A photograph of a brick building with a large stone sign that reads "CITY HALL" and "CITY of GRAND JUNCTION". In the foreground, there are several flowers, including purple thistles on the left and red and yellow Gaillardia flowers on the right. A green banner is overlaid at the bottom left.

CITY HALL

CITY of GRAND JUNCTION
250 NORTH [illegible] STREET

CITY COUNCIL BRIEFING

Monday, August 12, 2024



Communications and Engagement

Get to Know Your City

Plans are underway for this year's last Get to Know Your City Event on Friday, Sept. 13 at 4 p.m. While normally a staff event offering opportunities for the community to ask questions and receive project updates from Directors and the City Manager, this event is also a celebration of the 20th anniversary of the City's relationship with its sister city El Espino, El Salvador. The free event will take place on Rood Ave in front of City Hall from 4-7:30 p.m. with live music, food trucks, games, giveaways, and display booths. The Foundation for Cultural Exchange is cohosting and will share information about the organization and its support for high school and college students with scholarships. Members of this year's delegation from CMU who traveled to El Espino will be on hand to share their experiences.

Recycling with “Captain Compost”

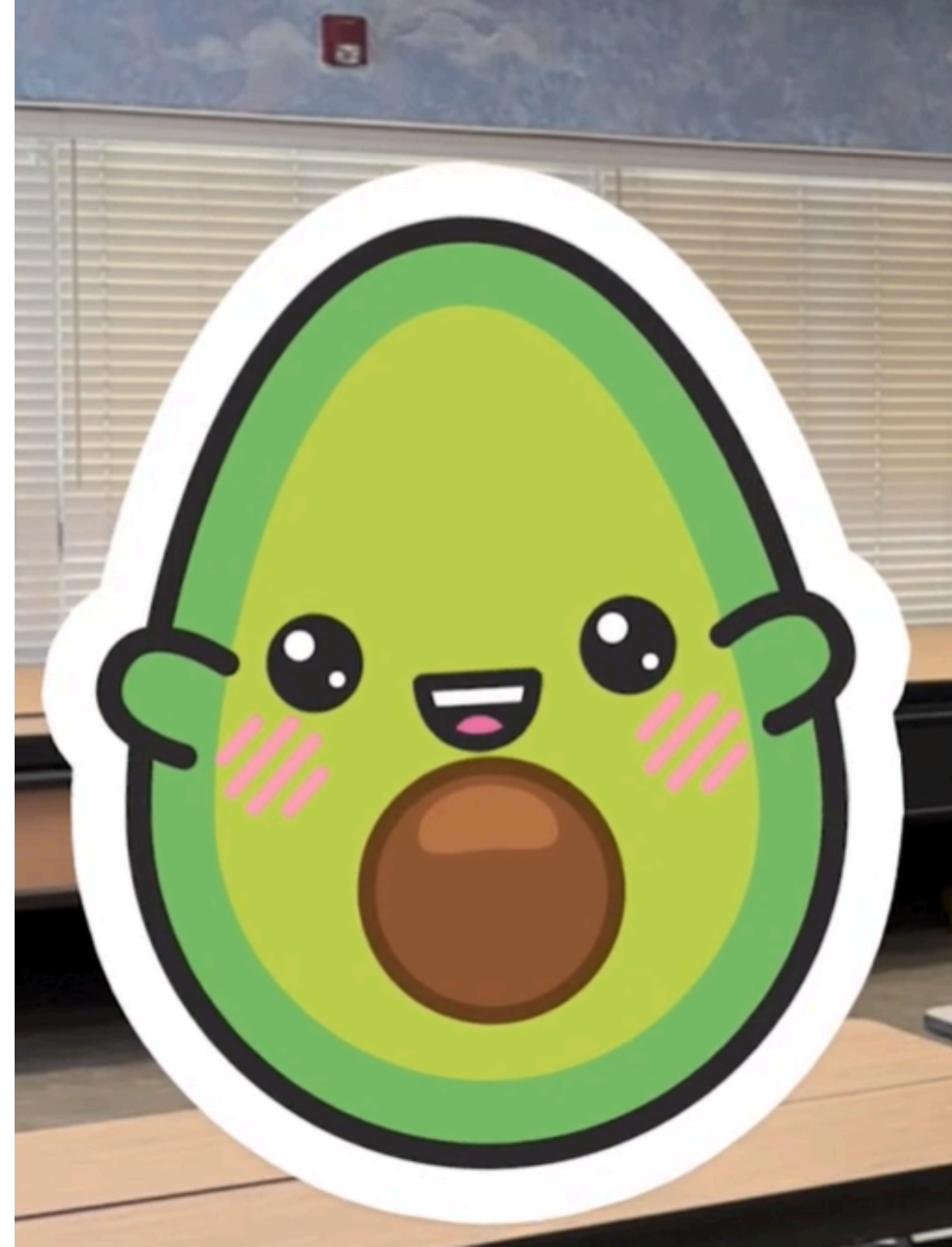
The Recycling Division is offering a pilot program for students at Pomona and Orchard Elementary Schools to compost their lunch leftovers through funding from a USDA grant. The Recycling and Communications Departments collaborated on an [informational video](#) for incoming students that will replace the traditional assembly approach. The video features an animated avocado named “Captain Compost” who will guide students through the composting process in a fun and educational way!

Accessibility in City’s Website Redesign

The City’s web redesign is moving forward following input from the CrossAbility Roundtable regarding accessibility. Updates are being made to the photographs online and how things are organized on the home page and department landing pages. As the new design goes live, things should be a bit easier to navigate in the coming months.

29 Road and I-70 Interchange Video

Mesa County is updating its [29 Rd and I-70 Interchange video](#), which will be posted to the website. Mayor Herman was interviewed and will appear in the video talking about the benefits and its importance for the region. City staff will not appear to ensure there isn’t any appearance of support for the initiative as it moves to the ballot in November.





Community Development

The City received an application for:

- Seven new Short-Term Rentals between mid-June and the end of July.

Staff approved:

- A site plan for Pearl Plaza, including an 11,050 square foot mixed-use building (commercial and residential) located at 609 24 Road.
- A site plan for the GJHA's the Current, including 61,879 square feet for 54 units of Affordable housing located at 674 Durham Drive
- A site plan for the Community Recreation Center
- A site plan for Fire Station 7

Impact Fees

The City, in coordination with the TischlerBise team, will hold its second Stakeholder Group meeting and community meeting on impact fees on Thursday, August 29. Information about the City's impact fee process is available at EngageGJ.org.

Planning

The Planning Commission held a public hearing on Interim Housing regulations on July 9. The Council is scheduled to consider this item at its August 21 meeting.

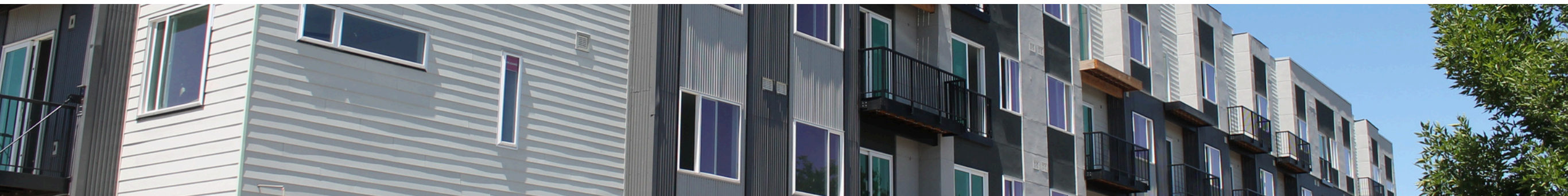
Housing

Staff are exploring a partnership with a CMU professor and students to develop pre-approved plans for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). Staff have been selected to present on the City's ADU production program and other ADU initiatives at the 2024 Housing Colorado conference in October.

Staff met with a regional representative from the U.S. Interagency on Homelessness to share updates on the City's various initiatives. They also attended the Housing Colorado Western Slope Stakeholder Engagement event with several state agencies, furthering their involvement in regional housing discussions.

On July 31, in collaboration with staff and volunteers from Mutual Aid Partners, Food Bank of the Rockies, Hilltop Family Resource Center and Domestic Violence, Hispanic Alliance Project, and the Veteran's Administration, the Neighbor-2-Neighbor team, along with an unhoused individual, visited two remote desert locations to deliver supplies and provide resources to approximately 30 unhoused individuals. Seven individuals are now being scheduled for housing assessments to be placed on the housing waitlist.

Since January 2024, the Neighbor-2-Neighbor team has completed housing assessments for 73 individuals. One individual has received a voucher, and four others are in the process of receiving one. Mother Theresa Place, tentatively opening in October 2024 by Grand Valley Catholic Outreach, will offer 40 permanent supportive housing units in the fall of 2024 and select residents directly from the By Name list.





COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Housing Supply Accelerator Playbook

A recent op-ed cited the Housing Supply Accelerator Playbook, published by the National League of Cities and the American Planning Association. The Playbook can be read [here](#).

Sustainability

The Urban Heat Island Mapping Project was completed on July 20 and 24. Thirty-five community volunteers supported the effort on July 20. During the afternoon shift, it rained, cooling down pavement temperatures below the necessary threshold for successful data collection. The data has been sent to NOAA's team, with heat maps and a report scheduled to be delivered to staff this fall.

The City's Sustainability Coordinator will present at the Chamber of Commerce's Energy Summit on Wednesday, August 14, on electric vehicle charging infrastructure for the private sector.

Engineering and Transportation

Safe Routes to Schools

The 27 Road Safe Routes to School project is funding sidewalk improvements along the west side of 27 Road from Unaweeep to B $\frac{3}{4}$ Rd and 27 Road from Hwy 50 south to B $\frac{1}{2}$ Road. The work is being completed by MA Concrete. Concrete has been placed between Unaweeep Ave and B $\frac{3}{4}$ Road. Paving is slated for the week of August 12. The project should be complete by the end of August.



4th and 5th Street Pilot Project

In 2021-2022, the City/DDA completed the 4th and 5th Street One-way to Two-way Feasibility study, which included alternatives for both an enhanced one-way design and an enhanced two-way configuration. The City Council and DDA board concurred to move forward with improvements that would maintain the one-way configuration but also meet the project goals: enhance safety, improve walkability and bikeability, activate economic development, and optimize traffic circulation.

The project installs “pop-up” elements such as bollards and striping to set both corridors, from North Ave to Ute Ave, into the final configuration, narrowing to one through travel lane, conversion of diagonal parking to parallel parking on the right-hand side of both corridors creating a parking separated bike lane and leaving space to eventually widen the sidewalk to enhance the pedestrian experience which would accommodate landscaping, art, and outdoor dining. Diagonal parking on the left sides of both corridors will remain. Curb and gutter modifications, along with street patching/overlays, have been completed.

City traffic crews, alongside General Services Operation staff, started painting and placing bollards on 4th Streets on Thursday, August 1, to set the corridor into the new configuration. Work on 5th Street will be started the week of August 19. Completion is slated for late August.

A call for artists has been made to provide street murals that will highlight the creativity of local artists and residents while promoting traffic calming. Similarly, another call for artists has been made for functional art pieces such as artistic bike racks and bench and table sets to install in areas along 4th and 5th Street.



Fire

New Rescue Boat

The Department is excited to announce the arrival of our new state-of-the-art rescue jet boat, which will significantly enhance our water rescue capabilities. This advanced vessel was purchased with a dedicated budget of \$100,000, which not only covered the cost of the boat itself but also included the acquisition of essential rescue equipment, customized striping and lettering for clear identification, and the expansion of storage facilities at Station 5 to accommodate the new addition. Our crews are set to begin training on the operation and handling of the jet boat, ensuring they are fully prepared to deploy it effectively in emergencies. The boat is expected to be fully operational and ready to serve our community by late summer, marking a significant milestone in our ongoing commitment to improving public safety and response times.





General Services

86th Sinclair Rocky Mountain Open

Tiara Rado Golf Course will host the 86th Sinclair Rocky Mountain Open, the oldest Professional golf tournament in Colorado, from August 21 - August 24. This event will include 170 players in the field, and the total purse for the event breaks the \$100,000 barrier. The City of Grand Junction is proud to partner with the RMO, Inc. board in contributing approximately \$50,000 annually to Colorado Mesa University's endowment fund. The Golf enterprise fund also clears over \$30,000 after expenses. It promotes a Welcoming, Livable, and Engaging atmosphere within the community and Thriving and Vibrant economic standards and goals described in the Council's Strategic Outcomes.

Parks and Recreation

Community Recreation Center Construction

Community Recreation Center (CRC) construction began the week of July 22, following Council approval of the construction contract on July 17. Based in Grand Junction, the earthwork and utilities subcontractor Skyline was on site to grade the site. Topsoil from the previous Matchett farm was removed and transported to Emerson Skate Park. This benefited both projects through cost savings since the topsoil at Emerson needed to be replaced. The new Emerson Skate Park is scheduled to be complete by the end of 2024 and the CRC will be complete by mid-2026.

Hawthorne Park Restroom Vandalism

The custodial teams and the department have observed an increase in restroom vandalism during the summer months. Instances of vandalism range from damaged toilet paper holders, sinks, and doors to clogged drains, spray paint, and litter. While the department acknowledges the significance of restroom facilities in enhancing park visits, the escalating vandalism has necessitated a reduction in the operating hours of these amenities.



Lincoln Park-Moyer Pool Waterline Break

On Sunday, August 4, a water utility line at the Lincoln Park-Moyer Pool broke. The location of the break occurred underneath the pool decking just outside of the concessions area of the pool building. The water to the facility was shut off shortly after the break occurred. On Monday, city crews located the water break, removed concrete, and repaired the broken pipe. New concrete was poured on Tuesday, getting the facility back on schedule to open on Friday, August 9, which coincides with the new weekend schedule and the start of the D51 school year.

Orchard Mesa Pool Annual Maintenance Closure

Orchard Mesa Pool closed temporarily for maintenance on August 7. This will continue until August 11, 2024. The aquatics staff will be performing scheduled pool maintenance, furniture repair, deep cleaning, and minor painting after the summer season. This will ensure a continued safe and clean facility. The pool will reopen on Monday, August 12. Pool passes will be extended five days to compensate for this planned annual closure.



River Park at Las Colonias Restricted

The City of Grand Junction has restricted access to the River Park at Las Colonias due to low water levels in the Colorado River. Sandbags have been placed at the entrance of the River Park to guide the water flow towards the primary river channel to help safeguard four species of endangered fish until water levels increase later in the fall. The water levels in the Colorado River have been dropping steadily over the past month. The River Park is still open during park hours, but the experience differs from when the river levels increase water through the channel. Residents can still access and enjoy the water, including the beach areas, which remain popular into the fall. Sandbags should remain in place. According to requirements of the River Park's federal permit issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, any time the Colorado River flows below 810 cubic feet per second (cfs), the River Park channel must be cut off from the main channel of the Colorado River to protect critical habitat for wildlife including four endangered fish species. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and U.S. Fish and the Wildlife Service authorized the City to construct the River Park channel, and the permit was contingent on restricting water from flowing into the River Park channel when levels are below 810 cfs.





Call for Artist – Multiple Projects

The Commission on Arts and Culture has been busy planning multiple projects for local and regional artists to add diverse, unique, and creative artwork to be placed around Grand Junction. These initiatives aim to enrich the community's cultural landscape and provide artists with opportunities to showcase their talents. One such project involves the installation of vibrant murals on downtown's 4th and 5th Streets, which will beautify the area and encourage pedestrian traffic. The Commission continues the tradition of improving the appearance of roundabouts by inviting artwork submissions for the Horizon and G Road and 24 1/2 and F and 1/2 roundabouts.

Splash Park at Dos Rios Opens

The City of Grand Junction Parks and Recreation Department has opened the Splash Park at Dos Rios. A soft opening happened the weekend of August 10 and 11 to ensure everything ran smoothly. This final feature is the culmination of the now-complete Dos Rios Park. The fully completed Dos Rios Park includes a bike park, playground, picnic shelter with restrooms, Playa Dos Rios, and the riverfront trail. The Splash Park is open daily from 12 – 6 p.m. until Monday, September 30. It will re-open in May of next year. More information can be found [here](#).

Police

National Night Out

The Grand Junction Police Department is grateful for the phenomenal turn out for National Night Out. A total of 18 neighborhoods hosted events around the City, bringing hundreds of community members together for food, laughter, and fun. GJFD firefighters and Crime Stoppers partners joined the GJPD for meaningful conversations with residents.

Hiring for Volunteers

The Grand Junction Police Department is hiring volunteers for the Victim Services Unit, which serves crime victims. Applications for the fall academy will be accepted through August 23.

Police Academy

Nine new GJPD cadets begin their training in the Western Colorado Peace Officers Academy this week, working towards becoming a Grand Junction Police Officer.





Utilities

Dam Inspections

The City's designated Colorado Dam Safety Engineer conducted the remaining dam safety inspections for this year at Chambers, Scales #1, and Scales #3. All were determined to be in Satisfactory Condition, with recommendations for only minor maintenance items, which are being addressed by staff.

Water Supply

At the end of July, total water storage in the City's reservoirs was 11,242 acre-feet, representing two times the City's annual demand. Flows in Kannah Creek are more than 10 cubic feet per second (cfs), enabling staff to divert the City's full paramount water right of 7.81 cfs.

Leak Detection Program

The leak detection program was initiated in September 2023 with advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) and upgraded in April with automatic email and text notifications to customers with continuous water consumption. From inception through May 30, 1,184 leaks were repaired, with an estimated water savings of more than two million gallons through early notification.

UTILITIES

Lead Service Line Inventory

Staff completed an inventory of water service lines to identify locations of any lead service lines as required by the EPA Lead and Copper Rule. Of 9,815 water service connections, 198 service lines were determined to be lead, which must be replaced over the next 10 years. Staff have already begun replacing service lines on Belford Avenue. While the City has lead service lines in our system, water quality monitoring across the distribution system indicates that lead levels are well below the EPA action level of 15 parts per billion (ppb).





Visit Grand Junction

Lodging Industry Performance

Grand Junction's weekly hotel occupancy rate, from July 28 through August 3, was 75.7 percent, according to STR hotel-metric data, which is 1.6 percent lower compared to the previous week's occupancy rate of 76.9 percent. Grand Junction's 75.7 percent occupancy rate is 9.1 percent higher than the U.S. weekly occupancy rate of 69.4 percent for the same weekly period.

Grand Junction's month-to-date occupancy rate through August 3 was 73.6 percent, which is 4.3 percent lower compared to the same period in 2023. Despite a national trend of declining occupancy rates, Grand Junction's average daily rate (ADR) has been resilient, offsetting the decrease in occupancy. Moreover, Grand Junction's year-to-date (YTD) ADR is outpacing both the U.S. average and Colorado's averages, with and without ski resorts included.

Public Relations Results

BIKE Mag partnered with Visit GJ to host three articles. The second article, "Ride Guide: Grand Junction, Colorado" was followed-up by the final feature "Post-Ride: Grand Junction, Colorado". The following businesses, nonprofits, and areas were highlighted: Roots Gastropub, the Lunch Loops, Copeka Coffee, Trail Life Brewing, Tacoparty, Jojo's Dinette, the Colorado River, Camp Eddy, Brown Cycle, Ruby Canyon Cycles, Naked Bike Works & Suspension, Boneshaker Adventures, the Grand Valley Trails chapter of the Colorado Plateau Mountain Bike Trail Association (COPMOBA), the Miramonte Rim Loop, the Leftover Lane, the Time Machine, the Raven Ridge, the Grand Mesa, the Gunny Loop, Little Park, First Flats, the Tabeguache trail, Clunker, Coyote Ridge, Ali Alley, The Ribbon, Little Park Road, the Toilet Bowl, the Wine Glass, the Eagle's Wing, Pucker Up, Lemon Squeezer, Moto, Snake Skin Loop, and Good Vibes. Total viewership is 327,572.

Fodor's selected Grand Junction as one of their "8 Crush-Worthy Road Trips for Wine Lovers" segment, showcasing the Grand Mesa. This outlet has a viewership of 4,000,000 and an ad equivalency of \$7,613.





Visit Grand Junction Data

Visit Grand Junction is monitoring the recent global economic fluctuations, specifically how they impact the travel industry. Despite broader economic struggles, including persistent inflation and stock market volatility, the Grand Junction lodging tax revenue has increased by 6.4% through June YTD over 2023. Aside from using data to fine-tune strategies to align with consumers who have a propensity to travel, vacation homes and hoteliers are yielding rates successfully to overcome a softening in the U.S. occupancy rate, which delivers positive revenue per available room (RevPAR).

The recent economic downturn has impacted segments of the travel industry in unique ways. Skift highlighted a relevant travel trend in their recent August 5th article "What's Going on With the Economy? And How Will it Impact the Travel Sector?" highlighting a widening wealth gap resulting in luxury hotels thriving, while the economy hotel sector occupancy is softening. The article provides insight into growth rates based on hotel scale. Despite Grand Junction's lack of luxury properties, Visit Grand Junction aims to elevate midscale to upscale accommodations while continuing to support economy lodging. This strategy aims to attract visitors less impacted by economic volatility, even as U.S. and Colorado occupancy falters.

Despite the challenges posed by global economic conditions, Grand Junction's tourism sector demonstrates resilience and potential for growth. Visit Grand Junction will continue its strategic use of data-driven marketing efforts, while focusing on leveraging trends, in order to support the community and drive positive outcomes for the City.



Thank you for viewing.

