

The Gilpin County Commissioners, at their regular meeting on February 28, received a letter of resignation from County Manager Roger Baker, announcing he will retire effective April 25, 2017.

Baker has served as County Manager since May 6, 2003. Despite the financial restrictions brought on by the Great Recession of 2008, which dropped the County's principal revenue source by nearly 25%, the County completed several major projects during Baker's tenure, including construction of a new, environmentally friendly Public Works building, and significant service and facility expansions for the County's recycling and trash programs.

The position was the capstone to Baker's 30-year career in public service in Gilpin County, which began when he was hired as the first paid librarian in Gilpin County January 1, 1986. Coping with the restrictions of that first tiny facility on Gap Road and Highway 119, Baker nonetheless helped establish the Library as a much-loved institution in Gilpin County. As the Library's programs (and public support) grew, so too did the physical facility, moving first to rented quarters further south on Highway 119 before a successful fund-raising campaign (aided by many generous donors) allowed the construction of the beautiful new Library in 1995-6.

During that period—and continuing through employment with the short-lived Gilpin County Chamber of Commerce, and several positions with the City of Black Hawk—Baker helped the community deal with the impacts from the introduction of limited stakes gaming by making efforts to celebrate the region's illustrious history.

His plays based on local historical figures and events were performed at venues such as the Glory Hole, Black Forest Inn, and the Gilpin County School, and Historical Society. His later works were staged as full-fledged musical comedies, which led to his scripting dialogue for a number of productions by the Peak to Peak Chorale.

Though never performed, his play on local heroine "Aunt" Clara Brown came to the attention of Central City Opera Artistic Director John Moriarty, who guided the commissioning of an opera based on her story to the Opera House stage as "Gabriel's Daughter" in 2003. In conjunction with that production, Baker wrote the definitive biography of the revered figure, *Clara*. He also wrote books on the early history of Black Hawk, and of the Central City Opera House, along with more than a thousand newspaper columns for his various employers.

The Commissioners are working with Don Sandoval, Regional Manager of the Colorado Department of Local Affairs, to advertise and interview for Baker's replacement.

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