Street Lamar; SECED; SCEDD; state micro-lending organizations (e.g. Colorado Enterprise Fund), Community Venture Fund, PEP staff time</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Help prove the market for new retailers by supporting temporary 'pop up' retail opportunities (e.g. sporting goods sale in conjunction with a Healthy Places event)</b></li> <li>• Encourage partnership with existing retailers; add complementary not competing products</li> <li>• Host retail workshops on topics of interest (e.g. new trends in online/in-store retail models; strategies for building community patronage)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote and host the first Prowers "Opportunity Fair"</li> <li>• Assess desire for a Community Venture Fund concept</li> <li>• Connect new retail businesses with planning assistance and financing resources</li> <li>• Continue to lend support to and advocate for new business that fill gaps and meet residents' needs</li> </ul>	<p>SECED; SCEDD; SEBREA, SBDC (La Junta); Main Street Lamar, existing businesses, County, city and town leadership, entrepreneurs, PEP board</p>	<p>Private sector, County incentive, Main Street Lamar, SCEDD, Enterprise Zone tax credits, USDA business loans &amp; grants, SECED business loan fund &amp; façade improvement program, Prowers banks, Prowers Community Venture Fund, PEP staff time</p>



# SERVICES | ACTION PLAN

Health & Medical Services

Prowers-Based Services

Outsource; Remote Work

GOAL(S)	KEY THEMES	WHY IMPORTANT	PROWERS ASSETS	SUGGESTED TARGETS
<p>Support medical recruitment efforts for new services with substantial demand; including services for an aging population</p>	<p>Next Gen</p> <p>Leverage Local</p> <p>Scale-up</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to adequate medical care is a major factor when considering where to live</li> <li>• Medical is an economic anchor for the County</li> <li>• Demonstrated leakage in medical services</li> <li>• Population is aging; increased need for senior services</li> <li>• Trend toward aging in place; Bureau of Labor statistics predicts job growth of 70% for home health and personal care aides over the coming decade</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prowers Medical Center</li> <li>• High Plains Community Health Center</li> <li>• Senior living facilities</li> <li>• LCC nursing program</li> <li>• Demand for additional services</li> <li>• Affordable lifestyle for retirees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-home medical care</li> <li>• Specialties with indicated demand (e.g. internal medicine, OB/GYN)</li> <li>• Housing initiatives for employee recruitment</li> <li>• Physician residency program</li> </ul>
<p>Grow new businesses that meet identified local demand for services</p>	<p>Next Gen</p> <p>Scale-up</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are service gaps in Prowers that, if filled, can keep more money spent locally and improve the quality of life available in Prowers</li> <li>• Creates new jobs at a variety of skill levels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unmet demand for services creates opportunities</li> <li>• Local examples of successful new service businesses (e.g. cell phone repair)</li> <li>• LCC trade programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technology service and repair</li> <li>• Electricians</li> <li>• Plumbers</li> <li>• [See trucking services]</li> </ul>
<p>Attract new businesses that provide outsourced services related to key Prowers industries. Connect underemployed persons with remote work opportunities</p>	<p>Next Gen</p> <p>Leverage Local</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remote services can be done anywhere – including Prowers</li> <li>• Remote service industries are growing, particularly in the fields of accounting, sales, and computer support</li> <li>• New online platforms help connect talent with the right remote work opportunities; advantageous for spouses who have not found work in Prowers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful business prototypes (e.g. medical billing office in Holly)</li> <li>• Community connections</li> <li>• Spouses seeking employment opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bookkeeping, accounting</li> <li>• Sales, advertising</li> <li>• Computer support</li> <li>• Opportunities for freelancing</li> <li>• Co-working space</li> </ul>

INITIAL STEPS (1-2 YRS)	FURTHER STEPS	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Collaborate with medical facilities to quantify demand for in-home care and identify additional medical services with substantial need</b></li> <li>• Seek new amenities [see Retail &amp; Restaurants] that make Prowers more attractive for recruiting medical professionals</li> <li>• Explore medical-led initiatives to improve housing stock to assist in employee recruitment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research In-home health care businesses with a CO presence that are expanding</li> <li>• Explore partnership with medical facilities to lease space for In-home care providers that need infrequent office space</li> <li>• Work with LCC nursing to ensure local training prepares students for In-home care positions; assist in finding resources</li> <li>• Continue to support Prowers medical facilities in recruiting new professionals</li> </ul>	<p>Prowers Medical Center, High Plains Community Health Center, senior facilities, LCC, County, city and town leadership, entrepreneurs, PEP board</p>	<p>Private sector, medical facilities, Community Venture Fund, PEP staff time</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Host La Junta SBDC event at LCC for graduating students who may be interested in starting their own business</b></li> <li>• <b>Work with local companies to create a full-time, temporary <i>shared</i> position for an electrician or other trade, to help kick-start their business</b></li> <li>• Research additional service gaps and new business opportunities (initial suggestions on pg. 34)</li> <li>• Explore internship/apprentice programs through LCC</li> <li>• Solidify business concepts for the Opportunity Fair</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote and host the first Prowers “Opportunity Fair”</li> <li>• Assess desire for a Community Venture Fund concept</li> <li>• Initiate a trades networking group.</li> <li>• Continue to seek new service businesses that meet local demand</li> </ul>	<p>Private sector, LCC, high schools, existing businesses, Main Street Lamar, County, city and town leadership, SBDC La Junta, PEP board</p>	<p>Private sector, Main Street Lamar, SCEDD, USDA business loans &amp; grants, SECED business loan fund, Prowers banks, state micro-lending organizations (e.g. Colorado Enterprise Fund), Prowers Community Venture Fund, PEP staff time</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess common needs for outsourced activities among existing businesses</li> <li>• <b>Work with local companies to create a temporary <i>shared</i> position that serves the common need of multiple businesses</b></li> <li>• Tap into local knowledge; reach out to Prowers residents and businesses for connections to targeted industries</li> <li>• Research companies with outsource operations that are expanding</li> <li>• Solidify business concepts for the Opportunity Fair</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote and host the first Prowers “Opportunity Fair”</li> <li>• Assess desire for a Community Venture Fund concept</li> <li>• Create co-working space to foster collaboration among freelance, independent workers</li> <li>• Continue to seek new business that serve Prowers industry clusters</li> </ul>	<p>Private sector, Main Street Lamar, commercial property owners, County, city and town leadership, entrepreneurs, PEP board</p>	<p>Private sector, Main Street Lamar, SCEDD, USDA business loans &amp; grants, SECED business loan fund, Prowers banks, state micro-lending organizations (e.g. Colorado Enterprise Fund), Prowers Community Venture Fund, PEP staff time</p>



# TOURISM AND RECREATION | ACTION PLAN

Hunting

Birding

Heritage

Trails

GOAL(S)	KEY THEMES	WHY IMPORTANT	PROWERS ASSETS	SUGGESTED TARGETS
<p><i>Grow Prowers niche and reputation in small game hunting; generate new hunting-related businesses</i></p>	<p>Leverage Local</p> <p>Scale-up</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small game hunting is a great starting place for youth to develop their skills. Family-friendly opportunities create potential for more visitors</li> <li>• Builds on Prowers rural character and western history</li> <li>• Hunting access on private properties can generate additional revenue for land owners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abundant game</li> <li>• State Wildlife Areas</li> <li>• Private properties with hunting access</li> <li>• Family-friendly reputation</li> <li>• Quail farm for hunting stock</li> <li>• Western history</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family-friendly county-wide small game tournament</li> <li>• Hunting outfitter</li> <li>• Hunting cabins</li> <li>• Youth hunting program/camp</li> <li>• Wild food commercial kitchen</li> </ul>
<p><i>Build Prowers reputation as a renowned birding destination; attract additional visitatio and new birding enterprises</i></p>	<p>Leverage Local</p> <p>Scale-up</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Builds on an inherent and unique strength of the region</li> <li>• Passionate birding enthusiasts willing to travel for the experience</li> <li>• Tourism opportunity; birders also invested in heritage activites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SE CO: large concentration of North American birds</li> <li>• High Plains Snow Goose Fest</li> <li>• Colorado Birding Trail designation</li> <li>• Private properties with birding opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Birding conventions</li> <li>• Birding outfitter</li> <li>• Private birding trails</li> <li>• Art/placemaking with birding theme</li> </ul>
<p><i>Market heritage assets as 'experience packages' to grow visitation and spur ancillary businesses</i></p>	<p>Leverage Local</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilizes Prowers rich history and heritage; which to date has created few jobs</li> <li>• Growing interest among visitors for experiential travel</li> <li>• Fun, cultural activities for residents and visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Western history</li> <li>• Santa Fe Trail &amp; Scenic Byway</li> <li>• Canyons to Plains</li> <li>• Camp Amache</li> <li>• Big Timbers Museum</li> <li>• WPA buildings</li> <li>• Holly SS Ranch Barn</li> <li>• Nearby: Bent's Old Fort, Sand Creek Massacre, petroglyphs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities such as horseback riding, archery and chuck wagon cook outs &amp; camping; farm &amp; ranch stays</li> <li>• Develop heritage itineraries; market through hotels and tour operators</li> <li>• Cross market of Bent's Fort, Camp Amache, and Sand Creek sites – "triangle of heritage tourism"</li> <li>• Heritage-based curriculum to bring homeschooled kids and their parents</li> <li>• Non-profit dance/theater organization - offers Wild West re-enactments and other performances</li> <li>• Souvenir shops; heritage-based crafts</li> </ul>
<p><i>Establish high-quality outdoor recreation options for residents and visitors</i></p>	<p>Take Initiative</p> <p>Leverage Local</p> <p>Scale-up</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality outdoor recreation options are attractive to visitors and improve quality of life for residents</li> <li>• Places that are attractive to residents, are attractive to businesses</li> <li>• Healthy Places built momentum around active living in Lamar; this mentality can be extended County-wide</li> <li>• Adventure racing and trail running: has increased over the last 10 years</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lamar Loop</li> <li>• 80+ miles of abandoned rail line between Swink (in Bent County) and Holly (in Prowers)</li> <li>• Santa Fe Trail remnants/history</li> <li>• Healthy Places Initiative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lamar Loop (in progress)</li> <li>• Rail Trail</li> <li>• Santa Fe Trail – partial excavation/re-enactment</li> </ul>

<i>INITIAL STEPS (1-2 YRS)</i>	<i>FURTHER STEPS</i>	<i>POTENTIAL PARTNERS</i>	<i>POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Work with local businesses to offer special coupons that reward hunters for a successful hunt; build excitement around hunting culture</b></li> <li>• Gauge local interest in small game family tournament and youth hunting programs/camps; survey families at elementary schools</li> <li>• Seek sponsors and volunteers for tournament organizing; collaborate with Two Shot Celebrity Goose Hunt</li> <li>• Match hunting outfitters with interested private landowners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Host annual small game family tournament</li> <li>• Help coordinate lodging options for the tournament (camps, home stays, cabins etc. to test the market for a hunting cabin business)</li> <li>• Inquire with private property owners, independent hotels or others about starting a business operating hunting cabins in proximity to hunt areas</li> </ul>	<p>Ranchers, volunteers, hunting enthusiasts, private businesses, Prowers 4-H, Pheasants Forever; Two Shot Celebrity Goose Hunt, Colorado Parks &amp; Wildlife, National Youth Hunting Association, County, city and town leaders, PEP board</p>	<p>Private sector, private event sponsors (such as an ammunition brand etc.), Colorado Farm Bureau, Community Resource Center, USDA business loans &amp; grants (commercial kitchen), Community Venture Fund, PEP staff time</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Feature Prowers birding locations on websites like Colorado County Birding</b></li> <li>• <b>Host a bird house building competition; display entries along Prowers main streets</b></li> <li>• Pitch Prowers as a future location for birding conventions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to market Prowers birding assets and seek opportunities to increase tourism</li> <li>• Commission a local artist or LCC's welding class to create an iconic piece of public art that conveys Prowers as a place for birding enthusiasts</li> </ul>	<p>Colorado Field Ornithologists, Young Birders Network, Arkansas Valley Audubon Society, community members with birding knowledge, LCC, Main Street Lamar, County, city and town leadership, PEP board</p>	<p>Birding associations, private sector, ArtPlace (grants for creative placemaking), Community Venture Fund, PEP staff time</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to seek national park/historic site status for Amache to bring more funding and visitors</li> <li>• Package and market weekend itineraries through Canyons to Plains, Colorado Tourism Office, local hotels, visitor center, tour operators, etc.</li> <li>• Facilitate connections, between artisans who are interested in making heritage-based crafts with museums and retail outlets</li> <li>• Begin solidifying business concepts for the "Opportunity Fair"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote and host the first Prowers "Opportunity Fair"</li> <li>• Assess desire for a Community Venture Fund concept</li> <li>• Continue to market and promote Prowers heritage sites and associated activities</li> </ul>	<p>Canyons to Plains, Santa Fe Trail Cookers, Santa Fe Trail Association, Colorado Tourism Office, Southeast Colorado Travel and Tourism, Colorado Welcome Center at Lamar, Lamar Chamber of Commerce, private sector, private property owners, County, city and town leadership, PEP board</p>	<p>Private sector, Rural Philanthropy Days (summer 2018 in Southeast Region, Colorado Tourism Office matching grant program for marketing; National Park Service, Community Venture Fund, PEP staff time</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Highlight the Lamar Loop in materials promoting the County</b></li> <li>• Gauge partner interest/support in Rails to Trails initiative</li> <li>• Seek grant opportunities through Rails-to-Trail Conservancy and other sources</li> <li>• Initiate conversation with Santa Fe Trail Association to gauge feasibility of restoring and re-enacting a portion of the trail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Lamar Loop</li> <li>• Attain funding to begin implementation of a segment of the Rail Trail</li> <li>• Host inaugural trail run or adventure race.</li> <li>• Host endurance races to promote the asset and increase visitation (running, cycling, horseback)</li> </ul>	<p>Santa Fe Trail Association; Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado (VOC); Otero County, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, Healthy Places Initiative, running clubs/ race series, private property owners, County, city and town leadership, PEP board</p>	<p>Rails-to-Trails Conservancy Grant, PeopleForBikes Community Grant Program, Federal Rec. Trails Grants, CO Health Foundation, Community Resource Center, local leadership, private sector, Community Venture Fund, PEP staff time</p>

# 06

## IMPLEMENTATION



### INTRODUCTION

A critical element of this Plan is how the recommendations will be accomplished. This section outlines key characteristics of an effective economic organization that is able to carry forward the recommended strategies and further economic prosperity in Prowers County.

The current economic development organization, Prowers County Development Inc (PCDI), while it has had some success, it is widely considered, among County leadership, stakeholders and the organization's board and staff, to need a refreshed business model. The perception is that PCDI has not had enough success in bringing new business to Prowers County. Some of the challenges PCDI faces within the County is the lack of a clear path for encouraging new investment and lackluster support for assisting new businesses. The organization outlined below aims to address these challenges and create a fresh start moving forward. The intention is to replace PCDI with the new organization outlined in this chapter, **Prowers Economic Prosperity (PEP)**.

## NAME AND TAGLINE

# Prowers Economic Prosperity (PEP)

"Building thriving businesses and communities in Prowers County"

## *What Makes PEP Different?*

- Guided by a Plan with a diversified strategy for economic prosperity. New opportunities identified in manufacturing, processing, distribution, agriculture, retail, restaurants, services, tourism and recreation.
- All Prowers communities are included in PEP's Plan and are poised to benefit.
- Tailored, organic approach to economic prosperity guided by the four key themes: scale-up, leverage local, next generation, and take initiative.
- Public-private partnership approach.
- Refreshed business model based on today's best practices.



## MISSION

Harness local assets, skills and knowledge to create prosperity in all Prowers County communities.

## GOALS

1. Bring new jobs and investment to Prowers County.
2. Assist existing businesses to sustain and grow.
3. Convene and collaborate with stakeholders and leadership to address collective challenges.
4. Champion Prowers to outside entities, improve perceptions, and advocate for state policies that strengthen the Prowers economy.
5. Foster an entrepreneurial culture in Prowers.

## SERVICES

### *Goal 1: Bring new jobs and investment to Prowers County*

**Information gathering & business feasibility research.** PEP should assist with basic information gathering and research to assist in determining whether a particular business or industry is viable for Prowers County. For example, one of the Plan recommendations is to pursue a dairy processing plant to complement the new dairy locating in Holly. PEP could initiate a dialogue with Dairy Farmers of America to better understand specific requirements for new processing locations and begin collecting such information. PEP should act as a knowledge portal to connect prospective or existing businesses with the right resources, whether it be about permitting or sources of financing.

**New business planning and development support.** There are people in Prowers who have great ideas but need further assistance to cultivate ideas into viable business plans. PEP can help facilitate this planning process by connecting entrepreneurs with appropriate resources. For example, PEP could host a regular monthly workshop with La Junta Small Business Development Center (SBCD) staff.

**Pro-active business recruitment efforts.** PEP staff needs to take initiative to reach out to entities elsewhere and show them an open door. PEP should tap into the community's knowledge and reach out to residents, businesses and elected officials who may have connections to targeted businesses or industries. PEP should develop a County profile (marketing piece) that provides information of interest to prospective businesses. The Top Ten Reasons to Locate in Prowers, is a starting point for this document.

**Pursue grants and other funding.** PEP should be aware of grant opportunities and pursue, or seek partners to pursue, funding opportunities that further economic prosperity initiatives.

**Actively utilize Prowers incentive policy.** P.U.M.A. supports the economic development incentive policy instated by the County in 2007

and recommends PEP staff actively seek opportunities to utilize the tools in the County toolbox.

**Utilize PEP website to provide information to prospective businesses.** The PCDI website already provides some helpful information for new businesses with its Business Startup Checklist. PEP should continue this practice and look for additional opportunities to provide value to prospective businesses. For example, there are many financing and incentive resources available for new businesses but they are not readily known. PEP could post information about grants, loans and other resources that are available for new businesses on their website.

**Reliable and efficient 'navigator'.** New businesses have to go through a series of steps to locate in Prowers. PEP should be a friendly face for new businesses and act as a 'navigator' to help prospects through the permitting and development review processes in the County and within each locality; partnering with each community as appropriate.

### *Goal 2: Assist existing businesses to sustain and grow*

**Host networking forums.** The County survey conducted by P.U.M.A. revealed that over 30% of County entrepreneurs and business owners



thought networking/idea sharing would be beneficial. PEP should coordinate and host (with support from private sponsorships) events that bring businesses, people and ideas together. This could be a business “after hours” event, a young professionals’ night, or specific business-to-business forums.

**Business workshops and trainings.** PEP should periodically survey businesses to see what types of trainings or workshops would be helpful. During community engagement efforts, P.U.M.A. heard that management training would be useful for many of Prowers businesses. PEP should also explore workshops that relate to opportunities identified in the Plan. For example, a workshop on how to get started growing hemp, regulations for growing food vs. feed, or the latest trends in rural retail.

### ***Goal 3: Convene and collaborate with stakeholders and leadership to address collective challenges***

**Attend monthly town council meetings.** To make sure PEP is proactive about working in all Prowers communities, the Executive Director should attend and participate in monthly town council meetings to stay informed and connected.

**Guide community priority setting conversations.** This Plan identifies many opportunities but with limited resources not all can be pursued simultaneously. PEP should work with the community to sequence initiatives and make a concerted effort to pursue opportunities in all communities within a reasonable timeframe.

**Partner & leverage resources.** PEP should work with economic development partners in the County and the region to coordinate and leverage resources, information and strategies. For example, the City of Lamar is developing a City profile to use in marketing efforts to prospective businesses; the County could utilize and customize this template so as to not reinvent the wheel. PEP can also be instrumental in convening sector partnerships, such as the Northern Colorado Manufacturing Partnership, which is a group of private manufacturing companies and public partners who joined forces to address common issues in the industry. On the public side, Lamar Community College would be a great addition to local



government partners as they could be involved in providing workforce training needs identified by the private sector.

**Address the County housing challenge.** PEP should initiate a housing coalition in the County, including both large employers, local governments and County officials, to develop creative approaches to finance improvements to the County’s housing stock. PEP might consider being the administer of a Housing Fund.

**Trends and best practices.** PEP should monitor trends and best practices in rural economic development, offering recommendations on strategies and tactics as annual PEP work plans are developed. PEP should be well educated on key issues impacting the County, such as lack of quality housing, and share this knowledge with other County leaders and collaborate on solutions.

**Community resource.** PEP should be a resource for all communities within the County on economic development options tailored to the differential advantages of each community. PEP should look for ways to address common needs across communities and industries and look for opportunities to connect the dots.



#### ***Goal 4: Champion Prowers to outside entities; improve perception and advocate for state policies that strengthen the Prowers economy***

**Market Prowers County.** PEP should be active in developing marketing collateral that tells Prowers story and celebrates its successes. PEP should regularly feature innovative Prowers businesses through its print and online channels, and pitch stories to local media, or statewide outlets where appropriate.

**Quarterly business tour.** To better understand the resourceful workforce and innovative companies in Prowers, County leadership and other interested parties should partake in quarterly business tours. PEP should identify and coordinate the tour with a business owner in a different community each quarter.

**Build statewide relationships.** PEP needs visibility at the state level. The new Executive Director should help cultivate relationships with entities such as the Office of Economic Development and International Trade

(OEDIT) and indicate that Prowers is taking an innovative new approach to economic development and is open for businesses. PEP may want to schedule an economic development trip to the Front Range once the new Executive Director is hired to make introductions to key partners and industries.

**Monitor and advocate for/against state policies.** Issues addressed at the state level have a direct impact on Prowers County. PEP should be aware of current and pending State of Colorado policies that affect agriculture or other key Prowers industries and advocate for or against state laws that may benefit or harm Prowers economic interests.

#### ***Goal 5: Foster an Entrepreneurial Culture in Prowers***

**Host a business planning competition.** To generate excitement and new ideas for Prowers County, PEP should launch a business planning competition that would award up to three participants with seed funding (\$5-\$10k each) to get their idea off the ground. PEP could help identify a location for the new business with discounted rent for the first year as part of the award. To tie to the Plan, PEP could require business concepts fall under one of the five Plan categories: Processing/Manufacturing/ Distribution; Agriculture; Retail & Restaurant; Services; Tourism & Recreation.

**Assistance with “pop-up” demonstrations.** PEP should encourage temporary ‘pop-up’ stores, events, or demonstrations to help gauge community interest in new business concepts. For example, one of the Plan recommendations is a family-style sports-oriented restaurant that builds off of Lamar’s reputation as a regional hub for youth sports. To help prove the market for this type of business, PEP could help an interested entrepreneur coordinate the location and logistics for pop-up BBQs or other food services after sports games. PEP could survey families attending these events to gauge their interest in the concept, desired price points, menu items and so forth.

**Explore non-traditional financing mechanisms.** PEP should explore new and innovative sources of project funding, such as a Prowers Community Venture Fund, which would connect local individual investors with

opportunities for equity investments in new Prowers County businesses. This concept is described in greater detail under Funding on page 47.

## ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

P.U.M.A. envisions two possible scenarios for economic prosperity work in Prowers County moving forward.

### Scenario A (preferred alternative)

PEP is formed as a true public-private partnership, a best practice among economic development organizations. It is an independent 501(c)(3) organization, whose employees are under the jurisdiction of the PEP Board of Directors. This scenario requires a commitment from the private sector, which is currently missing from PCDI. This scenario creates a new way of working with the private sector and fundamentally shifts the way economic prosperity is pursued in Prowers.

### Scenario B

If there are no commitments from the private sector, P.U.M.A. recommends that the County hires an economic development staff person who is under the supervision of the County Administrator to implement the plan. In this scenario, PCDI is kept as an organizational shell to help in occasional fundraising for grants and other funding only able to be pursued by a 501(c)(3).

The following details pertain to Scenario A.

## STAFF & BUDGET

PEP will be staffed by an experienced and skilled Executive Director with support personnel. Overall, the organization is envisioned as having 2.0 full time equivalent staff members.

### *Executive Director*

PEP's Executive Director reports to the Board of Directors and is responsible for implementing the organization's goals outlined earlier in this chapter.

#### Key Qualifications:

- Experienced Executive Director that can hit the ground running on day one
- Pro-active approach to seeking new businesses and investment opportunities
- Ability to think outside of the box and identify creative solutions to challenges
- Excellent communicator, written and oral
- Able to cooperate and collaborate with a variety of individuals and groups; ability to develop consensus
- Able to maneuver through local politics
- Highly effective fundraiser
- Ability to manage and report organization's budget
- Familiarity with a variety of financing tools and how to best utilize
- Experience with, or understanding of, business planning and small business finance
- Understands the role community-building and quality of life plays in attracting and retaining businesses
- A passionate, true believer in Prowers County
- Minimum of a Bachelor's degree in economic development, business, public relations, or related field from an accredited college or university
- Minimum 7 years of experience in economic development, community development or related field

To attract a candidate with the desired skill set, requires adequate compensation. Considering comparable economic development

positions and the rural context, P.U.M.A. recommends an annual base salary of \$65,000, plus benefits and the potential for bonuses based on performance.

PEP should open their Executive Director search to the state and immediate region. The following organizations have job boards and list serves that could help spread the word about the new position: Downtown Colorado Inc. (DCI), Economic Development Council of Colorado (EDCC), International City/County Management Association (ICMA), and Colorado Municipal League (CML).

### Support Staff

It is recommended that PEP’s Executive Director have a support staff to assist with the following types of tasks:

**Communications:** effective written and oral communication skills; able to field basic inquiries from business prospects; assist in preparing marketing materials and presentations; and periodic updates to the PEP website.

**Research:** assist in gathering information to assess new business feasibility and best practices.

**Administration:** Arrange logistics for tours, forums, workshops, and networking events hosted by PEP; assist Executive Director with scheduling; and manage basic office support functions.

### Budget

To support an Executive Director and staff, P.U.M.A. suggests a minimum budget of \$135,00 that includes the following elements:

Executive Director (\$65K + taxes + insurance)	\$75,000
Support Staff	\$35,000
Office and Administration	\$10,000
Marketing, Communications & Professional Development	\$15,000

### Location

It is recommended that PEP locate in a storefront that is highly visible to the public and prospective businesses and in a location that showcases the best of Prowers rural, small town atmosphere. Main Street in Lamar meets these criteria and a PEP office here could bring new life to a vacant building. To ensure PEP’s efforts are seen County-wide, PEP should consider having a presence on the east side of the County in either Holly or Granada. PEP should look for a visible location within one of these towns, perhaps partnering with an existing business that has extra space, to staff one day a week.



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### *Member Representation*

For the ultimate success in implementing the recommendations of this Plan, the board should have a diversity of seats, with high level, well-connected representatives.

P.U.M.A. suggests representation from the following:

- The five opportunity sectors identified in the Plan: manufacturing/processing/distribution, agriculture, retail/restaurant; services; and tourism/recreation
- Banking
- Medical
- Lamar Community College
- Each incorporated community
- Public, private and non-profit sectors
- County Commissioner – 1 fixed seat

### *Size*

As one individual can represent multiple criteria above, aim for a board size between 11 and 15 members.

### *Responsibilities*

Based on today's best practices, the following responsibilities should be assumed by each PEP board member:

- Fundraising, including securing funding support from government and/or private PEP investors
- Check in with at least one business a month to establish strong connections with the community and understand successes and challenges that are occurring; develop a pipeline for future funding requests
- Participate in PEP board meetings and any committees or task forces that may be formed around specific opportunities or challenges
- Generate new business leads within respective areas; refer to Executive Director

- Assist in organizing one networking forum or workshop per year
- Support the Executive Director in communicating PEP's mission and objectives to community and business leadership groups



photo source: P.U.M.A. staff

# FUNDING SOURCES

## For PEP

This Plan seeks to diversify funding sources for PEP by suggesting potential new revenue streams as well as a public-private partnership approach.

**County.** The County is the current funder of PCDI and should continue to be a fundamental supporter of PEP.

**City of Lamar and incorporated towns.** The work of PEP will benefit all Prowers communities and should have support from each incorporated city or town. Contributions can be based on what is reasonable for each community to pay.

**Private funders; i.e. banks, hospitals, major employers.** In the past, PCDI had private sector support and this should be reestablished. Support should be sought from the area's major employers who have a vested interest in Prowers prosperity. PCDI (soon to be PEP) is an Enterprise Zone Project, meaning those who contribute financially or in-kind are eligible for tax write-offs up to 25%. PEP should make sure potential funders are aware of this benefit. PEP should seek three year commitments to signal longevity and ensure sufficient time for meaningful change to take place.

**County-wide economic development tax.** This is a potential new source of funding that could be collected locally through a sales tax increase. Such funding should be used to support PEP staff time and expenditures specifically related to improving public realm amenities that have broad community benefit. More detail on this concept is provided under Funding on page 48.

**Grant support.** As a 501 (c)(3) PEP will be eligible to seek grant funding to help support its initiatives.

**Sponsorships.** PEP should seek public or private sponsorship of specific event or activities, such as the Opportunity Fair. Suggested sponsorship tiers are outlined to the right.

## Annual Sponsorship Opportunities

### \$10,000 – Platinum (3 available)

- “Presented by YOUR COMPANY” in the headline of all event marketing materials
- Sign recognition in the main event space
- Opportunity to elect a business to tour or topic for a PEP workshop or networking session
- Your name or organization carved into a brick, planter or other public realm feature
- Logo recognition in all event materials
- Verbal recognition at all events
- Business profile featured on the PEP website
- Guaranteed registration to all PEP events
- PEP goodies (water bottle, tote, etc.)

### \$5,000 - Gold

- Logo recognition in all event materials
- Verbal recognition at all events
- Business profile featured on the PEP website
- Guaranteed registration to all PEP events
- PEP goodies (water bottle, tote, etc.)

### \$2,500 - Silver

- Opportunity to be a food or drink sponsor at two events
- Guaranteed registration to all PEP events
- PEP goodies (water bottle, tote, etc.)

Those who want to be involved but contribute a lesser amount [\$250 to \$1,000] could join PEP as a member. General members would not have voting rights like board members but would be kept apprised of all PEP news, invited to events and perhaps asked to serve on task forces for certain projects.

## For Projects

The funding tools below include loans, grants, incentives, and technical assistance that can support projects that increase economic prosperity in Prowers County.

### *New Sources*

**Prowers Community Venture Fund.** There are pockets of wealth in Prowers County and entrepreneurs who want to start new businesses but have trouble accessing capital. This Fund would serve as a platform to connect local individual investors with opportunities for equity investments in new Prowers County businesses. This is a win-win, giving individuals the chance to make a positive community impact with the potential for high returns, while providing entrepreneurs access to equity capital. It is envisioned that PEP could facilitate the development of a Prowers Community Venture Fund by assembling prospective investors, researching best practices from other communities, and helping to filter and evaluate prospects for the Fund. To further investigate this opportunity, a PEP Venture Fund Task Force is suggested that would include representation from major employers and the banking community.

**Housing Support from Large Regional Employers.** The availability of quality market-rate housing was repeatedly identified by several of the County's major employers as an impediment to recruiting new employees. It is recommended that PEP lead a housing improvement task force composed of key leaders in the government, major employer and lending sectors. Options to explore include:

- Development of a credit enhancement pool, whereby major employers would help local developers and/or property owners to improve existing housing and/or build new units by providing leasing commitments, loan guaranties and other forms of credit enhancement.
- Determine the feasibility for an existing entity or a new non-profit group to become an active housing developer and provider in the County. Through the nation, non-profit community development corporations often take the lead in community development initiatives that include quality affordable housing.

**Foundation/Corporate Grants and Sponsorships.** Several of the strategies recommended in the Plan, could potentially be supported by grants or private sponsorships; such as the Rail Trail or Small Game Tournament.

**Crowdfunding.** Crowdfunding has proven itself as a viable way of raising money for a vast array of project types. Crowdfunding, as the name suggests, seeks to fund a project by raising a small amount of money from a large number of people, typically via an online platform. Crowdfunding could help provide capital for new business concepts in Prowers. To garner more interest, the County could pledge matching funds.

**County-wide Economic Development Tax.** Many counties through the nation collect an economic development tax, usually through a sales tax increase. Locally, Pueblo County offers an example of this approach. If this approach is contemplated in Prowers, P.U.M.A. recommends that any economic development investments from a tax be invested in public realm and amenities, as opposed to specific business or development projects. Improvements in the County's quality of life will help to differentiate



Prowers from other rural counties, plus will provide benefits to the existing population and businesses that would be asked to contribute.

**Encourage Capital: Liquid Assets Project.** This is an innovative project that provides investment capital for a range of projects that advance water sustainability. One of the investment areas is agricultural crop conversion and ranchland, which provides landowners with access to capital for conversion to sustainable ranching practices and improvements in agricultural water use that results in water savings and more profitable agricultural operations. [http://encouragecapital.com/wp-content/uploads/docs/water-in-the-west-exec-summary-final\\_web.pdf](http://encouragecapital.com/wp-content/uploads/docs/water-in-the-west-exec-summary-final_web.pdf)

### *Existing Sources*

**Prowers County Economic Development Incentive Policy.** Prowers County offers real or personal property tax rebates or sales tax refunds on County levied taxes for businesses expanding or locating within the County that meet set criteria. The County may also negotiate additional incentives including: infrastructure improvements, industrial revenue bonds, tax increment financing, special improvement districts or other unique incentive agreements.

**Enterprise Zone & Enhanced Rural Enterprise Zone.** Prowers County is designated as both an Enterprise Zone and an Enhanced Rural Enterprise Zone. The Enterprise Zone provides incentives for businesses locating and developing in economically distressed communities. Rural enterprise zones that meet certain criteria are designated Enhanced Rural Enterprise Zones and are eligible for additional credits. Incentives include state tax credits for investment, jobs, R&D, employer health insurance, rehabbing vacant buildings and job training. A double job tax credit is offered for ag processing in Enhanced Rural Enterprise Zones. [www.advancecolorado.com/ez](http://www.advancecolorado.com/ez)

**Home rehab, refinancing, and replacement loan programs.** SECED offers low interest loans to qualifying low-income homeowners.

**Southeast Colorado Enterprise Development (SECED) Business Loan Fund.** This Fund is intended to help finance business projects that

### *Sample Use of County Incentives*

**Project:** A new brewery wants to locate in Lamar and needs \$500,000 in capital. The project is expected to generate \$1 M in revenue a year.

**Incentives:** TIF, fee waivers, infrastructure improvements

**Description:** The County can utilize tax increment financing (TIF) to incentivize this new project. TIF captures the new or incremental taxes created by the project and uses this source of revenue to help finance. TIF can capture incremental sales tax as well as property tax. Based on a 4% sales tax for the County and City of Lamar, TIF would be available for \$40,000 in sales tax increment (.04 \* 1M). Assuming a revenue sharing agreement, whereby half of the increment tax revenue goes to the City and County and the other half goes to support debt incurred by the business, there would be \$20,000 available for the business. If the new project increases the property value from a base valuation of \$100,000 to \$500,000, this provides an increment of \$400,000. Applying the County's mill levy (.02717) to this increment provides approximately \$10,000 a year, for a total of roughly \$30,000. Assuming a tax increment duration of 10 years, the business owner could use this annual \$30,000 cash flow to secure a bank loan amounting to approximately 1/3 of the capital investment.

If additional incentives were needed, the County could help underwrite an expansion of utility capacity if the site needed more capacity and/or waive some of the development fees, such as tap fees.

positively impact economic health in Prowers, Baca, Bent, Kiowa and Crowley. SECED also offers a loan program for façade improvements.

**Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT).** OEDIT offers a number of incentive and financing programs, such as the Strategic Fund Incentive which supports and encourages new business

development and the Rural Jump-Start Program which provides tax relief for new businesses in eligible rural counties. Prowers is one of 47 eligible Colorado counties. To be eligible the business must hire at least five employees and not directly compete with the core function of a business already operating in the state. <http://www.advancecolorado.com/funding-incentives>

**Lamar Redevelopment Authority.** Lamar Redevelopment Authority (LRA) has been in operation for six years and has a healthy fund balance of over \$200,000, which can be used for public improvements within the planning area. As with other redevelopment authorities, LRA has the ability to utilize Tax Increment Financing (TIF) for new development or redevelopment projects.

**U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development.** USDA-RD has a number of ways to provide financial and technical assistance to rural communities, a few are mentioned below:

**Business & Industry Loan Guarantees.** This program guarantees loans for rural businesses, allowing private lenders to extend more credit than they typically would be able to. <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/business-industry-loan-guarantees>

**USDA Rural Business Development Grants.** These grants can be used on projects benefitting small and emerging businesses in rural areas. <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-business-development-grants>

**USDA Community Facilities Program.** Offers direct loans, loan guarantees, and grants to develop or improve essential public services and facilities in rural communities. <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/all-programs/community-facilities-programs>

**Southern Colorado Economic Development District (SCEDD).** SCEDD staff supports twelve southern Colorado counties. They can assist local economic developers in preparing professional community profiles to use

for prospective industries and consult with communities on how to “close the deal” with prospective businesses. SCEDD also has a lending program that assists banks with closing difficult business loans.

**Department of Local Affairs (DOLA).** DOLA has a number of programs to support rural communities. Their Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) infrastructure grants are available for projects that support diversification of the local economy. Examples include: facility expansion, business incubators, and industrial park infrastructure. <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/dola/rural-economic-development-initiative>

## ORGANIZATIONAL ROLL OUT

To continue the positive momentum generated through the planning process, it is recommended that the following actions be accomplished by year end 2016.

- Private sector funding commitments are secured
- Public sector (county, city, towns) funding commitments are secured
- PEP & commitments are announced to the public
- Recruit new Executive Director for PEP (suggested start date: January 2, 2017)
- Reconfigure PEP Board of Directors
- Create a speakers bureau within the Board to promote the new PEP throughout the County

## MEASURE AND SHARE PROGRESS

Since one of the key critiques of PCDI was the perceived ineffectiveness of the organization to recruit new businesses, it is critical that PEP establish clear criteria from the outset and monitor progress. Below is a list of metrics PEP should consider tracking and reporting. While some of these report direct successes, i.e. number of new jobs, others show that PEP is taking initiative.

- Number of new businesses
- Number of new jobs
- New community amenities
- Number of workshops, networking forums held through PEP
- Marketing efforts
- Project funding
- Grants (applied for | received)
- Advocacy efforts

Perhaps even more important than tracking and measuring success is that PEP effectively communicate and share successes with the Board of Directors, County Commissioners, city and town leadership, businesses, funders and the general public. PEP should also provide content to the media, as appropriate, to help spread the word about new businesses and other successes happening in Prowers County.

### *Reporting*

To instill confidence and maintain enthusiasm during the first year of PEP roll-out, quarterly reports should be made to the Board of Directors, County Commissioners, city and town leaders, and funders. Following the initial year, reports should be written on an annual basis and made available on the PEP website.

To generate broad community interest and support, the annual report could be presented as a 'State of Prowers County' event, complete with a festive outdoor atmosphere, food and music. This event could be held in a different town each year and feature stories from new or expanding businesses.



*photo source: P.U.M.A. staff*

# 07

## APPENDIX

**A. Past Plan Review**

Summary of past planning efforts related to Prowers County.

**B. Community Engagement Summary**

Summary of the community engagement efforts that were part of the planning process.

**C. Prowers County Demographic & Economic Profile**

Summary of the population, housing, retail, and economic characteristics of Prowers County.

## PAST PLAN REVIEW

### Holly & Granada Economic Development Assessment

#### *Department of Local Affairs 2016*

The towns of Holly and Granada requested an economic assessment, through the Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) program, to focus on two areas: industry diversification and heritage tourism. To assist in recruiting new industries, the report recommended establishing a primary point of contact to work with local businesses and market to prospective companies. It suggested that marketing should incorporate the benefits of doing business in Granada and Holly, including the small-town, family friendly feel. To entice back “boomerangs”, those who have left but are interested in returning, the report suggested developing an inventory of such individuals and providing them with community updates to keep them engaged as well as establishing a young leaders network. The report also suggested creating a calendar of local events to market to a larger audience.

### Lamar Market Niche Assessment

#### *Arland Land Use Economics 2013*

The City of Lamar hired ArLand Land Use Economics to prepare a market niche assessment for Downtown Lamar to inform types and intensities of uses, business attraction and other Downtown activities. The report noted a retail void and an opportunity for Downtown to capture more spending among City of Lamar households, regional households, and visitors. Specific suggestions included: unique restaurants, experiential retail (e.g. spa services), clothing, sporting goods, home furnishings, historic activities, art facilities, and youth activities such as bowling, pool, a skating rink, and arcade. The report also suggested adding more Downtown (second floor) residential development to help to bolster commercial activity and incorporating art in public improvement activities. The potential secondary trade area, including Kit Carson, Syracuse, Las Animas, and Springfield, has households that are slightly wealthier on average. Nearly 8% of Lamar and Secondary Trade Area households earn incomes over \$100,000, which represents a potential market niche.

### Prowers County CEDS Report

#### *Southern Colorado Economic Development District 2010*

This report is a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Prowers County and serves as a guide for community leaders who are working to grow the economy. Given Prowers assets, the report suggests the County is well positioned for economic development and growth in renewable energy, manufacturing, recreation and tourism. The plan goals include: economic development, improving community facilities and services, transportation, energy and natural resource developments, water resource development and management, increasing housing opportunities, and

increasing recreation and tourism. One of the specific projects recommended for economic development is recruitment of manufacturers that add value to the existing agricultural base

### **Lamar Community Revitalization Partnership Report**

#### *Colorado Community Revitalization Association 2008*

The Community Revitalization Partnership was invited to the City of Lamar in spring 2008 to help define downtown's revitalization goals and develop an action plan. The report focused on three core areas: aesthetics and streetscape, business recruitment/investment, and marketing/promotions/events. Specific recommendations included new pedestrian-friendly streetscape elements, improved gateways with colorful and welcoming signage, and merchandising training for business owners. The plan suggested downtown Lamar create a unique brand to make it a distinctive place to shop. At the time of this plan the CDOT bypass was proposed. The team working on this plan felt strongly that downtown should prepare and plan for the impact of the bypass and work to preserve downtown as the business and residential focus of the community.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

This section summarizes the community engagement efforts that were part of the Economic Prosperity Plan process.

**Stakeholder Meetings.** P.U.M.A. representatives traveled to Prowers County February 29<sup>th</sup> through March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 and toured each of the six communities: Lamar, Wiley, Granada, Bristol, Hartman, and Holly. P.U.M.A. participated in a kick-off luncheon with more than 30 stakeholders in attendance, followed by individual meetings with each towns' leadership. P.U.M.A. requested stakeholder participation in two additional meetings during the planning process, one on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016 to share and vet an initial framework for the plan and another to review the draft plan on July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016. P.U.M.A. had consistent contact with the County Commissioners and PCDI board and staff throughout the process. P.U.M.A. held a targeted work session focused on Plan implementation and a re-engineering of PCDI with the PCDI board and staff on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

**Business & Site Tours.** P.U.M.A. toured a number of businesses on the first and second site visits to better understand the community and its successes and challenges. P.U.M.A. gained a broader understanding of the types of businesses in Prowers County including, manufacturing and processing, agritourism, retail, restaurants, services, and heritage sites.

**Focus Groups & Interviews.** To take a deeper dive on specific opportunity areas within the Plan, P.U.M.A. held a series of small focus groups clustered by area of interest. These included a water-issues group in Lamar on April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2016 manufacturing and agriculture groups on May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016 and a Millennial group on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016. P.U.M.A. also interviewed individuals in government, medical, financing, education, and business fields. To re-engage the private sector in economic prosperity efforts, P.U.M.A. held focus groups with banks and potential individual investors.

**Site Visits.** P.U.M.A. visited Prowers County on six occasions. The initial trips were a combination of information gathering and vetting initial concepts with County Commissioners, city and town leadership, PCDI, and industry representatives. On July 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup>, 2016 P.U.M.A. held working sessions with County Commissioners, city and town leadership and the PCDI board to review and receive input on the *draft* Plan. A final plan roll-out, inclusive of the whole community, is planned for late summer.

**Survey.** To solicit broad participation and input, P.U.M.A. developed an online survey to be administered county-wide. The survey had over 350 responses and ran from May 9<sup>th</sup> to June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016. The survey was embedded on the County website and distributed through partner email channels, social networks, print media and radio. A summary of the survey results is found below.

## **PROWERS COUNTY SURVEY SUMMARY: FINAL RESULTS**

The following analysis presents findings from a county-wide online survey that was administered as part of the community outreach process for the Prowers Economic Prosperity Plan. The survey ran from May 9<sup>th</sup> to June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016 and was embedded on the Prowers County website as well as distributed through partner email channels, social networks, print media and radio. There were a total of 352 responses.

### **KEY FINDINGS**

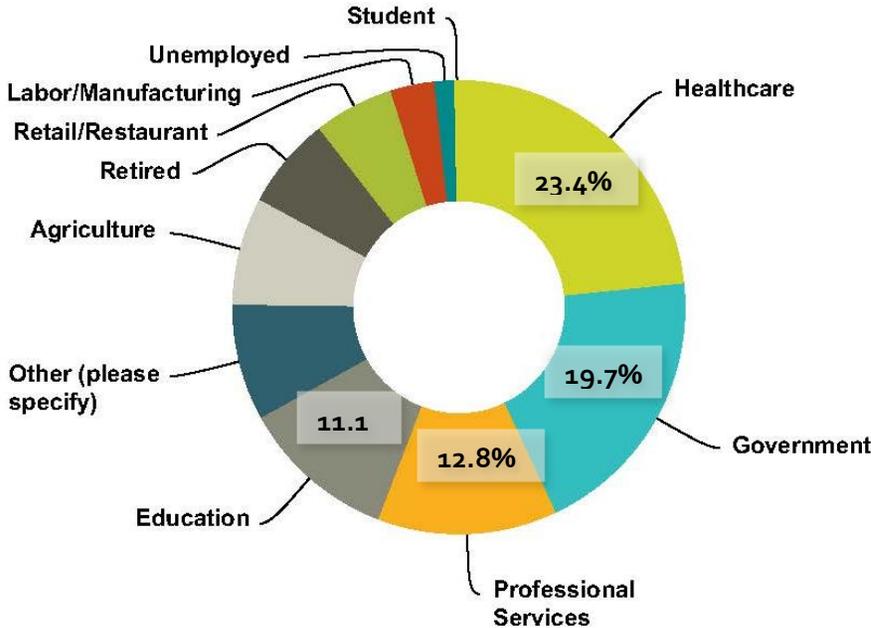
- Most respondents feel a strong sense of pride for Prowers. The small-town vibe, rural character, safety, and affordability were among the well-liked characteristics.
- New retail and restaurants, recreational activities, quality housing options, more jobs and community events were top responses for what would make Prowers an even better place to live, work, and play.
- The two items respondents most commonly said they obtain outside of Prowers County were clothing and medical services.
- 25% of respondents said they have a specific talent or skill that they are currently not using but would like to use.
- Approximately 1/4 of respondents said they would be interested in starting a new business in Prowers if they had the resources to support them.
- Existing businesses and entrepreneurs said the resources/services most beneficial to them would be 1) small loans, grant and financial incentives and 2) networking/idea sharing.
- 80% of respondents said they see themselves in Prowers County 5 years from now.
  - 87% of respondents over 50 see themselves living in Prowers County 5 years from now, compared to 73% of respondents under 35.

## RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

### Employment

Respondents were asked which category best describes their job/employment status? The most common responses were healthcare, government, professional services, and education.

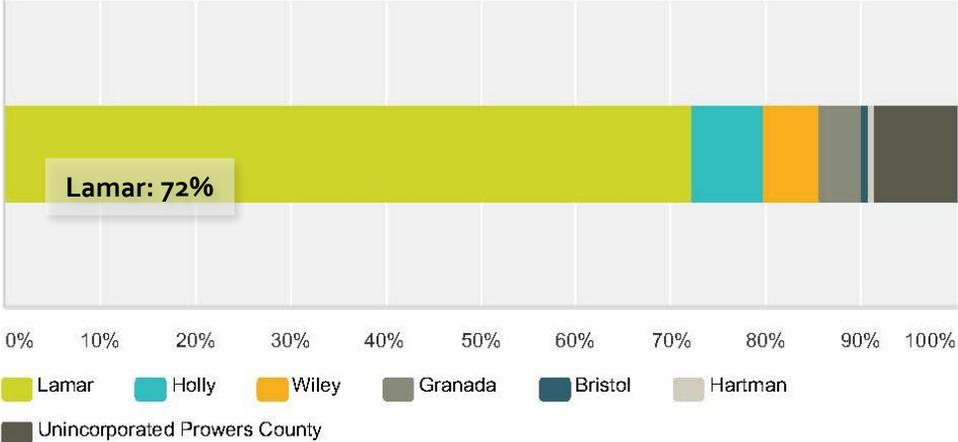
Note: Lamar Community College was not in session when this survey was administered and it was therefore difficult to attain student respondents.



Healthcare	23.4%
Government	19.7%
Professional Services	12.8%
Education	11.1%
Other	8.3%
Agriculture	7.7%
Retired	6.6%
Retail/Restaurant	5.7%
Labor/Manufacturing	3.1%
Unemployed	1.4%
Student	0.3% (1 student)

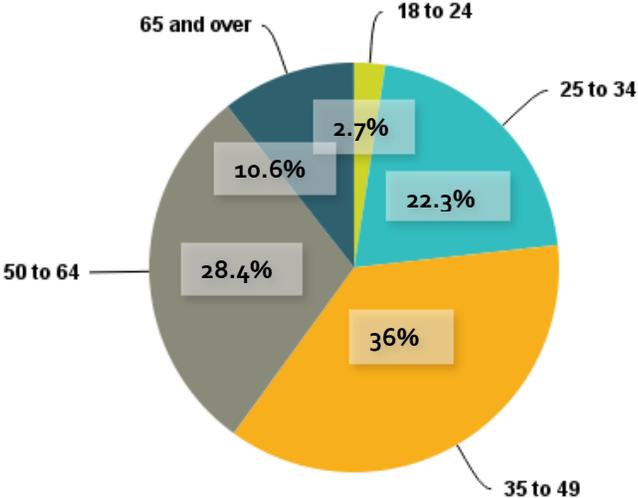
*Residence*

Respondents were asked to name their primary residence. 72% of respondents said they live in Lamar. For comparison, Lamar makes up 61% of the County’s population.



*Age*

The following provides a breakdown of respondents’ age. Most age segments had good representation with the exception of people ages 18 to 24.







WHAT KIND OF SERVICES DO YOU OBTAIN OUTSIDE OF PROWERS COUNTY? (E.G. CAR REPAIR, MEDICAL, BANKING)



The word cloud above illustrates the most common words used by respondents to answer this question. The large majority of respondents stated they have medical services done outside of Prowers County. Most respondents simply stated “medical” and did not elaborate further. Some noted specialized medical services. Other words commonly used to answer this question included: shopping, banking, dining, auto-repair, and entertainment.

WHY DO YOU NOT OBTAIN THESE SERVICES IN PROWERS COUNTY? [SELECT UP TO TWO]

Answer Options	Response Percent
It is too expensive / limited selection	57.0%
The service does not exist in Prowers	47.3%
Other (please specify)	30.3%
It is convenient for me to go elsewhere	8.7%

The majority of respondents stated that they do not obtain the services they listed in the previous question in Prowers because the services is either too expensive or there is a limited selection. Close to a majority of respondents also said it was because the service does not exist in Prowers. Some of the “other” responses included the **quality** of service and the **hours** of operation.



DO YOU HAVE A SPECIFIC TALENT/SKILL/KNOWLEDGE THAT YOU ARE CURRENTLY NOT USING BUT WOULD LIKE TO USE? (E.G. LEATHERWORK, BOOKKEEPING, CHILDCARE, TRAINING CERTIFICATE) [OPEN ENDED]

Common Answers	Number of Responses
Business Support Services (marketing, consulting, graphic design, IT, CPA)	10
Fine arts (woodworking, music, photography, knitting, leatherwork, beading)	10
Childcare	6
Teaching & Tutoring	5
Community Volunteering (life coach, elderly)	6
Healthcare (nursing, mental health, Spanish interpreter, alternative medicine)	4
Electrical work	3

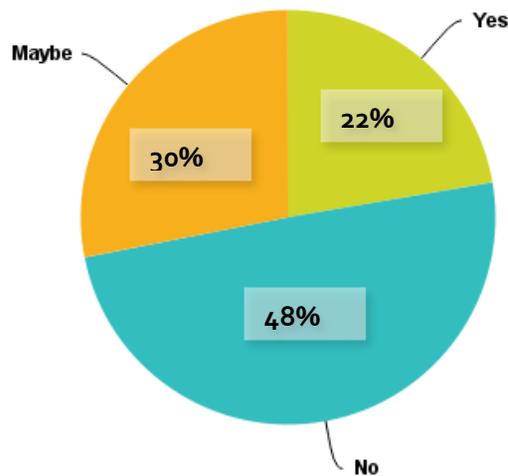
Of those who answered this question, 25% listed a specific talent/skill/knowledge that they are not using but would like to put to use. The talents are wide ranging. The chart above shows the most common responses. Some of the other responses included: dog training/hunting, special effects makeup, summer camp management, drama/theatre, event planning, and fitness training.

DO YOU NEED ANY KIND OF TRAINING TO ENHANCE YOUR SKILLS? IF YES, PLEASE DESCRIBE

Common Answers	Number of Responses
No/None Needed/	119
General Schooling/Finish Degree/Night classes	5
Skilled Trade Programs (e.g. welding, cosmetology)	5
Professional Management/Customer Service Training	4
Computer/IT training	2
Part time nursing program	2
Foreign language courses	2

The large majority of respondents said they did not need additional training to enhance their skills. For those who did, the most common answers were additional schooling and specific trade programs.

IF YOU HAD THE RESOURCES TO SUPPORT YOU (E.G. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, EXPERTISE, PARTNERS), WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN STARTING A NEW BUSINESS IN PROWERS COUNTY? WHAT BUSINESS?



Restaurant (9)
FunCenter/Arcade/Go-cart, Rec Center (6)
Sports Bar (3)
Sporting Goods Store (3)
Bakery (2)
Casino/hotel/B&B (2)
Crafting Store (2)
Kitchen store, wine & cigar bar, bookstore (1)
Marijuana Dispensary (1)
Animal therapy (1)
Women's clothing store (1)
Organic Green House (1)
Taxi Service (1)

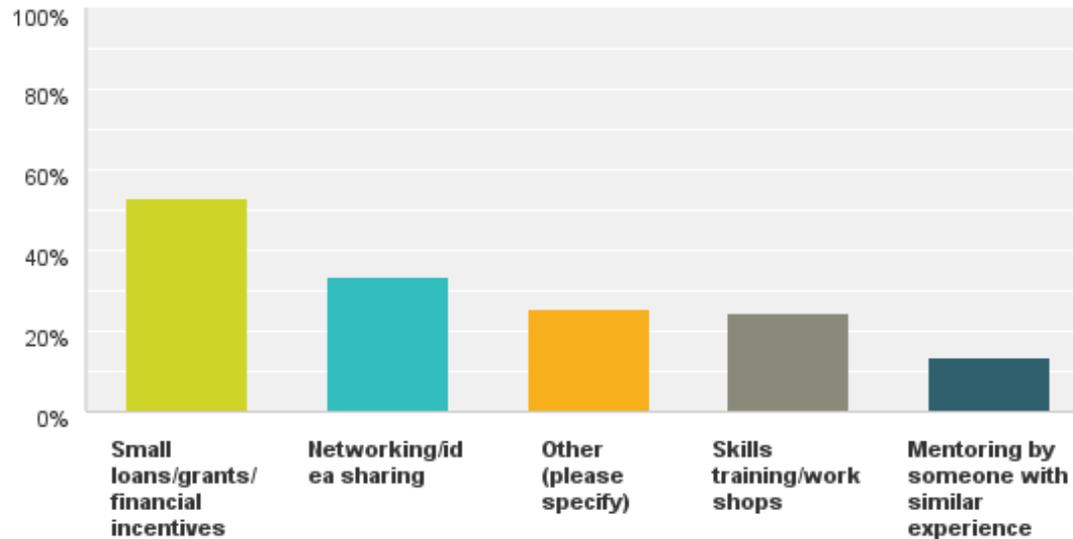
Over 50% of respondents said they *are* or *might be* interested in starting a new business in Prowers County. Nine respondents said they were interested in starting a restaurant and six respondents said they were interested in some type of recreational business, such as a recreation center or arcade.

*What Types of Resources are needed? [Open Ended]*

Most Common Answers	Number of Responses
Funding (grant money, capital, loans, partners)	15
Building/space to rent or buy	6
Permitting & licensing Assistance	5
General Resources on Starting a Business	5
Technical (print, software, electricians, advertising)	4

The most common resource respondents said they needed was funding. Several respondents also said assistance in identifying space to buy or rent.

**IF YOU ALREADY ARE AN ENTREPRENEUR OR BUSINESS OWNER, WHAT RESOURCES/SERVICES WOULD BE MOST BENEFICIAL TO YOU? [SELECT UP TO TWO]**



Similar to the preceding question, the majority of respondents said funding (grant, loans, incentives) would be the most beneficial resource. Another popular response was networking/idea sharing, with more than a third of respondents selecting this option.

Some of the “other” responses included:

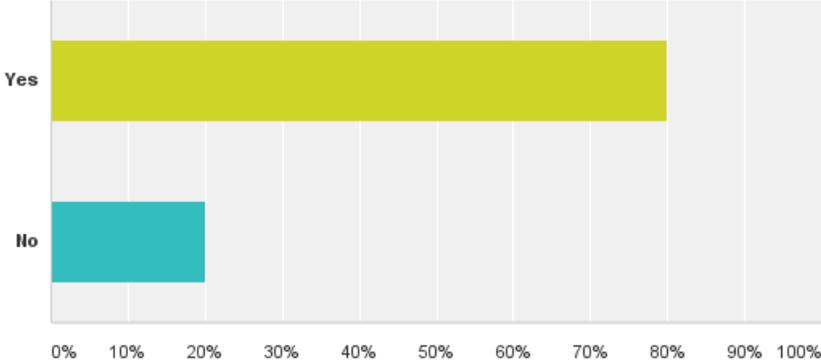
- Small business resources/training (e.g. tax prep, website help, resources from other agencies)
- Improve ease of permitting process
- Supply chain improvements

**IF YOU ARE A BUSINESS OWNER/MANAGER, ARE THERE ADDITIONAL INDUSTRIES OR SERVICES THAT COULD STRENGTHEN YOUR BUSINESS, IF THEY WERE TO LOCATE IN PROWERS COUNTY?**

<b>Most Common Answers</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
<b>Any business that creates more jobs</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Manufacturing or manufacturing support</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Dairy farm/operation</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Solar and/or wind energy</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Electricians, plumbers, mechanics</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Professional, IT services, etc.</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Funding sources &amp; investors</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Marijuana or Hemp ag and/or dispensary</b>	<b>2</b>

There was a fairly even split between those who answered yes (47%) and those who said no (53%). The most common responses to this question, for those who answered yes, were quite general. Respondents generally felt that any new business in Prowers would be beneficial to their own business, with some respondents saying manufacturing specifically.

### DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN PROWERS COUNTY 5 YEARS FROM NOW?



80% of respondents said they could see themselves in Prowers County five years from now, which is a positive sign for the County.

### CROSS-TABULATIONS

Survey results were cross-tabulated by age and primary residence to see if respondents had different preferences based on these factors. While many of the responses were similar there are a few interesting differences highlighted below.

#### Age

**Younger respondents were more likely to say they wanted to start a new business in Prowers County.**

70% of respondents under 35 said they *are* or *might be* interested in starting a new business in Prowers County, compared to 48% of respondents 35-to-49 and 43% of respondents over 50.

**Older respondents were more likely to see themselves living in Prowers County 5 years from now.**

87% of respondents over 50 see themselves living in Prowers County 5 years from now, compared to 78% of respondents 35-to-49 and 73% of respondents under 35.

**Younger respondents were more likely to know at least one person who would like to stay in or move back to Prowers County.**

49% of respondents under 35 know at least one person who would like to stay in or move back to Prowers County, compared to 35% of respondents 35-to-49 and 37% of respondents over 50.

*Residence*

**Respondents from Holly were the most likely to be interested in starting a new business in Prowers.**

64% of respondents from Holly said they *are* or *might be* interested in starting a new business in Prowers County compared to the survey average of 52%.

**Respondents from Granada and unincorporated Prowers County are more likely to see themselves living in Prowers County 5 years from now.**

100% of respondents from Granada and 92% of respondents from unincorporated Prowers County said they see themselves living in Prowers County five years from now compared to the survey average of 80%.

# PROWERS COUNTY DEMOGRAPHIC & ECONOMIC PROFILE

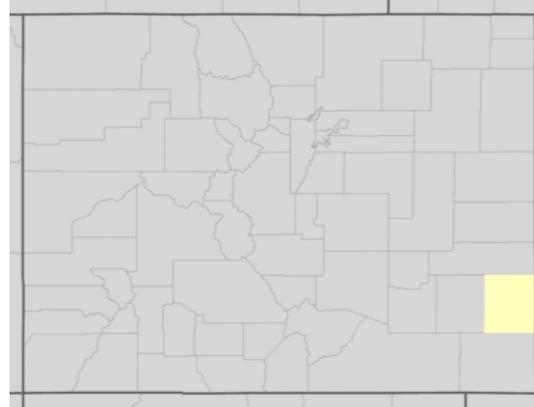
## Prowers County - 2015 Quick Facts

<b>Population</b>	12,143
<b>Population <i>Projection (2020)</i></b>	11,773
<b>Households</b>	4,849
<b>Housing Vacancy</b>	17.8%
<b>Median Household Income</b>	\$37,101
<b>Median Home Value</b>	\$95,781
<b>Median Age</b>	37
<b>Cost of Living Index (State=100) *</b>	83.9

\* 2013

Source: ESRI Community Profile; State Demography Office

## Colorado



## Prowers County



Prowers is a rural county located in southeast Colorado, bordering the Kansas state line. This profile provides demographic and economic data for the County, each of its communities and the region, which is defined to include: Prowers, Baca, Bent, Crowley, Kiowa, and Otero counties. In certain instances, comparisons are made to the State of Colorado.

Prowers has six communities: Wiley, Lamar, Granada, Bristol, Hartman and Holly that are centered around Hwy. 50, which runs east-west across the northern half of the County. Prowers is also served by Hwy. 287, part of the Ports-to-Plains corridor, which serves as a transportation route between Mexico and Canada. According to ESRI estimates, there are approximately 15,000 vehicles per day that pass through Lamar on Hwy. 287. Lamar is the largest of the communities and serves as the County seat.

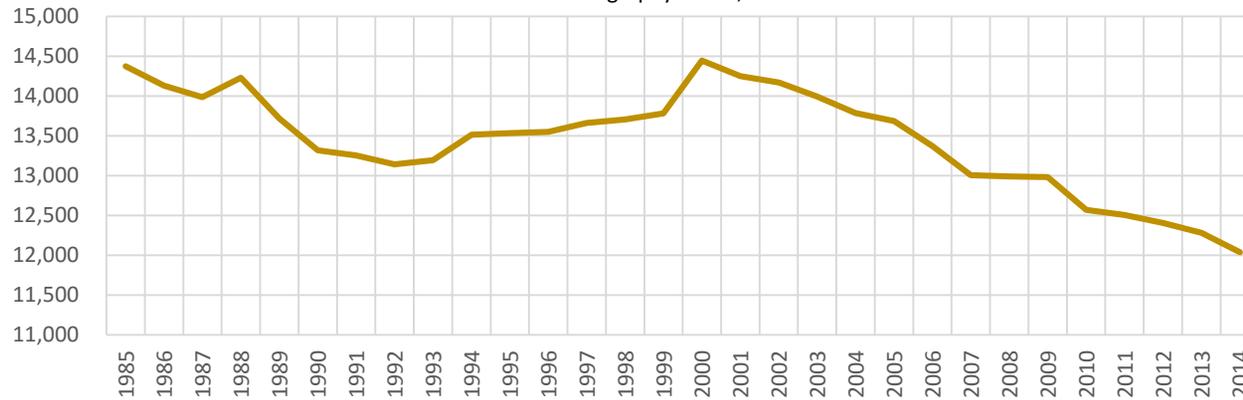


# PROWERS COUNTY DEMOGRAPHIC & ECONOMIC PROFILE

## POPULATION

### Prowers County Population

Source: State Demography Office; U.S. Census



Prowers County's population has been steadily decreasing since 2000, where it peaked at just under 14,500.

As of 2015, the County population was 12,143. ESRI projections estimate that population will continue to decline, although more gradually, through 2020.

The table below shows the population for the region along with each community in Prowers. The region's population is approximately 47,000 of which a quarter live in Prowers. More than half of the people who live in Prowers live in Lamar, which has a population of 7,503. All other Prowers communities have less than 1,000 residents each. There are more than 2,000 people who live in unincorporated areas of the County.

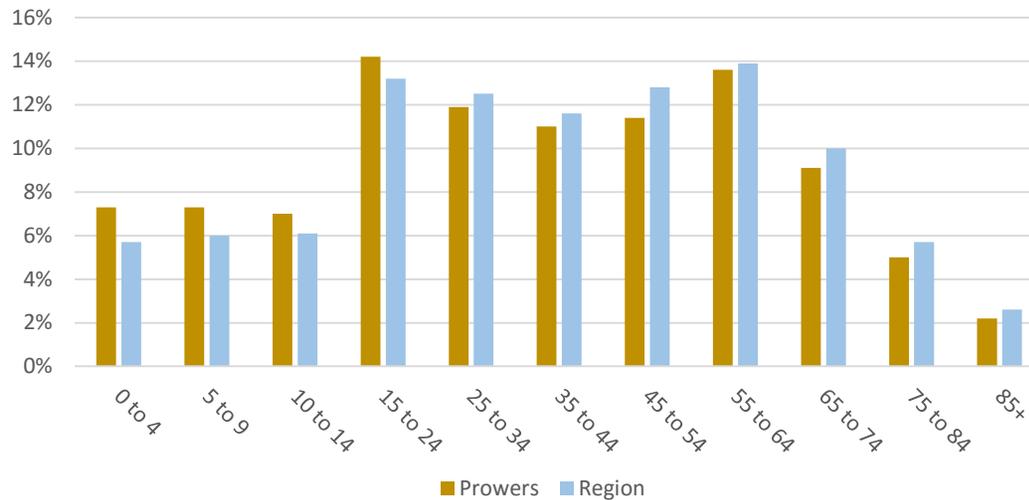
2015	Region	Prowers County	Lamar	Holly	Granada	Wiley	Hartman	Bristol	Unincorporated
<b>Population</b>	47,248	12,143	7,503	770	516	428	81	57	2,788
<b>Households</b>	18,022	4,849	3,019	290	190	175	36	30	1,109

Source: ESRI Community Profile

# PROWERS COUNTY DEMOGRAPHIC & ECONOMIC PROFILE

## 2015 Population by Age

Source: ESRI Community Profile



Prowers population is compared to the region in the chart to the left.

Prowers has a higher proportion of children and young adults ages 24 and younger than the region. The largest age cohort in Prowers is 15 to 24 years old. There is a noticeable drop in population between (15 to 24) to (25 to 34). Prowers should seek amenities and employment opportunities that are appealing to young professionals to encourage them to stay in the County.

Both the County and the region have a large percentage of people 55 to 64 years old, indicating a possible need for increased senior care options as this cohort ages. The region generally skews older than Prowers, with a higher percentage of its population 65 and over.

## HOUSING

2015	Prowers	Region
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	5,900	21,804
<b>Owner-Occupied</b>	51.7%	52.3%
<b>Renter-Occupied</b>	30.5%	30.3%
<b>Vacant</b>	17.8%	17.3%
<b>Median Home Value</b>	\$95,781	\$94,777

Source: ESRI Community Profile

The number of housing units in Prowers County decreased slightly between 2000 and 2015, from 5,977 to 5,900. Even with a slight contracting of housing supply, the vacancy rate increased from 11.2% in 2000 to 17.8% in 2015.

The majority of housing units are owner-occupied but there is also a strong rental market. Housing characteristics in the region are very similar to Prowers County, with comparable owner versus renter housing, vacancy, and home values.

# PROWERS COUNTY DEMOGRAPHIC & ECONOMIC PROFILE

## RACE AND ETHNICITY

	Prowers County		Region	
	2010	2015	2010	2015
<b>Total</b>	12,551	12,143	48,890	47,248
<b>White Alone</b>	81.0%	78.8%	80.7%	78.9%
<b>Black Alone</b>	0.5%	0.7%	2.6%	2.9%
<b>American Indian Alone</b>	0.9%	1.2%	1.6%	1.9%
<b>Asian Alone</b>	0.3%	0.5%	0.6%	0.7%
<b>Pacific Islander Alone</b>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Some Other Race Alone</b>	14.7%	15.7%	11.6%	12.4%
<b>Two or More Races</b>	2.6%	3.0%	2.8%	3.1%
<b>Hispanic Origin</b>	35.2%	37.2%	33.0%	34.8%

Source: ESRI Community Profile

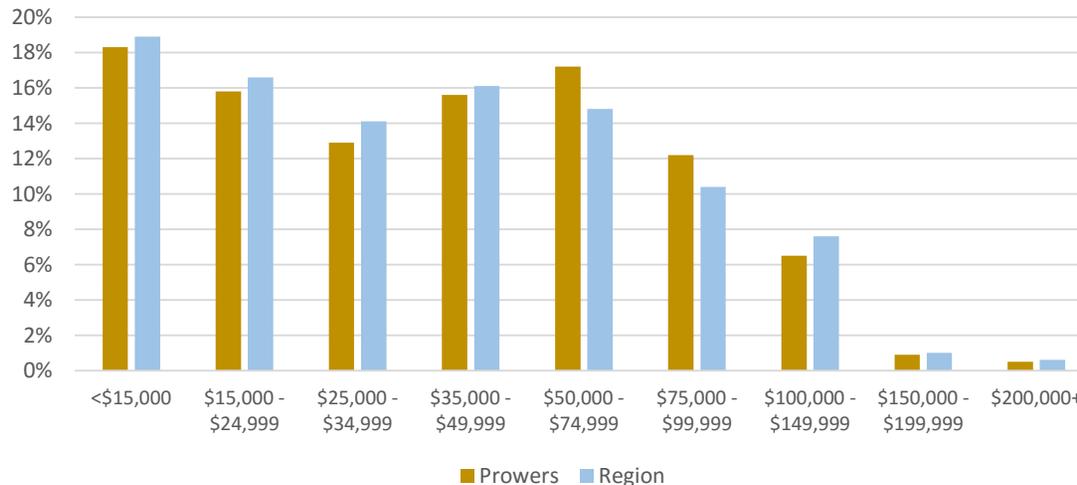
Prowers County was slightly more diverse in 2015 than it was in 2010. The Hispanic population, already over a third of the population in 2010, increased slightly, making up 37% in 2015.

The same trend can be seen in the region, as the table to the left shows. Prowers and the region have a similar racial and ethnic composition.

## INCOME

### 2015 Households by Income

Source: ESRI Community Profile



The chart to the left compares household incomes between Prowers County and the region. The median household income in Prowers is slightly higher than the region at \$37,101 compared to \$35,263.

Nearly half of Prowers and regional households earn less than \$35,000 per year. Households earning less than \$15,000 per year represent the most common income bracket in both Prowers and the region.

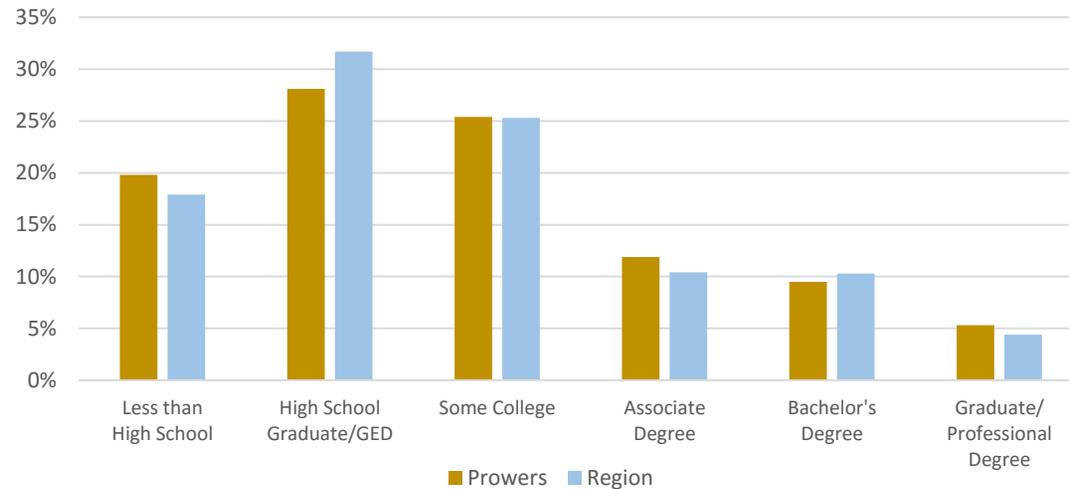
In Prowers, the second most common income bracket is \$50,000-\$74,999.

# PROWERS COUNTY DEMOGRAPHIC & ECONOMIC PROFILE

## EDUCATION

### 2015 Population (25+) by Educational Attainment

Source: ESRI Community Profile



Prowers County and the region have similar educational attainment characteristics. The largest share of the population 25 years and older has a high school degree or GED. Another 25% has completed some college but no degree. Approximately 25% of the population 25 + has an Associate's Degree or higher.



Photo credit: Lamar Community College

## RETAIL

ESRI's retail leakage report identifies retail demand and supply and resulting retail leakage or surplus.

Where there is leakage, new businesses are able to attract customers who would have to travel further to meet their demand for the product or service.

The chart to the right shows industry groups with the greatest leakage in Prowers County and the region. Prowers should consider attracting businesses that fill unmet demand for these types of retail.

### 2015 Retail Leakage

Industry Group	Region	Prowers
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	\$62.7M	\$9.9M
Furniture & Home Furnishings	\$9.1M	\$1.4M
Electronics & Appliances	\$9.9M	\$4.4M
Bldg. Materials, Garden & Supply	\$7.3M	\$1.5M
Grocery	\$22.7M	\$4.1M
Health and Personal Care	\$10.1M	\$4.0M
Clothing & Accessories	\$14.1M	\$3.0M
Sporting, Hobby, Music	\$9.0M	\$3.2M
Full Service Restaurants	\$7.0M	-

Source: ESRI Retail Marketplace Profile

## PROWERS COUNTY DEMOGRAPHIC & ECONOMIC PROFILE

Arland Land Use Economics prepared a market niche assessment for downtown Lamar in 2013. The report identified fairly significant spending potential across retail categories. This analysis assumes downtown Lamar is able to attract residents from a wide ranging trade area, which will require additional effort to bolster demand and encourage visitors to come spend their dollars downtown.

*Market demand for downtown Lamar is estimated as follows:*

- **Clothing & Accessories:** 36,251 sq. ft.
- **Health and Personal Care:** 34,368 sq. ft.
- **Full Service Restaurants:** 21,450 sq. ft.
- **Limited Service Eating Places:** 20,385 sq. ft.
- **Electronics & Appliances:** 18,175 sq. ft.
- **Furniture & Home Furnishings:** 17,942 sq. ft.
- **Sporting, Hobby, Music:** 16,115 sq. ft.
- **Specialty Food:** 5,619 sq. ft.



### ECONOMY

Prowers County employs nearly 6,000 people for a 2:1 resident to worker ratio. Of these employees, two-thirds work in Lamar. Another 16% work in the unincorporated areas of the County. The rest are dispersed across Granada, Holly, Wiley, Hartman and Bristol, ranging from approximately 0% to 6% of the total businesses. Prowers County captures 30% of the businesses within the six-county region. Prowers County fares better than the region in terms of unemployment, with a 5.6% unemployment rate, compared to 8.7% regionally. Lamar has the lowest unemployment rate (4.8%) in Prowers County. For comparison, the State of Colorado has an unemployment rate of 3.8%.

2015	Region	Prowers County	Lamar	Granada	Holly	Wiley	Hartman	Bristol	Unincorporated
<b>Total Businesses</b>	2,462	759	65%	2%	6%	3%	2%	0%	22%
<b>Total Employees</b>	20,196	5,977	67%	6%	5%	3%	3%	0%	16%
<b>Unemployment Rate</b>	8.7%	5.6%	4.8%	6.5%	10.1%	7.8%	4.3%	7.4%	--

Source: ESRI Community Profile, Business Summary

## PROWERS COUNTY DEMOGRAPHIC & ECONOMIC PROFILE

2013 Share of Jobs by Industry	Prowers	Colorado
Agriculture	11%	2%
Mining	2%	1%
Utilities	1%	0%
Construction	4%	6%
Manufacturing	5%	5%
Wholesale trade	n/a	3%
Retail Trade	12%	10%
Transportation and warehousing	3%	3%
Information	1%	3%
Finance activities	4%	4%
Real estate	2%	3%
Professional and business services	3%	9%
Management of companies and enterprise	n/a	1%
Admin and waste	2%	6%
Education	n/a	2%
Health Services	8%	10%
Arts	1%	2%
Accommodation and food	8%	8%
Other services, except public administration	6%	6%
Government	25%	15%

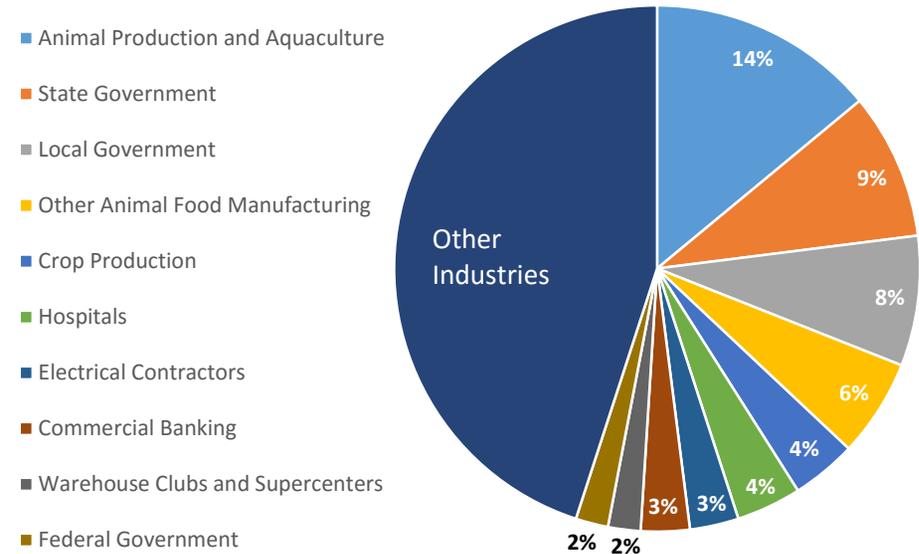
Source: State Demography Office

The three largest industries in Prowers County *by number of jobs* are Government, Retail, and Agriculture. Together, these represent nearly half of all jobs in the County.

There are several distinct differences between Prowers County's industry composition and the State of Colorado. Prowers has a much higher proportion of government and agriculture jobs than the state, whereas the state has a larger share of professional and business services.

### Prowers County: Top 10 Industries by Sales Revenue

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis 2013



An evaluation of top industries *by revenue* tells a similar story to industry by jobs. Animal production and aquaculture is the single largest revenue generator, at 14% of the total. However, when added together, state, local, and federal government represent 19% of sales revenue.

The top ten industries displayed above represent 55% of all sales revenue in the County.

