

Leadership Northern Colorado Public Governance Day

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Chip Taylor
Colorado Counties, Inc.

County Government

County Government in Colorado

“Exists for the convenient administration of the state government”

“Possesses only those powers expressly delegated by statute and necessarily implied powers”



Counties in Colorado

64 counties:

- 58 use conventional county structure
- 2 have statutory home rule power (Weld, Pitkin)
- 2 have functional home rule power and a consolidated “city and county” form of government



Conventional County Structure

- Commissioners
- Elected sheriff, clerk, treasurer, assessor, coroner, and surveyor
- County attorney
- District attorney



Statutory Home Rule

- Authorized in the constitution and implemented by statute
- Allows counties to adopt structural changes but only limited functional changes



Functional Home Rule

- Denver and Broomfield both have constitutionally-authorized “city and county” status
- Home rule power for these entities is full, municipal-style home rule



County Powers

- No general plenary authority, police powers enumerated in statute
- Eminent domain only for specific purposes
- Roads and bridges and limited infrastructure
- Land use and planning



County Services

Mandatory services include:

- Elections
- Property assessment and taxation
- Social services and public health
- Law enforcement and public safety
- MV license plates and registration

Optional services:

- Senior services
- Affordable housing
- Restaurant and food safety inspections



County Revenues

- Property tax is the main operating revenue source
- Sales tax authority
- Grants and other intergovernmental funds
- Financing



County Challenges/Opportunities

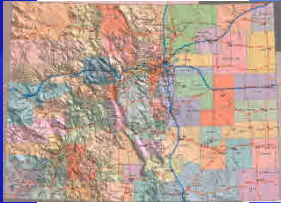
- Impacts of mortgage crisis and economic downturn
- State budget cuts
- Growth in unincorporated areas



Mark Radtke
Colorado Municipal League

Municipal Government

Municipal Government



- City or town
- Statutory or home rule
- Three forms of administration

Police Powers

- To promote general welfare
- Ordinance power
- Home rule authority

Public Services

- Public safety
- Infrastructure
- Public amenities
- Community planning



Municipal Finance



- Taxes
- Fees
- Special assessments
- Public debt

State of Our Cities and Towns

- Decreased revenue
- Service reductions
- Infrastructure backlog



Challenges Ahead

- Citizen disconnect
- Sustainable budgets
- Urban chickens



Bruce Eisenhauer
Colorado Department of
Local Affairs

DOLA Assistance to
Units of Government

Active Colorado Local Governments

- 3,269 local governments
 - Active Title 32 Districts - 1,874
 - Active Title 32, Article 1 Districts - 1,858
 - Metropolitan Districts – 1,221
 - Fire Protection Districts – 253
 - Water & Sanitation Districts - 127
 - Moffat Tunnel Authority - 1



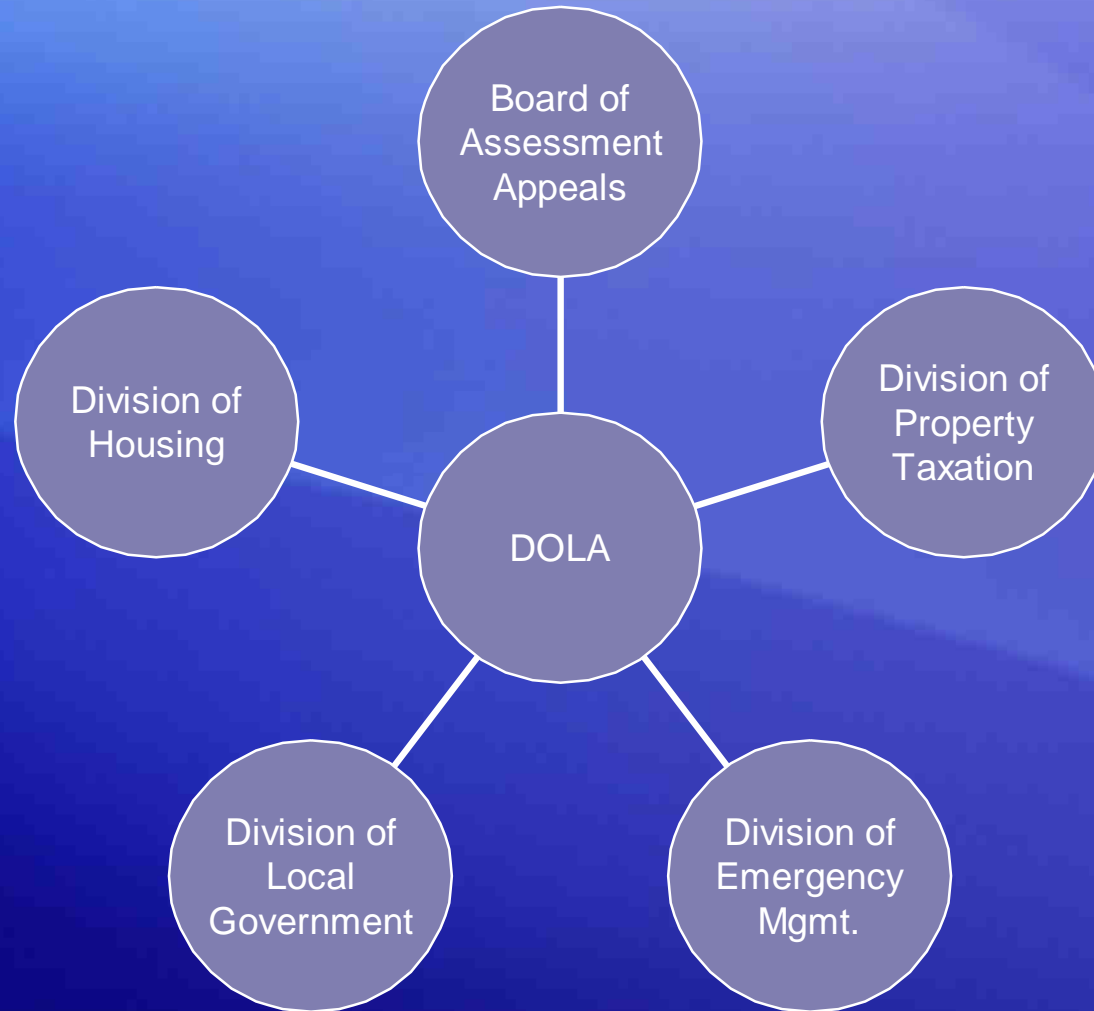
Tax Implications of Special Districts in Colorado



- Public Improvement Fund (PIF)
 - Example: Centerra Development
- Different levels of property and sales tax apply

DOLA's Role in Assisting Local Governments

Mission: Strengthening Colorado Communities



Division of Emergency Management



Photo taken by Red Cross

Division is responsible for the state's comprehensive emergency management program which supports local and state agencies.

In the aftermath of the Windsor tornado in 2008, DOLA's Division of Emergency Management helped coordinate DOLA's department-wide response during the recovery phase.



Division of Housing



DOH is a partner in providing financial assistance and services that increase the availability of housing to residents of Colorado who can least afford it.

- DOLA, through its Division of Housing is working with partners in Northern Colorado to help offset the impact of foreclosure.
- Colorado Foreclosure Hotline
- Housing needs assessments

Division of Local Government



Beaver Creek Water Treatment Facility in Rifle

The Division of Local Government was created in 1966, as a recommendation of the Governor's Local Affairs Study Commission.

Provides technical assistance and information to local governments on available federal and state programs and act as a liaison with other state agencies concerned with local governments.

Staff provide assistance to special districts through elections training.



Division of Property Taxation



The Division coordinates and administers the implementation of property tax law throughout the 64 counties. It operates under the leadership of the property tax administrator, who is appointed by the State Board of Equalization.

Provides support and technical assistance to local governments through:

- Administrative Resources Section
- Appraisal Standards Section
- Exemptions Section
- State Assessed Properties Section



Board of Assessment Appeals



The Board of Assessment Appeals (BAA) hears appeals filed by real and personal property owners regarding the valuation placed on their property.

DOLA's Board of Assessment Appeals (BAA) implemented a new scheduling process to decrease the time it takes to resolve taxpayer appeals resulting in a 14 percent increase in the number of appeals heard and settled at the BAA in FY 2009.

Has created web-based educational videos.

Now offers hearings by videoconference to promote accessibility and environmentally friendly practices.



Issues

Three initiatives that would put significant new restrictions on the finances of the State of Colorado and its local governments:

- Proposition 101
- Amendment 60
- Amendment 61



Conclusion