

2012 STATE OF OUR CITIES & TOWNS

- **Delivering vital basic services**
- **Struggling to maintain infrastructure**
- **Working hard to improve our economy**

Cities and towns are seeking and finding new ways to provide services efficiently and cost effectively.

They are working to provide public safety, transportation, public utilities and community amenities that form the backbone of Colorado's quality of life.

From the small towns that are the centers of commerce in rural Colorado, to the mountain resorts, to the large cities along the Front Range, there is a community spirit that can't be quantified by numbers, a spirit that gives each of our municipalities its own personality.

It is what makes Colorado's cities and towns such great places to live.





In these tough economic times, Colorado's cities and towns continue to provide us with the basic services we need to live in a safe, healthy and prosperous community:

- Police and fire protection
- Water and wastewater infrastructure
- Parks and recreation opportunities
- Streets
- Economic development


The 21st century's Great Recession has hit hard at the budgets of Colorado families and that's reflected in municipal government revenue. When consumers spend less at the store, it means fewer sales tax dollars to pay for municipal services.

Colorado's cities and towns continue to trim services and reduce staffing levels for a fourth year of decreased municipal spending:

- 28 percent have cut municipal employees in their latest budget
- 30 percent of cities and towns reduced street maintenance
- 10 percent cut police budgets
- 12 percent made across the board service cuts

But signs of recovery are beginning to show. According to the Colorado Municipal League's State of Our Cities & Towns survey:

- 35 percent of municipalities report increased revenue in 2011 compared with the previous year (while 30 percent reported an improvement in 2010; and only 7 percent saw increased revenue in 2009)



The most troubling aspect of budget cuts is that reduced municipal revenue and diversions of state and federal energy impact funding have dramatically reduced budgets for infrastructure construction and maintenance.


The number of municipalities reporting needed, but unfunded, capital projects is concerning:

- 16 percent report unfunded drinking water facilities
- 24 percent wastewater facilities
- 24 percent bridge projects
- 50 percent report unfunded street projects
- Altogether, 59 percent of municipalities have put needed capital projects on indefinite hold due to a lack of dollars

The infrastructure problem will grow as a lack of revenue prompts a continued reduction in maintenance spending:

- 53 percent of municipalities have deferred scheduled maintenance programs in order to balance their budgets.

CML has been working with government and private industry partners to increase the amount of state and federal dollars available to help cities and towns repair or replace outdated and insufficient facilities and distribution systems. Putting public projects in motion creates jobs and delivers infrastructure that will serve our citizens for decades to come.



Never have Colorado cities and towns worked harder to improve their local economies. Last year three-quarters of all municipalities dedicated funds for economic development activities. This year that number jumped to 85 percent.

Municipalities are involved in a wide range of activity including:

- Business incubators
- Buy-local campaigns
- Tourism marketing
- Urban renewal
- Tax incentives
- Mini business grants and revolving loan funds
- Streamlined approval processes

The results of these economic development efforts are encouraging as reflected in the better 2011 revenue picture. It's estimated that 27,500 new jobs were created in Colorado in 2011.

To view the complete survey results, as well as a video on the State of Our Cities & Towns, visit www.cml.org.