

GJEP enters new year with momentum from late-year surge in 2022

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Between hiring its new director and bringing in seven new businesses, 2022 was a busy year for the Grand Junction Economic Partnership — and that was reflected in the organization's year-end report on economic impact.

Curtis Englehart was hired as GJEP's executive director in August after serving as the director of the Mesa County Workforce Center for more than half a decade. Before Englehart's hiring, Steve Jozefczyk served as GJEP's interim executive director for more than a year.

Since he stepped into the position, Englehart has hired two additional staff members: a director of marketing and communications and an office manager.

"It's been really great," Englehart said. "It's been almost six months now, and being able to put a team together, being able to hire two additional staff here... I feel like our team is really gelling well together. I feel like we all have a shared vision and common goals, so that really resulted in the success we saw in the last quarter of 2022."



Photos by Scott Crabtree/The Daily Sentinel

EquipmentShare, 719 Arrowest Ct., is a nationwide construction technology company that was brought to Grand Junction by the Grand Junction Economic Partnership in late 2022. EquipmentShare was one of seven "wins" for GJEP in 2022. Left, EquipmentShare General Manager Joshua Lynch said his company has been "welcomed with open arms." Below: Kooler Garage Doors, 554 25 Road unit 6, was another successfully recruited primary job provider brought in by GJEP. Five of the seven "wins" happened once new CEO Curtis Englehart took over in August.

Scott Crabtree

According to the year-end report released by GJEP this week, for every \$1 invested in GJEP in 2022, \$20 in economic impact was generated.

GJEP successfully recruited four primary job providers to Mesa County last year: Kooler Garage Doors, EquipmentShare, Spares in Motion and MotoMinded.

Additionally, West Star Aviation committed to building a new \$16 million aircraft facility in Grand Junction, securing the company's long-term future in the Grand Valley. GJEP also helped CoorsTek expand locally through incentives that were in collaboration with the Industrial Development International. Boeson Research was also able to expand its local operations through GJEP, bringing GJEP's self-titled win count to seven.

According to GJEP's report, five of these seven wins came toward the end of 2022 under Englehart.

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Equipment Share General Manager Joshua Lynch, stands outside the company's building at 719 Arrowest Court. The construction technology company, was a significant "win" for the Grand Junction Economic Partnership in 2022.

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EquipmentShare, a nationwide construction technology company, was among the more significant wins for GJEP. EquipmentShare's expansion into Grand Junction created 13 new jobs with an average salary of \$50,000

and a total capital expenditure of \$3 million through its purchase of its building at 719 Arrowst Ct.

"Honestly, we've kind of been welcomed with open arms," said Joshua Lynch, the general manager of EquipmentShare's Grand Junction branch. "It's been great. Everybody's been real receptive, and new customers are happy to see that there's another option and something new in Junction."

Lynch spoke about why EquipmentShare jumped at the opportunity to expand to the Western Slope.

"I think growth and saturation is a big part of it," Lynch said. "A lot of companies, it seems, are looking for equipment and equipment purchases may be as big as they used to be. A lot of jobs are bid with rental in mind and options, so I think we really fit into this really big area between Salt Lake and Denver. It's been great."

In total, GJEP's economic impact report called out a total economic impact of \$15,690,242 in 2022 that resulted from business attraction and expansion efforts. Eighty-three actual jobs and 333 potential jobs were created, with \$8,920,062 in economic impact from job creation. There was \$4,025,000 in total capital expenditure and \$6,770,180 in economic impact from capital expenditures.



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Kooler Garage Doors. 554 25rd unit 6, was recruited by the Grand Junction Economic Partnership to come to Grand Junction in 2022.

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Englehart expects an even bigger 2023. This year, GJEP hopes to generate new leads through expanding its marketing efforts and attending trade shows such as the Avalon Australian International Aerospace and Defense Exhibition, set for Feb. 28-March 5 in Geelong, Victoria, in Australia.

GJEP also plans to promote several tools and incentives to attract new businesses, including the opportunity zones in the Grand Valley, the Riverfront at Las Colonias and the Rural Jump-Start Tax Credit Program.

"We're going to continue to work toward that proactive recruitment, so we want to be able to get in front of businesses as early and often as we can, whether they're looking at relocating or looking to expand in our area," Englehart said.

"We have a lot of programs, a lot of incentives and a lot of relationships built that allow us to help make that a seamless process and a painless process for those prospects. Proactive recruitment can be anything from attending meaningful trade shows to our targeted marketing campaign to building relationships at the state level, the federal level, the local level to ensure we're having the greatest impact we can for our area."