



### From the Executive Director

#### DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT MOVING FORWARD WITH CREATIVITY!

Unlike many cities on Colorado's front range, Pueblo is graced with the presence of a diverse, healthy, and vibrant arts/creative community that has grown into a substantial portion of our local economy and cultural character. While city governments in Denver, Loveland and Colorado Springs have taken official action and invested substantial taxpayer dollars in an attempt to foster the development of creative industries in their communities, Pueblo's creative community is less a result of government intervention and more a product of a strong sense of community, a unique local culture, affordable housing and commercial space, and beautiful natural surroundings.

Now that Pueblo's Creative Corridor has been officially recognized by the State of Colorado's Office of Economic Development and International Trade, it is incumbent upon us to redevelop our downtown area with the goal of enhancing the economic vitality of Pueblo's creative industries. The Pueblo Urban Renewal Authority (PURA) accomplishes this goal in a number of ways. Large scale projects, such as the \$12.8 million renovation of the Memorial Hall Performing Arts Theater, are intended to be active major anchors that will bring thousands of people downtown every week for arts performances. Smaller scale projects, such as the \$25,000 redevelopment of Mesa Junction's monumental staircase, are intended to restore and revitalize the necessary pedestrian routes that tie together the diverse neighborhoods within the creative district.

As a redevelopment planner and director of Pueblo's redevelopment agency, I am keenly aware that successful redevelopment will only occur if we make full use of whatever economic resources are present in our community. Pueblo's creatives have long been a key sector of our local economy, and it's time to lay the groundwork for further developing this industry in our urban core. By partnering with arts-related organizations such as the Pueblo Performing Arts Guild, PURA will continue to encourage the growth of Pueblo's organically-grown arts community. The Pueblo Creative Corridor is coming off a terrific grand opening event on October 5<sup>th</sup> that accentuated the First Friday Art Walk with a rolling procession through the downtown Creative Corridor.

PURA is a proud partner in Pueblo's Creative Corridor and will continue to focus on the redevelopment and rehabilitation of arts-related infrastructure in our city center. The end result can only be enhanced economic activity, the rehabilitation of blighted neighborhoods, and a greater quality of life for all Puebloans!

Yours, **John R. Batey, AICP-PURA Executive Director**

## From the Chairman



### ART AND REDEVELOPMENT

When one thinks about art, visions of wonderful paintings or maybe an upbeat musical come to mind. Rarely do we tie art to the redevelopment of our cities. Yet creating an art

district can stimulate an area and bring the synergism associated with the many artists and visitors that come. That is the goal of the Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT) by choosing Pueblo for a Boettcher Creative District Leadership Award.

This award is a grant for \$25,000 over a three year period for the production, enjoyment, and collaboration of the arts for the purposes of economic development and an enriched quality of life in Pueblo. Recently selected as a recipient of a state designation as a "Creative Corridor" the partnership of the Pueblo Urban Renewal Authority (PURA) and the Pueblo Performing Arts Guild (PPAG) is now actively pursuing how the arts can be developed into a redevelopment tool.

It has been a long process that is beginning to bear fruit. Sponsored by PURA and administered by PPAG the process is starting right. The concept is to evolve the "Creative Corridor" of the Mesa

Junction, Union Avenue and Lower Downtown districts into a haven for artists to live, work and play. The OEDIT has recognized the impact that art can have on the economics of the state. Over 185,000 people are employed in "creative" industries. That is the fifth largest employment sector in Colorado.

Pueblo has long been the home of many successful artists both in the visual and in the performing arts. Now PURA and PPAG hope to organize and capture this collective talent into a district. This hopefully will be widely recognized and become a regional destination. This certainly is not "pie in the sky". Little Paducah Kentucky one third the size of Pueblo has a multi-million dollar industry centered on their arts district. Modest beginnings have blossomed into huge economic generators for them.

The concept of the Creative Corridor is adjunct to our Destination Pueblo Tourism program. Bringing new visitors to Pueblo to experience the flavors and talents within our city is the goal. This type of economic development does not require large infrastructure or outlays of resources. It is a "clean" industry, indeed we are all proud that the OEDIT saw the potential in Pueblo; it is now ours to promote.

**Gary Trujillo, PURA Board Chairman**

## East Side Project Area Update

A proposal for property acquisition of 708 E. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and 812 E. 5<sup>th</sup> Street, for the purpose of blight elimination, was presented to the Pueblo Urban Renewal Board at their September 25<sup>th</sup> Work Session. Following careful review of both properties, the Board has decided to bring the acquisition question to the October Regular Meeting for a formal vote.

708 E. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and 812 E. 5<sup>th</sup> Street are vacant residential properties located within the East Side Urban Renewal District. 708 E. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street is an unimproved parcel that was previously identified for redevelopment, in 2010, as part of the Pueblo Housing Authority's grant application for the HOPE VI Project. In 2010, the Pueblo Urban Renewal Authority partnered with the Housing Authority to obtain an option to purchase the property; the Housing Authority did not receive the grant and the purchase option was void.

812 E. 5<sup>th</sup> Street is a vacant dilapidated home located directly west of the East Side Neighborhood Association's "La Familia" Community Garden. The house has been identified by the Pueblo Regional Building Department as a "dangerous building" and has been placed on the City of Pueblo's list of structures to be demolished when funding becomes available. Unfortunately, the house has been on the demolition list for three years with no action. The 800 block of East 5<sup>th</sup> Street has been identified by the East Side Task Force as a block of interest to focus residential redevelopment efforts as a way to spur positive change within the East Side. Acquisition of both properties will provide opportunities for residential infill redevelopment as set forth in the "Urban Renewal Plan for the Eastside Project Area."

The East Side Task Force met on September 28, 2012. Discussion items included redevelopment of

residential East Side properties, the proposed East Side Library, and exploration of a partnership between the Pueblo Urban Renewal Authority, the City of Pueblo, and the Colorado State University-Pueblo for community based projects. The partnership is envisioned to provide local governing bodies the ability to utilize student resources to complete civic projects that can be applied to their required course work and simultaneously provide benefit to the community.

The East Side Task Force meets the third Friday of every month. The next Task Force will be October 19, 2012 at 8:30 a.m. The location for the October meeting has changed to 2631 E. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, which is the Pueblo County Housing and Human Services Building. Please join us to discuss current issues and ideas on how we can continue the positive momentum on the East Side.