



**CONTACT:** Gregg Rippy, President, Board of Directors  
Garfield County Federal Mineral Lease District  
817 Colorado Ave., Suite 201  
Glenwood Springs, CO 81601  
[www.garfieldfml.org](http://www.garfieldfml.org)  
(970) 379-6100 (direct)

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### **FML District turns five**

GLENWOOD SPRINGS, CO – This month marks the Fifth Anniversary of the Garfield County Federal Mineral Lease District. Created by resolution of the Garfield County Board of Commissioners on June 13, 2011, the district is an independent public body that grants funds to Colorado political subdivisions – mostly municipalities, and school and special districts – impacted by the development of natural resources on federal lands within Garfield County.

“It has been a productive five years,” said Gregg Rippy, president of the FML board of directors. “It’s very rewarding to see the results of our grant programs. The majority of the projects are tangible community improvements.”

The district receives its funds from the Department of Local Affairs each September and conducts grant cycles every fall and spring for eligible entities and projects.

To date, the district has awarded \$15,775,559 to 24 different grant recipients through its traditional and mini grant programs. FML grants have helped fund roof repairs at public schools, the pedestrian bridge at New Castle, foreclosure counseling in the wake of the Great Recession, communications equipment for emergency responders, streets and utilities, parks, and emergency room upgrades at the Grand River Hospital District, to name only a few.

“I take my responsibilities as a director seriously and review every application closely,” said director Eric Schmela, who represents the western part of the county on the board.

This year’s spring grant cycle saw the largest ever single grant, \$750,000 to co-applicants Colorado Mountain College and the Garfield County Public Library District for completion of community meeting space at Cooper Commons in Glenwood Springs.

“I’m thrilled to see local governments working together on grant applications,” said Director Mike Samson, the county commissioner representative on the board. “I hope we see more of that going forward.”

This summer, the FML district invited past grant recipients to make capital planning presentations to the board. The rules limit each entity to two presenters and a ten-minute presentation per team. Also, entities are told to save their printed reports and PowerPoint presentations – only two printed sides of a page are allowed.

“We’ve found that if a municipality or district can’t present the main points of their three- or five-year capital plans within these parameters, they probably have some more thinking to do,” said Andrew Gorgey, general counsel for the district. “The presentations give our board a solid look at everyone’s capital needs, which helps them make more informed decisions down the road.”

Other recent accomplishments include creation of the Grantee of the Year award, the brainchild of Patricia Payne, administrative assistant to the board and one of the district’s original staffers; full membership in the Special District Association of Colorado (SDA), which gives FML districts access to the SDA’s insurance pools; migration of the FML website to the Statewide Internet Portal Authority (SIPA) ([www.Colorado.gov/GCFMLD](http://www.Colorado.gov/GCFMLD)); and assistance to Huerfano County, which formed its own FML district last year.

Applications for the fall grant cycle will be available in August.

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<Photo Caption>> (L to R) Mike Samson, Eric Schmela, Andrew Gorgey, Patricia Payne, and Gregg Rippy. The three directors and two staffers have managed the Garfield County Federal Mineral Lease District since its inception.