



# FIRST IN COLORADO FIRST IN SERVICE

*Annual Performance Report 2004*



## A message from the Board of County Commissioners

Arapahoe County. Colorado's First.

We say those words quite often because we are proud of our history as Colorado's first county. But, beyond our rich history is a commitment to be the best. *First in Colorado, First in Service* is the theme of our 2004 annual report, and throughout the next dozen pages you'll see examples of the many programs and services that set our county apart.

You'll read about the 17 citizens who became homebuyers for the first time, thanks to our Home Buyers program. You'll discover the innovative ways in which we are bringing services to you, such as the satellite technology that allows Assessor's employees to access property information on wireless handheld PDAs. The Sheriff's Business Watch program that sends alerts to businesses via e-mail, fax and phone about crimes and suspicious activity. Or, the millions we save by using recycled asphalt to pave high volume gravel roads in eastern Arapahoe County.

*First in Colorado, First in Service* is more than just six words written on a piece of paper. It's our vision of who we are and what we want to be. Our 1,900 employees are dedicated to making Arapahoe County a great community. Many of us live in Arapahoe County. This is our home and we care about making it a great place to live and work.

As your Commissioners, we are proud of our accomplishments, our organization's ability to work as a team, and our pursuit to make Arapahoe County even better. It's what *First in Colorado, First in Service* is all about and we are proud to present our 2004 Annual Report to you.

Sincerely,

Susan Beckman, Chair, District 1  
Bernie Zimmer, Chair Pro Tem, District 2  
Marie Mackenzie, District 3  
Lynn Myers, District 4  
Debra A. Vickrey, District 5



Board of County Commissioners,  
left to right: [back] Susan Beckman, Chair,  
District 1; Bernie Zimmer, Chair Pro Tem,  
District 2; Lynn Myers, District 4;  
[front] Marie Mackenzie, District 3;  
Debra A. Vickrey, District 5

# History

On Aug. 25, 1855, Governor Woodson of the Territory of Kansas signed an act that created Arapahoe County as a part of the Territory of Kansas. In 1861, when Kansas became a state, Colorado was made a territory with Arapahoe County as one of the 17 original counties.

In 1902, Arapahoe County was divided into five counties: Yuma, Washington, Denver, Adams and South Arapahoe. In 1903, the "South" was dropped from the county name, and in 1904, voters selected Littleton, over Englewood, as the County seat.

The Town of Deer Trail grew up where a trading post and campsite served the wagon trails heading for the gold fields. Deer Trail holds the distinction of staging the first organized rodeo in 1869.



## Accomplishments

We know that to be *First in Service* we need to constantly improve the way we do business, by raising the bar for standards within our organization to deliver new products and services that make it easier for citizens to work and live in our county. And, we know that includes improving how easy it is for citizens and companies to do business with us.

- We opened a new, larger satellite Motor Vehicle office in Aurora, with 10,000 square feet of office space and additional workstations, to better serve more than 15,000 customers each month in our County's rapidly growing eastern district.
- Our Clerk and Recorder's Office now accepts passport applications at the County Administration building, making it easier for U.S. citizens to get approved for international travel.
- By launching Access Arapahoe, an automated electronic alert service, citizens and employees can now get emergency alerts, including building closures or delays due to

weather, sent straight to their phone, fax, e-mail or TTY.

- Arapahoe/Douglas Works! helped 40 students of all ages study, test and pass their GED certificates this year—and then celebrated with a special graduation ceremony in their honor.
- In 2004, we remodeled courts in Littleton and Aurora to include an improved security checkpoint, a hearing room and video arraignment room, as well as a new ventilation system, paint, and carpeting.
- The first ever recall election in our County's history took place in February 2004, and resulted in the recall of the Clerk and Recorder. The election was overseen by Assessor Ed Bosier and the employees of the Assessor's Office, who stepped up to accept the task when the Commissioners needed to appoint a designated elected official.
- This year's General Election led to a record 92.6 percent turnout of the 253,403 registered voters in our County.



- ◀ Left: Better parking and a bigger workspace means faster, more efficient services for customers at the new Motor Vehicle office in Aurora.
- ◀ Right: Open Space Shareback Funds put half of the county's Open Space sales and use tax back into local towns and cities.

- Commuting got easier when we opened the Broncos Parkway Bridge in 2004—providing an east/west alternative to Arapahoe Road for 10,000 cars that use the bridge daily.
- The Sheriff's Office again earned Triple Crown Status accreditation, and remains one of only three agencies in Colorado (and 21 agencies nationally) to do so. The award can significantly reduce the number of lawsuits and the severity of civil litigation, but also helps improve public safety through community partnerships.
- In 2004, our Coroner worked closely with hospitals and donor organizations to increase organ harvest/transplant availability, and published several case studies in forensic journals. The team also implemented and maintained a working histology lab to provide efficiencies.

- We wrapped up the first year of the Open Space program by appointing the Open Space Trails and Advisory Board; hiring an Open Space Manager; developing criteria for the grant program, heritage areas and acquisitions; as well as distributing \$6.2 million to 12 cities and towns—the first Open Space Shareback Funds.

## Arapahoe County Elected Officials



**Susan Beckman**  
**Commissioner,**  
**District 1**  
**Chair**

*"What defines Arapahoe County from the rest is our sense of purpose and team approach to getting things*

*done. While our cities, special districts and economic development agencies have individual responsibilities and goals, we all take ownership in Arapahoe County and strive to provide the best programs and services for you—our citizens. Government works best when it works together and it's a philosophy we carry through in everything we do."*



**Grayson Robinson**  
**Sheriff**

*The men and women of the Sheriff's Office serve Arapahoe County with pride, integrity and a dedicated community spirit. They have*

*implemented a variety of innovative measures to ensure the challenges associated with providing exceptional public safety services are effectively accomplished, along with a serious focus on being good stewards of your tax dollars. They continue to earn the respect and support of our community, and work to ensure Arapahoe County continues to be a safe place to raise families, conduct business and enjoy life.*



- ◀ Left: The Broncos Parkway Bridge in Centennial provides relief for local commuters thanks to local District, City and County collaboration.
- ◀ Right: The Sheriff's Office keeps you and your dollars safe with Triple Crown accreditation.

# History

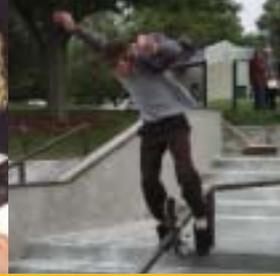
## Commissioners

The first Commissioners to oversee Arapahoe County served 1902 - 1905: Charles B. Patterson, Samuel R. Brown and Luke W. Terrell. In 1997, the Board of County Commissioners expanded from three commissioners to five.

The first ever Commissioners' meeting was held at the residence of Commissioner Charles B. Patterson. Later, the Town Hall was used as a county building and was rented for \$50 a month.

On the motion of Commissioner Luke W. Terrell, the report of Coroner O.M. Hurst—in matter of holding inquest—on the body of an unknown man killed by Santa Fe Ry, was received and placed on file.

On Nov. 25, 1903, the Commissioners levied an annual road tax of \$2 on each male inhabitant age 21 to 45 years old. The tax was kept in a fund to be known as the "Road Fund." Today, the Road and Bridge fund is \$23.7 million.



## Community

Reaching out to our community is essential to making our County a better place to live. We're *First in Service* because we welcome the expertise and advice of our civic-minded citizens to help shape Arapahoe County into a great place to live, work and enjoy life. Our open-door approach ensures constituents are heard and the community's needs are a foundation in our decision-making processes, to help us create strong, healthy local communities.

- By improving the energy efficiency of 600 low-income homes, our Weatherization division is making a difference in the lives of our low-income families and senior citizens.
- In 2004, 17 low-income families and individuals realized their dream of becoming homeowners using \$294,991 from the County's homebuyer program for down payment and closing costs.
- Food drives, blood drives, toy drives, and our annual Adopt-a-Family holiday giving program continue to provide avenues for

employees and local organizations to give to local families in need.

- Through our Embrace a Life foster and adoption program, we cared for more than 4,000 children who are at risk or are victims of abuse and neglect in 2004, and placed 112 children in permanent, adoptive homes.
- The Sheriff's Office put dozens of citizens through their paces in 2004 as part of our free Sheriff's Citizen Academy, including firearms safety, decisional shooting, and SWAT team, Bomb Squad and K-9 demonstrations.
- The 2004 County Fair attracted 1,500 spectators to six 4-H completion events, where more than 160 youth club members showcased valuable skills in pet care and home economics.
- We awarded more than \$1.2 million in Community Development Block Grants for public facilities, housing and services to benefit low to moderate-income citizens. Recipients included Center for the Blind, Covenant Cupboard

- ◀ Left: Single mom Pat Crespi, pictured with Geri Johnson, Arapahoe County Housing Authority, bought her first home in August with \$20,000 from the County's homebuyer program.
- ◀ Middle: The County Fair provides local youth a chance to gain skills and confidence they'll use for the rest of their lives.
- ◀ Right: Like, totally cool, dude: \$277,000 in CDBG funds provide Sheridan skateboarders a place to ride the rails, hurl down half-pipes and board bodacious bowls.

Food Bank, Radio Reading Services, and Gateway Battered Women's Shelter.

- In 2004, we paved half a mile of history by providing \$83,000 of CDBG funds for the first asphalt road in the Town of Deer Trail.
- More than 10,000 citizens received free mosquito repellent wipes in our countywide campaign to educate the public about the West Nile Virus, including tips on how to stay safe in the summer.
- Renovations continue on the historic, 143-year-old 17 Mile House and barn along Parker Road, thanks in part to a unique partnership of nine public and private entities that saved the property from development in 2001. The House is one of only three remaining 19th century 'mile houses' along the

Cherokee/Smokey Hill Trail, and is an essential part of Arapahoe County's history.

- The Board of County Commissioners granted \$1.4 million in aid to agencies that provide health care, mental health services and social services in the community.
- Through a \$23 million intergovernmental agreement, the City of Centennial contracts with Arapahoe County for municipal services, including law enforcement, public works, animal control and liquor licensing.

## Arapahoe County Elected Officials



**Lynn Myers**  
Commissioner,  
District 4

*"What makes a community a great place to live, and what defines quality of life? Is it great neighborhoods? Top-notch*

*schools? Low taxes? Good paying jobs? In Arapahoe County, we have all of the above, according to a 2004 study by the American City Business Journals, which ranked Arapahoe County in the top 50 counties of more than 3,000 counties across the nation."*



**Nancy Doty**  
Clerk and Recorder

*Providing crucial services for many of life's most important occasions, the Clerk and Recorder's Office is responsible for recording deeds, registering*

*automobiles, issuing marriage licenses, registering voters, administering elections and maintaining records for the Board of County Commissioners. The employees of the Clerk and Recorder's Office are committed to efficient, cost effective, quality service with an emphasis on the customer—the citizens and taxpayers of Arapahoe County.*



- ◀ Left: Deer Trail paves its first road in 84 years thanks to Arapahoe County.
- ◀ Right: Citizens volunteer time on nearly two-dozen boards and committees including budget, health, and planning councils.

# History

In 1903, Littleton got electricity. On Nov. 25, 1903, the Commissioners approved 36 payments, including a bill for \$30.55 to the Arapahoe Electric Light and Power Co.

On May 23, 1903, the Board of County Commissioners began a Human Services program when it approved a \$3.50 expense to pay the grocery bill for Mrs. Sullivan, and \$4 for Mr. Bartsch's transportation and expenses to Pueblo.

On June 21, 1904, the Board authorized loaning the county's Street Grader to the Town of Littleton for three days with the understanding that machine would be sharpened before it was returned.

## Assessor

The Assessor told the Board he could not get along with less clerical help than two clerks. Today, the Assessor's Office has 71 employees. The first Assessor, Paul J. Hogan, served 1902 – 1905.



## Innovations

Discovering new and innovative ways to provide quality programs to Arapahoe County residents is just one way in which we strive to be *First in Service*.

- In 1998, the Assessor's Office was the first to allow citizens to research property values and protest their assessed values online. Today, the Assessor's Office has taken innovation one step further with the addition of its EFS module—technology that gives the Assessor's Office and its Disaster Recovery Team property information and photographs on wireless handhelds and laptops.
- A few years ago, no one had heard of West Nile Virus, let alone worry about a few mosquito bites. Today, a multi-jurisdiction task force led by Arapahoe County coordinates mosquito control efforts. Using satellite-mapping technology, larvicide and public education, Arapahoe County is battling pesky mosquitoes and helping to prevent the spread of this terrible disease.
- Technology is a big part of snow removal. Arapahoe County is the only local government using an automatic vehicle location/global positioning system on our vehicles where we are able to track location, speed, and how much de-icing material is applied to roads. This system enables the County to ensure proper application of de-icing materials, efficient deployment of vehicles and operator safety during harsh weather conditions.
- Graffiti in Arapahoe County is no longer a lingering eyesore. With the Sheriff's Office Graffiti Clean-up Program, supervised minimum-security inmates—using equipment obtained through asset-forfeiture funds—are removing graffiti quickly without a drain on public tax dollars.
- *First in Service* also means protecting our environment and using tax dollars wisely. Our Road and Bridge division paves rural roads with recycled asphalt—at a fraction of the cost of new, and giving a new meaning to pounding the pavement.



- ◀ Left: Our Disaster Recovery Team determines property damages in an emergency and accelerates the disaster recovery process.
- ◀ Right: We apply new technology thoughtfully to make it easier for citizens to do business with us, and to live and work in our county.

- With Access Arapahoe—a new electronic service designed to keep citizens in touch with Arapahoe County government—the County can send a single message to subscribers via e-mail, telephone, fax, TTY, cell phones and PDAs.
- Got weeds? We've got bugs. Flea Beetles and Seed Head Weevils were given to dozens of Arapahoe County residents to battle pesky weeds. These bugs are a more effective and safer method to destroy weeds than using harmful pesticides.
- One of the unique things about Arapahoe County is that we do not have a county manager. Instead, the County Attorney and the Department Directors report directly to the Board of County Commissioners and function as the Executive Team. The E-Team

entails a redefined and more sophisticated management model by working in conjunction with the Commissioners and Elected officials to administer County services.

## Arapahoe County Elected Officials



**Bernie Zimmer**  
*Commissioner,  
District 2  
Chair Pro Tem*

*"With satellite offices and services through our web site, Arapahoe County is always striving to make government more accessible to our citizens. Our employees are dedicated to being the best and they work day in and day out to bring quality services to you. Accessing government should not be difficult. It should be easy, efficient and pleasant. We strive every day to be 'First in Service'. It's our commitment to you."*



**Ed Bosier**  
*Assessor*

*Discover, list, classify and value all real and personal property in Arapahoe County—that's the job of the Assessor's Office, which also is responsible for maintaining ownership and parcel maps; submitting the Abstract of Assessment, certifying values and producing the warrant roll. With a focus on customer service, the Assessor's Office leads the way in offering innovative tools to help residents discover property values. It was the first office to provide property information online and is now using wireless technology to access that same information in the field.*



- ◀ Left: Recycled asphalt on rural roads costs a fraction of new paving, and is environmentally friendly.
- ◀ Right: Just like an ATM, job seekers at Arapahoe/Douglas Works! find, then print jobs they want using touch screen Denver Post job kiosks.

# History

## Treasurer's Office

Tax lien sales date back to 1876. Unlike the 2004 tax lien sale which generated \$3 million in back taxes and an additional \$98,000 for Arapahoe County, there was not much activity back then. The first Treasurer, David Howard, served 1902 – 1911.

## Clerk and Recorder

On Jan. 5, 1904, Thos E. McNulty of the McNulty Ballot Box Co., quoted a special price—\$7 a box—to the Commissioners for ballot boxes. The County would need to buy 24 boxes for the county seat election. Unlike ballot boxes used in our early history, technology plays a large part in Elections today. During Early Voting, voters cast their ballot on a small, easy-to-use device that allows people with disabilities to vote without the assistance of someone else. Chase A. Berdel was the first Clerk and Recorder and served 1902 – 1905.



## Saving Money

Being *First in Service* means being fiscally responsible to our taxpayers, to deliver programs, services and innovations that are cost-effective and improve the quality of life for our residents. It's why we consciously leverage our dollars or reduce costs wherever possible without compromising our goal of being *First in Service*.

- Arapahoe County has the lowest county mill levy in the Denver metro area—and second lowest in the State—at 15.14.
- In 2004, we consolidated our health care plans with one provider to avoid a \$1.4 million increase in medical insurance costs—and, without losing either HMO or PPO options.
- Our employees frequently participate in our health and safety programs, helping us save \$2 million in 2004 by reducing the County's liability premium, and costs associated with lost wages and medical benefits.
- We continue to collaborate with Douglas and Adams counties to fund one Tri-County Health

Department, so our portion is just \$3 million—a fraction of what it would cost if each county funded its own health department.

- Our Capital Improvement Program leveraged \$4 million of County funds into \$15 million for much needed transportation and drainage projects which include:
  - Widening of Broncos Parkway, and widening of Quebec Street from Iliff to Cherry Creek;
  - Extension of Broncos Parkway from Jordan to Parker roads, and extension of Easter Avenue;
  - Goldsmith Gulch drainage improvements, and a Parker/Jewell outfall storm sewer;
  - Chambers and Potomac traffic signal.
- Every November, the Treasurer's Office holds a tax lien sale, which in 2004 collected \$3 million in taxes owed to local governments and other entities, as well as an additional \$98,000 in revenue for Arapahoe County.



- ◀ Left: Bike to Work day is just one fun way to encourage employees to be active for a healthy body and mind.
- ◀ Right: Public Works and Development employees turn dollars into tangibles – paving, roads, bridges, signs, signals – to make life better in our County.

- The Sheriff's Office acquired \$200,000 worth of equipment through a military surplus relocation program, at no cost to our taxpayers. The acquisition included two bulldozers, one of which was used by our emergency response team to put out a county prairie land fire; the other is in use in the Sheriff's training facility. The Sheriff also secured \$500,000 from the Drug Enforcement Administration to upgrade our law enforcement training facility.

## Arapahoe County Elected Officials



**Debra Vickrey**  
**Commissioner,**  
**District 5**

*"While the economy has created tough budget times in 2004, Arapahoe County continues to provide good, quality services to the citizens of Arapahoe County. We've been able to weather the financial storm with good financial management and planning, tough decision-making, and most importantly, due to the quality work of our 1,900 dedicated public employees who are willing to work harder and do more with less."*



**Bernie Ciazza**  
**Treasurer**

*The Treasurer's Office is responsible for collecting, investing and disbursing \$2.4 billion annually to local governments, school and other taxing districts in Arapahoe County. It is a function that is vital for ensuring the continued operation of local governments and school districts that depend upon tax revenue to provide essential government services to the community.*



- ◀ Left: The Treasurer's Office collected \$3 million in taxes owed to local governments and other entities during its annual tax lien sale.
- ◀ Right: The best things in life are free (to taxpayers): the County's emergency response equipment is cost-effective, cutting edge and keeps our community safe.

# History

## Sheriff

During 1902 – 1907, the first Arapahoe County Jail was located in the alley behind 2540 W. Main St., Littleton.

In 1907, Arapahoe County built a grand courthouse at a cost of \$51,845. Sheriff's deputies and their families resided next door in a house where jail cells occupied the first floor. The courthouse, which was sold to the City of Littleton in 1998, still stands at Littleton Boulevard and Court Place, and is a model in historic preservation.

William Barclay Masterson, better known as "Bat", served as an Arapahoe County Deputy Sheriff from Dec. 5, 1896 to Aug. 25, 1897.

In 1858, E.W. Wynkoop was appointed by Governor Denver of the Territory of Kansas to serve as Arapahoe County's first Sheriff when Denver was still apart of Arapahoe County. Charles Gallagher was the first Sheriff of the "new" Arapahoe County, and he served 1902-1905.



## Awards

*First in Service* always means striving to do your best. In 2004, Arapahoe County received awards recognizing employees for outstanding work.

### Individual Awards

Bernadette Gray, Human Services caseworker, received the inaugural Outstanding Caseworker of the Year Award from the Advocates for Children.

Tri-County Health Department named John Newhouse the Public Health Hero of the Year for his work with mosquito control.

The South Metro Denver Chamber of Commerce presented Commissioner Marie Mackenzie with the Outstanding Public Service award. She also received a Citizens Award for her work as an advocate for the Cherry Creek Basin Water Quality Authority, drainageway enhancements and water quality.

The National Association of County Information Officers honored Andrea Rasizer and Liz Ellis of Communication Services with eight awards for a variety of communication projects. Liz Ellis also received a MarCom Creative Award, honoring

excellence in marketing and communications, for her design work in the Fight the Bite West Nile Virus campaign.

The Board of County Commissioners and Bob Roby received a Design of Excellence Award for Arapahoe Centrepoint Plaza from the City of Aurora.

### Performance Awards

Arapahoe County Commissioners and local elected officials honored 20 teenagers who overcame personal adversity at the County's Metropolitan Mayors and Commissioners Youth Awards banquet.

Arapahoe/Douglas Works! received the Foothills Quality Award for its approach to performance excellence, in Colorado's third annual Quest for Excellence.

The Environmental Protection Agency recognized Arapahoe County with the Environmental Achievement Award for our participation in the Cherry Creek Stewardship Partners' Smart Growth for Clean Water project.

Arapahoe County received an Award from the American Concrete Paving Association for the Jordon

- ◀ Left: Human Services employees are setting the standard for Excellence in Practice in child welfare in Colorado.
- ◀ Right: CentrePoint Plaza combines form and function to create an award-winning spacious, user-friendly environment for staff and citizens.

Road Project, which also placed second in the Association's national competition.

3CMA, a national organization of city and county communication professionals, honored Communication Services and Information Technology with an Award of Excellence for the 2003 redesign of the County's web site. Communication Services also won three Bronze Quill awards from the International Association of Business Communicators for the web site redesign, newsletter redesign and crisis communication campaigns and programs.

The Finance Department won the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the 2004/2005 budget.

Arapahoe County won first place in the vehicle decoration category in the Western Welcome Week parade.

Human Services won the Excellence in Practice award at the Annual Child Welfare Conference. Awarded to the Family Empowerment Unit, the recognition positions the County as a State leader in promoting safety, permanence and well being for children and families.

Arapahoe County is a family-friendly organization, according to *Colorado Parent Magazine*, because we offer employees extended Family Medical Leave, job sharing, flex time, Take Your Child to Work Day, education assistance, wellness programs, medical, dental and disability benefits.

The Northern Aurora Business Association recognized the Board of County Commissioners for their dedication and support of the organization's goals and commitment to original Aurora.

## Arapahoe County Elected Officials



**Marie Mackenzie**  
*Commissioner,  
District 3*

*"When I came to this job in 1996 I did so with the future in mind. My focus has always been on making Arapahoe County*

*a better place for our children and grandchildren by concentrating on water, open space, development of a fairgrounds, preservation of our cultural assets and transportation issues. In order to look ahead, it is important to preserve the past because our history has a lot to offer in terms of our success and lessons learned."*



**Michael Dobersen,**  
*M.D., Ph.D.*  
**Coroner**

*The Coroner's Office works as a guardian of the health, safety, and welfare of our community. They serve the living by investigating sudden*

*and unexpected deaths, and in particular; those that occur under violent or suspicious circumstances. The office is led by Michael Dobersen, M.D. Ph.D, a nationally respected coroner; who is often called upon for his expertise in forensic sciences. The men and women of the Coroner's Office recognize the tragedy surrounding an untimely death and perform its investigations, in part, to assist grieving family, friends and relatives*



- ◀ Left: Local teenagers are honored for overcoming personal adversity, at the County's Metropolitan Mayors and Commissioners Youth Awards banquet.

- ◀ Right: John Newhouse, third from left, receives recognition for making the tri-county area a healthier place for citizens.

# Credits

Arapahoe County, Colorado  
*First in Colorado, First in Service*

## 2004 Annual Report

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Arapahoe County  
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## First in Colorado, First in Service

We are dedicated to providing quality, cost-efficient services to the citizens of Arapahoe County. We have more than 30 government offices offering a variety of services throughout the county. If you need to reach us, visit our web site at [www.co.arapahoe.co.us](http://www.co.arapahoe.co.us) or contact us at the following numbers:

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