

## City of Rifle, Colorado

### Defining Rifle's Economic Future Revitalization Opportunity Assessment

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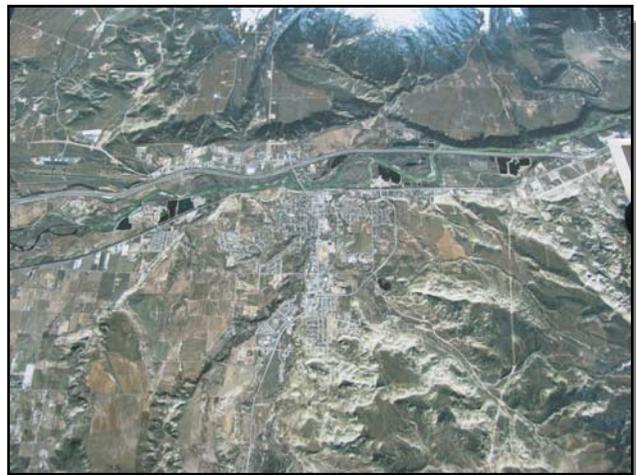
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## Introduction

This document highlights several key planning and development opportunities for the City of Rifle. The City of Rifle commissioned the Chesney & Associates and Vandewalle & Associates team in June 2005, to investigate and report on economic redevelopment and repositioning opportunities for the community. This Opportunity Assessment document is the first step toward creating a vision for the community's economic repositioning as well as the initial steps or strategies for implementation of that vision.

## Opportunities Assessment

The purpose of an opportunities assessment is to explore a community's untapped potentials, and to offer suggestions on how these potentials can be realized through directed development or strategic redevelopment. Ideally, redevelopment can also move in conjunction with brownfield clean-ups and larger redevelopment strategies. Factored into the analysis are such things as **available land; technology, transportation, power, and communications infrastructure**; development trends; regional economic strengths and initiatives; proximity to **concentrations of employment, education, and industry**; national and regional economic trends and influences; urban design considerations; and perhaps most importantly, the **community's development goals**. It is designed to provide planning and economic development guidance to City officials and stimulate future development opportunities and public-private ventures.



Although focused specifically on the City of Rifle, the opportunities assessment is an analysis of the city's potential economic role in Garfield County and the Western Slope. It recognizes that the city exists within a complex region, which presents numerous opportunities and challenges for local development. The opportunities assessment provides an evaluation of the redevelopment opportunities in the city, and is designed to focus those opportunities.

## Site Identification and Prioritization

The site identification and prioritization process began with a broad look at Rifle's position in the Western Slope economy and its connection to the regional transportation network. We examined Rifle's historic downtown core, and commercial/ industrial development areas throughout the community. Rifle's border areas and adjacent uses were also identified. These analyses form the layers of a preliminary vision for community revitalization which identifies key land use areas, transportation infrastructure, and potential development strategies to match emerging economic opportunities.

This vision and its opportunities are carried forward in development planning and implementation designed to introduce catalytic projects that will generate additional economic investment and energy to Rifle.

## The Site Identification and Prioritization Process

### 1. Review Development History of the City

The team began this Opportunity Assessment by interviewing city officials and discussing past development patterns, projects, and problems. We reviewed documents that helped us understand Rifle's regional development strengths and weaknesses. We researched agencies and organizations with knowledge of economic, environmental, transportation, and urban design elements to determine physical, cultural, and economic attributes.

### 2. Interviews with Key Stakeholders and Interested Parties

Throughout two days in August 2005, the consulting team conducted interviews with a number of community leaders. These individuals included small business owners, landowners, prospective business owners, civic leaders, and city staff. The interviews shed light on Rifle's past, present, and future. The observations and experiences shared with us gave perspective to future courses of action for effective and successful revitalization.



### 3. Physical Analysis and Regional Market Position

The design team conducted a physical analysis of the community and the emphasis areas. By examining urban geography, visual and design character, transportation systems, land use patterns, business mix, local development patterns, as well as regional context, the team identified social and economic relationships which suggest “activity zones” for potential investment. The analysis lent an objective eye to the community's physical condition in order to determine any constraints and, more importantly, opportunities for redevelopment.

### 4. Leadership Workshop to Discuss Findings

After a community forum where additional public input was solicited, we discussed preliminary findings with city leadership. The discussion with the mayor, staff, and city council members provided “institutional memory” as well as a genuine perspective of comfort level for future development activities.

### 5. Report Preparation and Presentation to the City

Feedback from the on-site activities, including the Leadership workshop, was condensed and reviewed for applicability in redevelopment. This document represents a first draft of findings and conclusions. Preliminary recommendations will be discussed with staff and incorporated in the next draft of this document.

## Regional Context

In the larger region of the High Mountain West, Rifle rests between the national economic centers of the Denver Front Range and the Greater Salt Lake Metropolitan Area, and between the regional economic centers of Glenwood Springs and Grand Junction.

The primary transportation corridor, I-70 is the major east-west route across the State of Colorado, and is vital for connecting the Front Range and Eastern Plains to the Western Slope and West Coast. The corridor passes through the Eisenhower tunnel, Vail Pass, and Glenwood Canyon and offers spectacular mountain vistas, steep grades, winding roads, rustic beauty in the landscape, recreational outlets such as hiking, skiing, hot springs, mountain towns, the churning Colorado River, and the lush Grand Valley.

The same corridor is also a major rail route. The Glenwood Subdivision plays a significant role in Union Pacific's "Coal Conveyor Belt" that generates two to three loaded coal trains per day. A manifest train operates between Denver and Grand Junction. Burlington Northern Santa Fe runs trains on the line through Rifle that contain manifest, coal, and soda ash cars. Additionally, the Amtrak California Zephyr operates almost daily both east and westbound using the same tracks.

Rifle holds a unique position located between two cities that house international airports. Denver International Airport serves as a major international gateway to the Rocky Mountains and Salt Lake City International Airport is also a hub for several major carriers. At the present time, there are no regular commercial flights into Rifle from these major cities.

Data lines, such as long haul fiber optics and transmission lines, utilize the rail corridor that runs through Rifle to connect Denver to the West Coast and for a back-up route between Denver and Salt Lake City.



**Map 1: Regional Context**

## Sub Regional Context

Rifle is nestled in a sub region between Colorado's Intermountain and Western Slope regions on the Colorado River and I-70. Neither a "mountain town" nor a traditional Grand Valley city, the area is unique in its connections and attributes.

Tourism and agriculture, two sectors that have commonly been attributed to the mountains and the Grand Valley, respectively, have seen some emergence as potential opportunities.

The Colorado River runs the length of the Corridor between the western interchange and the eastern interchange on I-70 and is a uniting feature of the sub region. The river is a prominent entry into many communities and has been underutilized for tourist and other aesthetic attractions.

The Roaring Fork Valley, just southeast of Rifle, is currently experiencing growth due to larger residential and resort development. In contrast to Rifle, these areas are host to many absentee investors and vacationers not interested in establishing connection to place. Rifle is also host to tourism and second home development, but the sampling of the population is less and people typically stay longer and become more engaged in the community.

Major neighboring cities in the region can be reached from Rifle in 30-60 minutes, exclusive of the twice-daily commuter rush. Workforce members traveling up-valley, or Eastward can be generalized as holding jobs in creative endeavors such as design, art, engineering and architecture, or in the service sector like housekeeping, landscape maintenance, or construction. In contrast, most people traveling down-valley, or Westward, to Grand Junction and adjacent communities for employment, are generally engaged in manufacturing, industry, and agricultural positions.

Rifle is at the center of a **reemerging energy exploration** and extraction industry. The Roan Plateau, located a few miles northwest of Rifle and 3,500 feet above the Colorado River Valley, contains large amounts of natural gas and oil shale. With the recent rise in oil prices, the instability of foreign oil markets, and technological innovations in oil and gas extraction have put the region back into the news and on the minds of oil companies and energy groups. At the same time, technology and a shift in mindset has made sustainable and renewable energy systems not only desirable, but feasible at scales that were once deemed uneconomical. More and more places are finding a spot on the map by establishing themselves as a leader in sustainable practice, be it in agriculture, waste systems, building trades, or energy resources.



**Map 2: Sub Regional Context**

## Local Context

Rifle represents evolving economics of the West. It retains a great deal of heritage from days of cattle and ranching, yet was at the center of the initial energy boom of the 1970s and early 1980s. It has experienced economic evolution similar to its neighbors along the river and appears “in the path” of evolving urban economic changes similar to areas in the east. These economic changes have not all been positive. Due to the generally high quality of life, moderate year-round climate, and modest cost of living, “ex-urban” growth in the west has emerged, but it has not brought economic stability in the forms of primary jobs or other “foundation” economics. Rifle, like many of its peer communities, has been figuratively and literally bypassed with contemporary development projects.



Rifle occupies a highly visible place along the Colorado River and I-70 corridor; with three full interchanges providing access to the city and adjacent lands. However, its central geographic position has not been advantageous to Rifle in the past as the cities of Glenwood Springs and Grand Junction usually capture most of the highly desirable development projects – retail, commercial and industrial. Recent acquisitions of Wal-Mart, improvements to Airport Road, and planned improvements to the Interstate interchanges appear to open new advantages for highway-based development that passed Rifle by in previous generations.



Rifle-Garfield County Regional Airport does not currently have regularly scheduled commercial flights; however it does possess a runway large enough to accommodate commercial jets and the land area to expand air service. Airport Land Partners has prepared a development potential analysis for lands adjacent to the airport. By clearing the approach and departure zones, Garfield County’s airside master plan proposes to realign the runway for more reliable all-weather service.

In close proximity to the airport is the former American Atlas co-generation power plant. It is a natural gas power facility that utilized waste heat from the power plant to warm 13 acres of greenhouses.



Sections 6 and 7 of the Colorado River flow through Rifle and offer Class 2 and Class 3 rapids. This river serves as a tourist attraction, aesthetic amenity, greenway corridor, as well as a place to fish or stroll along for residents and travelers. A CDOT rest station is located at the main Rifle Interchange and is routinely used as a put-in or take-out for boaters and serves as an information center for downtown Rifle and the parks in the vicinity.

The downtown section of Rifle offers typical western small town atmosphere of local community and features antique shops, dining, and historic museums.

The Colorado Mountain College campus is just north of downtown on the old Rifle high school campus. CMC is moving to a new campus by the airport in the coming year. Colorado Mountain College currently offers an array of courses in Rifle that are valuable for people interested in the energy field. From welder to emergency medical technician, these skills can provide residents profitable jobs in a growing industry.

Just north of the CMC campus is the Garfield County Fairgrounds. The original fairgrounds site has been subdivided to allow for some Health and Human Services buildings to be built on the north end, while existing fairgrounds and pavilions remain to the south.



North of this area is a variety of small manufactured home subdivisions, a mixture of commercial and retail establishments, and some tracts of vacant land as the highway winds its way out of town to the north. Nearby, Rifle Gap State Park, Rifle Mountain City Park and Rifle Falls State Park provide locations to camp, fish, swim and boat.

Just on the outskirts of town, heading north on Highway 13 and turning east on E. 30<sup>th</sup> street, is Deerfield Park, which is currently being constructed as an outdoor athletic complex.

The Rifle Creek Trail runs from Railroad Avenue, just north of the CMC Campus to 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, west of downtown.

At the Western Rifle Interchange, the majority of uses are industrial and construction yard uses, with a sand and gravel quarry located along the Colorado River. A large brownfield area is located adjacent to the quarry, and was indicated to be an old mining operation that has since been covered.

**Map 3: Local Context**

## General Opportunity Recommendations

Rifle has the opportunity to re-invent itself as a city with a focus on the Colorado River, a desire to be a leader in energy production and conservation, and a strategy to grow as a central player on the corridor running through the region.

### Rifle as a River Town

A successful economy needs to have grounding and should take advantage of “place-based” assets. This becomes difficult when the city is located on the cusp of two very different geographical areas. To the east are mountains and modern day “mountain towns” noted for ski areas and vacation homes. These mountain towns are destinations for people to escape the big city and are host to seasonal swings and transient communities. To the west, the Grand Valley and Western Slope are comprised of small towns, most of which have a population of less than 5,000 people and carry an agricultural focus. The main crops of these towns are grains, orchard fruits, and sugar beets. Rifle rests between these defined areas but also shares land on their edges.

By looking at land use patterns, researching past projects, and interviewing local community and business leaders, it appears that the Colorado River has been a largely overlooked natural asset in the community. The river corridor can be used as a natural amenity attraction for tourists and as a unifying feature for residents and businesses it helps define the community.

Symbolically, the Colorado River has become a dividing line between Historic Rifle and the new Rifle along the Interstate. Both figuratively and literally, the River Town span that gap and brings Rifle back to being a cohesive whole. The architecture and planning for the River District can be unique, but it must have unifying features and common elements on both sides. The existing bridge for vehicular traffic and the older steel bridge should be retrofitted with architecture and infrastructure to encourage pedestrian traffic, establish the river corridor as a gateway piece to the downtown, and make the visual and physical connections to the Interstate Corridor from the established downtown. We will describe the River Town concept in greater detail further in the Specific Opportunity Recommendations Section of this document.

*Rifle should re-orient and re-invigorate itself by centering on the Colorado River and defining itself as a Colorado River Town.*



### Rifle as an Energy Village

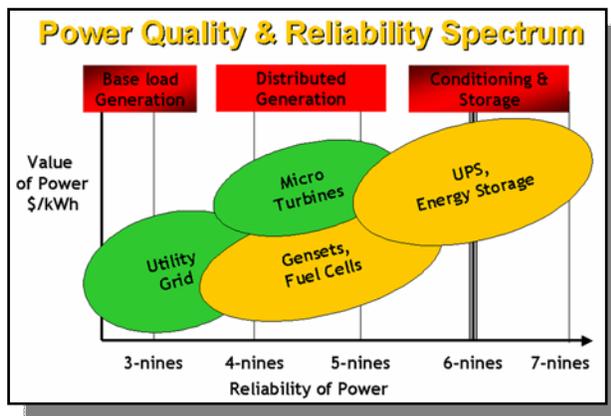
With the rising prices of oil and gasoline and the technological innovations in the petroleum industry, the renewed interest in the oil shale of the Roan Plateau brings a welcome relief to an economy that suffered an economic bust in the 80's when Exxon and the federal government pulled funding for further exploration of the US Naval Oil Shale Reserves. There is understandable hesitancy to dedicate resources into the energy industry again because fear of unrealized hopes, inflated expectations, and empty promises prevails. However these fears should not cloud the opportunity for Rifle to engage strategically with the energy industry and to utilize its 'place-based' assets effectively.

One key to creating a sustainable economy is to use petroleum investments to fund local opportunities that build intellectual capital within the community. Another focus is to promote infrastructure improvements that help stabilize and position Rifle to take advantage of future opportunities to build resilience into the local economy.

Rifle should work to orient itself as an Energy Village.

Instead of relying solely on the continuing rise of natural gas and the re-emerging Oil Shale economy, the surge of economic influx would be used to establish new stabilizing assets which would not be affected by the volatility of the Oil Shale economy. One of the new assets that we believe the City of Rifle should consider are distributed energy systems that focus on co-generation of reliable and **quality power**, heating and cooling; alternative energy strategies that demonstrate a reduction in use of energy; and a demonstration project showing alternatives to dependence on petroleum-based energy resources.

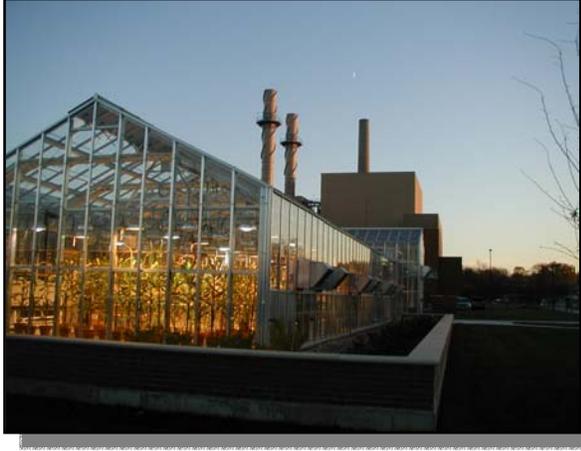
*Rifle should focus efforts in developing a stable, reliable, and redundant energy and technology infrastructure.*



Many benefits come with having several smaller power supply locations throughout the city. Using co-generation in several smaller systems offers environmental benefits and less reliance on a single resource. Many new economy industry clusters require power quality for running precision equipment, performing detailed procedures, or managing large quantities of data. As evidenced by national stories of power failures in California, the East Coast, and the South due to natural disaster, mismanagement, and operator error, being able to provide quality power, in a safe and secure location

with guaranteed performance, is a highly sought after feature when corporations are looking to re-locate. Industry clusters such as business services/supply chain management, biotechnology, finance and insurance, information technology/data processing, machinery manufacturing/automation, manufacturing/materials, medical devices/medical informatics, and pharmaceuticals, are just a few among the industry clusters that require quality power when looking to locate new facilities. Realistically not all of these industry clusters will look to locate in Rifle. However, a specific business, such as plastic injection molding manufacturing, for example, would see great value in moving to the West Rifle Employment District, and a firm specializing in holographic data storage could succeed in the Airport Technology Campus. Further details regarding specific industry clusters and locations in Rifle are explained in the Specific Opportunity Recommendations.

In our assessment, it is possible and viable for Rifle to have three distributed co-generation facilities in the municipality. The first plant would be located at the existing American Atlas site. The focus would be on clean, reliable, and redundant power for specific data and technology users and would be reliant on at least two alternative fuel sources. The second, along the Colorado River near the city's wastewater treatment plant, would be a smaller plant. It would develop as part of a Materials Resource Center (MRC) utilizing multiple



fuel sources and providing both electricity and steam heat to users in the River and Downtown Rifle Districts. The MRC would also demonstrate how multiple municipal services can develop strategies to employ both the inputs and outputs of the individual processes to harness energy, heat, and other useful by-products.

The third co-generation plant would be the largest and most diverse and would be located further west from downtown at the West Rifle Interchange. The West Rifle Plant would be powered from alternate fuel sources including possibilities such as natural gas, solar energy, innovative coal technologies that alleviate traditional dust, oil shale resources, microhydro and hydrogen fuel cell power. The two larger co-generation

plants would provide at least 50 megawatts of power to a cluster of industries and businesses in close proximity and the smaller plant is envisioned to be a 25 megawatt facility.

Co-generation, also known as combined heat and power, is the simultaneous production of electricity and useful heat from the same fuel or energy. Facilities with co-generation systems produce their own electricity and then use the unused excess heat for process steam, hot water heating, space heating, and other thermal needs. Some of the same industry clusters that require quality power sources would also benefit from utilizing a centralized heating and cooling source. The excess heat and cooling can also be a benefit for other business ventures in the near vicinity. As attempted with the Atlas co-generation plant in Rifle, greenhouses can be established to use the excess heat from a co-generation facility to heat the buildings and offer fresh produce and plants to the region throughout the year. The excess heat could also be used for other facilities' HVAC needs- such as the new Colorado Mountain College Campus and any new airport facilities.

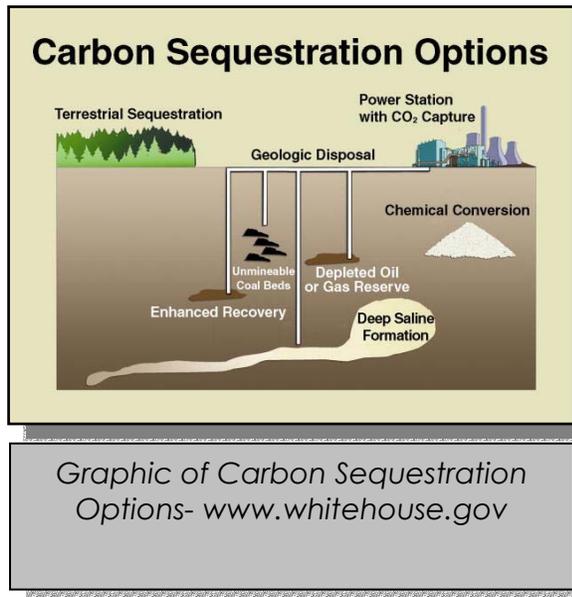
There is considerable support through foundation funds and grants for the addition of energy conservation strategies. Much attention is drawn to communities that embrace the notion of reducing their energy "footprint." Resources such as the Rocky Mountain Institute in Snowmass, the Department of Energy, the Gas Technology Institute, and other local agencies can be instrumental in helping Rifle define a strategy and take the first steps in implementation.

Rifle should establish a highly visible energy demonstration center to display alternative and renewable energy technologies. Looking at a wind resource map, Rifle is situated in a region of poor wind quality for a wind energy park. Rifle does however possess great resources when looking at solar maps for both flat panel and concentrated solar heat technologies.



*Rifle should orient itself as a leader in energy conservation*

We recommend that Rifle establish an Energy Demonstration Center with a large array of solar panels, both photovoltaic and passive solar heating systems that can add to the electricity and heating grids. The Energy Demonstration Center should be in a location that is highly visible from I-70, and thus is a highly visible demonstration of Rifle's commitment to being an energy conservation leader. The center is viable and provides a readily available funding target. This can then act as a draw for people to identify and seek out Rifle as a leader in energy conservation, quality energy use, and alternative energy technologies. It will make the project a target for innovative funding from federal programs such as the Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Laboratory.



In tandem with renewed interest in oil shale exploration, the petroleum and mining industry has discovered new technologies permitting the extraction from and the injection into the earth's crust. This new found ability allows pressurizing low flow wells and sequestering of gases deemed detrimental to our environment. Known as Carbon Sequestration, liquid carbon dioxide is injected into porous rock chambers underground for storage as well as to pressurize any oil in the reservoir to the surface. As the interest in oil exploration begins to re-engage in the Roan Plateau, the opportunity to gather greater attention and garner additional funding arises. The practice of carbon sequestration should be introduced into the overall operational strategy, as well as a part of the Energy Demonstration Project. An important aspect of these renewable energy systems is to demonstrate that alternatives require different inputs and deliver alternative outputs. Carbon dioxide sequestration has

been developed in response to higher concentrations of carbon dioxide present in the atmosphere due to the burning of fossil fuels.

Some ideas for additional funding sources that may become available if carbon sequestration is part of the energy strategy are listed in the Example Funding Sources Section of this Document.

## Rifle as a Regional Economic Center

The two large concepts presented above, Rifle as a River Town and Rifle as an Energy Village, lead us to our third general recommendation to make Rifle a more prominent center for creative job growth.

Located between two capital cities immersed in technology, Rifle has the opportunity to become a tech transfer area between them by discovering valuable synergistic connections. The city could become a point of presence in a routing network that would act as a draw to many different sectors of business. The quality of life and environment indicate the ability of Rifle to recruit a workforce and as the community of Rifle grows, it can take advantage of its connections via highway, rail, and air travel to create a diversified economy. Achieving the goal of a diversified economy, does not imply that Rifle should build its economy in several different directions at once. Rather, Rifle should focus on key strategic opportunities that it can build from its foundation assets and promote clustering of key economic initiatives to build economic critical mass.

Rifle can offer quality of people, place, and environment to draw ideas, intellectual capital, and investment to the region. Rifle's intact historic downtown offers a quaint, walkable district that both travelers and locals appreciate. A growing arts community brings more creativity and draws more people to the downtown district, and allows it to remain vibrant and relevant despite large regional outlets to the south of the Interstate. Cluster opportunities also exist near the airport, the river gateway, and on Railroad Avenue.

Additional opportunity exists in the fact that Rifle can be considered "off the beaten path" for typical technology clusters and innovation centers. The focus that Rifle should take, rather than apologizing for not being situated in a major urban center, is to appeal to those who desire a pristine region with strong community values that can foster what we term "creative isolation." Seymore Cray, a computer industry pioneer and the father of the supercomputer, claimed that creative isolation was what made his company a leader during the advent of the microprocessor. It can also be the driving force behind Rifle's value proposition. Rifle can use creative isolation as a viable economic recruiting tool. Many workforce members will be attracted to the absence of a large metropolis and be excited to be within a defined creative community.



*Rifle should strategically land plan to create quality clusters.*

## Specific Opportunity Recommendations

Four distinct areas have been identified as possessing economic opportunity if devised and executed with a comprehensive and dynamic strategy for implementation. The areas are described in an order from East to West down the I-70 corridor:

Airport Tech Center, Downtown River Gateway, Downtown Railroad Avenue Revitalization Corridor, and West Rifle Employment District.

### Airport Tech Center

Airport Tech Center includes amenities such as the Colorado Mountain College Tech Campus, the Colorado River Corridor, and the Rifle-Garfield County Regional Airport.

#### 1. Colorado Mountain College Technology Campus

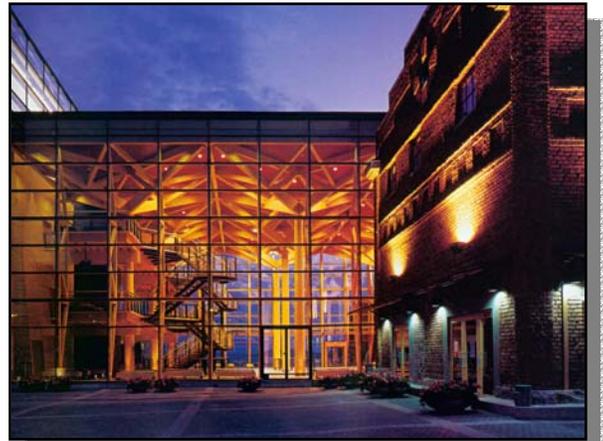
Colorado Mountain College is an important technology partner with Rifle. Educational offerings often follow the available industry, so logically Colorado Mountain College currently offers an array of courses that are valuable for people interested in the energy field. When new industry emerges the educational offerings will also change.

Considering Rifle's numerous opportunities as both a river town and an energy village, the new campus of Colorado Mountain College near the airport can seize an opportunity to offer broader, foundation courses in entrepreneurship, personal financial management, integrated systems management and creativity, while also exploring future employment trends and opportunities. Conversations with CMC leadership suggest that the college is interested in playing a significant role in academic and economic development focused on Rifle.

#### 2. Rifle- Garfield County Regional Airport

The opportunity for Rifle to compete on the national economic development level resides in the airport and lands surrounding it. Airport Land Partners has prepared a development potential analysis for the lands adjacent to the airport. Their analysis shows four key areas in which Rifle could benefit from current markets and demands; construction, education, government, and tourism/retirement.

A specific master planning team could be created with Airport Land Partners, Garfield County Aviation, and the City to integrate ALP's development objectives with Rifle's larger opportunities in energy extraction and energy-related industrial development. Regional airports in complementary areas have created models for this concept and could be studied, such as Wittman Regional Airport in OshKosh, Wisconsin, and Scottsdale AirPark in suburban Phoenix.

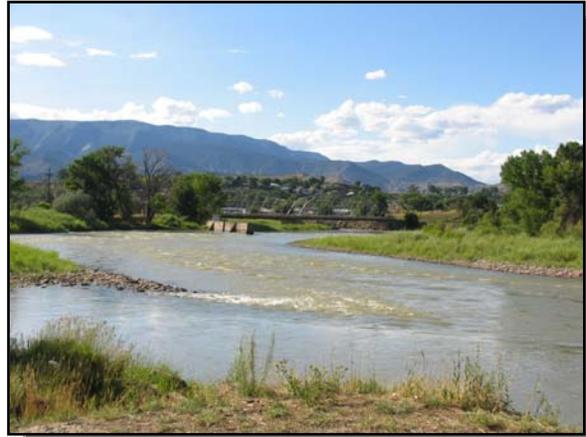


#### 4. Airport Tech Center North

The Airport Tech Center North is an important business development zone that will substantiate a future bridge to Highway 6. An interstate connection to Highway 6 will also be a long-term development option as this tech center grows. As discussed in the River District Section, it will be equally important for this area to span and engage with the river corridor plus offer visual and physical connections to the rest of Rifle as it expands in a long-term development strategy in both directions along the Colorado River Corridor.

The Colorado River corridor should offer visual and physical connections between all of the major districts in Rifle. Walking trails, put-in and take-out areas, and pedestrian crossings will aid in taking the River from the backdrop to the foreground in the community.

The Tech Center North connections unite the transportation and technology aspects of the Airport to the residential aspects of the downtown without having to cross through the retail and city centers. A crossing of the Colorado River at the Tech Center North location will provide alternative routes for entering and exiting Rifle, as well as allowing the Airport Interchange a greater gateway role to traffic and transit coming from the east.



**Map 4: Airport Technology Center**

## Downtown River Gateway

Downtown River Gateway is a powerful aesthetic resource and a positive branding of Rifle as a river town. It possesses a unique focus on river entry and the history of early settlers on the river. It centers on travelers, regional users, and the local market. The River District must orient to a variety of points. Not only must it span the gap between the two land areas, it must begin to define Rifle's relationship with the River. This would include strategically taking advantage of underutilized land areas in the immediate vicinity of the River, such as the state rest stop and welcome center, and the lands surrounding it as well as the land to the north of the Airport Interchange. Offerings such as an extended stay lodging facility, restaurants, limited retail, and targeted residential could all be a part of the River District and should be explored.

The River Corridor offers the potential for exciting development oriented on the river and a strong draw from the Interstate corridor to the downtown of Rifle.

Extended stay lodging in the River District would encourage a strong pedestrian component and quickly add life to the newly developed area. Visiting lecturers, students taking short courses, and consultant contractors working in the region would all benefit from extended stay facilities in this location. Rather than wanting to be a part of downtown Rifle, they would value the access to the Interstate, the Airport Tech and West Rifle Employment Districts while having the option to engage in downtown Rifle's historic district. The Colorado Mountain College campus does not provide, nor do they believe that they need, housing as a component of their campus. Studio and efficiency apartments and condominium offerings in the River District could appeal to a growing student population as Rifle and CMC's Technology Campus become known as a leader in education and training in the growing energy industry. Students in this situation would be interested in housing that would get them easily to and from campus, allow easy access to the Interstate for weekend trips home or jaunts to Fruita, Moab or Vail and Beaver Creek for recreation. The location would also give them visual and pedestrian connections to the downtown.

The River Gateway has potential for longer –term residential development as well. New residential needs to be created, potentially including age-targeted housing that could allow Rifle residents to move into low maintenance housing and open their existing homes to another generation of new Rifle families. Market rate senior housing provides disposable income with which limited retail and commercial businesses may be recruited. Other housing is necessary for Rifle to stabilize its local economic core-provision of affordable housing for the emerging job market. The River District affords an outstanding place for new housing at more affordable levels than many places along the corridor.



All of the uses listed, as well as travelers from the Interstate, would be attracted to a dense riverfront district that would offer a sampling of local community and a complete range of local services. The visitor center could become part of a riverfront park or plaza. Paddlers on the river could still put in or take out in this location, but now also enjoy restaurants and retail offerings that meet their needs at the end of a day on the river. The Rifle River District is an opportune location for a visual attraction that would encourage travelers to stop and visit a village complete with café, grocery, and hotel facilities. Public use areas could remain and the orientation to the river as a central element would be key.



**Map 5: Downtown River District**

## Downtown Railroad Avenue Revitalization Corridor

Downtown Railroad Avenue Revitalization Corridor includes amenities such as the Downtown Walking District, the Riverfront Residential and Entertainment District, CMC Rifle Campus Redevelopment Master Plan District, Ag Exposition District, Small/Local Business Development District, and Centennial Trail. It is important that these areas be maintained as large parcels of land to be master planned instead of being parceled.

### 1. *Downtown Walking District*

Railroad Avenue needs consistency to define it as the main downtown corridor. Uniformity in streetscape elements and wayfinding signage should be incorporated. Design and development standards should be created for this district to define the character of Rifle's downtown. Superior urban design is possible and necessary for revitalization of this area – partially to define the street, partially to connect the street to the River District. An old western town character should also be preserved. An arts quarter and retail shops as well as crosswalks at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Railroad Ave as well as 3<sup>rd</sup> and Railroad Ave could all contribute to developing a walkable neighborhood.



### 2. *Riverfront Residential and Entertainment District*

A residential inclusion, possibly in the form of lofts, would make Centennial Trail an even more valuable asset since people could access the trail from their homes. A connection between Rifle Creek Corridor and downtown via 2<sup>nd</sup> Street would make the entertainment district more easily accessible.



### 3. *Ag Exposition District*

The fairgrounds are currently used as an area to auction livestock and horses and often tourists visit to appreciate the authenticity of the scene. Additional focus on this area could improve the Ag Exposition District as an economically prosperous tourist area. A farmers' market as well as co-op and agriculture education would help to ensure the area retains value for residents, too.



### 4. *Small/Local Business Development District*

The Small Local Business Development District would be an ideal locale for businesses, such as local car dealerships or a lumber yard, that are not in direct competition with large big box corporations.

### 5. *Centennial Trail*

The Centennial Trail would serve as a connection to all the Downtown Railroad Avenue Revitalization Corridor districts. Its several uses, including biking, skating, walking, and jogging, would appeal to residents and visitors alike.

**Map 6: Downtown Revitalization Corridor**

## West Rifle Employment Center

Opportunity lies at the western interchange of I-70 for creating an employment district that aims to cluster materials manufacturing, processing and storage and machinery manufacturing and automation in accordance with high design standards. In contrast to the Airport Technology Center, this area will focus on production and manufacturing rather than data, technology, and informatics. This West Rifle Interchange will become synonymous with processing, automation, and manufacturing. Its infrastructure will include a distributed energy power cell of the energy demonstration center.

The focus is to cluster and build opportunity as a group of businesses. Already a large number of people travel down river to Grand Junction for work in manufacturing and industry. The West Rifle Employment Center would acquire those workers, reducing their commute and keeping their economic benefits within the community. Additionally, Rifle can create a reverse commute effect in which workers from Grand Junction travel up river to Rifle providing additional laborforce.



**Map 7: West Rifle Employment Center**

## Implementation

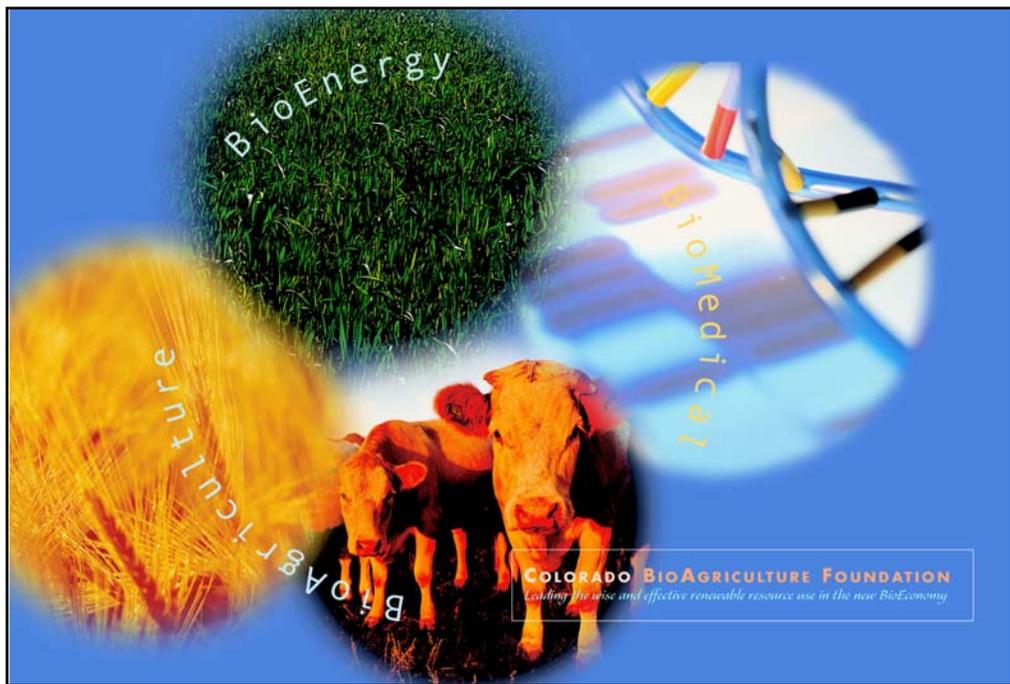
Rifle has established the groundwork for this vision through the identification of these redevelopment opportunities and the determination of priority projects. Consensus of city leadership can start the process toward action. Creation of a development team including city leadership and private partners will provide stability to any redevelopment effort.

A successful redevelopment implementation program needs a minimum three-year commitment for the phase one priority projects to be defined, funded, designed, and built. Successful communities begin a series of moving three-year plans so that in any given year multiple parts of the overall redevelopment process are in progress. This approach keeps a focus on projects and how each is a component of the overall vision. The process also helps manage other, sometimes unexpected, development opportunities to be considered and implemented within the context of the vision.

Findings suggest that Rifle has the chance to successfully identify new economic development opportunities and create a new market position in the area if it aggressively undertakes this kind of “rolling” redevelopment program.

## Partners and Commitment

Partnerships and local commitment are paramount to making Rifle’s vision for the future a reality. The City of Rifle should continue this aggressive approach to economic development and urban revitalization by maintaining and enhancing partnerships with its local private sector and supporting new development through tax increment financing, zoning, and other redevelopment implementation tools. Rifle should also strive to create a private development corporation. There are several advantages to this type of partner including 501C3 establishment, distance from political limitations because of ongoing leadership, available budget, and the fact that a corporation can buy and hold property. It is important to create a campaign to inspire local and regional citizens, investors, and the development community with the city’s image-altering vision for its future. This effort is critical to their understanding that the vision is achievable. Engendering this kind of desire and advocacy for the project will increase the feasibility for economic implementation.



*Example: In 2004, Elbert County used a whitepaper to communicate its vision to key stakeholders.*

The city needs to engage the regional real estate community to recognize the value and timing of investment opportunities in Rifle's priority redevelopment areas. Particularly for areas with generally high growth, places that are positioned and aggressive will capture the investment of those who are solicited to support the vision.

Rifle needs to build a political team to be its advocate at the state and federal level, for example to be included in the energy study noted previously, and also as the means by which the city can address the skills and tactics of the large energy companies in the area.

### **Initial Implementation Steps**

Each priority project area needs a detailed development plan, including definition of public improvements and investments necessary for the project. "White papers" are used to summarize these projects for state and federal funding requests. Any potential revisions to local codes and ordinances should be examined and prepared. Design standards need to be created. Parcel acquisition negotiations should be defined and prepared.

- The city should create a developer and business recruitment program.
- The city should undertake eligibility studies in anticipation of creating tax increment financing districts for the priority projects.
- The city should begin to create a public outreach and marketing program to communicate the vision and objectives for these projects as an economic positioning program.
- The city should organize itself as a development team.

### **Funding**

At this stage, a public funding program should be explored with state and federal agencies and departments. Many sources remain useful for urban redevelopment and legislators' economic development staff members are useful partners with whom to build relationships. The approach that is recommended is a combined effort of funds from a variety of different sources and for portions of the overall strategy. For example, there is a high probability that funds would be available for renewable energy implementation and improvements by utilizing the strategy of Rifle as an Energy Village. It is possible to acquire additions to the power grid that would build quality, reliability and redundancy that have nothing to do with renewable energy sources but are vital for economic development and attraction of high-quality end users.

Various topics, like renewable energy and carbon sequestration, can provide critical short-term economic input while also being part of a longer term sustainable approach. It will be important when attracting potential funding sources that the benefits outweigh the costs of utilizing the source for short term gain. Likewise, it is also important to develop a strategy that can be many different things to different audiences. Giving the opportunity for a variety of sources to participate in the way that best helps them meet their objectives is important in the implementation of the opportunities presented in this document.

The next section includes some potential funding sources for achieving the components of renewable energy and carbon sequestration in the overall strategic plan. These are provided as examples and with further study, can be assessed for true funding potential as well as finding additional funding sources.

## Example Funding Sources

Contained within this section is some collected information regarding potential funding sources if certain aspects of the Opportunity Assessment recommendations are followed. This list is not exhaustive nor is it implying that funds would be available for Rifle or for the components of the project that may directly pertain. In the Implementation Stages of this project, these and other sources would be investigated more thoroughly for funding potential.

### Renewable Energy Strategies

Below are some example targets for obtaining funding and support for renewable energy strategies and programs.

#### Renewable Energy Production Incentive (REPI)

Incentive Type:	Production Incentive
Eligible Renewable/Other Technologies:	Solar Thermal Electric, Photovoltaics, Landfill Gas, Wind, Biomass, Geothermal Electric, Fuel Cells, Anaerobic Digestion, Tidal Energy, Wave Energy, Ocean Thermal
Applicable Sectors:	Tribal Government, Municipal Utility, Rural Electric Cooperative, State/local government that sell project's electricity
Amount:	1.5 cents per kWh (indexed for inflation)
Terms:	10 years
Authority 1:	42 USCS § 13317
Date Enacted:	1992, amended 2005
Website:	<a href="http://www.eere.energy.gov/wip/program/repi.html">http://www.eere.energy.gov/wip/program/repi.html</a>

#### Summary:

The Renewable Energy Production Incentive (REPI) provides financial incentive payments for electricity produced and sold by new qualifying renewable energy generation facilities. Qualifying facilities are eligible for annual incentive payments of 1.5 cents per kilowatt-hour (1993 dollars and indexed for inflation) for the first ten year period of their operation, subject to the availability of annual appropriations in each Federal fiscal year of operation.

REPI was originally authorized under section 1212 of the Energy Policy Act of 1992 and had expired for new projects as of 9/30/03. However, Section 202 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (H.R. 6) reauthorized appropriations for fiscal years 2006 through 2026 and expanded the list of eligible technologies and facilities owners. See 42 USCS § 13317 above for the new REPI statute. New regulations established as a result of the new law will be posted when they become available.

Eligible electric production facilities include not-for-profit electrical cooperatives, public utilities, state governments, Commonwealths, territories, possessions of the U.S., the District of Columbia, Indian tribal governments, or a political subdivision thereof, or Native Corporations that sell the project's electricity to someone else.

Qualifying facilities must use solar, wind, geothermal (with certain restrictions as contained in the rulemaking), or biomass (except for municipal solid waste combustion), landfill gas, livestock methane, and ocean (including tidal, wave, current, and thermal) generation technologies. Fuel cells using hydrogen derived from eligible biomass facilities are also considered an eligible technology.

If there are insufficient appropriations to make full payments for electric production from all qualified facilities for a fiscal year, 60% of appropriated funds are to be assigned to facilities that use solar, wind, ocean

(including tidal, wave, current, and thermal), geothermal, or closed-loop biomass technologies; and 40% of appropriated funds for the fiscal year to other projects.

REPI complements sections 1914 and 1916 of the Energy Policy Act of 1992, which provide tax incentives to certain private sector entities for certain types of new renewable energy generation facilities.

The point of contact for questions concerning REPI policy issues and the availability of appropriations for the REPI program is Dan Beckley. The point of contact on REPI implementation (facility qualifications, applications, and payments) is Christine Carter.

**Contact:**

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### **Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Efficiency Improvements Program**

Incentive Type:	Federal Grant Program
Eligible Efficiency Technologies:	
Eligible Renewable/Other Technologies:	Solar Water Heat, Solar Space Heat, Photovoltaics, Wind, Biomass, Geothermal Electric, Geothermal Heat Pumps, Hydrogen, Anaerobic Digestion, Renewable Fuels, Fuel Cells (Renewable Fuels)
Applicable Sectors:	Commercial, Agricultural
Amount:	Grants: 25% of eligible project costs; Guaranteed loans: 50% of eligible project costs (pending)
Max. Limit:	Grants: \$500,000 per renewable-energy project; Guaranteed loans: \$10 million
Authority 2:	Farm Security And Rural Investment Act of 2002, Sec. 9006
Date Enacted:	5/13/02
Effective Date:	FY 2003
Expiration Date:	FY 2007
Authority 3:	Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Efficiency Improvements Program (Final Rule)
Effective Date:	7/18/05
Website:	<a href="http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rd/farbill/9006resources.html">http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rd/farbill/9006resources.html</a>

*Summary:*

Section 9006 of the 2002 Farm Bill requires the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to create a program to make direct loans, loan guarantees, and grants to agricultural producers and rural small businesses to purchase renewable-energy systems and make energy-efficiency improvements. This program is known as the Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Efficiency Improvements Program.

The maximum grant award is 25% of eligible project costs up to \$500,000 for renewable energy projects and \$250,000 for energy efficiency improvements. Assistance to one individual or entity is not to exceed \$750,000. The minimum grant request is \$2,500. Eligible renewable energy projects include wind, solar, biomass and geothermal; and hydrogen derived from biomass or water using wind, solar or geothermal energy sources. Applications must be submitted to the appropriate Rural Development State Office.

Under the guaranteed loan option, funds up to 50% of eligible project costs (with a maximum project cost of \$10 million) will be made available. The minimum amount of a guaranteed loan made to a borrower is \$2,500. A combined grant and guaranteed loan under this program cannot exceed 50% of eligible project costs, and the applicant or borrower is responsible for having other funding sources for the remaining funds.

The USDA has implemented this program through a Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA) for each of the last three years. The latest round of funding was made available in March 2005. The selection of 150 applicants to receive almost \$21 million in grant assistance was announced in September 2005.

The USDA will determine each year if direct loan funds are available. If funds are available, a NOFA will appear in the Federal Register.

*2003-2004 Program Results**2003 Renewable Energy Funding Results*

- 35 wind projects totaling \$7.4 million;
- 30 anaerobic digester projects totaling \$7 million;
- 6 solar projects totaling \$1.1 million; and
- 16 project involving ethanol plants/anaerobic digesters, or direct combustion and fuel pellet systems totaling \$3.9 million.

*2004 Renewable Energy Funding Results*

- 38 wind projects totaling nearly \$7.9 million
- 37 anaerobic digester projects totaling \$9.5 million;
- 13 Biomass/bioenergy projects totaling \$3.1 million;
- 2 solar, 2 hybrid, and 2 geothermal projects were also funded.

**IRS Seeks Applications for \$800 Million in Clean Energy Bonds**

December 21, 2005

The U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) requested applications on December 12th for renewable energy projects to be financed with up to \$800 million in "tax-credit" bonds. Unlike normal bonds that pay interest, tax-credit bonds pay the bondholders by providing a credit against their federal income tax. In effect, the new tax-credit bonds will provide interest-free financing for certain renewable energy projects. According to the American Public Power Association (APPA), this provides an effective new financing tool for public power companies, which are non-profit and cannot directly benefit from other tax credits.

Under the new Clean Renewable Energy Bond (CREB) program, established by the Energy Policy Act of 2005, up to \$800 million in tax-credit bonds may be issued by qualified bond lenders, cooperative electric companies, and government bodies (including public power systems). The borrower must be a cooperative electric company or a government body, and must use the financing for wind, biomass, geothermal, or solar energy projects, or for hydropower expansions, trash combustion facilities, or refined coal production facilities. The act allows government bodies to borrow up to \$500 million for such projects, setting aside at

least \$300 million for cooperative electric companies. Since the federal government essentially pays the interest via tax credits, the IRS must allocate such credits in advance, which is why it is seeking applications now; they're due by April 26th, 2006.

## Carbon Sequestration

Below are some example targets for obtaining funding and support for carbon sequestration strategies and programs.

### Regional Carbon Sequestration Partnerships - Phase II

Agency Name: U.S. Department of Energy

Funding Opportunity Number: DE-PS26-05NT42255

CFDA Code: 81.089

CFDA Title: Fossil Energy Research and Development

Solicitation Description: Regional Carbon Sequestration Partnerships – Phase II (DE-PS26-05NT42255)

**PURPOSE OF SOLICITATION.** Through the Regional Carbon Sequestration Partnerships (RCSP) Phase II Solicitation, the DOE is seeking to build upon the work conducted by Phase I partnerships and other groups working on similar activities. The RCSP program is designed to support the FutureGen Initiative by validating technologies and identifying locations throughout the United States that could support future full-scale geologic sequestration deployment opportunities. During the program duration (FY05-FY09), the Phase II Partnerships will implement and refine several activities similar to those conducted under Phase I, as listed below:

- Conduct Field Validation Tests of Sequestration Technologies and Infrastructure Concepts
- Refine and Implement Appropriate MMV Protocols for Sequestration Projects
- Refine Characterization of Regional Sequestration Opportunities
- Implement Permitting Compliance Activities
- Prove the environmental efficacy of carbon sequestration technologies
- Implement Carbon Sequestration Public Outreach and Education Mechanisms
- Assess Validation Tests and Identify the Commercially Available Sequestration Technologies Ready for Large Scale Deployment Opportunities

The existing partnerships have established key relationships and have been collectively working on national issues related to carbon sequestration with the NATCARB, IOGCC, WGA, USDA, and others. It is expected that these interactions will continue and strengthen with programmatic coordination provided by DOE.

**NUMBER OF AWARDS.** DOE anticipates awarding approximately (7) RCSP - Phase II Partnerships as Cooperative Agreements.

**FEDERAL FUNDING.** The total Federal funding anticipated to be available for all awards is up to \$100 million over 4 years (FY05-FY09). Funding for each partnership is expected to be \$2 to \$4 million per Partnership per year, depending on factors such as duration, scope, and number of technology validation projects proposed within a region.

**ANTICIPATED AWARD SIZE.** The total anticipated award size is \$17.9 million which includes a DOE share of \$14.3 million and a minimum cost share of \$3.6 million from the Recipient. Federal funding is expected to be \$2.3 million for Year 1 + \$4M for each of Years 2 – 4 (i.e., totaling \$14.3 million of DOE share/project).

Eligible Applicants: Unrestricted (i.e. open to any type of entity below) - subject to any clarification in the text field “Additional Information on Eligibility”

Award Ceiling: None

Award Floor: None

Number of Awardees: 7

Award Date:	09/30/2005
Award Company 1:	Montana State University
Award Contract Number 1:	DE-FC26-05NT42587
Award Dollar Amount 1:	\$15,168,231
Award Date 2:	09/30/2005
Award Company 2:	University of Illinois
Award Contract Number 2:	DE-FC26-05NT42588
Award Dollar Amount 2:	\$17,384,302
Award Date 3:	09/29/2005
Award Company 3:	Battelle
Award Contract Number 3:	DE-FC26-05NT42589
Award Dollar Amount 3:	\$18,067,378
Award Date 4:	09/22/2005
Award Company 4:	Southern States Energy Board
Award Contract Number 4:	DE-FC26-05NT42590
Award Dollar Amount 4:	\$19,875,044
Award Date 5:	09/28/2005
Award Company 5:	New Mexico Institute of Mining
Award Contract Number 5:	DE-FC26-05NT42591
Award Dollar Amount 5:	\$14,477,606
Award Date 6:	09/29/2005
Award Company 6:	University of North Dakota
Award Contract Number 6:	DE-FC26-05NT42592
Award Dollar Amount 6:	\$21,389,541
Award Date 7:	09/22/2005
Award Company 7:	California Energy Commission
Award Contract Number 7:	DE-FC26-05NT42593
Award Dollar Amount 7:	\$22,323,940

### Other groups working in Carbon Sequestration Initiatives

- StatOil, Inc.
- Encana, Inc.
- Royal Dutch/Shell Group
- BP
- Suncor Energy Inc.
- ChevronTexaco Energy & Research
- ConocoPhillips
- Rocky Mountain Institute
- C\*Trade
- Coal-Seq Project
- IEA GHG Program
- International Energy Agency
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- National Energy Technology Laboratory
- Princeton Ecology and Evolutionary Biology
- The Energy Group, Princeton Environmental Institute
- USA: Interstate Oil & Gas Compact Commission