



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **GUNNISON COUNTY MANAGER NAMED “ADMINISTRATOR OF THE YEAR”**

#### **State-wide award given to County Manager Matthew Birnie**

**Gunnison County, Colorado-** Last night Gunnison County Manager Matthew Birnie was awarded the “Colorado County Administrator of the Year Award” at the winter meeting for Colorado Counties, Inc. held in Colorado Springs. The recognition has been awarded annually since 1999 by the Colorado Association of County Administrators as a way to recognize strategic organizational leadership and effectiveness and productivity in local governing.

Birnie’s vision and leadership have also been noticed at both the state and national levels prior to this week’s award. He has been featured in *Governing Magazine* and was invited to Washington DC to share his expertise at “The Cost of Governing Summit” last year. He has also been featured at the Advancing Government Accountability Performance Management Conference and at a previous Colorado County Winter Conference. Additionally, last month Gunnison County was awarded the "Distinguished Budget Presentation Award" by the National Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA). No other county in the state under 100,000 in population, let alone under 20,000 has received this honor and County Manager Birnie was part of the team that made that award a reality.

The nominating committee that submitted Birnie’s name for this award included Commissioner Paula Swenson, Human Resources Director Debbie Moore, Public Works Director Marlene Crosby, Director of Finance Linda Nienhueser, County Attorney David Baumgarten and Assistant to the County Manager Katherine Haase.

Some of the highlights from Birnie’s nomination submitted by his colleagues in Gunnison County government include:

- “Matthew came on board in early 2007 and Gunnison County has excelled in the past four years like no other organization I have seen both in the public sector and in private industry. Matthew has created a team that is unstoppable. He implemented the national governing model "Managing for Results" in Gunnison County which has created government transparency in a strategic, measurable, and performance-based manner that has allowed us to get a clear picture of what is important and how we can accomplish it.

In Matthew’s time as Gunnison County Manager, major projects like a new detention facility and public works building both of which were extremely high priority projects in the County for over 20 years have become a reality, without an increase in our tax revenues. In the current economic downturn, the commissioners asked Matthew to ensure that our budget was as trim

as possible while not cutting the services that our community needs. With a clear management and budgeting approach, he was able to deliver a proposed budget for 2012 that not only does not increase our local property taxes, but it decreases them,” **Paula Swenson, Gunnison County Commissioner.**

- “Effectiveness of County government can be measured in many ways, but the true test might be the relationship between the services provided to its citizens and the cost of those services while focusing the conversation on the needs and experiences of citizens. Matthew has truly lead Gunnison County from a culture of looking at the *things we do* to the *results we produce* for the citizens of Gunnison County.

His vision for transparent government with strategic, measurable, performance-based management led him to propose using the Managing for Results (MFR) model for Gunnison County. In a short time period, Gunnison County is poised to be the only Colorado County of our size with a fully integrated MFR system,” **Linda Nienhueser, Finance Director.**

- “There is a saying that integrity without knowledge is weak and useless, and knowledge without integrity is dangerous and dreadful. Matthew’s behavior has integrity, is informed by ethics, and backed by knowledge and experience,” **David Baumgarten, County Attorney.**

When asked to list three additional attributes of a good administrator that Birnie has, the committee responded: is a visionary; is a team leader and does his job with humor. His colleagues feel he fits all of the attributes of a good leader and rightfully deserves this recognition as a statewide example of an exceptional leader. “Matthew Birnie is more than deserving of this honor,” says Commissioner Swenson.

For more details on the award please contact Molly Mugglestone at [molly@mdmpublicaffairs.com](mailto:molly@mdmpublicaffairs.com) or County Commissioner Paula Swenson at [pswenson@gunnisoncounty.org](mailto:pswenson@gunnisoncounty.org).

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