

“Diverse” is an appropriate description for the range of Garfield County’s cultural amenities, as it spans six municipalities and several geographic regions, each with their own identities and influences. While much of the county proudly retains a rural and western culture that harkens back to its farming and ranching roots, gradual urbanization is altering the cultural landscape. This is being accompanied by an influx of modern telecommunications, performing arts centers, and urban transplants seeking rural lifestyles.

As just a flavor of the diversity offered to residents and visitors to the county, performing arts are drawing larger audiences with performance centers like Thunder River Theater Company in Carbondale, the New Space Theater at the CMC Spring Valley campus, and the recently renovated New Ute Theater in Rifle. The many world-class cultural offerings in Aspen and Vail are easily accessible from most areas of the county. These venues provide community and professional theater, programs on literature, politics, visual arts, and a variety of public educational, civic and cultural activities. Colorado Mountain College provides multiple cultural opportunities to students and the public at its various campuses within Garfield County.

Each community within the county has a variety of cultural amenity offerings, ranging from film to rodeo, and from fairs to historic walking tours. This section highlights only a few of the unique and signature events that help give each community its unique flavor and feel.

Cultural Events

GARFIELD COUNTY

Garfield County Fair and Events Center

The Garfield County Fair and Events Center is located in the heart of Rifle, Colorado. With nearly \$2 million in recent improvements the facility consists of a 225-by-140-foot indoor arena, a 250-by-150 foot outdoor arena, 140 stalls, and three meeting rooms/banquet halls. The facility hosts a wide variety of events throughout the year, including rodeo events, such as team roping, barrel racing, and bull-riding. The facility is also used for many agricultural events, such as 4-H, Future Farmers of America (FFA) and other youth functions and houses the Colorado State University extension office. The facility also hosts other diverse events, such as job fairs and expos, private parties and banquets, and carnivals and concerts.

Garfield County Fair and Rodeo

In 2018, the Garfield County Fair celebrates its 80th year. The fair and rodeo, held yearly in late July to early August, features a family rodeo, PRCA ProRodeo, bull riding, parade, a car show, concert, and a demolition derby. Evenings at the fair are concluded with well-known musicians showcased in the facility’s arena.



CARBONDALE

First Fridays

On the first Friday of each month, experience all things Carbondale, including gallery openings, art walks, business open houses, live music and street performers in historic downtown, at the Third Street Center, and along Highway 133.

Mountain Fair

The Carbondale Mountain Fair began in 1972 with 20 booths showcasing local artists and artisans. Today, the Mountain Fair draws over 145 vendors, poised to bring their unique and diverse homemade wares to town each summer. In addition to vendors, Mountain Fair features non-stop entertainment – both in live music and various forms of performing arts. There is a family-area called “The Oasis,” which provides interactive, creative experiences for children, there is also great food; friendly competitions that run the gamut from pie-baking to wood-splitting, and an amazing spirit. That spirit is best evidenced by the over 300 volunteers who come together to run the fair. Throughout the weekend, over 20,000 people pass through from across the state and all over the country. www.carbondalearts.com.

5Point Film Festival

Known as Colorado’s basecamp for adventure, the town of Carbondale is home to the world-renowned 5Point Film Festival, which takes place every April. For those seeking an adventurous kick-off to spring, 5Point weekend is an inspiring time to spend days outside in the mountains, followed by nights viewing the best of adventure filmmaking. Visitors can live out a 5Point adventure of their own, with biking, hiking, and mountain activity all on Carbondale’s doorstep. The town offers a range of accommodations and gourmet dining, rounding out a perfect adventure weekend, during which life can indeed imitate art or film.

The 5Point film festival takes place at the Carbondale Recreation Center, and across downtown Carbondale venues. The four-day-long program includes inspiring short adventure films, special guests, filmmakers, outdoor industry professionals and athletes from across the globe. Established in 2008, 5Point Film is on a mission to inspire adventure of all kinds; connect generations through shared experience; engage passion with a conscience; and educate through film. 5Point also hosts various film events around the country, and organizes the Dream Project, which is an adventure scholarship program for local high school students.

Potato Day

Potato Day is the longest-standing annual community event in Carbondale! Since 1909, local farming and ranching families have kept local traditions alive with a parade, BBQ, potato sack races, and other fun activities that take place in Sopris Park.

Carbondale Wild West Rodeo Season

Billed as “The place to be on Thursday Nights” the Carbondale Wild West Rodeo Association presents a 12-week summer season of authentic rodeo, featuring competitors from across the state and as far away as Texas. Each week, more than 150 contestants compete for the coveted end-of-the-year belt buckle, and weekly prize of \$2,000. The rodeo takes place every Thursday, rain or shine, and is held at the Gus Darien Arena. www.carbondalerodeo.com

New Powers Art Center: a World-Class Arts Center

The Powers Art Center offers a world-class gallery facility set against the backdrop of Mt Sopris. The gallery, which opened doors in 2014, is now open to the public Monday through Thursday, and offers free admission. The center’s permanent exhibits showcase Jasper Johns limited edition works on paper, and with over 300 works in the collection, the Art Center is able to feature 100 works in each exhibition. The Powers Art Center was created in memory of the life of John G. Powers as a museum and study center. The center is a gift to the community and visitors to share Power’s passion and study “Pop Art” through the lens of Jasper Johns. The galleries are supplemented by a library and conference room to facilitate contemplative enjoyment and research of the works. The Powers Art Center is located on a ranch setting near Carbondale. The building itself is a new 15,000-square-foot facility, with state-of-the-art solar electric generation and geothermal heating and cooling, designed by Japanese architect Hiroshi Nanamori. www.powersartcenter.org

True Nature Healing Arts

True Nature Healing Arts is a new sanctuary for health and wellness, featuring one of the only reflexology pathways in the country. The center offers daily yoga and meditation classes. The petit spa offers a selection of wellness massages, body treatments, facials and holistic treatments. The sanctuary’s design incorporates Feng Shui principles, eco-friendly materials, solar panels, local artisan crafts and architectural antiquities from Afghanistan, India, Pakistan and Morocco – all creating spaces that transcend time. The High Prana food kitchen serves the vegetarian, paleo, and raw food communities, featuring items such as medicinal loose-leaf teas, coffee, chai, cold-pressed juices, gourmet meals, soups, snacks, and special desserts just to name a few. www.truenaturehealingarts.com.

GLENWOOD SPRINGS

The community of Glenwood Springs is highly engaged in all of the arts, as is evidenced by the National Center for Arts Research ranking Glenwood Springs the number one “Vibrant Medium and Small Cities for the Arts.”

Strawberry Days

Strawberry Days is the oldest community festival west of the Mississippi River. Starting in 1898, Strawberry Days now includes music, a fine arts fair, carnival, food, interactive entertainment, and FamilyFest. In addition, the annual Saturday parade down Grand Avenue culminates at Strawberry (Sayre) Park with free strawberries and ice cream.

Free Summer Music Performances

The community funds and supports live music performances. Included in this are free music concerts at the Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park and at Two Rivers Park. Two Rivers Park hosts music on select Wednesday nights through the summer. The caverns’ Music on the Mountain Series offers “a can for a tram,” where the donation of a canned good for the needy gets a free tram ride to the concert.

Downtown Market

Tuesday evenings, until nearly dark, are the time to shop for your local produce and enjoy the distinct community of Glenwood Springs. The Downtown Market is open mid-June through September and is an open-air market featuring farm-fresh produce, hand-

made arts and crafts, Colorado wine and tastings, live music, cooking demonstrations, and more.

Historic Ghost Walk/Linwood Cemetery

Three weekends each October, the Frontier Historical Society and Museum present a ghostly visit to the past. Guides take participants by lantern light through Linwood Cemetery, where actors portray people who lived in Glenwood Springs 100 years ago, including gunslinger and dentist, John Henry “Doc” Holliday.

Glenwood Vaudeville Revue

Since the late 1800s, vaudeville variety shows have entertained audiences with song, dance, magic, comedy and all-around silliness. One hundred years ago, Vaudeville was the only entertainment available in the west. Acts traveled around the country performing in quaint theaters, and were often the highlight of the year. The Glenwood Vaudeville Revue revives this time-honored tradition at the site of the former Springs Theatre, 915 Grand Avenue.

Amtrak Train Depot

Enjoy the relaxed pace of train travel and a visit to the historic train depot. Amtrak has year-round daily arrivals into Glenwood Springs from various points throughout the west and midwest. The California Zephyr travels from Chicago to San Francisco, with stops in Denver and Grand Junction.

NEW CASTLE

Burning Mountain Festival

The Burning Mountain Festival has been a New Castle tradition since 1973. Originally sponsored by the New Castle Branch Library, the festival is now sponsored by the town, with the help of generous volunteers.

The Burning Mountain Festival is New Castle’s signature event. It is a small town’s celebration of summer, friends, family, and tradition. Neighbors from near and far are encouraged to join in the fun. Taking place over two days in early September, the festival celebrates the town’s mining history and is named for the iconic mountain in which a coal seam still burns. The festival includes a parade, musical performances in Burning Mountain Park, craft and food vendors, pancake breakfast, classic car show, kid’s carnival, and new activities each year.

Founders Day Celebration

In February, the town gathers to honor the anniversary of its founding in 1888. The event features stories from New Castle’s history, along with an old-fashioned

potluck with foods that were popular in the 1880s, and live music.

Community Market

The New Castle Community Market begins in July and continues through September. The market has many regular vendors who sell fresh produce, food and a variety of hand-crafted products. The Community Market generally starts in early July and continues until the end of September. It is held every Thursday in Burning Mountain Park. There are also booths available for non-profit and civic groups to disperse information or offer demonstrations. Local musicians perform at each market.

Chili Cookoff

Not just an opportunity to sample a wide variety of chilies, New Castle’s Chili Cookoff is the town’s annual winter celebration. In early December, crowds gather in Burning Mountain Park to eat chili, sample local beer, enjoy musical entertainment, and light the Christmas tree.

SILT

Silt Historical Park

The Silt Historical Park emphasizes life as it was when Silt was founded a century ago. The historical park features Chautauqua annually in May, at which time the park is manned with storytellers and demonstrators to educate and entertain the public for two days.

Stoney Ridge Pavilion - Party at the Pavilion

The Town of Silt built the Stoney Ridge Pavilion in 2011, to the north of the Stoney Ridge Recreational Ball Field. The outfield is used as the seating area, where patrons bring a chair or blanket (no fixed seating). The Stoney Ridge Pavilion is a 40-foot-wide by 26-foot-deep concrete concert stage, with a permanent roof constructed of wooden beams and trusses. It was designed to structurally support a professional sound/light system. During the summer, the town hosts Party at the Pavilion, where live music is featured in the evenings. A variety of music including blues/jazz, ’80s rock tribute, country, and stand-up comedy is part of the regular summer line-up.

Movie Night in the Park

Residents and visitors are invited to bring a blanket and chair to Town Park to watch a movie on the big screen. Movies in the park are a great way to get out, meet fellow residents and enjoy the offerings of a small town. Movies start at dark and concessions are available for purchase.

Emily Johnson Play-it-Forward Soccer Tournament

The Annual Emily Johnson Play it Forward 3v3 Soccer Tournament is held every year in June at Gates Soccer Park on CMC’s Spring Valley campus. Fifty teams of six players complete on boys and girls teams, as well as co-ed adult teams in both recreational and competitive divisions. The tournament honors the passion of Emily Johnson, an amazing Coal Ridge soccer player who was tragically killed in an ATV accident in November 2008. All proceeds support three scholarships given to local high school seniors in Emily’s name.



RIFLE

Rifle Rendezvous

The Rifle Rendezvous is an annual event in Rifle that celebrates the local history, and provides culture and entertainment for the Western Slope of Colorado. A rendezvous is a place where people of all cultures can assemble and exchange their wares, goods, values, and ideas. The rendezvous serves as the perfect place to bring together people of all ages and heritages, who have helped pioneer the mountains and valleys of western Colorado, both yesterday and today. It is a place where people can come together as friends and acquaintances and accept and understand one another, while having fun.

Chili Cook-off

Held in October each year, the annual Chili Cook-off and Jalapeno-Eating Contest is held in the Garfield County Fairgrounds and Event Center. The 2018 event celebrated its 40th year. Participants are invited to come and taste the best red chili, green chili, salsa, and guacamole in western Colorado. Prizes are awarded for Grand Champion, Reserve Grand Champion, Showmanship, and People's Choice.

Ice Fishing Tournament

Every January, the Rifle Area Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with Colorado State Parks and Wildlife and other local businesses, hosts an Ice Fishing Tournament at Rifle Gap. Cash prizes are awarded for 1st through 5th place for adults over 18 for rainbow trout, brown trout and yellow perch. Prizes are also awarded for youth 17 and younger.

Ute Theatre and Event Center

The city of Rifle is proud to have restored and reopened the Ute Theater & Events Center in the heart of downtown Rifle. Operated by the city, the facility is a state-of-the-art theatre and events center, offering a space to gather, host events, produce cultural programming, and entertain. The Ute Theater & Event Center provides amenities, such as on-site sound and lighting equipment, stage, dressing rooms, tables or audience seating, and concession area.

PARACHUTE BATTLEMENT MESA

Winter Fest

The first Annual Battlement Mesa Winter Fest was held in 2013. Since then, it has become an annual event, that takes place at the Battlement Mesa Golf Course and the Town Plaza. Friends and neighbors of all ages gather together for seasonal celebration, featuring ice fishing, a parade of lights, middle and high school royalty, a hay ride, bonfire, food and beverages, dances, and other events.



Oktoberfest

Battlement Mesa and Parachute jointly host Oktoberfest in Parachute's Cottonwood Park. The annual early-October event features food, fun, and fireworks. Other fun family offerings have included a zip line, hamster balls, bungee trampoline, bounce houses, and cotton candy. A nationally known country western line-up performs at a concert on the Friday evening before the Saturday activities. The event continues to grow and is anticipated to soon become a signature event on the I-70 corridor.

Grand Valley Days

The Grand Valley Parks Association hosts the annual Grand Valley Days in Parachute. The event is a community celebration, commemorating the traditional western roots of the area. The event includes a two-night rodeo and a Saturday morning parade that brings the community out to celebrate.

Community Classic Golf Tournament

The Battlement Mesa / Parachute Community Classic Golf Tournament is held annually in September. Battlement Mesa Golf Course hosts the event. The event is a 4-person scramble, shotgun start, which makes it fun for both the skilled and the novice golfer.

Movies Under the Stars

Hosted by the Grand Valley Recreation Center, free movies are shown on the lawn at the Grand Valley Recreation Center. Movies play on four nights each summer and begin at dusk.

National Night Out

Battlement Mesa's National Night Out, sponsored by the Garfield County Sheriff's Office and Battlement Mesa Service Association, is always the first Tuesday of August in the Town Plaza in Battlement Mesa.

