

## otero *county*

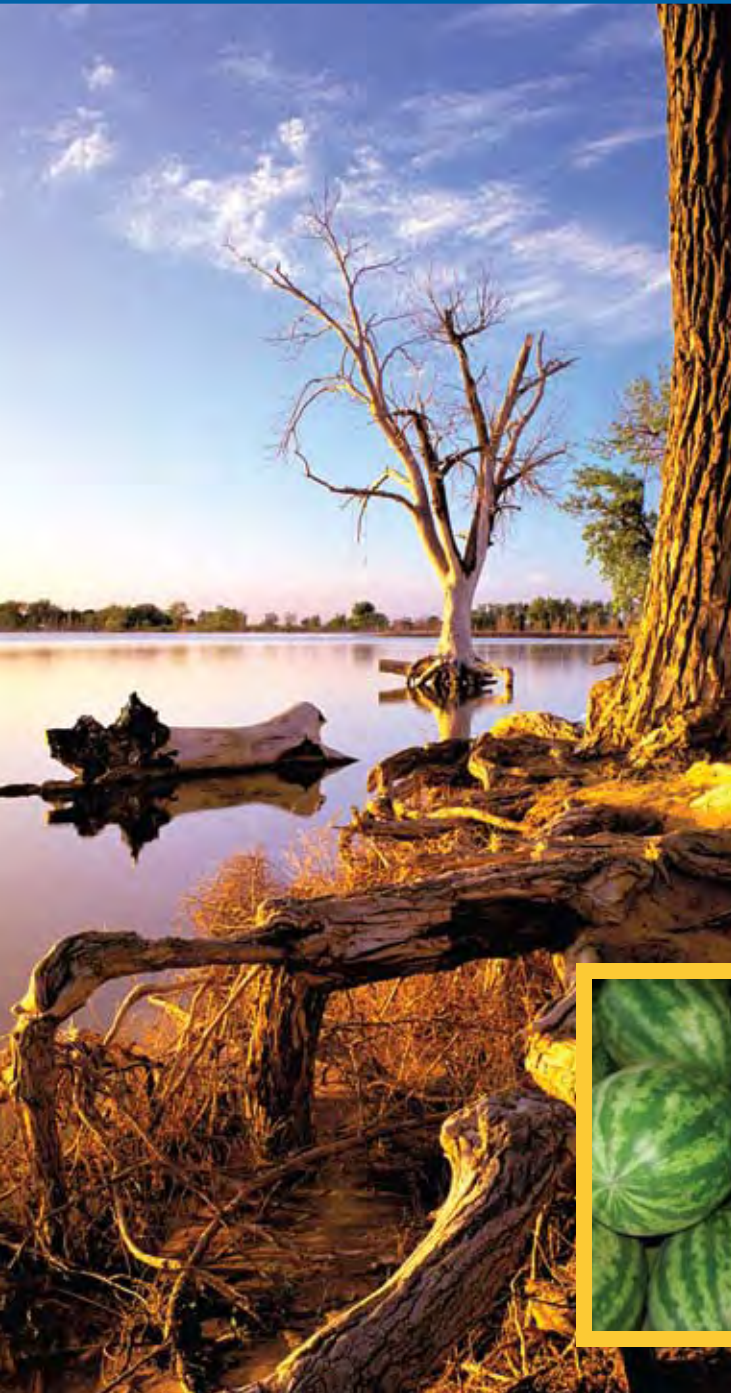
First settled by Native American tribes, French trappers, Spanish missionaries and early Mexican homesteaders, Otero County long served as a frontier trade hub. More than a century later, the county remains one of the southeast region's centers of commerce.

Still referred to by some as the "Melon Capital of the World" for its prize-winning cantaloupe and watermelon crops, the area has also become a nucleus of new energy development, with a concentration of biofuel-related enterprises. The town of Fowler is going green, harnessing wind and solar power, as well as using agricultural waste to generate energy.

Otero Junior College – a magnet for students throughout the region, across the state and beyond – helps maintain a population of skilled and knowledgeable workers. The 3,500-acre La Junta Industrial Park and the La Junta Municipal Airport provide area businesses with facilities and services needed to compete on a national level.

Some of the region's most significant cultural resources can be found in Otero County. Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site, a painstakingly reconstructed adobe trading post, allows visitors to explore 19th century life along the Santa Fe Trail. La Junta's Koshare Indian Museum features a renowned collection of tribal art and artifacts.

The county's wealth of outdoor adventures includes the trails, petroglyphs and dinosaur tracks of Comanche National Grasslands. Each November, the Rocky Ford Balloon Festival brings in balloonists from across the nation.



**Population<sup>1</sup>**

Total	19,580
Cheraw	203
Fowler	1,106
La Junta	7,036
Manzanola	477
Rocky Ford	3,983
Swink	659

**Workforce<sup>2</sup>**

Labor force	9,288
Employment rate	95%

**County Taxes**

Sales Tax <sup>3</sup>	1.0%
Mill Levy Rate <sup>4</sup>	21.94 mills

Sources  
<sup>1</sup>U.S. Census Bureau, 2007  
<sup>2</sup>Colorado Department of Labor, 2007  
<sup>3</sup>Colorado Department of Revenue, 2009  
<sup>4</sup>Colorado Department of Local Affairs, Division of Property Taxation, 2008

**Attractions, Recreation & Events**

**Attractions**

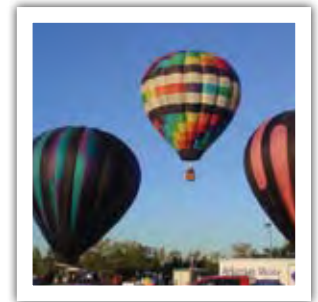
- Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site
- Children's Theatre of La Junta
- Ed Stafford Theater
- Fowler Historical Society and Museum
- Grand Theater
- Koshare Indian Museum
- Otero County Museum
- Otero Players
- Picketwire Players
- Rocky Ford Museum

**Recreation**

- Comanche National Grasslands
- Cottonwood Links Golf Course
- La Junta Golf Club
- Rocky Ford Golf Course
- Sk8Way Skateboard Park
- Vogel & Picketwire Canyons

**Events**

- Arkansas Valley Balloon Festival
- Arkansas Valley Fair
- Early Settlers Day
- Kids Rodeo & Race
- Melon Days
- Missouri Day
- Music at the Junction
- Swink Days



*business profile:* **DeBourgh Manufacturing**

Established in Minneapolis, DeBourgh Manufacturing is a family business going back four generations. Originally a small sheet metal shop making roofing and gutters, the company manufactured parts for B24 bombers during WW II. Debourgh began making lockers in the 1930s and quickly became one of the leading suppliers nationwide.

When the company decided to relocate, it explored business sites in seven states and 13 locations before deciding on its current 110,000-square-foot manufacturing facility in La Junta. With more than 120 employees, Debourgh has a 99.5% on-time delivery record and is a National Blue Chip Enterprise Initiative Winner.