



**GARFIELD COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
PREPARED DECEMBER 2007**

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

### **Garfield County Economic Development Planning Team**

Allen Henrie - Panguitch City Manager  
Brian Cottam – Southern Utah University  
Bobbi Bryant - Local Business Owner  
Donna Owens - Powell District Ranger, US Forest Service  
Fred Jaeger - Local Business Owner  
Gael Hill - Local Business Owner  
J. Arthur Cooper - Mayor Panguitch City  
Jean Seiler - Ruby's Inn  
John Holland - Scenic Byway 12 Coordinator  
Justin Fischer – Garfield County Planner  
Lori Mecham - Local Business Owner  
Mark Austin - Local Business Owner  
Rusty Lee - Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument  
Tim Clarke - Boulder Town Board  
Tom Barlow – Former Garfield County Planner

### **Other Participants**

Jane Excell - Local Business Owner  
Les Prall - Utah Office of Rural Development  
Elaine Baldwin - Local Landowner  
Bruce Fullmer - Garfield County Travel Council  
Janet Borg - Envision Escalante Director  
Tracy Hassett - Owner Gallery Escalante  
Jana Hassett - Owner Gallery Escalante  
Beverly Evans - Utah Office of Rural Development  
SuzAnne Jorgenson - USU Extension  
Ken Sizemore - Director, Five County Association of Governments  
Allysia Angus - Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In the summer of 2005, the Garfield County Commission recognized the need to update the Garfield County General Plan to address resource management. The Garfield County Resource Management Plan (RMP) was Adopted November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2006. One of the resulting recommendations from the RMP was to initiate a County-wide, comprehensive economic development plan. Under the direction of the Garfield County Planner and with the assistance and financial support of the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget, Garfield County developed an Economic Development Plan.

A planning team comprised of community leaders, local residents, business owners and representatives from land management agencies in the County were selected and approved by the County Commission. The team included representatives from Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, Dixie National Forest, Utah State University Extension Services, Ruby's Inn, Panguitch City, local business owners and the Garfield County Planner. The Garfield County Economic Development Plan was periodically reviewed by the Garfield County Commission, and the Planning Commission.

### **Vision Statement**

Garfield County is rich in agricultural, natural, cultural, and human resources. Quality soils, topography, climate and forests, the concentration of national parks with their recreation areas and scenic beauty create an environment rivaled by few other areas. These natural features enrich our economy and the lives of our citizens. Garfield County is also steeped in historic tradition and pioneer heritage. Cities and Towns have a strong sense of identity, retaining original design elements from pioneer times. These original design elements act as a good framework for continuous and steady development. From these resources and features emerged our local culture, character and economy.

We are challenged, as we look to the future, to protect the quality of our environment and its inherent quality of life while meeting the needs of all of our citizens. This special place has been purchased at a high cost, one of diminishing job opportunities, particularly for our young citizens. Although our economy has expanded from chiefly farm-based and natural resource extraction, one which includes industry, retail and tourism, and other service-oriented businesses, we must continue to seek innovative ways to diversify our economy and provide job opportunities for all Garfield County citizens. Vigilantly safe-guarding those precious and irreplaceable resources unique to Garfield County and wisely planning for change, we look forward to the challenge.

## **Vision Elements**

This plan provides recommendations founded upon nine primary vision elements that will guide future implementation strategies by the County. These elements focus on the following:

**1. Increased Tax Base:** To generate additional revenue to support, maintain, and improve local infrastructure and services such as water systems, roads, parks, libraries, hospitals, clinics and emergency medical services. Careful and frugal use of public expenditures.

**2. Job Development:** To encourage a wide variety of industries and jobs which provide better wages, benefits, and opportunities for advancement.

**3. Business Retention:** To encourage economic growth from within the County. Businesses that feel appreciated by the community and, in turn, feel as if they are contributing to the economy will stay in the County, and continue to provide employment opportunities.

**4. Economic Diversification:** To Expand the economy and reduce the County's vulnerability to a single business sector. Develop a diverse stable economy that provides economic opportunities for all citizens which is essential to a healthy and balanced community, and helps to insulate the County from economic downturns in specific industries.

**5. Self-sufficiency:** To assist Garfield County residents with economic self-sufficiency to break the cycle of government reliance. Public/private cooperation with an organized approach to economic development with self-sufficiency in mind. To work together with cooperative community spirit toward a common goal, and focus on self reliance.

**6. Productive Use of Property:** To use property for its "highest and best use" maximizing the productivity of that property. In addition to the brick-and-mortar investments, all decisions are made with an outlook on the future.

**7. Quality of Life:** To increase local tax dollars and jobs to raise the economic tide for the County, which generally increases the overall standard of living of the residents. Conviction that, in the long run, we have to power to increase the quality of life and that our destiny is in our own hands. Making our communities good places to live is a pro-active assignment, and we willingly accept it.

**8. Recognition of Local Products:** To increase the awareness of locally produced products and services, and to increase the degree locally produced goods are consumed in the local market.

Local loyalty is emphasized, but thriving communities know who their competitors are and position themselves accordingly.

**9. Sophisticated Use of Information Resources and Networking:** Networking and pooling of all resources in Garfield County is imperative to success in a rural environment. Several efforts going on in the County should be connected and working together, i.e. scenic byway coordination, (highways 12, 143, and 89), along with planning, tourism, heritage, and natural resource development. Leaders should seek to access information that is beyond the knowledge base available in the community. County leaders should compete for government grants and contracts and for economic and social programs.

### **Scope**

Early on in the planning process the Planning Team recognized the geographical differences in Garfield County and how there are at least 3 distinctly different areas in Garfield; *West region:* Panguitch and Hatch; *Bryce Valley or Central region:* Tropic, Cannonville, and Henrieville; and an *Eastern region:* Escalante, and Boulder. Antimony has its own issues and uniqueness as well, and could possibly be a fourth distinctly different region. Additionally, Ruby's Inn and surrounding areas on top of the plateau could be seen as another distinct region. This presents a challenge in writing and developing economic development goals and strategies for Garfield County as a whole. Garfield County does have commonalities throughout, and it is the intent of this plan to bring forward economic development strategies that work for Garfield County as a whole.

The Concept of regions of Garfield County being a "regional cluster" was brought up. The regional cluster is the Highway 12 corridor as the common thread that links a majority of the communities in Garfield County together.

## **Recommendations**

The Planning Team issued a number of specific recommendations in support of the plans vision elements. Eight issue areas form the basis of the Team's recommendations. Each issue with its accompanying recommendations is outlined as follows:

- 1. Legislative, Governmental and Community Support. Hold Community Meetings to unify and inform public of survey results. Information gathering, networking and consensus building etc**
- 2. Develop the "economic facts" brochure / website to give up to date information to potential businesses relocating to Garfield County.**
- 3. Develop the "Garfield County Business Directory"**
- 4. Develop strategies for ongoing funding and community planning in the County and with each municipality in Garfield County**
- 5. Strategies from the SWOT exercises**
- 6. Re-zoning Near Escalante saw-mill from Agricultural to Residential to allow for additional housing for saw-mill employees.**
- 7. Create an ongoing economic development financing, development, and promotion entity**
- 8. Use GOPB model to inventory communities "rural character"**

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN PURPOSE AND PROCESS

### **Purpose of the Plan**

This Economic Development Plan is intended as a guide for the leaders of Garfield County to stimulate economic growth, and retain existing industries, while preserving the County's natural and cultural heritage. This plan outlines specific measurable ways to achieve a more widely shared and sustainable quality of life, to increase local tax base, and to create industry/job diversification. This plan outlines ways to improve the economic positioning of communities in the County in an increasingly competitive environment.

### **The Planning Process**

Planning for economic development in Garfield County is essential to preserving the quality of life currently enjoyed by County residents. The planning process was done through a series of meetings in an attempt to determine a number of factors that typically shape a regional economy.

The team held several meetings over the course of twelve months, and corresponded by telecommunication methods in between meetings. Within that time-frame the Economic Development plan was completed.

The Governor's Office of Planning and Budget has developed an online toolkit to assist in plan development. Garfield County has followed the toolkit outline in developing this plan. By following the toolkit, Garfield County has a formal document by which to follow planning visions.

## CURRENT SETTING

### **Introduction**

Garfield County is located in south central Utah. The Colorado River and Lake Powell mark the eastern border, and to the west there are forested high plateaus. The County was created in 1882 by the territorial legislature and named after President James A. Garfield. Vast rangelands and some of the state's largest forest reserves have made cattle ranching and the lumber industry important economic activities since pioneer times. The forests and National Parks also provide recreational enjoyment such as hiking, hunting and fishing, and camping. Garfield County has some of the most spectacular national parks in the US. Garfield County is situated in a region of the US with the highest concentration of National Parks anywhere in world. Garfield draws upon many tourists throughout the world to visit Bryce Canyon and Capital Reef National Parks. The primary economic activities are tourism, government, cattle, and lumber.

### **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats**

The Planning Team conducted a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats, (SWOT) exercise in January 2006 to help define realistic goals, objectives, and strategies for the County. The Planning Team sees the value and need to create a broadly shared vision of the County and each region within the County. One of the implementation items of this plan outlines a strategy to share results with each community and to conduct another SWOT exercise to develop a broadly shared vision.

The results of the SWOT exercise the Planning Team conducted are as follows:



**WESTERN REGION: Panguitch City, Panguitch Valley, Panguitch Lake, Hatch Town,  
Hatch Valley, Mammoth Creek**

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
People	Overly dependent on tourism
Infrastructure - Hospital (sewer, water, natural gas) airport, industrial park	Limited cultural and recreational programs/facilities for youth
Historic district/Mormon heritage area	Untrained workforce
Recreation	Older (retired) population and part-time residents
Summer climate	Winter climate
Motel rooms (400+)	Limited retail businesses
Main Street/Chamber of Commerce	
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
Scenic byway designation for SH 143, and National Park designation for Cedar Breaks	Drugs and alcohol
Develop more retail businesses	Terrorism
Expand airport facilities	Declining student population
Create a golf-course	Big-Box stores
Develop niche-markets (arts and crafts)	Surrounded by federal lands
Encourage growth of current businesses	Elimination of sales tax on groceries
	Forest fires
	Alton coal mine

***CENTRAL REGION: Bryce valley, Tropic, Cannonville, Henrieville***

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
Locally owned utilities	Distance to medical care
Strong work ethic	Lack of access to resources
Strong families and family values	Cyclical work
Good schools	Lack of cultural diversity
Good geographic location in the County	Small private land base
	Loss of local control (federal lands)
	Cultural attitude
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
Outdoor adventure	Lack of local networking
Tourists	Federal lands
Alton Coal	
Oil in Johns Valley	
Winter visitors - keep highway (143) open above Panguitch Lake	
Brewery/vineyards	
Winter tourism	

***EASTERN REGION: Boulder Town, Escalante City and surrounding areas.***

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
Natural - scenic beauty and parks - resources (forest, minerals, sun)	97% Public land = ownership/control
Landscape - physical/social/cultural	Inter-community distrust (and intra-)
Cultural heritage - ranching defines landscape	Lack of top-down communication from county
Artistic demographic	Lack of social/cultural diversity
Experience - education/equivalency = knowledge base	Low esteem(can't do mentality/rear view mentality)
Demographic/social diversity	Communication (lacking real newspaper, county website: IT systems)
Natural resources	Cash-flow for start-up businesses
Communication - networking	
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
Sustainable technologies - biomass, solar, etc avoid "one-size fits all"	Change! Resistance
New ideas and approaches (niche marketing)	Tribal mentality - between communities and various and various cultural backgrounds
Progressive ideas - not old tapes	Urban sprawl - mac mansions
Local community character and passion -Encourage bottom-up initiatives, e.g. seed money	Loss of productive land/agricultural character
Change - responses to meet new challenges, different (small-scale) business models	Changes incompatible with local character
Compatible, sensitive solutions e.g. not conflicting with natural resource/scenic value e.g. locating extractive industries (oilfields not visible)	Urban sprawl
	Unchecked growth
	"Change" that ruins resources
	Outside influence (like big-money/box stores, strip malls, etc)

## **Quality of Life Survey Results**

The Planning Team prepared a quality of life survey which was sent to every Post Office Box in the County. The survey had a good response(number), with many interesting results.

The results of the survey and the SWOT exercise have provided the Planning Team with a number of good strategies and

### **DESIRED CONDITIONS**

1. The creation of a County website with meeting dates/agendas, current social and economic facts profile, and Garfield County business directory.
2. Ongoing business development support, and economic development assistance (USU, EDGE, Planner, etc) Partnerships with Utilities, Colleges/Universities, Public/Private partnerships
3. Identification of funding sources/mechanism for ED work products and implementation: USU Extension Entrepreneurship and Business Initiative Program, Western EDGE, CDBG, CIB, Forest Service Rural grants. County to act as lead party for Cities and Towns.
4. ED Committee/Advisory Council formed and periodic meetings of ED Advisory Council
5. Buy local programs/initiatives started and implemented - farmers markets, etc.
6. Communication and consensus building on ED strategies between the County and Cities and Towns
7. Surveyed Inventory of Cities and Towns with “rural character” (presumable all Cities/Towns in Garfield will Qualify)
8. To Identify economic/community development strategies and implementation tools

# Goals, Objectives, and Action Items

**Goal 1:** Work to establish **Internal** County and Planning/Economic Development Office processes for economic development plan implementation.

Objective 1: Take steps to make County Planner's office the Economic Development Office.

Action item: Provide annual budget request to the County Commission

Responsible Party: ED Office & County Clerk

By When : 4th quarter

Action item: Annually present completed economic development plan and update of ED Office activities to all Garfield County city councils.

Responsible Party: ED Office

By When: 1st quarter

Action item: Contribute at least six submissions (e.g., articles, announcements, advertisements, etc.) from the economic development office to *The Garfield County Insider* and publish the same on the county website.

Responsible Party: ED Office

By When: at least bi-monthly, six total

Action item: Send an introductory letter or newsletter to Garfield County businesses introducing the ED office and the pertinent elements of the ED plan.

Responsible Party: ED Office

By When: 2nd quarter

Objective 2: Establish and maintain a website for Garfield County, including the Planning/Economic Development Office.

Action item: Acquire hardware, install software, and choose content management system (e.g., MediaWiki, Zope, Plone)

Responsible Party: ED Office

By When: 1st quarter

Action item: Register domain name(s) and ask ITS to open ports and enter DNS information.

Responsible Party: ED Office & ITS

By When: 1st quarter

Action item: Determine feasibility of internship for system development, maintenance, and/or content creation.

Responsible Party: ED Office

By When: 1st quarter

Action item: Create business county-wide business directory.

Responsible Party: ED Office, business owners, & intern

By When: Ongoing

Objective 3: Assess options for creating, managing and facilitating a Garfield County Economic Development Council.

Action item: Conclude business with the current economic development planning committee.

Responsible Party: ED Office and ED planning team

By When: 1st quarter

Action item: Present multiple options for an economic development council to the County Commission.

Responsible Party: ED Office

By When: 3rd quarter

Action item: Implement the County Commission's decision.

Responsible Party: ED Office

By When: 4th quarter

Objective 4: Establish a partnership with the Economic Development Corporation of Utah.

Action item: Apply for funds to publish the county Strategic ED Plan.

Responsible Party: ED Office

By When: 3rd quarter

Action item: Apply for funds to pursue Economic Development training.

Responsible Party: ED Office

By When: 4th quarter

Action item: Establish eligible Sure Sites.

Responsible Party: ED Office & municipal governments

By When: As determined by eligibility requirements

**Goal 2:** Provide assistance to businesses and entrepreneurs, as guided by the General Plan, pages 5-3 and 5-4, parts 9, 10, and 14-16

Objective 1: Research and become familiar with the Garfield County economy and businesses.

Action item: Create and maintain a Garfield County business list

Responsible party: ED Office

By when: business list by third quarter; maintain ongoing

Action item: Create and maintain a Garfield County Economic Development information packet.

Responsible party: ED Office

By when: packet by third quarter; update as needed

Objective 2: Identify & learn about economic development resources for existing businesses and entrepreneurs.

Action item: Investigate business service offerings from Utah State University, including USU Extension Services, Southern Utah University's Business Resource Center, state government (e.g., GOED, GOPB, and the Department of Community and Culture), federal government (e.g., USDA, Small Business Administration, Department of Commerce), and any other sources.

Responsible Party: ED Office & USU Extension Office (SuzAnne Jorgensen)

By when: Ongoing

Action item: Become familiar with grant and loan opportunities for new and existing businesses.

Responsible Party: ED Office & USU Extension Office (SuzAnne Jorgensen)

By when: Ongoing

Action item: Attend Senator Bennett's Rural Business Conference in Price

Responsible Party: ED Office

By when: 2nd quarter

Action item: Attend Utah Rural Summit, Cedar City

Responsible Party: ED Office

By when: August

Action item: Become conversant with the Five County Revolving Loan Fund and assist in packaging eligible deals.

Responsible Party: ED Office

By when: Ongoing

Action item: Incorporate the Garfield County ED Goals and Objectives into the Southwestern Utah Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

Responsible Party: ED Office

By when: 2nd quarter

Action item: Become familiar with the programs of the federal Economic Development Administration and participate in the regional Economic Development District

Responsible Party: ED Office

By when: Ongoing

Objective 3: In partnership with the USU Extension office, implement the Garfield County Business Expansion And Retention (BEAR) Program.

Action item: Request initial funds for BEAR software license from Garfield County.

Responsible Party: ED Office

By when: 1st quarter



Action item: Apply for funding for BEAR surveyors through SUU.

Responsible Party: ED Office

By when: 1st quarter

Action item: Investigate funding options for BEAR implementation from GOED and other sources.

Responsible Party: ED Office

By when: 1st quarter

Action item: Attend BEAR Program training hosted USU Extension.

Responsible Party: ED Office & USU Extension

By when: 1st quarter

Action item: Identify industry sector priority for 2008 surveys.

Responsible Party: ED Office & USU Extension

By when: 1st quarter

Action item: Edit the BEAR survey to better suit Garfield County's business needs.

Responsible Party: ED Office & USU extension

By when: 2nd quarter

Action item: Perform practice surveys.

Responsible Party: ED Office & USU extension

By when: 2nd quarter

Action item: Contract with BEAR surveyors and begin to implement BEAR Program.

Responsible Party: ED Office & USU extension

By when: 2nd quarter, implementation ongoing

Action item: If appropriate, renew funding request from SUU.

Responsible Party: ED Office

By when: 4th quarter

Objective 4: Provide follow-up services and assistance from information gathered from BEAR surveys & outreach (Goal 4, Objective 2).

Action item: Continually respond to needs of businesses as identified from BEAR survey

Responsible party: ED Office

By When: Ongoing

Action item: Provide up to two workshops/trainings as a result of BEAR survey results or other business outreach initiatives.

Responsible party: ED Office and other partners such as USU Extension, SUU, Manufacturing Extension Partnership, USTAR, PTAC, etc.

By when: year's end

Objective 5: In partnership with USU, plan and conduct the annual Garfield County Business Conference.

Action item: Seek funding from SUU and other sources.

Responsible Party: ED Office & USU Extension Office (SuzAnne Jorgensen)

By when: Ongoing

Action item: Assist with conference preparation and hosting.

Responsible Party: ED Office & USU Extension Office (SuzAnne Jorgensen)

By when: March 2008

Objective 6: In the spirit of Goal 1, Objective 2 and Goal 4, Objective 1 have the economic development office be the conduit to business service providers.

Action item: Establish a pattern of proficiency in delivering the right services to local businesses and entrepreneurs.

Responsible Party: ED Office

By when: Ongoing

**Goal 3:** With the appropriate partners, work to support and strengthen the **Agriculture and Natural Resources** sectors of Garfield County's economy.

Objective 1: In keeping with the Garfield County General Plan, pages 5-4 and 5-5, parts 6, 19, and 25-31, the economic development office shall assess the needs of local sawmills and other wood products businesses.

Action item: Partner with Skyline Forest Resources to identify needs and opportunities with which Garfield County Economic Development could assist. Where possible and appropriate, deliver ED Office assistance.

Responsible Party: ED Office & Skyline Forest Resources

By when: meet by 2nd quarter; assistance TBD, but may be ongoing

Action item: Partner with K&D Forest Products to identify needs and opportunities with which Garfield County Economic Development could assist. Where possible and appropriate, deliver ED Office assistance.

Responsible Party: ED Office & K&D Forest Products

By when: meet by 2nd quarter; assistance TBD, but may be ongoing

Action item: Identify other wood products business that could benefit from assistance in like manner to that identified in this objective.

Responsible Party: ED Office

By when: Ongoing

Objective 2: Research agricultural opportunities in the County, as per the General Plan, page 5-4, parts 5, 13, and 22-24.

Action item: Research the feasibility of growing crops and livestock that are not currently grown in the County.

Responsible Party: ED Office & USU Extension Office (Kevin Heaton)

By when: 3rd quarter

Action item: Research different methodologies to increase yield and/or lengthen growing season.

Responsible Party: ED Office & USU Extension Office (Kevin Heaton)

By when: Ongoing

Action item: Identify new markets for locally raised agricultural products.  
Responsible Party: ED Office & USU Extension Office (Kevin Heaton)  
By when: 3rd quarter

Action item: Attend the USU Extension Diversified Ag. conference  
Responsible Party: ED Office  
By When: 1st quarter

**Goal 4:** Participate in Garfield County **infrastructure** development as appropriate.

Objective 1: Investigate and assess more robust Internet options for Garfield County and its municipalities.

Action item: Assess options for UTOPIA project and other projects.  
Responsible Party: ED Office  
By when: 2nd quarter

Action item: As appropriate, assist the private sector in pursuit of the objective.  
Responsible Party: ED Office  
By when: Ongoing

Action item: Present options to municipalities as appropriate.  
Responsible Party: ED Office & UTOPIA  
By when: 3rd quarter

Objective 2: Promote infrastructure in eastern Garfield County, consistent with the General Plan, page 5-4, part 20.

Action item: participate in Ticaboo commercial electrification feasibility study.  
Responsible Party: ED Office & FCAOG  
By when: Ongoing