

Colorado Municipalities

Vol. 95, No. 3, June 2019




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Colorado Municipal League
Volume 95 • Number 3

Mission

Colorado Municipalities is published to inform, educate, and advise appointed and elected municipal officials about new programs, services, trends, and information to help them perform their jobs and better serve their citizens and communities.

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Manuscripts: Original articles on subjects of interest to Colorado municipal officials accepted. Contact the editor for guidelines.

Subscription rate: \$25 an issue, \$150 a year. (Colorado residents, add sales tax: in Denver, 7.72%; all others in Regional Transportation District, 4.1%; all others in Colorado, 2.9%.)

Periodical postage paid at Denver, Colorado. Postal Information: Colorado Municipalities (USPS 123-140) is published bimonthly (February, April, June, August, October, and December) by the Colorado Municipal League, 1144 Sherman Street, Denver, CO 80203-2207, 303-831-6411 / 866-578-0936.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Mark Vanderbrook, Colorado Municipal League, 1144 Sherman Street, Denver, CO 80203-2207; email: cml@cml.org.

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The Colorado Municipal League is a nonprofit association organized and operated by Colorado municipalities to provide support services to member cities and towns. The League has two main objectives: 1) To represent cities and towns collectively in matters before the state and federal government; and 2) To provide a wide range of information services to help municipal officials manage their governments.

Colorado Municipalities

- 08** **MY VIEW:**
A LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP
AND VERY BIG SHOES
- 10** **RESEARCH: COMMUNITY**
LOCAL GOVERNMENT SATISFACTION RATES
- 14** **RESEARCH: VIBRANCY**
RATING THE STATE OF THE ECONOMY
- 17** **RESEARCH: LIFESTYLE**
GRADING QUALITY OF LIFE
- 21** **RESEARCH: HOME**
HOUSEHOLD SIZE IN COLORADO
- 24** **RESEARCH: TRAVEL**
ECONOMICS OF TRANSPORTATION
INFRASTRUCTURE
- 27** **RESEARCH: SAFETY**
CRIME RATES AND COMMUNITY SAFETY
- 30** **NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE:**
COLORADO WELL REPRESENTED AT
NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES STATEWIDE
PERSPECTIVE:
- 31** **STATEWIDE PERSPECTIVE:**
COLORADO'S CLEAN ENERGY FUTURE,
AND HOW LOCAL COMMUNITIES ARE
LEADING THE WAY
- 34** **GET TO KNOW:**
JENNIFER COATES, RIDGWAY
TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

SPOTLIGHTS



11 HIRING,
RETAINING
VETERANS



12 ENCOURAGING
YOUTH VOICES



15 SPARKING
BUSINESS
INVESTMENTS



16 A MODEL FOR
SUCCESS FOR
MAIN STREET



18 CONNECTING
COMMUNITY



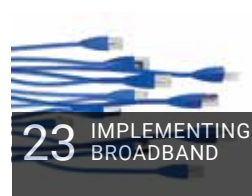
19 COLLABORATION
FOR A SCHOOL
PLAYGROUND



20 WORKING ON
WELLNESS



22 COMMITTED TO
A RESILIENT
FUTURE



23 IMPLEMENTING
BROADBAND



25 A NEW BRIDGE



26 AWARD-WINNING
ASPHALT
PROJECT



28 WILDFIRE
PREPAREDNESS



29 COMMUNITY
AND NATIONAL
NIGHT OUT

On the cover: The City of Montrose.

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About Some of Our Contributors



Kevin Bommer, Colorado Municipal League executive director, is responsible to CML's 21-member executive board for executing

the policies and programs of the League, supervising staff members, managing and coordinating activities and operations, recommending and developing organization policies and programs, and serving as a spokesperson for League policies. Kevin also directs the League's advocacy program and oversees CML's strategic plan development and implementation. Prior to being appointed executive director in April 2019, Kevin served as the League's deputy director and was a full-time lobbyist from 2000 to 2019.



Jonathan Cain is a Best and Brightest administrative intern for the City of Idaho Springs. He is completing his graduate

degree at the University of Colorado Denver Center for New Directions this fall. He lives in Lakewood with his wife and two daughters.



Kristen Chernosky is the director of communications and engagement for the City of Brighton. In this role, she provides leadership

over the Brighton Communications Office, Special Events, Office of Arts & Culture, the Office of Youth Services,

and the Armory Performing Arts Center. Chernosky began her career as a newspaper reporter but quickly found her love for government communications. She worked as the communications coordinator for the Florida Department of Law Enforcement prior to moving to Colorado nine years ago.



As a project manager at Colorado West Land Trust, Libby Collins works to preserve landscapes and develop trail-based recreation

along the Monument Corridor and around the six-county service area. Through partnerships with local organizations and government, Collins fundraises and coordinates public processes and land acquisition that support trail-based recreation and community stewardship of public and private lands.



Kendall Cramer is the grant coordinator at the City of Montrose. He has been with the city since July 2017. Cramer has more than seven years

of experience in grant writing and grant management and has secured millions of dollars in grants for community development projects. Kendall has a bachelor's degree in mass communications from Olivet Nazarene University and a master's degree in public administration from the University of Illinois.



Frank Lancaster has served as the town administrator for Estes Park since 2012, prior to which he was the county manager for Larimer

County for 18 years. He started his career as the city forester for Cheyenne, Wyo., starting the first urban forestry program in the state. In 1981, he became the county forester for Larimer County, and then served as director of natural resources until his appointment as county manager in 1994.



James Redmond is a communications coordinator at the City of Greeley. He has been working for Greeley since December 2017,

focusing on communication and public outreach regarding public works projects and initiatives. Previously, Redmond worked as a journalist for publications such as *The Greeley Tribune*, *Windsor Now*, and *The Mountain Mail*. He has a bachelor of arts in mass communication from Colorado Mesa University.



John Sutherland currently serves as the city administrator for the City of Lamar, a home rule Colorado community. His

20 years of local government service have allowed him to satisfy his passion for delivering good,

responsive government through good management, and has provided the opportunity to continue learning how to build positive productive relationships with people that enable them to transform their community. He has previously served communities in New Mexico and Native American communities in Arizona.



In January 2019, Will Toor was appointed executive director of the Colorado Energy Office by Gov. Jared Polis.

Toor's background spans transportation electrification, sustainable transportation, smart growth, electric vehicle policy, clean energy finance, green building policy, local government policy and regional planning. Prior to his current appointment, Toor was transportation program director at the Southwest Energy Efficiency Project, a Boulder County commissioner, mayor of Boulder, and director of the University of Colorado Environmental Center.



Traci Wieland is the deputy director of parks and recreation for the City of Grand Junction. She joined the department in 2000.

Wieland oversees all parks and recreation functions and manages special projects including master planning, grant writing, and new park development/redevelopment. She

has a master's in public administration from the University of Colorado Denver.



Megan Williams has served as the community relations manager for the Town of Frederick for the past nine years. As

the first person in this role, she created and manages successful communication outlets to connect the community to the municipal government that serves them. Her favorite part of her job is coming up with community programs that meet the needs of Frederick as it grows, so that residents continue to enjoy the small town features of involvement and connectivity.



Allison Wittern is the communications director at the City of Centennial, where she leads a team responsible for developing and

implementing strategies to engage the community with the goal of increasing citizen understanding of municipal operations and related issues. Previously, Wittern was the senior marketing manager for Forest City Stapleton and Regional Transportation District (RTD) public information representative for the \$1.67 billion Transportation Expansion (T-REX) Project, Colorado's largest highway and light rail construction project.



CML's Vision:

Empowered
cities and towns,
united for
a strong Colorado.

CML's Mission:

Founded in 1923, the Colorado Municipal League is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization providing services and resources to assist municipal officials in managing their governments and serving the cities and towns of Colorado.



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MY VIEW:

A LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP AND VERY BIG SHOES

By Kevin Bommer, Colorado Municipal League executive director



From left to right: CML Executive Directors Sam Mamet, Ken Bueche, and Kevin Bommer

As I conclude my 20th year with the Colorado Municipal League, I begin a great adventure as the League's executive director. All of a sudden, I feel a lot like the kid who started his first awkward day as a staff associate in 1999 – and it almost did not happen.

A Journey of Luck and Timing

I was born and raised in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, and I spent my college years at the University of Wyoming, first getting my undergraduate degree in 1992 and then my master's degree in 1996. Along the way, I had a formative internship

in Washington, D.C., as well as time in a Senate field office in Laramie, in 1995, working for a U.S. Senate campaign in Wyoming.

Although I loved my time working in those endeavors, I can say that working in and around the federal government was the greatest motivation to ultimately work for local governments. One of my most impactful jobs was working in the field office assisting constituents face-to-face with real problems and seeing their gratitude or frustration up close and personal. That sounds a lot like what local leaders do every day.

After college, I worked for three years in Utah on a growth management public-private partnership that is still in operation today called Envision Utah. I got to work directly with municipal and county elected officials and staff on what became one of the most collaborative, voluntary growth management efforts in the entire country. It remains so to this day.

Upon moving to Colorado in June 1999, I sought to work directly for municipal government. Based on my experience with CML's counterpart in Utah (Utah League of Cities and Towns), I knew that CML would have listings of available jobs. Back in 1999,

that was *CML JobFinder*, which was printed and mailed periodically. Around Labor Day, I returned from some time out of town and was thumbing through the *JobFinder*. I stumbled across a listing for a job at CML titled “staff associate,” and the application was due the next day!

In spite of the staff associate title, I was excited to hurriedly update my resume. Jobs at municipal leagues do not open up that often, so I raced to finalize my material and get it printed at Kinko’s and faxed to CML before the end of the day. I barely made it.

After three or four weeks, I had not heard a thing. I was certain that my application was rejected because no one checked the fax machine before the end of the day. I had 21 letters of reference from U.S. senators, mayors, commissioners, and city managers, after all! Maybe it got lost. Was I sure that my fax made it through? I began to move on and continue my search, until I came home one day to find the message light blinking on my answering machine.

Three days later, I was sitting in the office I now occupy. I only had one interview, but it happened to be with Ken Bueche, Sam Mamet, and Steve Smithers. Like Sam said last month, “Ken Bueche was the boss man,” but Sam sure asked most of the questions! It turns out that Colorado had been dealing with growth control legislation in the previous session and the League was gearing up for another bruising session on the issue. Sam was exceptionally interested in my previous experience in Utah.

Ultimately, I was offered the job and happily accepted. Steve, who was one of the lobbyists at the time and also managed the construction of the CML

building, left the following May to become the deputy city manager for the great City of Westminster — a position he held until retirement. With Steve and Sam’s support, Ken trusted me enough to promote me to be a lobbyist, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Leadership and Service

In today’s modern workplace, it is exceptionally rare that employees remain with an organization for a long period of time before they move on to a new challenge for a new employer. Employers often are replacing vacancies every couple of years or so.

However, when I started at CML in 1999, I knew then that I was very lucky to find a place on the CML team. At the time, the “short-timers” were people who had been with the League for less than 10 years, since most of them had been there for longer. When I replaced Steve Smithers on the lobbyist team, he was one of the newer employees, having been at CML a mere 12 years.

In the 2000s, that may not have seemed like as big a deal as it might today. However, things really have not changed at CML that much. Sam Mamet was with CML for 40 years, the last 14 as executive director. Ken Bueche was with CML for nearly 40 years, 31 years of that time as executive director. Of my current colleagues, there is one staff member who has been at CML longer than me, and with the exception of a few new people, everyone else has been on staff for three to 10 years.

Readers of this magazine saw Sam’s homage to Ken Bueche in the last edition. For me, Ken was a teacher and a friend, and he still is to this day. For the five years that I got to work for

Ken before he retired, he spent time with me. He taught me how to read bills, develop my own lobbying style, be concise and get to the point, and think critically about the impact of legislation.

When Sam became executive director in 2005, he was flung into a role that he said later he was not initially sure he wanted or could do. Not only did he figure out how to do it, but he did it with all the energy that only Sam can bring. In the past 14 years, Sam has been my boss, my mentor, and my friend. Even though I know my feet are much larger than his, I still will have a very hard time filling those shoes.

Looking Ahead

From 1974 to 2019, Sam and Ken were the faces of the Colorado Municipal League. As I begin my tenure of leading this outstanding organization, I reflect on everything I learned from them and how to address challenges when they arise. I have the best staff that anyone could ask for and a vision of how to continue our legacy of growth and improvement. Most important, we are all here to serve the needs of our members, and our members have as much to do with the longevity of staff as anything, I believe.

It is a privilege to lead this organization, and it will most certainly be a learning experience. I am lucky to have an outstanding executive board, a strong staff, and municipal elected officials and staff that support this organization. I cannot be Ken or Sam, but I do pledge to always have your best interests in mind in this great gig. I never would have gotten it if my fax had not been received 20 years ago.

It is a privilege to lead this organization, and it will most certainly be a learning experience.

***I am lucky to have an outstanding executive board, a strong staff,
and municipal elected officials and staff that support this organization.***

RESEARCH: COMMUNITY
LOCAL GOVERNMENT SATISFACTION RATES

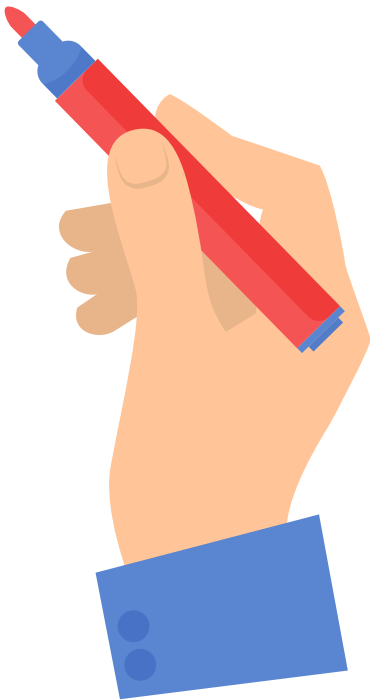
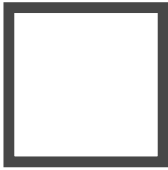
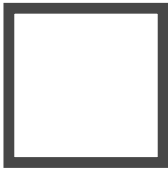
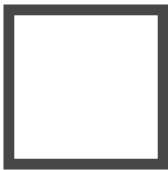
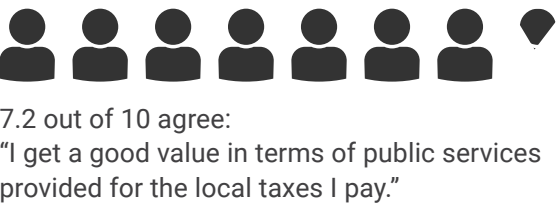
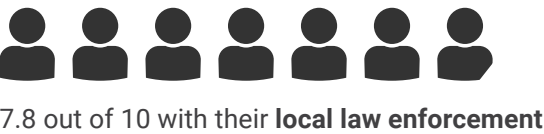
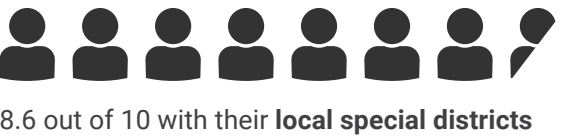
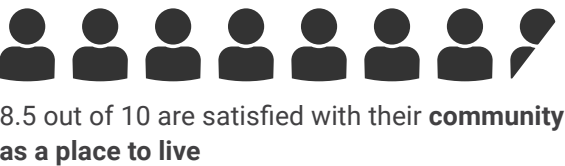
Source: 2018 Colorado Community Report Card, survey by Colorado Mesa University



Are you registered to vote at present address?

79% registered (20% not registered and 1% unsure)

COLORADANS SATISFACTION RATES



COMMUNITY: HIRING, RETAINING VETERANS



Lakewood Mayor Adam Paul, left, shakes hands with an employee who is a veteran as part of Lakewood's annual Veterans Recognition Day event.

When Alan Searcy would leave his work with the City of Lakewood for drills with the Army National Guard, he never doubted he would be able to keep his job.

"For more than seven years, I was a member of the Army Reserve and had to go to drill two weeks a year and two days a month, and the city supported me in that always," said Searcy, a stormwater quality coordinator.

That kind of culture helped earn Lakewood the U.S. Department of Labor's 2018 HIRE Vets Medallion Program Demonstration Award. This recognition is the only federal-level award for employing veterans, and Lakewood was among 239 recipients that range from small businesses to leading Fortune 500 companies across the country. The award honors organizations for hiring and retaining veterans and for providing veteran-specific resources, leadership, programming, dedicated human resources support, and compensation programs.

Lakewood's supportive culture for veterans, reservists, and members of the National Guard is evident to employees.

"They do show a great respect and honor for the veterans here," said Lakewood Animal Control Officer Leesha Crookston. "They give us the recognition that we deserve for the sacrifices that we made in serving our country even if it was at peacetime."

Nine percent of full-time, regular Lakewood staff members are veterans, more than eight times the

national average. To support these employees, the Lakewood Veterans Alliance group has been established and is facilitated through a dedicated internal website. Lakewood also conducts an annual Veterans Recognition Day event for employees and hosts the annual West Metro Veterans Fair for military families in the community. The Lakewood Human Resources Department provides accommodations for employees serving in the guard or reserves and has a staff member dedicated to facilitating veterans hiring initiatives.

"Lakewood is committed to providing job opportunities for veterans because it's the right thing to do," City Manager Kathy Hodgson said. "Having veterans as employees also brings a wealth of experience, commitment, and dedication to our workforce."

That experience provides tangible skills that employees say they need in working for Lakewood.

"Valuable lessons I learned while I was in the military are about figuring out what needs to be done, and then doing it. The military really is a public servant job a lot like how the City of Lakewood is a public servant job in being able to apply lessons learned, working with people, working for people in service of the greater good," said Cory Peterson, Lakewood manager of organizational development and risk.

COMMUNITY: ENCOURAGING YOUTH VOICES

By Kristen Chernosky, Brighton communications and engagement director



Each year, the City of Brighton's Office of Youth Services hosts a statewide youth summit, called the Image Summit. Now in its fifth year, the two-day Image Summit brings 300 young people from all across Colorado to Brighton to empower youth, build confidence, teach leadership, and inspire young leaders to use their voices to impact their communities and policy governance.

At the summit, attendees hear from impressive guest speakers and have the opportunity to attend breakout sessions geared toward encouraging youth voice and challenging attendees to push past their comfort zone. On day two of the summit, youth are given a platform to speak to elected officials from across the state and discuss matters of importance to them. For many, this is the first time they have ever spoken to an elected official. Discussions range from issues that are important to youth, such as bullying, to questions about potential career paths.

"Giving young people and elected officials the opportunity to engage in dialogue opens the door to creating youth-adult partnerships and the understanding that both youth and adults have valuable insight to bring to the table," said Brighton Youth Services Manager Tawnya Russell.

Out of the summit rose a desire to create more opportunities in Brighton for youth to be connected with their elected officials. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, about 27 percent of Brighton's population is under the age of 18. With youth making up such a large percentage of the population, how does the City of Brighton incorporate their voice? Brighton has long been dedicated to providing youth a role in government through its well-recognized Brighton Youth

Commission (BYC). BYC is a group of dynamic youth and adults commissioned by Brighton's City Council to study and plan events that impact the youth in the community and their families. And while the youth commission does an amazing job connecting youth voice to the city, there was a desire to reach even more youth in the community who might not have ever had a chance to talk to an elected official, just as the Image Summit did for those 300 attendees.

On Oct. 4, 2018, the City hosted its first Teen Town Hall. Just days prior to the event, students had to face an all too difficult situation, again — the death of a fellow classmate by suicide. As adults, municipal officials questioned if the timing was appropriate to host the town hall. It was decided to continue with the event as planned, and what came out of it was conversations that needed to happen for both the adults and young people.

Brighton City Council met with approximately 40 youth that evening to answer their questions and hear their ideas and concerns. The very first topic to be brought up by a young person attending the event was suicide. This provided city council a space to have a very open and honest conversation about such a difficult and sensitive issue.

At the end of the town hall, all of the Brighton City Council echoed their desire to have more opportunities to engage with young people and committed to meeting with the BYC quarterly to continue to have open and honest, two-way communication.

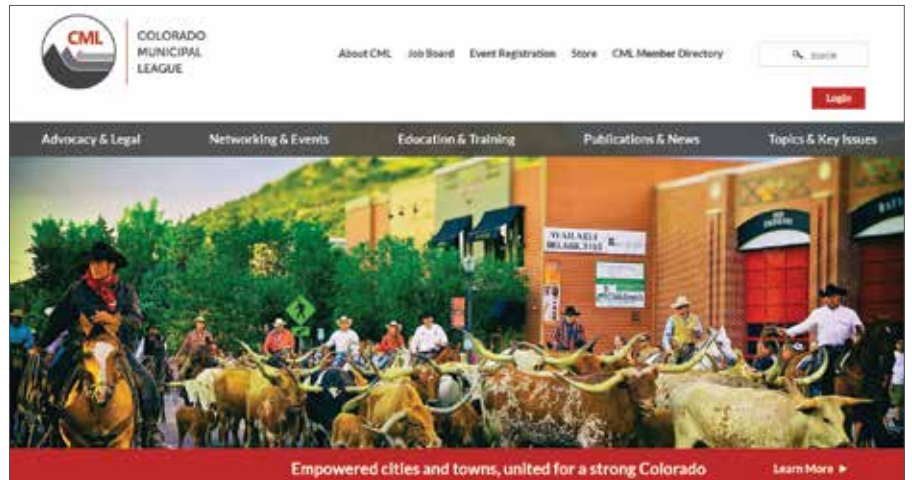
To learn more about the Brighton Youth Commission, visit www.brightonyouthcommission.org.

THE LEAGUE'S NEW LOOK

By Christine Taniguchi, CML communications coordinator

Some people may be unaware of the impact that design has on our lives; but whether it is urban design, web design, graphic design, or any other type of design, design matters. A good city or town design can create a sense of place and belonging or make navigating through it easier; a well-designed logo has the power to communicate an organization's values and vision; and a nicely designed website can help a visitor find information more efficiently.

In an effort to better communicate our values and vision and improve user experience when visiting our website, the Colorado Municipal League (CML) has unveiled a new logo along with a new website. Our last rebrand was in 2008; and before then, it was in 1996. CML strives to enhance its value to our members, and our attention to communications is a part of both adding and demonstrating that value. Although we have a new brand identity, the core functions of CML remains the same: to provide advocacy, information, and training to build strong communities throughout the



state. We place great effort in providing the best and latest information to serve our city and town leaders so that they can better serve their residents.

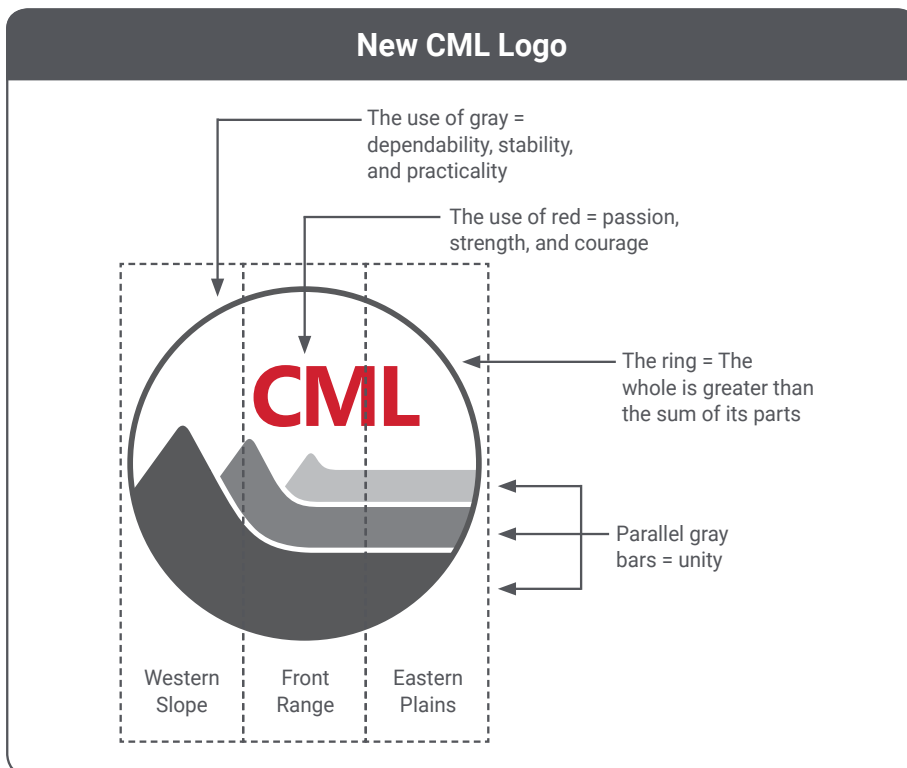
In designing our new logo, there were four primary characteristics we wanted: scalability, versatility, simplicity, and distinctiveness. Scalability was important because we wanted to ensure that our name would be legible at various scales, small or large. Our previous logo was illegible at a smaller scale, which placed unnecessary constraints on how

we employed it throughout our print and digital communications. Secondly, we wanted a logo that was versatile, one that was a logomark with our acronym "CML" that could live independently of the "Colorado Municipal League" type without losing impact. Thirdly, we sought simplicity in our logo design so that it would have a modern aesthetic and would be instantly recognizable. Finally, we wanted a logo that was distinctive and relevant to our organization.

The new logo is inspired by our vision statement: Empowered cities and towns, united for a strong Colorado. As a membership organization, it was paramount that the logo be inclusive of the various and diverse cities and towns throughout the state. Depicted within the circle is a symbolic representation of the state's three general regions: Western Slope, Front Range, and Eastern Plains. The parallel position of the three gray bars emphasizes unity and the connection our communities have with one another. The ring that encircles this imagery reiterates the concept of unity but more specifically the idea that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

All in all, our new identity is an expression of who we are and what we do: advocacy, information, and training to build strong Colorado cities and towns.

Visit www.cml.org.



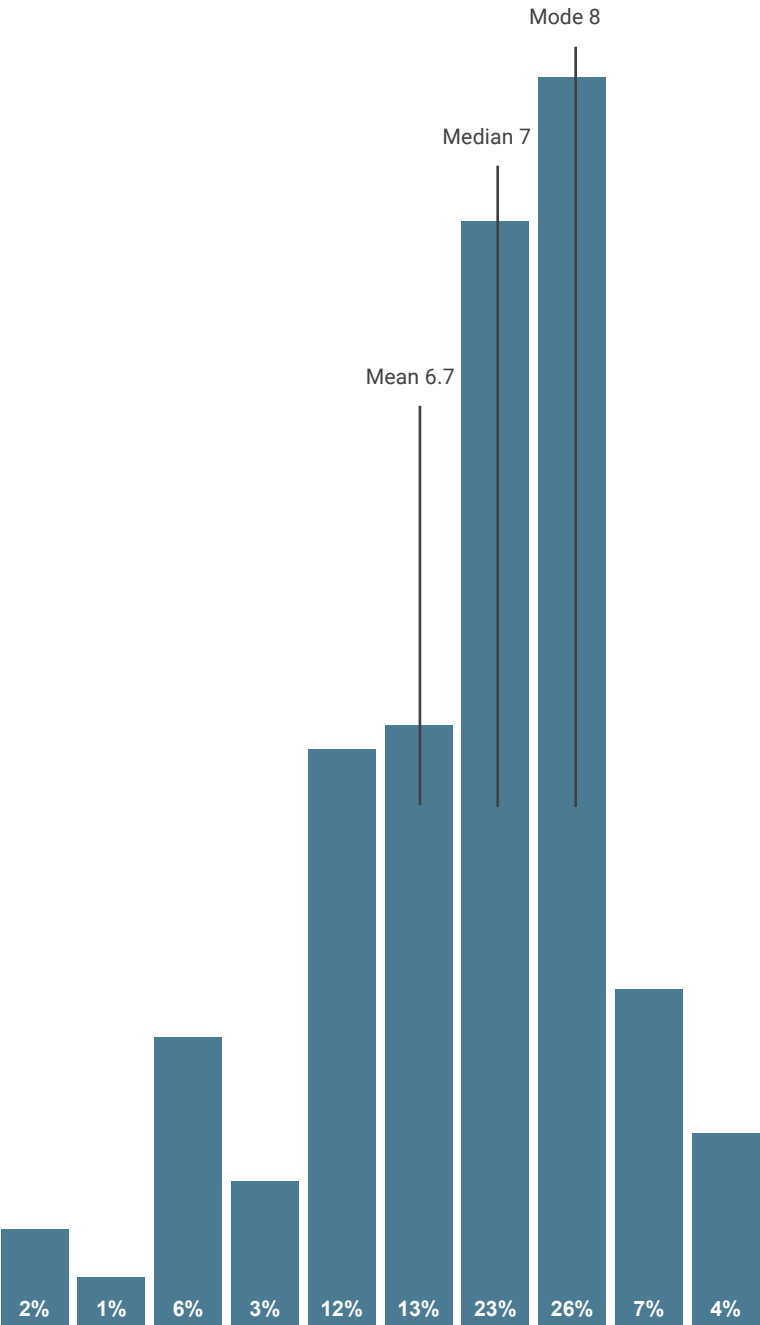
RESEARCH: VIBRANCY

RATING THE STATE OF THE ECONOMY

Source: 2018 Colorado Community Report Card, survey by Colorado Mesa University

Ranking the State of the Economy in Colorado

from terrible (1) to great (10)



68% of Coloradans agree:
“My community is a good place to start a business.”



56% of Coloradans agree:
“Tourism is key to my local economy.”



46% of Coloradans agree:
“Oil & gas development is key to my local economy.”

VIBRANCY: SPARKING BUSINESS INVESTMENTS

By Jonathan Cain, Idaho Springs administrative intern



The East Colorado Boulevard corridor in Idaho Springs is one of the commercial centers of the City. Up to 40,000 cars drive by the City on I-70 every day, and many of them stop to use the amenities available on the east end of town.

In 2015, the City of Idaho Springs and Colorado Department of Transportation entered into an agreement to devolve Colorado Boulevard in this area from a state highway to a municipal road. As the highway lacked many of the amenities of a city street, Idaho Springs took the opportunity to rebuild the roadway and utilities, adding sidewalks and a segment of the Clear Creek Greenway to create a multimodal transit corridor to better serve its residents and visitors.

In 2018, as an effort to activate this “new” city street, Idaho Springs received a \$25,000 Social Investment Grant from Freeport McMoRan, operators of the Henderson Mine, to fund a Façade Improvement Mini Grant Program.

The Idaho Springs City Council awarded two rounds of grants through this program in 2018. In total, this translated to \$153,267 in

new capital investment by businesses. The remaining \$5,925 was rolled into the 2019 Façade Mini Grant Program.

Applicants were asked to submit funding requests to the City of Idaho Springs with a proposed budget and associated documentation. Applicants were required to provide matching funds up to or exceeding the award amount.

In 2019, Idaho Springs received another Social Investment Grant from the Henderson Mine to continue its program and open it up to the whole city. With the \$5,925 remaining from the previous year, there is \$45,925 to award this year. Thirty applicants submitted for funding in 2019, with new capital investment at commercial properties throughout Idaho Springs expected to exceed \$150,000 as a result of the program.

The City of Idaho Springs has been hard at work improving its infrastructure. This opportunity to partner both with Freeport McMoRan and the business owners of Idaho Springs to activate the streets represents a key goal for Idaho Springs, and everyone is excited for the future of the program.

VIBRANCY: A MODEL OF SUCCESS FOR MAIN STREET

By John Sutherland, Lamar town administrator

As one of Colorado's eastern plains communities and richly endowed with an agricultural heritage, the City of Lamar finds itself in the demographic identified as disappearing and not only at the state level but nationally as well. By the middle of the first decade of the 21st century, the reality of that demographic had become obvious to the elected leadership of the City. Population was declining, the once vibrant downtown had begun to fade, and the problem was not going to fix itself. At this juncture, the City began to make crucial decisions to stop the slide and change course.

Lamar developed two key partnerships that remain critical to our success: the first was with Downtown Colorado Inc. (DCI) and the second was the Colorado Department of Local Affairs. DCI introduced the City to the National Main Street model and DOLA has carried it on. The Main Street Program was ideal for Lamar. The program structure is rigorous, disciplined, and focused on goals that mattered. For years, everyone had known that Lamar's downtown retail district was floundering. Efforts to change direction would start up and then die out. Lamar suffered from a wealth of ideas and leaders, and a poverty of doers. The Main Street Program forced Lamar to confront that problem. It was not good enough to have a bright idea; local leaders were expected to actually make it happen.

The Main Street Program provides a model for success, and plenty of examples of success to draw on for inspiration. Working toward the required tasks began to yield positive results early on. Lamar started with a part-time program manager position that quickly grew to full-time. The program adopted bylaws and had regular meetings that were well attended. The program then secured status as a 501 nonprofit organization. Working closely with the Lamar City Council, Chamber of Commerce, DOLA Main Street, and the Lamar Redevelopment Authority, changes began to happen.

A derelict vacant lot in the heart of downtown has been converted into an outdoor art space with picnic tables, shade umbrellas, and a stage for performance art. Retail spaces are being renovated. Façades of some buildings have been totally refreshed and more are in the works. The



faintest glimmer of entrepreneurial reinvestment downtown can be seen. These efforts are beginning to bear fruit with residents. It cannot be claimed that everyone is on the same page, but even grudging support is a step in the right direction.

The Lamar program has achieved "Graduate" level status in the DOLA Main Street Program, was recognized as the "Main Street Program of the Year" in 2014, and received the 2018 Downtown Excellence award. The Lamar program manager has presented at the Main Street National Conference, and the City of Lamar has achieved Certified Local Government status with History Colorado.

This year should bring a nearly \$1 million renovation of a landmark historic property in downtown, a \$400,000 streetscaping project, and completion of the Colorado Department of Transportation's reconstruction of the Lamar Main Street. Eleven years of teamwork, focus, partnerships and it all started with the Main Street program.

RESEARCH: LIFESTYLE GRADING QUALITY OF LIFE

Source: 2018 Colorado Community Report Card, survey by Colorado Mesa University

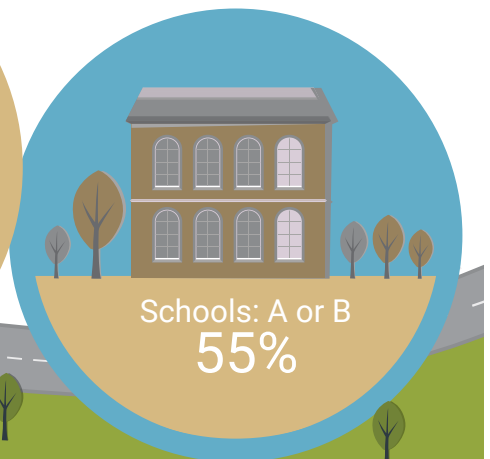
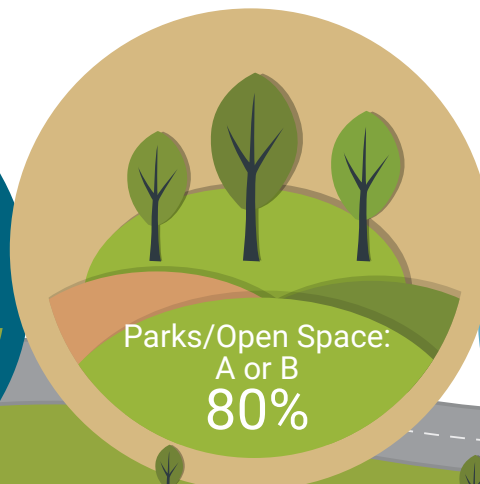
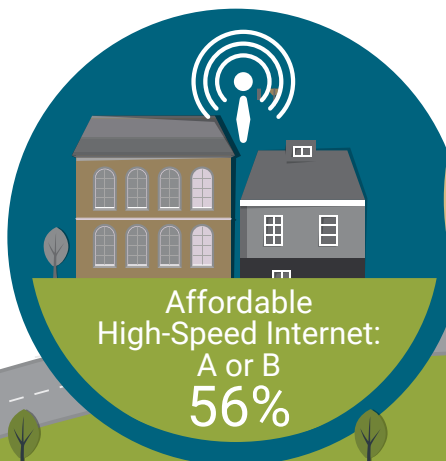
WHAT COLORADANS THINK
ABOUT THEIR COMMUNITY:



83% "A good place to raise kids"
75% "A good place to retire"



COLORADANS GRADE
COMMUNITY AMMENITIES:



LIFESTYLE: CONNECTING COMMUNITY

By Traci Wieland, Grand Junction parks and recreation deputy director,
and Libby Collins, Colorado West Land Trust project manager



The Colorado Riverfront Trail is a paved trail system that connects the cities of Palisade, Grand Junction, and Fruita in western Colorado. The Grand Junction section of the Colorado Riverfront Trail, funded extensively with Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) funds, has been complete for many years and includes trails through the newly developed Riverfront at Las Colonias Park, the soon-to-be-developed Riverfront at Dos Rios site, Riverside Park, and Junior Service League Park. The Colorado Riverfront Trail is a critical link to connecting community members to important recreational opportunities within Grand Junction and opportunities in neighboring communities.

A short distance from the Colorado Riverfront Trail in downtown Grand Junction is the Lunch Loop and Three Sisters recreational area that includes hundreds of acres of open space, more than 75 miles of single-track dirt trails, and a very popular bike park. The Lunch Loop trail system and trailhead is the most popular trail system in Mesa County, particularly for locals, with 120,000-plus visits per year. According to a recent study, Lunch Loop is one of three trailheads in the county that generate more than \$15 million for the local economy. Trail users range in age, skill level, and interest, and include mountain bikers, runners, hikers, and walkers. The Lunch Loop bike park and development of beginner trails and additional access points are bringing more and more youth and families to the trail system. In addition, the Lunch Loop area is in close proximity to several underserved neighborhoods that have direct access to the Colorado Riverfront Trail.

Unfortunately, there is currently no safe connection to the area.

The Lunch Loop Connector Trail is a 1.5-mile paved shared use path that, when complete, will improve safety for those who want and need to reach close-to-home outdoor spaces by bike or foot. It will attract far more trail users to the natural wild land areas of Lunch Loop/Three Sisters, making healthy lifestyles and the benefits of connecting to nature attainable for people of all ages and abilities. It is expected that the Lunch Loop Connector Trail will experience a minimum of 50,000 visits annually with users including paved trail users exploring a more wildlands area at the Lunch Loop/Three Sisters; recreational commuters of all ages using the trail to get to mountain bike and hiking trails; youth from surrounding neighborhoods accessing the Lunch Loop bike park; and commuters from neighborhoods using the paved trail for alternative transportation to town or work.

The Lunch Loop Connector Trail is the result of tremendous civic leadership and extensive community organization partnerships. The City of Grand Junction and Colorado West Land Trust spearheaded the project with expertise or financial support provided by the Bureau of Land Management, Grand Valley Metropolitan Planning Office, GOCO, Mesa County, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Bacon Family Foundation, El Pomar Foundation, Goodwin Foundation, Gates Family Foundation, and One Riverfront. The Lunch Loop Connector Trail is set to be complete in fall 2019.

LIFESTYLE: COLLABORATION FOR A SCHOOL PLAYGROUND

By Kendall E. Cramer, Montrose Innovation & Citizen Engagement grant coordinator

For the first time in nearly 60 years, Columbine Middle School in Montrose has a playground.

Since the original construction of Columbine Middle School in 1960, there had never been a designated playground or an outdoor learning space. The only amenities for play included foursquare courts painted on concrete and two basketball hoops. The district sought to provide students with an inviting space with amenities that encouraged exploration, imagination, and discovery — a place where students would feel comfortable, socialize, learn, and be active.

In March 2018, the City of Montrose and Montrose County School District received notice from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) that their joint School Yard Initiative application for the construction of a nature-based, student-designed, and inspired playground to complement the construction of a new school building had been selected for funding.

GOCO, like several funding agencies, requires school districts to partner with an eligible unit of local government to apply. The City of Montrose has served as a fiscal sponsor for multiple community-based projects over the years. For the City of Montrose, collaboration has become the name of the game. When organizations work together, everyone benefits. Montrose has been recognized for its efforts to partner with nonprofits, businesses, and other local governments on a variety of community-based projects.

“We are so proud to have worked with our school officials and the awesome students of Columbine Middle School on this playground project. Our community does an excellent job of coming together in times of need and to resolve problems for our residents. The City of Montrose is fostering a culture of innovation and collaboration as we team up with many nonprofits, special districts, neighboring communities, and small businesses to make life better for all of our citizens. This effort truly supports our goal of making Montrose an even better place in which to live, work, and raise a family,” stated Bill Bell, Montrose City Manager.

In addition to serving as the fiscal sponsor for the GOCO grant, the City of Montrose helped make the

project possible by participating in a land exchange with the school district to meet the needs of the new school building. The playground was constructed on .913 acres of exchanged land.

Collaboration, the planning efforts of students, staff, and administration, as well as the generous support of GOCO and community organizations made the project possible. As part of the school’s problem-based learning (PBL) approach, seventh grade students were tasked with developing conceptual designs and cost estimates. The students worked with a local landscape architect, surveyed their family members and peers, researched playground designs, identified equipment, and consulted with businesses before giving presentations to a panel.

The students’ design concepts were representative of their age group. Although in middle school, the process confirmed that these students still had a desire to be kids and play. However, their concepts illustrated a more engaged type of play as opposed to what is offered on a typical playground. Nearly all of their design concepts included specific objectives such as being able to complete an obstacle course in a certain amount of time, learning about different types of trees and rocks, and providing access and inclusive play to all students within the school and from all over the community by connecting with their peers through nature. The landscape architect incorporated many of their ideas into the final design, and a ribbon-cutting ceremony was held in late November 2018. As students were observed climbing the newly placed boulder, running the obstacle course, and sharing the group swing with their peers, it was clear — this is why partnerships matter.

Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) invests a portion of Colorado Lottery proceeds to help preserve and enhance the state’s parks, trails, wildlife, rivers, and open spaces. GOCO’s independent board awards competitive grants to local governments and land trusts, and makes investments through Colorado Parks and Wildlife. Visit GOCO.org for more information.

LIFESTYLE: WORKING ON WELLNESS

By Wade Gandee, Sterling parks, library, and recreation director



In 2014, the City of Sterling finished updating its Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Since the update, the City has been hard at work fostering a climate of health and wellness by promoting healthy eating and active lifestyles for the community at large.

Working with Livewell Colorado, the City has drafted several healthy eating and active living policies and is beginning to implement them. These policies promote both personal and workplace wellness and include incentives for different healthy activities, such as healthy food alternatives at meetings and events along with promoting involvement in public walking and biking groups.

Sterling also has partnered with the local school district to provide healthy free lunches during the summer months to all children, 18 and under, through the National School Lunch Program. The City received \$35,000 to bolster the program from a 2018 Rural Healthy Out of School Time Grant from the National Recreation and Parks Association. The grant provided staff training, thought-provoking interactive nutritional education materials, food service equipment, advertising assistance, physical activity equipment, maintenance equipment, and transportation assistance — all of which helped to generate tremendous excitement and increased participation within the program. The much-needed education provided by the grant is helping the City to work toward combating childhood obesity in northeastern Colorado, a growing and disturbing trend. The City also is looking into ways to work

with local farmers to provide more farm to table opportunities for the region.

The master plan, fostered largely by public input, propagated ideas to address an additional necessity: Sterling needs trails that connect its parks, schools, and open spaces. Armed with this information, the City began looking at areas where new trails could create the desired connections. The initial design has a 14-mile loop around Sterling connecting all the schools, including the local junior college. The loop will connect to existing trails and park connections and travel through the Overland Trail Recreation Area along the South Platte River. New land acquired along the river prompted the City to apply for a Great Outdoors Colorado planning grant for the expansion of the Overland Trail Recreation Area. Amenities included in the plan are trailheads, hard and soft trails, restrooms, a new fishing area, interpretive signage, a nine-hole disc golf course, a river park, and an observation tower. Sterling also has received a Trails Grant from Colorado Parks and Wildlife to complete a hard trail with solar lighting around its existing fish pond, which is a great outdoor recreation source for both those within the region and travelers. These improvements will only increase activity and draw new visitors to Sterling.

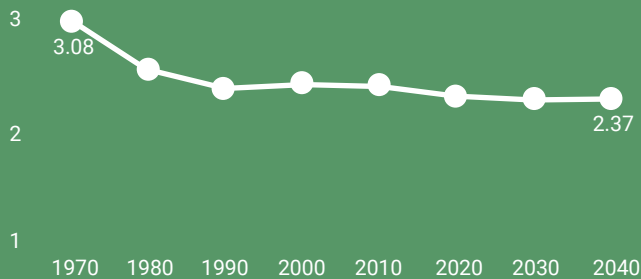
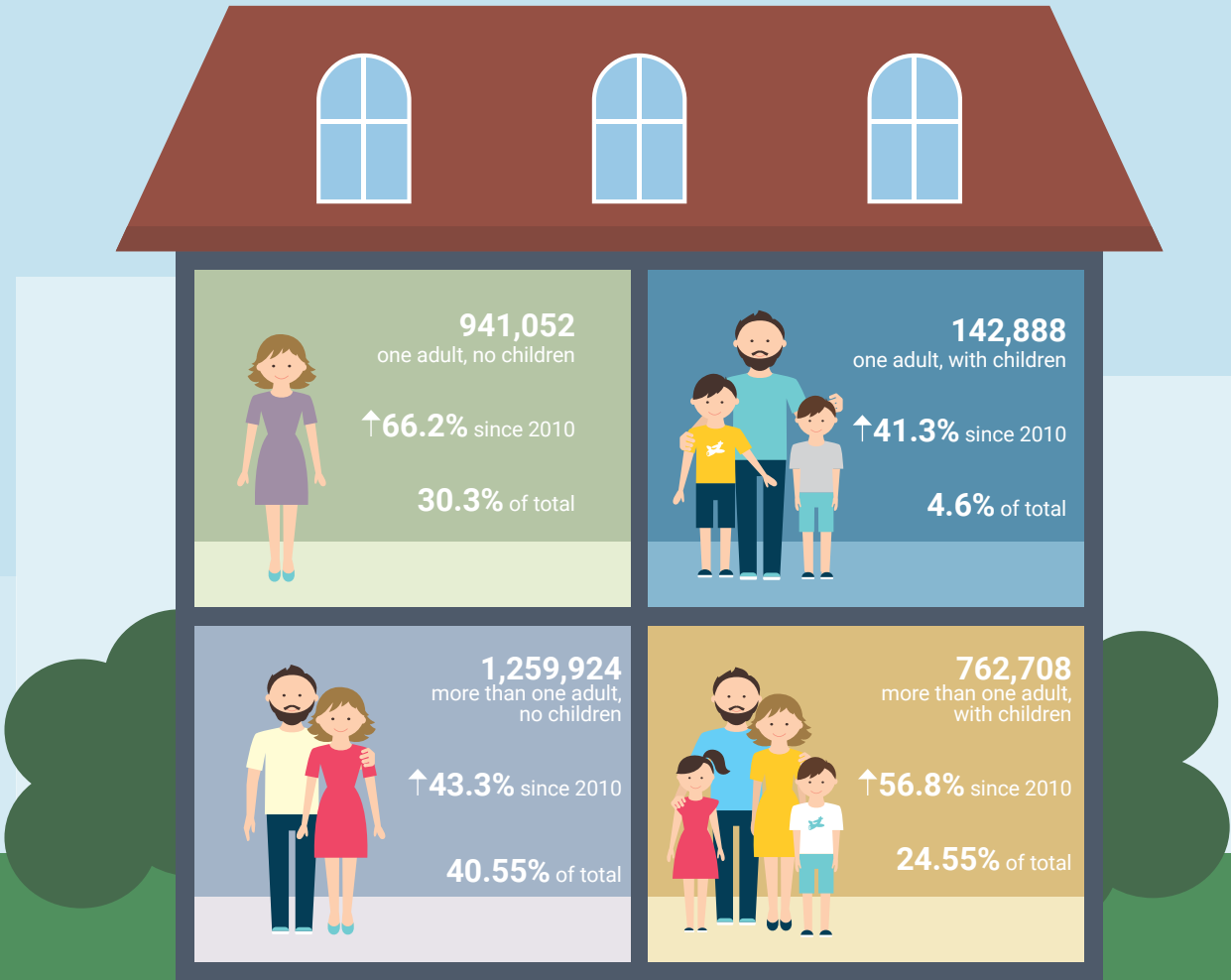
Sterling is hard at work engaging with its residents to create new and exciting features for everyone to enjoy. Encouraging people of all ages to eat a healthy diet and be active while relishing in the great Colorado outdoors welcomes newcomers and benefits those who are embedded within the community and fosters civic pride.

RESEARCH: HOME
HOUSEHOLD SIZE IN COLORADO

Source: Colorado State Demography Office

Projected Household Size in 2040

3,106,572 total households, ↑ 66.2% since 2010



Household size in Colorado will continue to decline as the population ages and fewer households have children.

HOME: COMMITTED TO A RESILIENT FUTURE

By Allison Wittern, Centennial communications director

The City of Centennial is committed to creating a resilient future for its residents and businesses through improved energy efficiency, enhanced connectivity, education, and cost savings. To achieve this, the City recently completed an Energy Action Plan through Xcel Energy's Partners in Energy program for the Centennial community.

Development of the two-year Energy Action Plan started in the summer of 2018 when Centennial partnered with Xcel Energy to facilitate a series of planning workshops with the Energy Action Planning Team, which included representatives from Centennial's municipal operations, libraries, park and recreation districts, Colorado State University Arapahoe County Extension, and community members.

The Energy Action Plan assists Centennial in supporting the growing senior population, families, and businesses with energy efficiency measures, programs, and education that can lead to energy and cost savings, and increased community resiliency. This plan also supports the recently adopted Centennial NEXT Comprehensive Plan, which provides a roadmap for future development in the City from now to 2030. Together, these plans can enhance the quality of life and provide economic vitality for the businesses and residents of the City of Centennial.

Three important focus areas were identified in the planning process: residents, businesses, and community facilities. Common themes to all focus areas are outreach and education, energy efficiency, renewable energy, and new technologies.

Throughout 2019, residents and businesses will have the opportunity to learn about energy efficiency opportunities, discounts, and a variety of rebates through educational workshops, social media posts, community events, and newsletters. Overall, the City and Xcel Energy want to help residents save money through energy efficiency programs and rebates; connect businesses with free and low-cost energy efficiency programs; and ensure community

facilities are running efficiently and taking advantage of energy rebate opportunities.

During the next year, the City of Centennial aspires to achieve the following energy goals:

- Connect with 20,000 residents to double participation in Xcel Energy programs in one year.
- Connect with 15 percent of large businesses and engage 10 percent in Xcel Energy programs in one year.
- Connect with 20 percent of small and medium businesses and engage 10 percent in Xcel Energy programs in one year.
- Engage 25 percent of new buildings and/or development construction and major renovations in Energy Efficient Buildings (EEB) or the Energy Design Assistance (EDA) program.
- Conduct 10 Onsite Energy Audits or Building Tune-Ups and five associated projects at community facilities.

The City already has held two successful educational workshops on electric vehicles and energy efficiency for businesses, with a renewable energy workshop for residents to be held on June 13. Partners in Energy representatives will be attending all of the Centennial summer events, handing out LED lightbulbs and other energy efficiency resources.

Finally, community facilities at the City of Centennial, South Suburban Parks and Recreation District, Arapahoe Libraries, and others are planning to participate in energy audits and building tune-ups to identify potential improvements, increase energy efficiency, and help save taxpayer money.

To learn more about upcoming activities or to review the Energy Action Plan, visit centennialco.gov/energy.

HOME: IMPLEMENTING BROADBAND

By Frank Lancaster, Estes Park town administrator

Broadband internet is not a luxury — it is a basic utility needed not just for technology-based businesses, but for nearly all business and home uses. But many in Estes Park and surrounding areas lack adequate, reliable, and affordable high-speed internet service.

Nearly four years ago, voters told the Town of Estes Park that they wanted to reclaim local authority to build a telecommunications infrastructure by a 92 percent margin. Since that election, Estes Park has diligently researched what it would take to provide state-of-the-art broadband service to its Light & Power service area.

The Town of Estes Park provides electrical service to more than 10,000 customers in a service area covering 300 square miles. The Town has been upgrading its electrical grid with fiber smart grid technology for several years. It also is a co-owner of Platte River Power Authority, along with the cities of Loveland, Longmont, and Fort Collins. Platte River has an existing fiber loop in the Estes Valley that integrates with the Town's smart-grid fiber, providing a foundation to serve the broader community with broadband service.

Internet services currently available to the community are limited by the capabilities of the valley's current infrastructure, and do not meet the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors. Prior to moving forward with municipal service, Estes Park issued a request for proposals to private providers, and no viable proposals were received. Private companies are unlikely to prioritize an upgrade to Estes Park and the surrounding area's infrastructure themselves due to the low return on what would be a very high investment for relatively few customers, low customer density, and difficult terrain.

After the floods of 2013, the Town partnered with the Estes Park Economic Development Corporation and received an Economic Development Administration grant to fund a broadband assessment. Community outreach showed significant demand for high-speed, reliable, and affordable internet service. Municipal representatives met with other communities and organizations with hands-on experience installing

fiber networks to learn about costs and experiences. They then contracted with Colorado State University's marketing department for a market take-rate study to help determine financial viability of a high-speed broadband option and price points. With a grant from the Colorado Department of Local Affairs and support from the Larimer Emergency Telephone Authority, Estes Park completed final engineering designs for the middle mile of the system and gathered detailed costs for a shovel-ready project, including routes to Glen Haven and Allenspark.

Last fall, the Town hired a financial advisor to evaluate its ability to sell bonds to finance the project, while Town staff developed a detailed business plan for a municipal broadband utility. Approximately \$33.5 million in bonds are needed to completely fund the utility. Now, underwriters are being evaluated to issue the bonds sometime in the late summer or early fall.

After a unanimous vote of the Estes Park Board of Trustees, the Town is moving forward with the broadband utility startup phase including initial marketing and branding efforts. The first two neighborhoods will be lit up this year, with full build-out across the service area by 2024. The system will be built using existing electric infrastructure wherever possible and service locations will be prioritized for construction based on their overall cost and revenue potential to ensure the business is funding itself.

The Town of Estes Park appreciates its peers in the industry. Delta-Montrose Electric Association oriented the Town on how construction costs can be cut with new micro-duct and microfiber products. Longmont, with its NextLight broadband ranked "nation's best service" by *PC Magazine*, has become a mentor municipality, generously sharing insights and advice on products, construction methods, marketing, and daily operations. Moving forward, Estes Park is working in collaboration with Fort Collins and Loveland to lower costs and enhance service levels for all communities. The Estes Park Light & Power Division is now Power & Communications, and the Town is proud to join the ranks of municipal broadband providers.

RESEARCH: TRAVEL ECONOMICS OF TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Source: Colorado Transportation By the Numbers (2018), a report by TRIP



\$323 billion

Value of goods shipped to and from sites in Colorado each year



77,308

Full-time jobs supported by design, construction, and maintenance of transportation infrastructure

52 billion

Vehicle miles of travel in Colorado in 2016



\$3.4 billion

Annual wages earned by workers in transportation infrastructure

1.1 million

Full-time jobs in Colorado further dependent on transportation infrastructure, in industries such as tourism, retail sales, agriculture, and manufacturing



\$5.20

Return on each \$1 spent on transportation infrastructure improvements by way of reduced vehicle maintenance costs, road and bridge maintenance costs, delays, fuel consumption, and emissions; and improved safety



TRAVEL: A NEW BRIDGE

By Laurie Erwin, La Veta town clerk

The Town of La Veta started the planning stages for a new bridge located over the Cucharas River in 2010 and finally completed the project in 2018.

Due to funding issues and increased construction costs, the bridge was delayed. It took many years of consistent research for funding and different design concepts, but the Town finally got its bridge completed and it is wonderful.

The original bridge, built in 1935, was barely passable if two cars met on the bridge. The new

bridge has two lanes, plus a pedestrian and bicycle path, making it much safer.

Funding was made possible from the Town of La Veta, Colorado Department of Transportation Special Highway Committee Program, Colorado Department of Local Affairs, and Tabula Rasa.

The Town of La Veta thanks everyone who contributed many hours of blood, sweat, and tears to make this project a success!



TRAVEL: AWARD-WINNING ASPHALT PROJECT

By James Redmond, Greeley communications coordinator

Greeley won the “Best in Colorado” subdivision paving award for Keep Greeley Moving’s work last year in the Rolling Hills neighborhood. The Colorado Asphalt Paving Association (CAPA) recognized Greeley’s paving excellence at its 25th Annual “Best in Colorado” Asphalt Pavement Awards Program. Additionally, the award recognized Greeley’s paving contractor for the work, Martin Marietta.

“It is an important award to us, and pretty prestigious in the industry,” said Greeley Pavement Management Coordinator Pat Hill.

Scored by a jury of asphalt industry peers, the almost six and a half-miles of new pavement in the central Greeley Rolling Hills neighborhood scored higher than any other Colorado residential subdivision paving. Judges base a lot of the score on the quality and appearance of the pavement, Hill said. However, material testing and construction organization and timing play an important role in the award too.

Paving the Rolling Hills neighborhood had quite a few unique challenges, said Asphalt Paving Inspector Randy Walrath. Greeley’s paving crews jumped into the area right after school got out for the summer and only had a couple of months to get most of their work done before school started again.

In the few school-free months, Greeley crews had to find a way to work around the reconstruction of Woodbriar Park, numerous underground utility projects, and the deluge of insurance workers and roofers who needed access to the neighborhood after the intense hailstorms that hit Greeley last summer. Even with those challenges, Greeley’s paving program managed to come out on top.

“It is an assurance that our work is high quality and that we’re putting the community’s tax dollars to good work,” said Public Works Director Joel Hemesath.

The staff and crews who spend months diligently laboring over 300-degree fresh asphalt to improve this community deserve recognition for their excellent work, he said.

“And it is great to see the energy the new roads in Rolling Hills gives one of Greeley’s older neighborhoods,” Hemesath said.

Paving a road with a new surface, also called an overlay, is the last step in Greeley’s pavement maintenance program. Now that the Rolling Hills Neighborhood has freshly paved roads, those same streets will restart their life in the City’s special maintenance program.

“Most roads are engineered to last about 20 years,” Hill said.

Greeley’s maintenance program can add another 15 years to a road’s 20-year life expectancy, he said.

Each year, City staff analyze the condition of Greeley’s streets and implement one of five maintenance programs funded in the City budget. In a road’s early years, Greeley will use a rejuvenating seal coat to help protect the street and add a few more years. As roads age they become prime candidates for slurry seals and chip coats — all in addition to patching problem areas and filling cracks before they cause more damage.

The program took years of experimentation, research, and testing to get to this point, Hill said. Even now, he and his staff keep trying to improve techniques to get the biggest and best quality bang for their buck.

“Paving is my life,” Walrath said. “I am never too old to learn.”

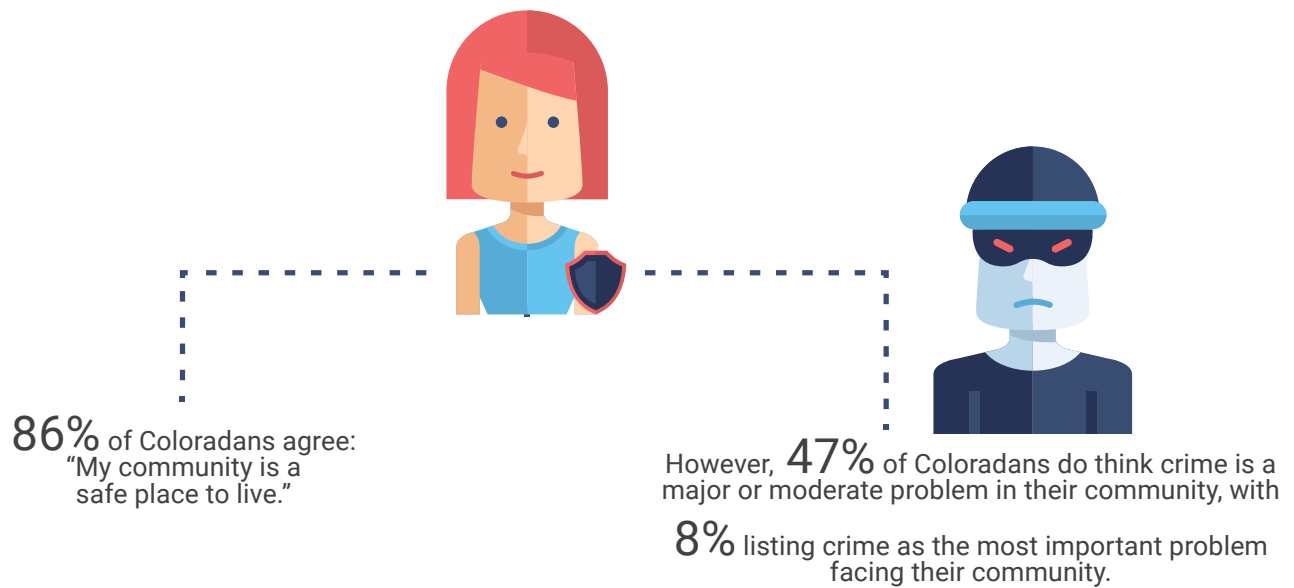
Although it is the first CAPA award Greeley’s Keep Greeley Moving program won, it is the 11th CAPA award Greeley’s paving program earned in 25 years. At the national level, work done as a part of the Keep Greeley Moving program managed to win the National Asphalt Paving Association’s Excellence in Asphalt Paving award for the past three years.

Keep Greeley Moving — a voter-approved seven-year 0.65 percent sales tax — provides funding to improve and repair Greeley roads. The Keep Greeley Moving program includes road expansion projects; neighborhood road improvements such as the work done in Rolling Hills; arterial and collector road repairs and improvements; and concrete and sidewalk repairs and improvements. The tax and the KGM program end (sunset) Dec. 31, 2022.

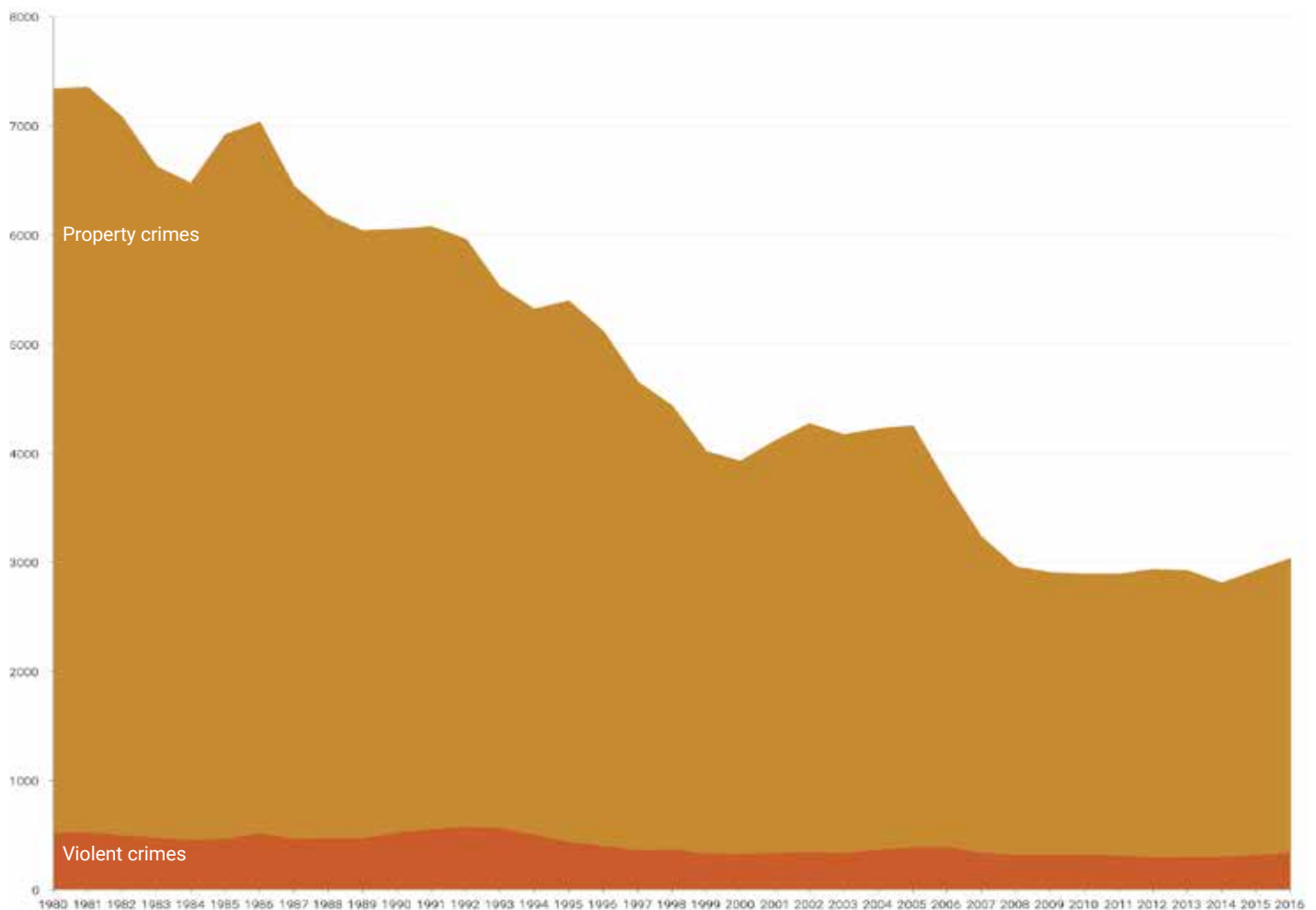
The award is nice, and it means a lot to Hill, Walrath, and the Martin Marietta paving crews. But for locals like them, they both agree, the best part is seeing the quality work every time they drive by.

RESEARCH: SAFETY CRIME RATES AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

Sources: 2018 Colorado Community Report Card survey by Colorado Mesa University
Colorado Division of Criminal Justice, Department of Public Safety



REPORTED VIOLENT AND PROPERTY CRIMINAL OFFENSES PER 100,000 IN POPULATION 1980 - 2016



SAFETY: WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS

By Karen Gerrity, Nederland town administrator



In fall 2018, staff for the Town of Nederland secured a Colorado Department of Local Affairs matching administrative grant that will be used for the survey and final design of an emergency egress in its Big Springs neighborhood.

This project is important to the Town because the Big Springs neighborhood is in need of an additional egress for emergency situations from the 187-home subdivision. If an emergency were to limit or obstruct access to the highway from the subdivision, residents in the Big Springs Subdivision would not have an evacuation route.

The survey is underway and the design will be completed by mid-year 2019. Town staff continues to research funding sources for construction.

In other emergency preparedness news, the Town hosted a Firewise Clean-Up Day on Saturday June 2, 2018, at the transfer station and it was a huge success. Approximately 85 vehicles full of trash, recyclables, reusable building materials, scrap metal, and scrap lumber were dropped off. The Town will host a similar event this year as well.

The Forsythe II Multiparty Monitoring Group continues to work with the United States Forest Service as they address wildfire mitigation needs in forest lands that border the Town of Nederland. Potential strategies include ecological monitoring, reviewing precipitation data, climatic mapping,

slash pile burning, and wildfire mitigation treatment. While the federal government shutdown delayed the project, work could begin as early as late summer or early fall 2019.

In summer 2018, the Nederland Interagency Counsel for Homeless Encampments (NICHE) started a pilot program and hired an outreach worker. The grant-funded program is called Summer Homeless Advocate for Residential Encampments (SHARE) and the goals are to connect people who choose to camp on public lands and are experiencing homelessness to existing resources, educate the homeless on appropriate camping practices, to keep themselves and the mountain community safer, and to learn best practices that can be shared with other communities facing similar situations.

The outreach worker met 212 campers through the summer and 175 were experiencing a form of homelessness. She was able to connect 64 people to various services. Out of 212 interactions, she discussed fire safety with all of them. She discussed wildlife safety and waste management with 170. Many of these campers became advocates for wildfire safety and were quick to ask other campers to put out fires due to the ban and to leave a clean camp.

Due to the success of the program, NICHE has secured funding for the SHARE program for another two years.

SAFETY: COMMUNITY THROUGH NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

By Megan Williams, Frederick community relations manager



For three years in a row, the Town of Frederick's police department has won the National Association of Town Watch's national award. This award recognizes outstanding participation in the annual nationwide National Night Out event. All three years, Frederick was the only winner in Colorado for towns with a population of 5,000 to 15,000. So what makes Frederick's event so special?

"That is all due to our incredible block captains," said Frederick Chief of Police Todd Norris. "We empower them to create an event that is right for their neighborhood's specific needs."

In Prairie Greens, a senior-living community, a poolside barbecue welcomes police officers and firefighters to sit and enjoy a meal with thankful residents. Shaking hands, expressing gratitude, and challenging a cop to a game of cornhole are all a part of the celebration.

In Wyndham Hill, a neighborhood full of young families, you will find coloring books, badge stickers, sidewalk chalk, and other great kids activities for the police officers to participate in alongside the youngest in the community.

"I really enjoy this event and the way it strengthens the partnership between the citizens and the police," said Chief Norris. "We get an opportunity to combine education and interacting with our community on a more personal neighbor level."

Chief Norris and Mayor Tony Carey make their way to each neighborhood that hosts an event. This

has meant eight stops within two hours, each of the past three years. Frederick police officers and Frederick-Firestone Fire Protection District firefighters and paramedics also join in the celebration in each neighborhood. For the past several years, Mayor Carey has brought blue lightbulbs for residents to take home and put in their porchlight to show support for law enforcement.

"It is just amazing to see all the hundreds of blue lights throughout our community," said Chief Norris.

National Night Out is just one part of a larger year-round effort to create a strong Neighborhood Watch program. Quarterly meetings are hosted at the police department and expose the block captains to community programs like Dog Walker Watch and Vacation Watch, or give them an inside look to police training tools like the MILO use-of-force simulator. Crime updates are also a part of these meetings, and block captains get a chance to ask questions or bring up any issues they are seeing in their community. Neighborhood watch block captains are always copied on press releases from the town and have become a valued word-of-mouth communication network.

According to Chief Norris, "National Night Out and our neighborhood watch program provide us the opportunity to send a message to criminals that we are united as a community and together, we will fight back against crime."

NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE: COLORADO WELL REPRESENTED AT NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES

By Kevin Bommer, Colorado Municipal League executive director



Every March, the National League of Cities (NLC) holds its Congressional Cities Conference in Washington, DC. The conference is primarily a legislative event intended to inform municipal officials of the opportunity to learn about significant municipal issues in our nation's capital, but it also offers local leaders a chance to meet and hear from Congressional and administration officials. In addition, while in Washington, municipal officials have opportunities to network and share best practices with each other.

This year's conference was held March 10–13 and drew more than 2,500 municipal leaders from around the country, including 80-plus from Colorado. The conference focused on rebuilding America's infrastructure from bridges to broadband, with key sessions including an address from 2019 National League of Cities President and Gary, Indiana, Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson; a general session panel on infrastructure; sessions with members of the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives; and a direct discussion with senior advisor and counselor to President Donald Trump, Kellyanne Conway. In addition, several

smaller breakout sessions were held on a number of issues of municipal interest.

The March meeting is also an opportunity for the various NLC federal advocacy committees to discuss activities and efforts supporting NLC's National Municipal Policy, which is a compilation of federal policy positions adopted by the full NLC membership at the annual City Summit Conference in November. These positions focus on federal actions, programs, and legislation that directly impact municipalities and guide all of NLC's federal advocacy efforts. Colorado has always been well-represented on the various NLC committees, including past and current chairs and vice-chairs.

Over the past several years, the Colorado Municipal League has provided added value to the trip by setting up even more opportunities for our delegation to network and learn. This year, members had the opportunity to travel to Capitol Hill to hear from most of Colorado's delegation to the House of Representatives, followed by a trip to the U.S. Department of Transportation to talk with officials about FAA implementation of the Denver Metroplex project and critical

transportation infrastructure funding. On the final day of the conference, members of the state's contingency, including some of the youth commissioners from Colorado municipalities, were able to meet with Sen. Cory Gardner. That breakfast meeting usually includes both senators, but Sen. Michael Bennet had an unavoidable conflict and his very capable staff filled in.

A highlight of this past trip were the acknowledgements by both Sens. Gardner and Bennet of CML's recently retired executive director, Sam Mamet. Both senators presented tributes to Mamet's 40 years of service to CML and municipal officials past and present.

CML encourages members to get involved with and attend next year's Congressional Cities Conference, March 8–11, 2020. CML will again arrange opportunities for members to enhance their conference experience with opportunities to meet with Colorado's delegation and key agencies or organizations, if possible.

In addition, NLC's City Summit will be held Nov. 20–23 in San Antonio, Texas. Information for both conferences can be found at www.nlc.org.

STATEWIDE PERSPECTIVE: COLORADO'S CLEAN ENERGY FUTURE, AND HOW LOCAL COMMUNITIES ARE LEADING THE WAY

By Will Toor, Colorado Energy Office executive director



Why Clean Energy Matters

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and a statewide transition to clean energy are integral to preserving and protecting Colorado's way of life and central to the mission of the Colorado Energy Office (CEO). Transitioning to clean energy preserves and protects the health of our communities and natural environment, provides access to lower-cost clean energy resources for rural and urban areas, increases investment and economic growth opportunities, and expands clean energy jobs.

A statewide transition to clean energy also underpins Colorado's commitment to climate action. The warming climate is already

impacting communities across the state. Colorado is very vulnerable to these impacts — increased risks of catastrophic wildfires, greater likelihood of droughts, increased flood risks, not to mention the loss of alpine ecosystems and the negative impacts to our ski industry. A recent study found that if we do not limit emissions, the average Denver summer will have more than 34 days a year over 100 degrees by the end of the century. Water, energy, public health, transportation, agriculture, and tourism — climate challenges will affect everyone and require collaborative solutions involving state and local governments, industry across sectors and communities.

To address Colorado's two largest sources of emissions — the power sector and transportation — the state is working to transition to 100 percent clean electricity generation by 2040 and rapidly expand the electrification of vehicles. By engaging with and supporting local communities, CEO will cultivate increased consumer choice, consumer cost savings, economic growth, and energy diversification. Communities across the state should have access to the economic, health, and environmental benefits of emissions reduction.

CEO and other state agencies (Colorado Department of Local Affairs, Office of Economic Development and International Trade,

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, and the Colorado Department of Transportation) currently are working in partnership on ways to bolster Colorado's resilience and help communities achieve clean energy and climate mitigation goals.

The Power of Cities and Towns to Create a Clean Energy Future

Leadership from municipalities is critically important in the fight against climate change. Cities and towns are uniquely positioned to advance solutions in buildings, locally sited renewable energy, and transportation. Local communities across the state are already undertaking sustainability solutions, climate action, and clean energy transition planning with a focus on energy efficiency, renewables, and emissions reduction.

In addition to state resources, nongovernmental organizations have formed to help cities and towns move forward. The Compact of Colorado Communities (compactofcoloradocommunities.org) is focused on building capacity of local governments and communities to rapidly scale up and advance climate action planning. Colorado Communities for Climate Action (CC4CA, cc4ca.org) is a coalition of local governments working for state and federal climate-protection actions to complement local efforts.

To get involved and move forward now with climate action and clean energy transition planning, municipalities can:

1 Adopt updated energy codes for new buildings

One transformational lever available to local governments is adopting the most recent International Energy

Conservation Code (IECC). IECC addresses the design of building envelopes and mechanical, lighting, and power systems through requirements that emphasize energy performance. The most cost-effective way to improve the energy efficiency of buildings is at the time of construction. Adopting a building energy code reduces energy demand and emissions for the life of a building while protecting the health and safety of its occupants. Cities and towns can also build EV-ready requirements into their codes as both Fort Collins and Golden have. More how-to information is available from the Southwest Energy Efficiency Project at swenergy.org/cracking-the-code-on-ev-ready-building-codes.

CEO provides no-cost, customized technical assistance for the implementation and enforcement of building codes to municipal governments and boards of county commissioners. CEO also provides residential and commercial energy codes education to builders, designers, engineers, and architects through in-person trainings and webinars taught by code experts. Colorado's training efforts have placed the state in the position where over 90 percent of construction activity occurs in communities that have adopted the 2009 IECC or newer — a list of these local building energy code leaders can be found at colorado.gov/energyoffice/energy-codes.

By adopting requirements that go beyond 2009 IECC, municipalities can go further, saving residents and businesses even more money in energy bills while preparing buildings to be near net zero energy, in which renewable energy generated by on-

site solar equals or exceeds the net energy use of the building over the course of the year. Fort Collins, Lone Tree, Louisville, Telluride, Trinidad, Parker, and Vail have already adopted 2018 IECC, and a number of communities have adopted custom codes that go well beyond the IECC.

2 Promote energy efficiency and renewable energy in existing buildings and homes

Commercial buildings and residential homes consume more than 42 percent of energy in Colorado. By utilizing energy efficiency and renewable energy, Colorado building owners and residents can realize reductions in monthly utility bills, improved indoor air quality, enhanced comfort and health, as well as increased property values.

CEO's Energy Performance Contracting program provides an innovative financing technique that allows public jurisdictions to use utility cost savings to pay for efficiency upgrades to facilities. CEO also partners with Western Resource Advocates to promote opportunities within EPC for water efficiency and water meter upgrades. To date, 36 cities and towns have utilized EPC to improve energy and water efficiency performance of municipal buildings, libraries, parks, community centers as well as water and wastewater treatment plants in communities across Colorado; a list of these municipalities can be found at colorado.gov/energyoffice/energy-performance-contracting.

Cities and towns have the ability to promote sustainable choices and behaviors by their residents. Building owners can use CEO's Colorado Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) program

(copace.com) to modernize building energy infrastructure, lower energy costs, and increase building comfort and asset value — all with no upfront costs. C-PACE allows owners of eligible commercial and industrial buildings to finance up to 100 percent of energy efficiency, renewable energy, and water conservation improvements.

Homeowners interested in energy efficiency and renewable energy projects for their homes can utilize CEO's Colorado Residential Energy Upgrade (RENU) Loan (colorado.gov/energyoffice/colorado-renu-loan), a low-cost statewide residential loan program. Eligible home energy improvement projects include HVAC equipment, insulation and air sealing, windows, ENERGY STAR appliances, solar PV, and solar thermal. CEO pre-authorizes contractors who provide statewide service coverage to all 64 counties.

Cities and towns also can require disclosure of energy use in existing buildings. The City of Denver released its Energize Denver benchmarking building ordinance in 2018. Buildings in Denver larger than 25,000 square feet are required to annually assess and report energy performance using the free ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager tool available at energystar.gov. Denver publishes the building energy performance data at energizedenver.org to enable the market to better value energy efficiency.

3 Embrace the transition to electric vehicles

In Colorado, transportation greatly contributes to air pollution. Children and adults with asthma and other chronic health conditions are especially vulnerable to this

pollution. In January, Gov. Jared Polis issued an Executive Order “Supporting a Transition to Zero Emission Vehicles” to accelerate the widespread electrification of cars, buses, trucks, and other vehicles across Colorado to provide clean air, public health, and climate benefits. This transition also delivers substantial economic benefits, from lowered consumer operation costs to economic development and jobs to build the infrastructure that supports electrification.

Colorado cities and towns are already working toward this transition and EV-readiness in their communities, and municipalities can follow the lead of those already stepping up and taking advantage of available planning toolkits and funding opportunities to support this transition.

GoEV City (goevcity.org) provides a toolkit of local policies, strategies, and programs to help Colorado cities advance transition to EVs. GoEV City's approach to transportation electrification includes policy recommendations for public transit, municipal fleets, taxis, ride-hail services, and personal car ownership. GoEV City's tools have been implemented in cities, counties, states, and utilities in Colorado and across the country.

Managed by CEO and the Regional Air Quality Council, Charge Ahead Colorado provides funds to local governments for EV chargers and EVs. To date, Charge Ahead Colorado has awarded 50 municipalities a total of 221 EV chargers and six municipalities a total of 53 EVs. More information and a list of Charge

Ahead Colorado municipal awardees can be found at colorado.gov/energyoffice/charge-ahead-colorado.

Refuel Coaches (colorado.gov/energyoffice/refuel-coaching) are available statewide and free of charge through CEO's Refuel Colorado program to help municipalities identify advantages, monetary savings, and available incentives associated with converting to electric fleets. Refuel Coach 4CORE (fourcore.org), through Ride And Drive EV events, has increased consumer awareness and EV ownership in Durango.

In 2018, the City of Fort Collins developed an Electric Vehicle Readiness Roadmap to support current and future EV adoption within its community. It includes items for its efforts to inform policies and programs, and strategies for increasing and leveraging investment in EVs and charging infrastructure.

As we move toward a prosperous and healthy clean energy future for Colorado, no one is better suited to help maximize the benefits of this transition than local governments, which understand the unique needs of their communities. The Colorado Energy Office looks forward to a state and local partnership to achieve this clean energy vision.

For more information about CEO programs for municipalities, visit colorado.gov/energyoffice.



GET TO KNOW: Jennifer Coates, Ridgway town administrator

How did you end up in public service?

In 2005, I went back to school to work on obtaining a master's degree. The University of Colorado Denver and Colorado Department of Local Affairs offered an internship program with two years of experience working in local government. The Town of Ridgway submitted an application and I wanted to live in Ridgway, so I signed up.

What do you enjoy most about your position?

I truly enjoy community building — engaging the community and our local government team around what is possible in a way that immerses local government in the local community to realize a common vision.

What is the most challenging part of your position?

It can be difficult to gracefully balance the desires and urgencies of the community with the resources available to achieve them.

What are some exciting things going on in Ridgway?

We have a burgeoning new business and artist community, which we are working to support with our Space to Create initiative, a work/live affordable, workforce housing project. The Space to Create project is planned to provide 26 affordable rental housing units and some nonresidential space that will anchor our historic downtown.

What project or undertaking are you most proud of and why?

I am most proud of our amazing, innovative, and committed team in Ridgway Town Hall. We have an incredible team and visionary town council, which means we can do anything. Anything, not everything.

Second to that would be our downtown investment partnership project: 13 years and \$13 million.

What is the funniest or strangest thing to happen while at work?

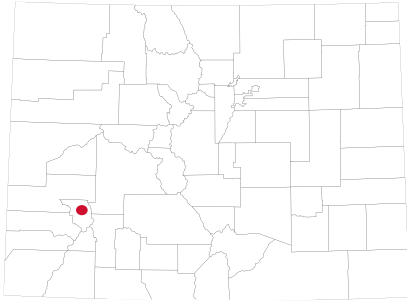
The most controversial product of our \$13 million downtown renovation has been the colorful benches. I can only think that this is the sign of a very successful project. Keep talking to me about the benches ...

What website(s) and/or publication(s) do you refer to when seeking information?

I use CML, the Colorado Department of Local Affairs, and ICMA websites and resources quite a bit.

What book are you currently reading? Are you enjoying it?

I have not read a book in a long time ... I can hardly watch a movie without falling asleep.



Get to know the Town of Ridgway

Incorporated on March 20, 1891

Population: 1,003

www.town.ridgway.co.us



Jennifer “Jen” Coates grew up in central Illinois and headed west after graduating from college. She received her undergraduate degree in political science from the University of Missouri-Columbia and her master’s degree in the same field from the University of Colorado. After working in the private and nonprofit sectors in Arizona and southwestern Colorado, Jen moved to Ridgway in January 2006 and has loved working in its town hall and community ever since. During her tenure as town administrator, she has led the community toward a more sustainable future that is directed and nurtured by Ridgway residents and businesses. This includes significant investments in main street development, creative industries, street and drainage infrastructure, parks improvements, placemaking, wayfinding, water supply security, affordable housing, and more.





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