



Region 10 Announces Renovation of New Entrepreneurial Center in Olathe

Montrose, CO (November 14, 2022)—Region 10 League for Economic Assistance and Planning has begun the renovation of a new Entrepreneurial Business Resource Center in Olathe that is slated to open in March. The aim of the \$1.2 million project that has begun at 300 Hap Court, is to create new jobs in Delta and Montrose counties and continue development of a regional entrepreneurial network.

Entrepreneurs Will Get a Boost

Recent population growth, workforce enrichment, and a strong local broadband network have positioned the area well for business growth. Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that small businesses accounted for 66 percent of employment growth over the past 25 years; with stronger support for entrepreneurs, this would increase.

The new center will support entrepreneurs in all industry segments--with a business incubator providing technical assistance, training, coaching and co-working space. Within it, there will be a commercial kitchen for food-based businesses and an area for pop-up restaurants. These will support the development of new catering, food manufacturing and other food-based businesses. The food business segment is a frequent entry point for entrepreneurs.

There will be access to the regional Business Loan Fund (BLF) and Small Business Development Center (SBDC,) which are part of Region 10. The center has training and conference rooms with the newest technologies. Leading training and development programs will be offered, such as Demystifying Entrepreneurship from the Leeds Business School at the University of Colorado and the FastTrac startup business curriculum from the Kauffman Foundation. A full set of food training programs will also be available. Training will be available in English and Spanish versions.

Sue Hansen, Montrose County Commissioner, and member of the Project Steering Committee commented: "This project will provide much needed resources for those interested in starting a new business. Think of it as a one-stop shop for our entire region. It is a worthy investment for Montrose County, and I am excited to see the Entrepreneurial Center completed and filled with entrepreneurs ready to build and expand their businesses."

A Broad-Based Regional Partnership

Region 10 has spearheaded this initiative, in keeping with the regional economic development strategy. The organization sought and obtained a sizable USDA Rural Innovation grant in 2021. This was the catalyst that formed a strong partnership that includes Montrose County, the Town of Olathe, Delta County, The Bank of Colorado, and Montrose Housing Authority—which have all committed to provide additional funds. The Gates Family Foundation and Colorado Department of Local Affairs' Rural Economic Development Initiative invested additional grant funds.

There is great determination to see this initiative create impact for the area. Along with all the local governments and agencies, other supporters include Colorado State University, Valley Food Partnership, Technical College of the Rockies, and Conexion Coworking (Olathe's co-working space.) The team hopes to engage local businesses as mentors and guest speakers at the center and to offer networking and enrichment events on a regular basis.

Stay Tuned for Further News

Region 10 has hired a program manager to help create a Regional Entrepreneurship Program and operate the Olathe Center. Ann Bradford, a Cedaredge resident, is the new Program Manager. Ann moved to the area in 2019, after working as an executive and consultant for major consumer package good companies and retailers for over 30 years. "I am thrilled to be a part of helping strengthen small business development in western Colorado. I have enjoyed launching new businesses and building inspired organizations and more than anything in my career," she said. "We just can't wait to get underway."

Michelle Haynes, Region 10 Executive Director said, "we are pleased to begin this new project in Olathe—it provides an opportunity to introduce programming targeted to entrepreneurs that complements our existing Small Business Resources. We are excited to have recruited Ann to assist us with the project and program development. We are confident that the community will see new jobs created through this and the broader effort to stimulate new business development."

This project is part of a broader long-term commitment to the development of a vital entrepreneurial ecosystem in western Colorado. Entrepreneurial support organizations already exist in Telluride (Telluride Venture Network), Gunnison (ICELab), the west end of Montrose County (Advanced West End,) Durango (Southwest Colorado Accelerator Program for Entrepreneurs,) and Grand Junction (Grand Junction Business Incubator.)

Further information will soon be available regarding pre-opening and opening events through community publications and on partner websites.

About Region 10

Established 50 years ago in 1972, [Region 10](#) League for Economic Assistance and Planning (LEAP) has leveraged resources to help build strong communities. This happens through providing senior services, small business services, and regional development support to a six-county area that includes Delta, Montrose, Hinsdale, Gunnison, Ouray, and San Miguel counties. As a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, Region 10 is supported by local and county governments, and its programs are supported by state and federal programs and funding sources. More information is available at www.region10.net.

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