

# 2011 Colorado Planning & Management Region Report

Region 10 – Delta, Gunnison, Hinsdale,  
Montrose, Ouray and San Miguel Counties

## Introduction

Region 10 is located in West-Central Colorado and includes the counties of Delta, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Montrose, Ouray, and San Miguel. The region's population grew from 86,348 in 2000 to 100,190 in 2010, a 16% increase. Montrose County was the fastest growing within the region at 23.4%. Delta, Ouray and San Miguel counties also posted double-digit gains. Growth rates for the region's population are expected to increase slowly after 2010, with an average annual percent increase of between 1 – 3% from 2010 to 2040.

County	2000	2010	% Change
Delta	27,834	30,952	11.20%
Gunnison	13,956	15,324	9.80%
Hinsdale	790	843	6.71%
Montrose	33,432	41,276	23.46%
Ouray	3,742	4,436	18.55%
San Miguel	6,594	7,359	11.60%
<b>Colorado</b>	<b>4,301,261</b>	<b>5,029,196</b>	<b>16.92%</b>

Source: State Demography Office

Delta and Ouray Counties have some of the highest median ages in the State. In Delta, about 20% of the County's population is aged 65 or over, whereas in Ouray, the high median age is more the result of an absence of young children rather than the presence of the elderly. In contrast, Gunnison has one of the lowest median ages of Colorado Counties despite an unusually low proportion of children, due principally to the large relative population of post-secondary students in the County.

## Jobs & the Economy

Agribusiness, Tourism, and Retiree related expenditures are the largest drivers of the economy. The majority of job losses have occurred in the construction and real estate industry. A number of real estate offices have closed and all have reduced staff. Many construction workers have left the area, or have taken temporary service jobs waiting for the housing market to recover. As time moves on, more of these individuals are leaving the area, a trend which is expected to continue. Some job losses were the result of the decline in tourism, which recovered somewhat in the summer of 2010, though expenditures were still below 2007 levels. Second Home development is at a virtual standstill, with some sales in the very high end of the market. Some very slow job growth is expected to return with growth rates gradually increasing in the next several years. It is highly doubtful that growth rates will return to pre-recession levels by 2013.

## Housing

Home sales have finally stabilized after two years of steady declines in every quarter since 2008. Despite few sales, prices have remained remarkably stable, though increasing numbers of foreclosures in 2010 did erode prices. Region 10, along with most of the Western Slope, was hit with foreclosures later than Denver and while Front Range counties are currently experiencing a decline in the number of foreclosures, Region 10 was still seeing increases through 2010. Based on filings during the first two quarters of 2011, our region is on track to slow or reverse that trend.

### Foreclosure Filings

County	2009 Total	2010 Total	2011 Q1 & Q2
Delta	206	283	111
Gunnison	189	210	82
Hinsdale	4	5	0
Montrose	290	392	129
Ouray	68	59	8
San Miguel	98	108	20

Source: Colorado Division of Housing

Due to the scenic beauty of this region, many of the counties have a high proportion of their housing units dedicated to seasonal use. A 2007 study of homeowners in Hinsdale, Gunnison, San Miguel, and Ouray Counties had 44% of respondents indicate that their property was a second home for occasional or rental use. The highest rate was in Hinsdale County with 66%.

## Agriculture

Agribusiness is an important industry within the Region. In both Delta and Montrose County greater than 10% of all basic jobs were within Agribusiness. Recently, the development of sweet corn and wine production has had a positive impact within Montrose County. According to the Census of Agriculture the number of farms producing sweet corn in Montrose County increased approximately 30% between 2002 and 2007 and the number of grape harvesting farms increased nearly 50% during the same time period. Another growing market segment is so-called boutique agriculture and ranching, producing organic and natural products for local and statewide consumption.

## Clean Energy

The clean/green energy segment is still at the fledgling stage, with many small solar hot water and photovoltaic installers. Manufacturing of photovoltaic systems in Montrose will soon move from research/design/prototype development to production, with job growth potential of 150 jobs.

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## New Projects & Goals for the Upcoming Year

Construction could begin as early as 2012 on a proposed uranium mill in Montrose County. The proposed site for the mill is approximately 12 miles west of Naturita in the Paradox Valley. The proposed mill would process up to 500 tons of ore per day, and would be the first uranium/vanadium mill built in the United States in more than 25 years. Supporting activity for the mill could include future increases within both the mining and transportation industries.

Community leaders across Region 10 are focused on a range of goals intended to

- Retain and support local sustainable businesses and industries including agriculture
- Retain and create jobs that add value to the counties
- Diversify our economic base
- Increase/expand tourism activity
- Promote understanding and stewardship of our natural landscape
- Improve transportation options for residents and visitors, including public and air transportation