

# A Great Opportunity for the Nature and Raptor Center

## Ballot Measure 1a

The Board of Trustees for the Nature and Raptor Center of Pueblo met on August 21, 2013. One of the key issues approved by the Board was participation in the ½ cent sales tax issue that will be on the ballot in Pueblo County in November 2013 as issue 1A.

The Nature and Raptor Center of Pueblo is working in cooperation with five other non-profit organizations: Pueblo Animal Services, Pueblo Zoo, Colorado State Fair, Arts Center, and HARP as part of the 1/2 cent sales tax issue. The estimated income from the issue to the Nature and Raptor Center of Pueblo would be \$450,000 per year for the five years of the issue. \$100,000 of the funding would go to general operations per year, and \$350,000 of the funding per year is to go to improvements and new projects.

The Board has approved the following projects for the improvements from the proceeds:

- **Build the Arkansas River Interpretive Center to replace the building destroyed by arson in 2007.** The Center will offer new environmental education programs for school groups and the general public, interpretive displays, live native animal displays, office space for staff, and a nature store.
- **Improve the Raptor Center building, which was condemned for public use in 2007, to allow public access.** This will enhance the opportunities for visitors to enjoy views of the wide variety of raptors in the Center. This will include restrooms and improved ADA access at the Raptor Center, as well as new housing for education raptors.
- **Improved entrance, trail-side interpretive displays, and landscaping.**

Here are some key facts for reference:

- Each of these organizations will enter into a contract with the City and County:
  - These organizations will no longer get any support from the general fund of the City of Pueblo or Pueblo County.
  - Baseline will be 2012 funding levels. New money is any money over the base line.
  - Ninety percent of the new money must be used for new capital projects and programs.
  - An annual financial and performance evaluation would be reviewed by the Community Services Advisory Commission.
- Without this measure, services would be cut and some of the organizations might not be able to continue operating these public facilities.
- Other nonprofits will benefit, as these six will no longer receive CSAC funds or other general revenue funds from the City or County, increasing available CSAC revenues for other nonprofits.
- These facilities are assets to our economic development efforts and make our community more attractive to businesses considering relocation.
- Visitors to Pueblo from around the country, attracted by these tourist sites will spend their money and pay the tax.

- Most of life's necessities are exempt from the sales tax: Groceries, Medical supplies, Drugs, Dental appliances, Eyeglasses, Oxygen, Hearing aids, Livestock feed, Gasoline.
- Sales tax in the City of Pueblo would go from 7.4% to 7.9% which is less than the sales tax in Aurora, Ft. Collins and Boulder, cities that are prospering.

The long term impact of this measure passing for the Nature and Raptor Center is very significant. Two of the key challenges facing the Nature and Raptor Center are the need to replace the facility destroyed by arson in 2007, and the need to repair structural issues at the Raptor Center that caused the building to be condemned for public access in 2007. The sales tax issue would allow us to address both challenges over the five year time period of 2014-2018.

We will continue to pursue grant funding, increasing our membership base, and other funding sources to help with other improvements needed at the NRCP.

The support of all of our members will be very important to the success of the campaign this fall. Please write or call if you have any questions. If you would like to assist with the campaign, please contact Puebloans Improving Our Community at (719) 569-5453 or [improvingpueblo@gmail.com](mailto:improvingpueblo@gmail.com). If you would like to contribute to the campaign in support of the issue, please note that contributions are not tax-deductible. Checks should be made payable to "Puebloans Improving Our Community" and mailed to 1836 Vinewood Suite 200, Pueblo, Colorado 81005.

Thank you for your support of a bright future for the Nature and Raptor Center of Pueblo. Future generations of area citizens can reflect on your positive vision for environmental education programs that help connect people of all ages with nature and a remarkable raptor rehabilitation center that provides wild birds of prey with a second chance at life.