

COLORADO CITIES & TOWNS WEEK 2017 TOOLKIT

September 11-17, 2017

A Word from Sam Mamet

CML will once again host Colorado Cities & Towns Week to unite the municipal family; this year Sept. 11-17, 2017.

Over the past several of years, municipalities from all across the state have made this week their own.

Some use it as an opportunity to connect with residents to provide information on the valuable services their city or town provides.

Others use it as a time to show appreciation for the hard work of municipal employees and/or volunteers.

However you choose to participate, the most important thing is to have fun and celebrate how your efforts make your community a great place to live, work, visit, and play!

Last year, 51 municipalities celebrated Colorado Cities & Towns Week, and we hope to have even more get in on the fun this year.

If CML can be of any assistance, contact me or CML Membership Services Manager Lisa White.

We are excited to hear how you celebrate your city or town! Please share your activities and events with us, including pictures during Colorado Cities & Towns Week.

Let the fun begin!

Sam Mamet, CML executive director

Overview

What is Colorado Cities & Towns Week?

Now in its fifth year, Colorado Cities & Towns Week, Sept. 11-17, 2017, is an opportunity for municipalities to connect with residents and remind them of the vital services provided by their city or town, as well as acknowledge outstanding municipal employees and/or volunteers.

Why has CML established this week?

Colorado Cities & Towns Week provides a unified statewide opportunity to recognize municipal employees and volunteers and to educate citizens on what municipal government is all about.

How can our municipality celebrate?

CML has provided numerous planning tips online and in this PDF to help cities and towns celebrate, including ways municipalities celebrated last year (perhaps it will inspire you to do something similar in your community). If an idea interests you, in addition to CML offering support, leaders from past participating communities would be happy to provide insights.

Whether you want to connect with youth in your community, celebrate the people who work hard each and every day, or simply throw a party to bring everyone together, these tips can help.

The tips are only suggestions — the possibilities are endless! Reach out to residents in a way that is meaningful for your community and that your municipality has resources for.

How much will it cost?

Many of the suggested events and activities do not cost anything! The tips are organized by the resources they would take to implement. Ideas that have a lower cost are marked with an asterick (*); things that take more resources are marked with a dollar sign (\$).

Also, if you already have an event scheduled, consider simply including the Colorado Cities & Towns Week message in it.

Where do I start?

We know you have a lot on your plate and may find it difficult to even think of adding to it. We understand, but CML hopes you will commit to one idea to increase awareness about your vital services, and has created the planning tips to make this as easy as possible for our members. Take a look at the tips - if an idea resonates, run with it by tailoring it for your community.

(Again, these tips are intended to provide ideas — do not feel that you have to do exactly what is described! Use any ideas you have to connect with your residents, employees, and/or volunteers.)

How do I plan?

If it is an event for residents, get the word out via your website, newsletter, government access channel, local radio/television stations, social media, signs around the community, etc.

How should I connect with media about my event?

If possible, meet with the editor or reporter(s) who typically cover local government issues from your local newspaper,

radio or television station(s) in advance to brief them on Colorado Cities & Towns Week and how your community will celebrate. Perhaps explore if there are opportunities to partner with them to help promote your activities to citizens and of course, invite them to attend and suggest they do a story on it. You also may choose to send out a news release or letter to the editor ([sample news release and letter to the editor are available at www.cml.org/cities-and-towns](#)).

After the event send photos and key information (number of attendees, testimonials, etc.) to local media.

Questions?

If you have any questions about Colorado Cities & Towns Week, contact CML Membership Services Manager Lisa White by email at lwhite@cml.org or phone (303-831-6411 or 866-578-0936).

Share with CML

After Colorado Cities & Towns Week, be sure to share your experience and photos with CML Membership Services Manager Lisa White by email to be included in an article in the CML Newsletter.



Reminding residents

Colorado Cities & Towns Week is a great opportunity to educate residents on municipal services.

Display poster *

Display the 2017 Colorado Cities & Towns Week poster in city/town hall or other municipal building. (The poster is 24 inches wide by 36 inches, pictured at bottom left. CML will mail these to all member municipal clerks in July.)

Free giveaways *

CML will send your municipality up to 100 kitchen oven mitts with the message "Colorado Cities and Towns: We've Got You Covered" to distribute to residents during events or at municipal centers. Items will be available to request in July. To make this even more fun, consider asking residents to take selfies with the kitchen oven mitts and post to social media with your municipality's hashtag, #cocitiestowns, and what they love most about their city or town. ([Order form will be at www.cml.org/cities-and-towns](#).)

Free coloring books *

CML will send your municipality up to 50 coloring/activity books and crayons to distribute to kids, whether at an event or simply to have available at your city or town hall. These are also available as a free download on the CML website. These will be available by request in July. ([Order form will be at www.cml.org/cities-and-towns](#).)

Run ads *

CML can customize ads similar to the poster (pictured to left) with your municipal logo and text to highlight municipal services, employees, or an event for you to run in your local newspaper, municipal newsletter, activity guide, as utility bill stuffers, website, etc. ([Request an ad at www.cml.org/cities-and-towns](#).)

PSAs *

CML offers several 30-second and 60-second PSAs focused on different municipal services for your municipality to post on social media or website and, if available, government access channel. Also available are three audio PSAs featuring different municipal services if you have a local radio station that might air it. Contact Traci Stoffel at tstoffel@cml.org for details. ([PSAs can be viewed at www.cml.org/cities-and-towns](#).)

Recognize residents *

Use this week to recognize outstanding residents, perhaps at a board or council meeting. If funds allow, consider hosting a reception.

2016 highlight: The City of Gilcrest held an Appreciation Award Reception honoring special residents, a local company, and the high school football team for their outstanding service to the community. They invited residents to the event by mailing a postcard.

Activity suggestion key:

* free or low cost idea • \$ this idea takes additional resources



Trivia *

Run trivia questions or interesting facts in the local newspaper, municipal newsletter, and/or on social media as a fun way to promote municipal government awareness and educate citizens.

2016 highlights: The Town of Mead held a trivia contest during the week for residents. The City of Wray posted fun department facts to social media.

Social media *

Spotlight Colorado Cities & Towns Week in social media using the hashtag #cociestowns. You can simply share the work of municipal services, or, if holding an event, include details and invite the public to attend. Post pictures of staff and volunteers at work with “Your city/town works for you” with a link to the Colorado Cities & Towns website (www.coloradocitiesandtowns.org). Request that residents post pictures from their favorite places around town or ask them what they enjoy most about their community. (Additional tips are available at www.cml.org/cities-and-towns.)

2016 highlight: The Town of Berthoud created a BuzzFeed-style quiz, offering insight into what municipal job the person answer should have.

Tours and open houses *

Select a day to offer tours of city/town hall or other municipal facilities, or set up an open house where residents can meet council and staff.

2016 highlights: The City of Montrose offered residents tours of its buildings, and the Town of Larkspur hosted an open house where staff could answer questions and residents could meet the people who work for them every day.

Use an existing event *

Use an existing or already scheduled event to tie-in the Colorado Cities & Towns Week message.

Consider using the messages and tips from this toolkit to help share how cities and towns work for residents during your event.

Contact local media *

Schedule an interview about an exciting community project with the local newspaper, a local television or radio talk show, and/or your government access channel.

Utilize your library *

Ask to make information about municipal government and Colorado Cities & Towns Week available at the library, whether flyers or a small exhibit on municipal services. Offer a special guest (firefighter, police officer, mayor, councilmember, manager/administrator) to read during a story hour.

2016 highlight: The City of Yuma offered giveaways to residents at the library.

Go where the people are *

Set up an exhibit downtown or other public place with information on your city or town’s services.

Photos *

Initiate a photo contest.

2016 highlight: The City of Wray held a “Capture Our Community” photo contest.

Focus on history *

2016 highlight: The Town of Kiowa partnered with the historical society and museum to present its early history.



Host a potluck meal at a park or municipal facility. *

2016 highlight: The Town of Green Mountain Falls held its first potluck in over 30 years, providing the opportunity for residents to come together and visit.



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Recycling *

Host a recycling contest. See which organization, business, or school can collect the most recycling and announce the winner in your municipal newsletter or community newspaper.

Gather leaders *

If your municipality has a program to acknowledge residents (a “Resident of the Month” program, for example), consider bringing all of the 2017 winners together to recognize at the same time (perhaps during a council/board meeting, reception, community event, etc.).

Go to meetings *

Arrange for an elected official or staff member to address rotaries, chambers, senior citizen groups, or other organizations on local government issues and the latest news in your community.

Use existing communication *

If your mayor or city manager writes a regular column for your municipal newsletter or local publication, or appears on a regular government access channel program, consider focusing on Colorado Cities & Towns Week and the value of municipal government and acknowledging those who work and volunteer for the city/town.

2016 highlight: The City of Montrose ran an article on the importance of municipal services by the city manager in the local newspaper.

Adopt a resolution*

Have your city council or town board adopt a resolution acknowledging Colorado Cities & Towns Week. ([Sample resolution available at *www.cml.org/week-resolution*](http://www.cml.org/week-resolution).)

Community service *

Conduct a community service activity, perhaps in partnership with a local nonprofit, or sponsor a city-wide cleanup day (at parks, main streets, tourist attractions, etc.).

Events \$

Have an **old-fashioned event** in a park or other location to connect residents with municipal staff and elected officials. To reduce costs, consider partnering with local nonprofits and other entities.

2016 highlights: The City of Fountain hosted its annual community night in the park, while the City of Monte Vista held a BBQ for residents where each department displayed information on its services. The Town of South Fork served hot dogs at an open house, providing officials and staff the opportunity to discuss what they do for the community and to hear what residents want from them.

Host a **coffee or breakfast** with the mayor or council/board for residents and/or local business owners. Consider having a local talent or group from a school provide entertainment.

Have a **car wash** with funds donated to a specific project or local park.

Plan a **pet parade** to promote pet licensing.

If you are planning an event for residents, please contact CML Membership Services Manager Lisa White at lwhite@cml.org. The Colorado Cities & Towns website (www.coloradocitiesandtowns.org) will feature activities taking place during the week throughout the state.

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Engaging Youth

CML encourages municipal officials (both elected and staff) to **visit with students in local schools** * to educate them on civics and what it takes to be a good citizen anytime during the year. After all, students are the next generation of citizens and voters! If you have a desire to connect with youth, Colorado Cities & Towns Week is an ideal time. Encourage staff, elected, and/or appointed officials to contact an elementary, middle, or high school and ask to speak to students about the importance of local government and community involvement. (Get tips for on visiting students in the classroom from www.lessonsonlocalgovernment.org/classroom-kits.)

2016 highlights: Brush councilmembers and staff visited schools to talk to students about different aspects of local government, while the Denver clerk and recorder and a councilmember visited high school history classes to discuss civic engagement, the importance of voting (and how to navigate the process), and being involved in the community.



City of Brush!

Offer a special guest * (firefighter, police officer, mayor, councilmember, manager ...) to read to kids during a story hour, or to explain the importance of local government to older students.

Request free coloring/activity books and crayons * from CML (available in July at www.cml.org/cities-and-towns or print the books from the same page) if you are visiting elementary school students.



Invite students to municipal facilities. *

2016 highlight: The Town of Severance hosted a field trip for third grade students to town hall, where they learned about elections from the clerk, about governing from the mayor and board members, learned about the municipal fleet from public works, and discussed public safety with the Weld County Sheriff's Department.

If you have a government access channel, **produce a program** * in which elected or appointed officials meet with high schoolers (your youth commission or class officers are good places to start), asking them about the issues that are important to them.

If you do not have a channel, invite youth to participate in a **roundtable discussion with council**. *

Offer an afternoon of **free finger printing** * at the police station or city/town hall.

Showcase local student talents and arts * at community events.

Hold an **art/coloring contest** * for elementary school students related to a particular municipal government issue (recycling, water conservation, fire or police services, recreation and parks, transportation, planning, etc.) Winners could receive a certificate, mention in your newsletter, recognition at a council/board meeting, or gift certificate. Display winning artwork at city/town hall. (Find guidelines and tips for holding a contest at www.cml.org/week-contests.)

2016 highlight: The City of Alamosa held a mayor's art contest for elementary students asking them "What service do you like?"

Hold an **essay contest** * focusing on local government services. Recognize winner(s) at a town board/city council meeting and/or offer personalized city/town hall tour for the winning student and classmates. (Find guidelines and tips for holding a contest at www.cml.org/week-contests.)

Host a competition to **seek the best solution to a municipal problem** * and recognize students/teachers at a council meeting.

Sponsor a local government **career day** * at a school. Invite a few department heads to attend and spend 10 minutes each on what their roles are.

Showcase police, fire, and/or public works vehicles * at an elementary school or other popular location.

2016 highlight: The Town of Windsor had its public works, police, and fire departments bring their vehicles to local preschools for "touch-a-truck" events.

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Host a youth in government night. * Invite elected officials and department heads to speak about important community issues and how kids' lives are affected by municipal government.

Invite local youth groups or organizations * (scouts, debate teams, high school seniors, etc.) to attend a council/board meeting, perhaps including a tour of city/town hall or other municipal facility.

If your municipality already has a **recognition program** * in place to acknowledge youth ("Teen of the Month" program, for example), consider bringing together all of the 2017 winners for recognition during a council/board meeting, reception, or school presentation.

Work with high school history, civics, or social studies teachers to organize a **mock Government Day or "Doing Democracy Day"** \$ (a multicomunity, multischool event devoted to area students wrestling with local issues, using local leaders as resources). For more information, contact Lessons on Local Government Consultant and "Doing Democracy Day" Cofounder Kent Willmann at kentwillmann@gmail.com.

Consider establishing a youth council in your city/town. \$ These councils typically plan community service projects, hold entertaining activities for families and youth, and provide input to elected officials regarding youth needs and concerns.

Hold a **mock election** \$ with the help of teachers and city council members. Let the "elected student officials" conduct a council/board meeting and have them come up with ideas on how to improve their community. The real elected officials can then give them advice on their ideas — whether or not their ideas would work and why (or why not).

Working in coordination with a middle or high school, create an **advisory committee of students** \$ to study a particular municipal government issue of importance to teenagers (for example, recreation or volunteerism) and prepare a formal report with recommendations to council. Or include youth representation on an existing citizen committee, commission, or board studying an issue of consequence to teens. Make a formal announcement of these appointments during Colorado Cities & Towns Week.

Develop a **"job shadow"** \$ program for an afternoon, when students can learn first-hand what municipal employees do.

Recognizing Employees and Volunteers

Colorado Cities & Towns Week is a great opportunity to recognize and thank the employees and volunteers who make your city or town so great.

Give employees and volunteers a gift. *

CML will have a limited number of free keychain tape measures that read "It is impossible to measure your impact" to give to municipal employees and volunteers to thank them for their efforts. (Limit of 100 per municipality.) Employees or volunteers will smile and think about the difference they make in the community every time they use it. To make things even more fun, encourage employees and volunteers to take "selfies" with it and then post to social media (be sure to include the week's hashtag: #cocitiesandtowns). (Available in July at www.cml.org/cities-and-towns.)

Feature employees or volunteers * to residents on social media, website, municipal newsletter, or local media.

Introduce a group or department. *

2016 highlights: Each day during Colorado Cities & Towns Week, the City of Brush! posted to its Facebook page pictures of its employees at work, featuring a different department each day. The City of Westminster used Facebook and Twitter to provide daily trivia and highlight four of its more than 1,000 volunteers, encouraging others to become engaged.

Feature an employee or volunteer. * Tell a story to personalize municipal workers. Maybe an employee spends each day fixing the municipal fleet, and spends his evenings playing a violin in an orchestra or is an award-winning artist. Perhaps the mayor is a professional skateboarder. In addition to featuring him/her on social media, consider pitching the story to the media — news outlets are always looking for great and unique people to feature. For assistance, contact CML Membership Services Manager Lisa White at lwhite@cml.org.

Recognize a community leader. * Community leaders include a past or present employee, board or commission member, or volunteer. Recognize your leader with a ceremony and a certificate. Then contact your local media about doing a feature story on the person(s) you have selected.

Recognize longevity. * Feature your longest tenured (or certain anniversary) employees in the municipal newsletter or social media. Present awards at a ceremony and engage local media to do a feature on them.

2016 highlight: The Town of Estes Park profiled employees with 20-plus years of tenure with the town, and showcased different departments.

Activity suggestion key:

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Use your municipal newsletter * to send a special message of thanks to all of the volunteers in your community. Total up how many hours they work annually and calculate the cost savings for the city/town if paid employees had to do those very important jobs. Volunteers save residents money and make the community a great place to live!

Use signs and bulletin boards. * Whether an old fashioned bulletin board or a fancy digital sign, post a thank you to your employees and volunteers.

2016 highlight: A local bank in the City of Lamar gave a “shout out” to celebrate the week on its digital sign.



Send letters, emails, or certificates. * Provide employees and/or volunteers from recognition from the mayor, councilmembers, and/or manager/administrator thanking them for all that they do.

Showcase staff at a council/board meeting. * Have various departments provide the city council/town board with updates on their latest projects and what they are most proud of. Ensure council expresses appreciation to employees for all of their hard work.

Hold an event. \$ Provide an employee appreciation breakfast, picnic, or ice cream social — even include families if budget allows! For even more fun, consider incorporating interdepartmental competitions — host a chili cook-off, best dessert, etc. People love competitions!



2016 highlights: The City of Sterling provided employees an appreciation lunch in Pioneer Park, where the city manager thank them for their service to the community. Employees at milestone years with the municipality were given special recognition. The City of Monte Vista held a community BBQ where each department provided information on its role in keeping the community running smoothly. The City of Wray held a staff appreciation breakfast, and the City of Federal Heights threw an employee appreciation party.

Provide treats. \$ Surprise municipal employees with treats during C&T Week.

Arrange for a **city/town employee day or night activity \$** at a sports or cultural facility. It could include free or discounted admission for municipal employees and/or a special acknowledgement at intermission or half-time. Hosting an outing where employees (and their families, if budgets allow) go bowling; visit a zoo or museum; play baseball, softball, or kickball provides great physical activity.

2016 highlight: The Town of Milliken hosted “Employee Appreciation Day” at Elitch Gardens, bussing all employees and their families to the park to display how much municipal leaders appreciated their work.



Activity suggestion key:

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