

BIOGRAPHIES OF SPEAKERS



Thea Chase Gilman is the Executive Director of the Western Colorado Business Development Corporation (WCBDC), a 501 c-3 non-profit corporation with a volunteer Board of Directors, and has since February 1993. The corporation has an annual operating budget of \$1.2 million, twelve employees, five programs, plus numerous special projects.

Ms. Chase Gilman directly manages the Incubator, which currently houses 34 tenants in approximately 60k square feet of mixed-use space, the Property Management Department which manages a 46 acre government compound transferred to the community in October 2001, the Enterprise Zone for the County and the Corporation. BIC began in 1987 and moved to the former Department of Energy compound in April 1999. Approximately \$1 million was invested in remodeling the facilities initially with another \$1 million in renovations in process, which include expanded manufacturing space, a shared-use commercial kitchen and updating of the electrical, gas and water systems throughout the complex.

WCBDC is a leader for Business Incubation in Colorado and the US. They won the Incubator of the Year Award from the National Business Incubation Association (NBIA) in 1996. One of its tenants, Little Bear Snowshoes won Tenant of the Year (1998) and Graduate of the Year (2001). Ms. Chase Gilman was a founding member of the Colorado Business Incubator Association and served as President for the first three years. She provides tours and technical assistance to numerous business incubator start-ups and is a business incubation resource for the Governors Office of Economic Development.

Ms. Chase Gilman serves or has served on the following boards and commissions: NBIA (Treasurer, Membership Committee Chair), Mesa Land Trust, Hilltop Community Resources, Kiwanis Club of Grand Junction, Grand Junction Economic Partnership, and Governors Council on Small Business. She has been an adjunct professor at Mesa State College teaching marketing. Her presentations, lectures and special projects include the Australia New Zealand Association for Business Incubation, Tioga County New York Business Incubation Feasibility Study, NBIA Conferences, various community groups and government meetings. Ms. Chase Gilman received her Masters of Business Administration from the University of Colorado and Bachelor of Science degree in Political Science from American University, Washington D.C.