

# COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

GUNNISON COUNTY

*Colorado*



## Why Apply?



This is a unique opportunity for a seasoned marketing veteran that thrives in a highly successful, strategic, and fast-paced environment. Gunnison is a small, rural county that offers programs and services that are remarkably broad and innovative for Colorado counties of comparable size. The Communications Director is a newly created role within the County, providing an opportunity to shape the position from its inception with the goal of establishing Gunnison County as a unified and cohesive source of information. The new Director will be part of a highly functioning, dynamic, and well-organized team that has a passion for public service and for getting projects done through focused strategic planning that turns into impactful actions.



# WELCOME TO GUNNISON COUNTY

Nestled in the heart of Colorado's Rocky Mountains, Gunnison County is known for its mountain culture and almost 2 million acres of accessible public lands offering world-class outdoor recreation opportunities.

Winter sports enthusiasts flock to the region for world-class skiing and snowboarding at Crested Butte Mountain Resort, as well as cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, dog sledding, snowshoeing, and ice fishing. The warmer months offer kayaking, rafting, fly-fishing, mountain biking, rock-climbing, and more.

Hailed as an "all seasons" destination, tourism is a leading economic driver in Gunnison County where second homes and vacation rentals comprise the majority of residences. The region also has a long legacy of ranching and mining that are important to both the economy and character of Gunnison County.

A tight-knit community of about 17,000 year-round residents live in and around the County's mountain towns. They place a high value on their quality of life and appreciate the small, safe communities where they care for their neighbors and enjoy access to the incredible landscape around them. An intellectually interesting and stimulating life is also important to residents. More than half of the County's adult population have a bachelor's degree or higher.

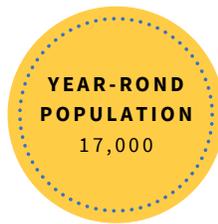
The town of Gunnison is home to Western Colorado University with nearly 3,000 students and over 100 program offerings. The university provides residents with a range of opportunities from classes and programs to music performances and guest lectures. Gunnison-Crested Butte Regional Airport serves the entire region with commercial flights.



# GUNNISON COUNTY

Gunnison County cherishes its sense of community and place. The County strives to preserve and promote the well-being of the County's citizens, natural environment, and rural character. Incorporated in 1877, Gunnison County is governed by an elected three-member Board of County Commissioners who serve four-year overlapping terms.

Daily operations are led by County Manager Matthew Birnie who has assembled a collegial team of exceptional public sector executives who enjoy working together collaboratively on important cross-cutting issues to maximize organizational effectiveness in delivering results to the community. The County serves a year-round population of 17,000 across 3,259 square miles with a 2025 budget of \$76.8 million and a team of 230 FTEs.



## THE COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

Working as part of the Administration department under the general supervision of the County Manager or designee, the Communications Director is responsible for developing and executing a comprehensive strategic communications and branding plan that aligns with the County's goals, policies, and initiatives. Serving as the County's lead Public Information Officer (PIO), this role ensures clear, consistent, and effective messaging across all departments, enhances public engagement, and strengthens internal communication while maintaining a strong, cohesive brand identity.





## THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

- Considerable experience in all facets of communication (social media, mass media, website content, video, traditional print media, and digital publications).
- An independent, self-starter that can work well with a highly functioning team and diversity of opinions.
- Strong critical thinking abilities to develop and present multiple communication strategies, along with an analysis of the potential outcomes for each approach.
- A clear, accurate, and timely communicator. A person that understands that words matter, and how the public perceives the message is as important as the message itself.
- Adaptable and can see that change is needed if something is not working.

## EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE

Bachelor's degree in public relations, communications, journalism, or related field and 6+ years of communications and media relations experience or equivalency. Experience should include writing press releases, media advisories, fact sheets/briefs or news stories/articles; pitching stories to the media, and responding to requests for information on a wide variety of subjects. Or any satisfactory combination of experience and training which demonstrates the knowledge, skills, and abilities to successfully perform the job.

**SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:** Must possess a valid Colorado driver's license and complete ICS 100 and ICS 200 within the first year of employment.



## OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

### ***Creating A New Position***

Because this is a newly defined position, the successful candidate will work with the leadership team to develop the overall communication goals and the direction for this position. The Communications Director will have the opportunity to create an impressive, multi-disciplined communication strategy for the County and its residents in an area where there is limited regional news coverage.

### ***Working with an Exceptional Team***

A strength of the County is its strong leaders who embrace a clear strategic direction. The Communication Director will need to navigate strong opinions to develop the best communication strategy for the County. It will also be important to build connections and collaborate with staff who have been doing communication work in the past. Additionally, the Director will work closely with the County Manager in consultation with the County Board to establish and enforce a disciplined communication approach that clearly articulates the rationale behind decisions made by the Board, reinforcing existing accountability for decision-making.

### ***Understanding the County***

Gunnison County is a rural area, encompassing a wide range of demographics. The Communications Director will need to develop an understanding of the variety of ways that residents consume news and information through both formal and informal communication channels, leveraging this knowledge to benefit the County.

## COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

Gunnison County is offering an annual salary range of \$96,884 to \$137,042 for this position, dependent upon experience and qualifications, along with a comprehensive [benefits](#) package.

- Medical, dental, and vision coverage & FSA
- Vacation Leave based on years of service
- Sick Leave: 8 hours for each month of service
- 12 paid holidays
- Dependent Care FSA
- Life, Supplemental Life, and AD&D
- County 401(a) Retirement Program
- 457 Deferred Comp Plan Match Program

Gunnison County realizes that housing may be a challenge for candidates looking to relocate to the area. As part of the County's strategic plan, the County is currently building 32 new work force housing units to add to the 26 they currently own and operate. Another 252 unit project will break ground this Spring. Gunnison County employees have first preference for renting these units. This will ease the burden of relocation and provide ample time for the employee to find long-term housing in the County.



## RESOURCES

[Gunnison County Strategic Plan](#)

[Gunnison County News Releases](#)

[Gunnison/Crested Butte Tourism Association](#)

[Gunnison County Chamber of Commerce](#)



## TO APPLY

Apply Online: [gmphr.com](https://gmphr.com)

First Review: **April 6, 2025**

More Info: Linda Woulfe, GMP Consultants  
[lwoulfe@gmphr.com](mailto:lwoulfe@gmphr.com) / (612) 965-0237