

DOWNTOWN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN MONTEZUMA COUNTY

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Agritourism and Community Capacity

Montezuma County is located in the Southwest corner of Colorado with a population of over 25,000. The largest city in Montezuma County is Cortez, CO where many of the site visits were conducted. Emerging interests in rural, community-based economic development options allowed me to use this internship to explore opportunities, with a particular focus on agritourism.

Agritourism

- Diverse and growing sector of the “outdoor economy” including activities, goods, and services
- Farmers, business owners, government members, and community members who are involved in agritourism provide insights into the support needs of this sector

Community Capacity

- A community’s ability to leverage skills, resources, relationships, and institutions to support local economic development
- This project is interested in Montezuma County’s capacity for supporting and sustaining economic growth

Internship Goals

1. Ascertain communities’ capacity and priorities to support economic development
2. Identify specific technical assistance and resource needs from community members with a particular focus on agritourism
3. Coordinate with organizations, such as Downtown Colorado Inc., to plan next steps and address need areas

Educational Application

1. Diversify my research interests
2. Gain qualitative research experience
3. Collaborate with regional experts to influence my role in this field

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the entire supervisory for their support. I appreciate how welcoming and forthcoming everyone in Montezuma County was throughout my site visits. I’d like to further thank CSU Extension and Downtown Colorado Inc. for their roles in making this possible while aiding growth in rural communities.

Methods

1. Review Literature

Thorough review of existing literature on agritourism. This process helped to inform the scope of this internship, specifically in determining our focus on agritourism.

2. Site Visits

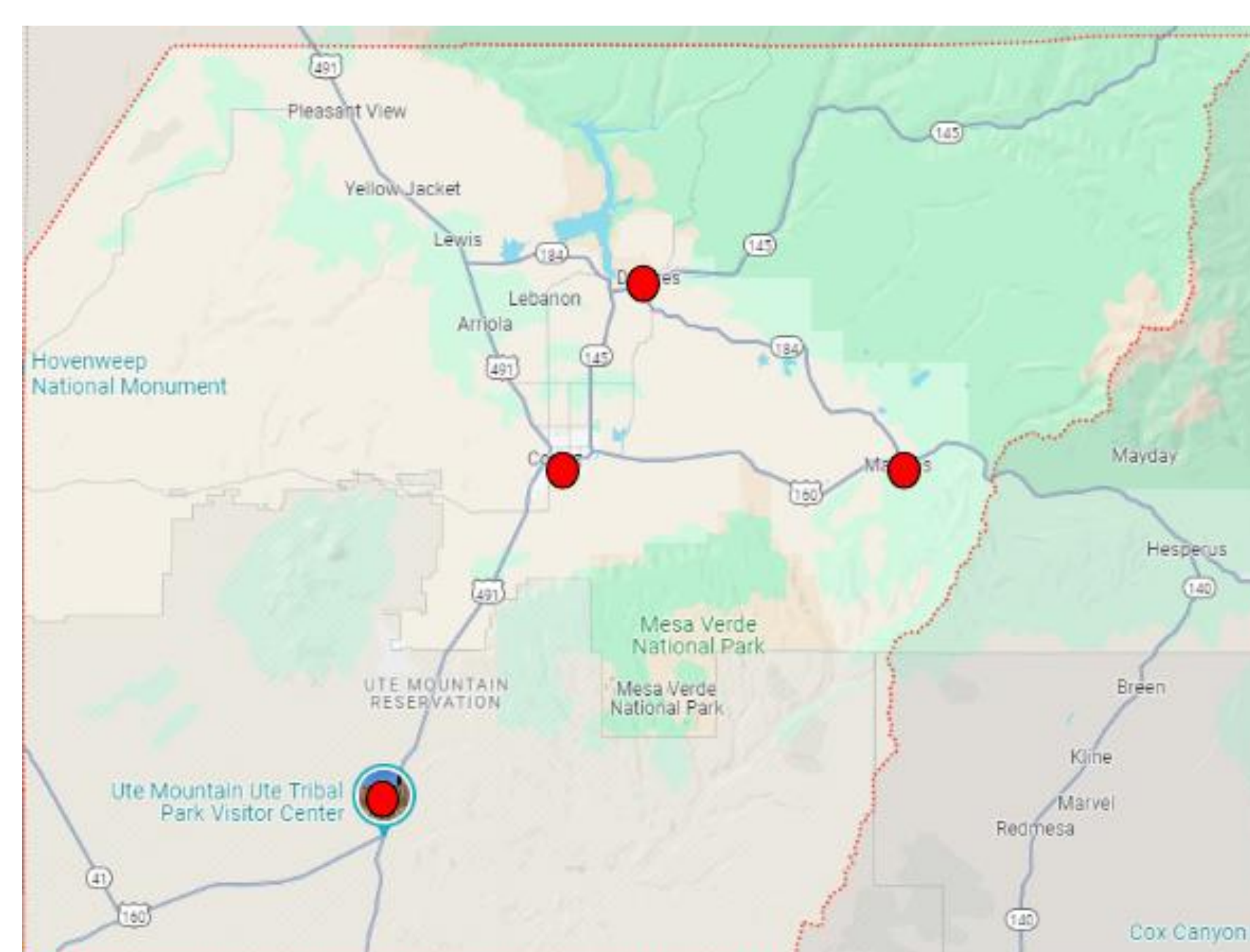
- Visits in Cortez, Mancos, Dolores, Ute Mountain Ute Reservation and the surrounding area
- Interviews with local farmers, business owners, and government members
- Visits were conducted at farmers’ markets, on farms, at local events, and by phone

3. Analyze Interviews

- Transcribe, summarize, and review interviews
- Determine common areas of support, growth, and need

4. Determine Support Areas with Stakeholders

- Consider key takeaways from site visits In collaboration with the internship stakeholder
- Suggest next steps to be taken by related institutions including Downtown Colorado Inc., local and state governments and community members.



Map of Montezuma County marking the locations of site visits

Donkey sighted near Mancos, CO after attending the 5th Annual Burrofest in Mancos, CO



Key Findings

Community Needs

1. Desire for greater collaboration between farms, local businesses, and members of local governments
2. More accessible information on available resources including clarity from local governments on event regulations.
3. Technical assistance related to the many roles needed to develop a successful and sustainable agritourism business

Potential Ways to Address Needs

1. Develop an agritourism affinity group that meets regularly to stimulate collaboration, collective action, and sustainable growth.
2. Marketing materials shared by local lodgings
3. Update existing documentation on available resources including grant opportunities, business processes, and relevant laws/regulations
4. Conduct technical assistance workshops to support the growth and development of local business

Key Performance Indicators

1. Community Engagement
Measure the engagement knowledge, and confidence in enacting new strategies of local community members and collaboration of local businesses and farmers.
2. Use of Resources
Track online traffic to resource portals outlined in next steps
3. Efficacy of Technical Assistance
Measure completion and participation in training programs. Survey participants on their satisfaction and applicability of programs and resources

Next Steps

- Continue collaborating with Downtown Colorado Inc. in their Challenge Community and information dashboard efforts
- Update existing documentation outlining resources including the [REDI Community Based Projects](#), [Colorado Agritourism Association Business Resources](#), and [Colorado Agritourism Association Business Environment Resources](#) websites
- Create targeted reports to share with related community members in Montezuma County