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Arapahoe County Open Space is Mapping out a Greener Future *Arapahoe County distributes \$10.6 million for open space, park and trail projects*

Littleton, CO --- Thanks to the generous citizens of Arapahoe County, the Arapahoe County Board of County Commissioners Thursday distributed \$10.6 million in Open Space sales tax revenues and awarded the City of Aurora with the *Our Progress Takes Flight Stewardship* award during a ceremony at Infinity Park in Glendale.

Grants and awards were distributed to local cities, towns and special districts during the County's Open Space Shareback and Grant award ceremony, which is held each June.

"The extensive impact of the Arapahoe County Open Space program would not be possible without our cities, towns and special districts," said Commissioner Rod Bockenfeld, who serves as Board Chair. "Together we are preserving open space, enhancing our parks and building a network of trails that make Arapahoe County, First in Colorado, First in Service, Your County of Choice."

These funds are made possible by the generous citizens of Arapahoe County through the voter-approved Arapahoe County Open Space Sales and Use Tax, which is dedicated to preserve open space and natural areas; protect lands that preserve water quality; improve parks, sports fields, picnic facilities and trails; protect wildlife habitat; preserve agriculture and ranchlands; and maintain heritage areas.

The City of Aurora was presented with the *Our Progress Takes Flight Stewardship* award, which recognizes an individual, local government or organization that displays outstanding leadership, cooperation and stewardship to ensure the conservation and protection of the great outdoors.

As this year's winner, the City of Aurora serves as a role model for putting Arapahoe County Open Space shareback and grant dollars to work. They've completed numerous projects for their residents to enjoy from preserving the County's only forest of Ponderosa Pine and the creation of a water quality education center to building new parks, renovating others and connecting various trails.

"We are thrilled at the results from this partnership with Arapahoe County," said Aurora Mayor Ed Tauer. "We've made the phrase "living legacy" into reality."

The City also is serving on the Cherry Creek Basin Working Group and High Line Corridor Working Group to protect and enhance these important regional corridors.

After the ceremony guests attended the City of Glendale's Ribbon Cutting for the latest phase of Infinity Park. With the completion of the Park, Glendale has created a beautiful green open space for the city that features walking paths, public lawns and free wireless throughout.

In 2009, Arapahoe County committed almost \$3.4 million in Open Space funds to the City of Glendale to acquire two acres of land for open space as part of Infinity Park. This land allowed the City to connect the northern and southern pieces of the entire Infinity Park complex to create a 17.5 acre oasis. The project includes a conservation easement that ensures the land will remain as open space forever. In addition, the City received two grants totaling \$500,000 to help turn a five-acre section of the old Seminary Park complex into a community park with a state of the art regulation sized playing field with artificial turf for year-round use.

In Glendale, where there are only three single-family homes, the new Infinity Park will be a gathering place with infinite possibilities for families and friends alike.

Open Space Shareback Awards

In November 2003, Arapahoe County voters approved a countywide quarter-cent sales and use tax for the preservation of open space in Arapahoe County. This tax is equal to 25 cents on every \$100 purchase. Tax collection began Jan. 1, 2004 and is set to expire in 2013 unless citizens vote “yes” to continue the program on a future ballot question toward reauthorization. Fifty percent of the annual tax revenue is returned to incorporated cities and towns to enhance local parks, trails, recreation and open space.

More than \$57 million from the Open Space Fund has been distributed to municipalities since the program’s inception. This year, Arapahoe County distributed nearly \$8.7 million in shareback funds, which was divided among the following cities and towns, based on population:

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|------------------------|----------------|---------------------|-----------|
| • Aurora | \$4.96 million | • Englewood | \$582,496 |
| • Bennett | \$5,737 | • Foxfield | \$14,369 |
| • Centennial | \$1.81 million | • Glendale | \$85,682 |
| • Cherry Hills Village | \$112,956 | • Greenwood Village | \$262,535 |
| • Columbine Valley | \$23,377 | • Littleton | \$698,902 |
| • Deer Trail | \$10,419 | • Sheridan | \$97,496 |

Arapahoe County Open Space Grants

In addition to Shareback funds, 12 percent of the annual tax revenue is set aside for competitive grants to eligible special districts and municipalities with \$13 million in grants awarded since 2004. These funds are leveraged at a ratio of 1:2, which means that for every grant dollar from the County, local entities generate \$2 of additional dollars to pay for approved projects.

On June 10, Arapahoe County awarded nearly \$1.9 million in grants for 10 open space, park and trail projects. The projects receiving funding include:

Arapahoe Park and Recreation District - Lowry Trust Land Acquisition: Grant: \$250,000 Match: \$838,800

With this grant along with a Great Outdoors Colorado grant of \$756,000 and District funds of \$83,000 will help the District purchase 175 acres of open space at Quincy and E-470 to protect one mile of Tollgate Creek and develop a regional park with sports fields, swimming and picnic facilities and regional trail connections.

Arapahoe Park and Recreation District - Tallgrass Park Phase I: Grant: \$250,000 Match: \$279,400

This project supports the development of the first phase of a 9.4 acre neighborhood park that includes wildlife friendly natural areas with multi-use trails, basketball court, playfield, picnic shelter, playground and disc golf.

City of Aurora, Ponderosa Preserve Expansion - Grant: \$250,000 Match: \$862,500

This grant supports the purchase 25+ acres of additional open space to preserve the far north end of the Black Forest and protect sweeping vistas of the Front Range, Ponderosa Pine, native grasses, shrubs and wildflowers that provide a unique environment for diverse wildlife.

City of Aurora, Unnamed Creek Trail Extension: Grant: \$100,000 Match: \$292,600

The City of Aurora will use this grant to complete the Unnamed Creek Trail with two creek crossings connecting southern Aurora, eastern Centennial and parts of Unincorporated Arapahoe County to the metro-wide regional trail system.

City of Centennial - Centennial Civic Center Park Phase I: Grant: \$250,000 Match: \$1,645,320

This grant along with a Great Outdoors Colorado grant of \$198,000 and almost \$1.5 million in matching funds will

help Centennial build a new 11-acre community park in the center of Centennial with playground, water play, shelters, trails, open space meadow near the creek and more.

City of Centennial - Centennial Regional Trail Link Phase I: Grant: \$250,000 Match: \$455,100

The City of Centennial will work with South Suburban Park and Recreation District to create 1.25 miles of multi-use community trail connecting to both the High Line Canal and more than 100 miles of an interconnected regional trail system.

City of Littleton - Slaughterhouse Gulch Trail Link Phase I: Grant: \$233,000 Match: \$129,600

The City of Littleton will build a trail that showcases a hidden open space gem that includes the historic 1860s City Ditch and flume, the oldest operating aqueduct and irrigation ditch in metro Denver.

Parker Jordan Metro District - Cherry Creek Crossing and Trail: Grant: \$250,000 Match: \$276,600

This grant will begin the design and construction of a low-water crossing across Cherry Creek and trail connection south of Arapahoe Road and west of the Cornerstar development.

Town of Bennett - South Bennett Trail Plan: Grant: \$12,000 Match: \$4,500

The Town of Bennett will use these funds to develop a regional trail plan that identifies key trail corridors for southern Bennett and possible connections to the County's open space. The proposal is a combined planning effort involving the Town of Bennett, Adams and Arapahoe Counties to increase residents' accessibility to recreational amenities.

Town of Deer Trail - Trail Replacement: Grant: \$27,100 Match: \$12,600

This grant will help replace the damaged multi-use trail running through Spirit of the Prairie Park to increase safety, accessibility and user-enjoyment.

To learn more about Arapahoe County Open Space, visit www.co.arapahoe.co.us and download the 2010 Community Guide "*Mapping Out a Greener Future*" and/or sign up to receive the [Arapahoe County Open Space e-newsletter](#).

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