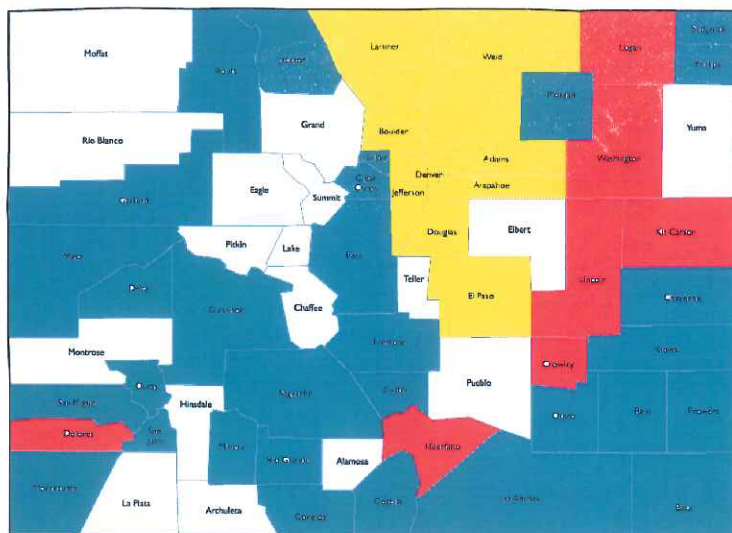




As I put on my local hat for a moment, the Town of Limon in Lincoln County, is still supportive of the REDI Program, but wishes the legislature would carefully review the eligibility criteria. Under the original REDI grant the Town of Limon, Lincoln County Economic Development and the Town of Stratton in Kit Carson County were able to work together with a key new business to retain 18 jobs in the two communities.

I have worked the past almost 25 years for the Town of Limon, Colorado and have long been active in rural development. I also serve on the Board of Directors of Lincoln County Economic Development.

Under the criteria currently in the bill, neither Lincoln County nor Kit Cason County is eligible because of the first set of criteria.



Blue are the 30 counties identified as eligible by Rep. Willett

Yellow are over the population threshold.

Red are enhanced rural enterprise zone counties that are not eligible in this bill

It is my understanding that the criteria for being identified as an Enhanced Rural Enterprise Zone do not fit the current economic situation on the western slope.

I do want to make sure that you understand that the current listing may not correctly reflect the thirty (30) Most Distressed Rural Counties in Colorado. In my discussions with the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce and other economic development professionals around the state, I suggested that the second step be removed and all the counties, 175,000 and under in population, be ranked by the criteria existing in the bill: Changes in: Population, Employment, Weekly wage and Number of Establishments. This was well received as it would better identify the thirty (30) most distressed rural counties in the state.

While having criteria that does identify more accurately the most distressed counties in Colorado as eligible for REDI funding would be our goal, we urge you to approve the bill, perhaps with some changes in the initial criteria.