

## **Socioeconomic planning for oil shale - a second chance**

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In preparation for the oil shale boom in the late 1970s, the State of Colorado initiated a major planning effort termed the Cumulative Impacts Task Force. It incorporated a large computer model used to predict the impacts of oil shale development and resultant growth over a five-county region. Given subsequent 1980s developments, it is no surprise that the project's most notable characteristic was its remarkable inaccuracy.

Garfield County faces many of the same questions today: Where will workers live in the event of an oil shale boom? What will this mean for city and county infrastructure? How much does the location of energy development affect the growth of the county?

In preparation for future growth and economic changes, Garfield County worked with BBC Research & Consulting to develop a more flexible model. This model allows users to specify economic and demographic assumptions and compare projected outcomes. Using this approach helps County officials recognize for the complexity of the Garfield economy and explore economic impacts such as extensive natural gas development and the influx of "quality of life" migrants. Preliminary analysis shows the need for infrastructure and land-use planning given a potential tripling of Garfield County population over the next 25 years.

The BBC/Garfield model, due to be completed by late fall of 2006; will be initially calibrated with insights gleaned from local public officials, residents, business owners, planners and industry representatives, but is open to modified assumptions as insights change in the future.