

## WELD SELLS HOSPITAL LAND TO NCMC, INC.

Weld County has been involved in or owned hospital operations since 1904, but that changed in October, under a deal approved by Colorado Attorney General Phil Weiser, providing new ways to support health care and education for residents.

The Weld County Board of Commissioners officially divested itself of the land and assets associated with North Colorado Medical Center to Banner Health, which has operated the hospital since 1995.

NCMC, Inc. received a portion of the sale proceeds, because it owns outright some of the land and assets Banner bought. Those proceeds expanded funds available to NCMC, Inc. to bolster its philanthropic efforts to benefit Weld County's most vulnerable.

This new endeavor, called The Weld Trust provides grants for ongoing support of both health care and education in Weld County. In addition, Weld County receives money for its Bright Futures program, which assists students in pursuing a college degree or vocational training.

"The attorney general listened to those who supported the sale because of what it would mean for Weld County residents, but he also did his due diligence in making sure Banner Health would continue to provide top-notch health care here in Colorado," Weld County Commissioner Chair Barbara Kirkmeyer said. "The approval of this deal is truly a victory for Weld County residents who will directly benefit in so many ways from the new programs and resources that will be created and provided to them through the sale proceeds."



## WELD A SECOND AMENDMENT SANCTUARY COUNTY

Weld County declared itself a "Second Amendment Sanctuary County" on March 6, 2019. The resolution came in response to HB 19-1177, or the Red Flag Bill, which allows family members, household members or law enforcement to petition a judge to remove firearms from an individual they deem dangerous to themselves or others.

"The issue isn't an issue of safety as much as it is an issue of protecting the constitutional rights of citizens," said Commissioner Chair Barbara Kirkmeyer.

Per the resolution, the Weld County Commissioners affirmed their "support for the Weld County Sheriff in the exercise of his sound discretion to not enforce against any citizen an unconstitutional firearms law."

The Weld County resolution states the Board of Commissioners "will not appropriate government funds for capital construction of building space and purchase of storage systems to store



weapons seized pursuant to the authority and requirements set forth in HB 19-1177, if such bill is enacted by the Colorado General Assembly."

## DEPARTMENTS RECOGNIZED FOR OUTSTANDING WORK

**Department of Public Works:** National ACPA Excellence in Concrete Pavement Award.

**Department of Public Safety Communications:** Colorado NENA/APCO Trainer of the Year: Jessica Flohrs; Center of the Year. Life Savers Awards: Dispatchers Laura Schumacher, Julie Nelson and Josh Rysavy. Stork Awards: Sumer Graham.

**Department of Finance:** Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Distinguished Budget Presentation Award, 36 years; GFOA Comprehensive Annual Financial Reporting (CAFR) Award.

**Extension Department:** Colorado Association of Extension 4-H Agents Awards: Extension Diversity Award, Excellence in Teamwork Award, Excellence in Animal Science Programming Award, Extension Team Award, Kim Sterkel. National Association of Extension 4-H Agents Awards: Excellence in Ag Literacy Programming Award, Kim Sterkel. CSU Extension Team Award for 4-H Horse Work Team, Kim Sterkel.

## FINAL APPROVAL GIVEN FOR ZONING UPDATES



After considering public input from residents and business owners, the board unanimously approved on third reading proposed

zoning updates to Chapter 23 of the Weld County Code. Updates involved the county's 14 zoning districts and identified the types of facilities and uses that belong in the county's vast agricultural zone.

Throughout the three-reading process, some of the proposed updates included restricting certain commercial and industrial uses from occurring in the agricultural zone, especially in subdivisions, while promoting more agriculture related issues; changing whether a use is allowed in the agriculture zone based on whether property is located in a subdivision or historic townsite; and shifting the permitting process for many agriculture related uses from a Use by Special Review (USR) to a more administrative process facilitated by the Department of Planning Services.

While the zoning updates further solidify the intent of the county's agricultural zone, they also provide a clearer developmental framework of Weld County, which the commissioners believe will help create growth that is consistent with residents' expectations, while allowing accommodations to changing needs in the future.

## NEW TECHNOLOGY BETTER LOCATES MOBILE 911 CALLERS

A new tool was added to Weld County's Department of Public Safety Communications that makes location accuracy for mobile 911 callers more precise - RapidLite SOS, a device-based software that pinpoints a mobile caller's location.

"RapidLite is helping Weld County's public safety dispatch system to provide quicker, more accurate service," said Weld County Chair Barbara Kirkmeyer. "This tool will aid in better serving our residents and any 911 mobile caller."

If a mobile caller can't communicate their location clearly, the call drops or the dispatcher can't locate a caller, the mobile caller's phone number is entered into RapidLite's database; pinpointing the caller's location within milliseconds. Dispatchers can look up a phone number for up to 10 minutes after it's received.

"This technology is not only helping our residents but also our dispatchers," said Mike Wallace, Public Safety Communications Director. "It is enhancing the way our department runs and allows mobile callers to be located faster and more precisely during an emergency."

Also debuting this year, residents can text WELD911ALERT to 99411 to sign up for CodeRED emergency alerts.

CodeRED is free, and users can register multiple phone lines and manage their own accounts. Alerts for severe thunderstorms, tornadoes, flash floods, critical police activity and boil water notices are delivered via phone call, text, email or a combination of all three, based on the resident's specific preferences.



## BUSINESS INCENTIVE PROGRAM THRIVING

The Weld County Small Business Incentive Program continued to help small businesses in unincorporated Weld County thrive in 2019. Since the program began in 2014, a total of \$189,160 has been distributed to 11 businesses to help offset permitting fees.

"As county commissioners, we appreciate this program," said Mike Freeman, Weld County Chair Pro-Tem. "We are a business-friendly county, and this program assists business growth in Weld County."

Facilitated by the Board of Commissioners and the Department of Planning, the Small Business Incentive Program was established with \$500,000 from the county's economic development fund in 2014. The program has provided businesses with \$130,000 this year.

"This is a unique program, and I would encourage more participation," said Scott James, Weld County Commissioner and Coordinator of the Planning Department. "When you're in the planning process or the permit process, don't forget to look into the Small Business Incentive Program. It's a great way to start you off on your new venture."



## COMMISSIONER MEETINGS LIVESTREAMED

The Board of County Commissioners launched a new tool in November that will help interested citizens stay up-to-date with county business - live streaming their Monday and Wednesday board meetings.

"A few residents asked for the ability to be able to watch board meetings remotely, so we looked into a program that would tie into our existing records management system," said Commissioner Chair Barbara Kirkmeyer. "Now residents can view the agenda, the minutes (at a later date) and the video all on one screen."

Viewers can either watch videos live or view past meeting videos on demand. On-demand videos are uploaded to Weld County Government's website within three business days of the meeting.

"This is a great addition to our communication tool box," said Commissioner Scott James. "This was something I really wanted the county to provide to our residents, so I'm excited to see we have a system now in place that will do just that."



## JAIL EXPANSION IN PROGRESS

In 2010, Weld County started saving money for future expansion of the jail. In 2018, the bid for construction was awarded at \$45 million, and the project is being paid for in cash which means no additional taxing of residents is required. A new three-story addition to the existing jail is under way. Construction is being done in two phases. The first phase consists of building out the west wing; which will house 373 more inmate beds as well as administrative offices and training rooms for staff. This phase should reach completion by the end of 2020. The second phase will expand the kitchen and inmate property storage within the existing facility due to an increase in inmate population. This phase is projected to reach completion in mid-2021.

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## PASSING THE TORCH, NEW DHS DIRECTOR ANNOUNCED

Jamie Ulrich was named the new Director of the Department of Human Services (DHS) by the Board of County Commissioners, effective January 16, 2020. Ulrich, who has served as the Deputy Director of the department since 2016, has spent the past three years under the mentorship of current director Judy Griego.

This department is the most complex in the county," said Commissioner Chair Barbara Kirkmeyer. "The numerous divisions, responsibilities, and funding sources require a leader who truly understands the day-to-day operations as well as the impacts of proposed state and federal legislation. We are happy to name Jamie Ulrich as the new director and are confident in Jamie's ability to be that leader."

Ulrich began working for the department in 1996, when she was hired as an eligibility technician for the Aid to Families with Dependent Children division. For the next 17 years, Ulrich gained more experience in the department through several divisions. In 2013, she took a position with the state DHS as the deputy director for the division of employment and benefits. She returned to Weld County in 2016, when she was hired as the department's deputy director. Since that time, Griego has mentored Ulrich in preparation of this transition.

"I'm ready," said Ulrich. "It's been invaluable to have had the time to learn from Judy about what it takes to manage the many divisions, projects and programs in this department. I feel confident she has given

me the foundation I need to be successful." As for Griego: "I'm excited to start my next chapter," she said. "I've had a great career here in Weld County. I've worked with amazing commissioners and incredible staff. I feel confident the department is in capable hands with Jamie."



## FOURTH VIETNAM VETERANS PINNING CEREMONY HELD IN 2019

For the fourth consecutive year, the county hosted a pinning ceremony as part of a national effort to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War.

The pinning ceremony Presidential proclamation and the official pin are provided through the county for Vietnam Veterans by a program of the United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration. The goals of the program include thanking and honoring veterans of the Vietnam War, highlighting their service and paying tribute

to their contributions. The program is scheduled to continue on the Federal level through Veterans Day 2025.

"It is a privilege and an honor to publicly thank each of these veterans for their service to our country and welcome them home," exclaimed Commissioner Chair Barbara Kirkmeyer.

The first local ceremony, held in November of 2016, honored more than 20 Vietnam Veterans while the May 2017 ceremony

honored approximately 100 veterans. In 2018, 62 veterans were honored.

Over 100 people gathered at the Windsor Community Center for the 2018 ceremony to officially "welcome home" veterans of the Vietnam War. The county's Veterans Services Office worked through a program offered by the federal government to make sure Vietnam veterans, received the recognition and honor they earned but did not get when they returned home from the Vietnam War.



# WELD COUNTY COMMISSIONERS 2019 SUMMARY

## BOARD ACCEPTS LOCAL CONTROL DELEGATION OVER OIL AND GAS

The passage of Senate Bill 19-181 by the state gave local governments expanded local government authority with regard to land use related to oil and gas development.

With more than 100 people in attendance, the board unanimously approved the 1041 authority resolution designating all unincorporated areas of Weld County as under the purview of county government with regard to mineral resources, including oil and gas development at the June 10 board meeting. These actions officially accepted the local control SB 19-181 was touting to bring to local government agencies.

Each commissioner shared their thoughts on the new regulations: Commissioner Chair Barbara Kirkmeyer: "Senate Bill 181 took away a preemption that was there, delegated to us additional authority and gave us additional land-use powers. As a county commissioner, I'm going to exercise that land-use authority as much as I possibly can to provide regulatory stability for the energy industry, protect the interests of our Weld County property owners, and, most importantly, provide security to the women and men who work in the energy industry."

Commissioner Pro-Tem Mike Freeman: "As we go forward and continue to work with this, I realize it's going to be a difficult challenge, but believe me you have five county



commissioners dedicated to making this happen. And we will be successful in providing certainty and stability for the oil and gas industry."

Commissioner Sean Conway: "Other communities may see this in a different fashion. But I know other counties and municipalities are looking for our leadership and our guidance."

Commissioner Scott James: "I am in agreement with Governor Polis in the fact that the best government is the government that is closest to home, and therefore this government, which is the closest to your homes, will take that authority and will continue to support the economic vitality of Weld County."

Commissioner Steve Moreno: "We do care very deeply about the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of this county."

On August 28, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was approved between Weld County and the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (COGCC). This MOU established the process that oil and gas operators should follow when obtaining a permit to develop oil and gas resources in Weld County. While both the county's 1041 WOGLA process and the state's permitting process are separate, the MOU established a 60-day time limit for the state to approve, grant, deny or otherwise respond to the permit request. Entering into the MOU was a necessary step in expediting the permitting process and providing opportunity for oil and gas exploration.

## OIL & GAS ENERGY DEPARTMENT OPENS

On July 8, the board unanimously approved a resolution to create an Oil and Gas Energy Department directed by Jason Maxey.

"Establishing this department is vital for the economic health of our county," said Commissioner Pro Tem Mike Freeman. "For years, we as a county, along with our residents and the industry, have developed a process that has worked well for the needs of our community."

The department officially opened for business on August 5, is staffed by 12 people and is responsible for permitting, regulating and enforcing surface and air oil-and-gas operations for drilling sites located in unincorporated areas of Weld County.

By design, the department sets a fee and fine schedule which mitigates the financial impact to the county's overall budget and thereby to Weld County taxpayers.

"This new department provides clarity for the energy industry when it comes to permitting and serves as a central location for residents who have questions for the energy industry or want to get more information about drilling activity in Weld County," said Commissioner Chair Barbara Kirkmeyer.



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