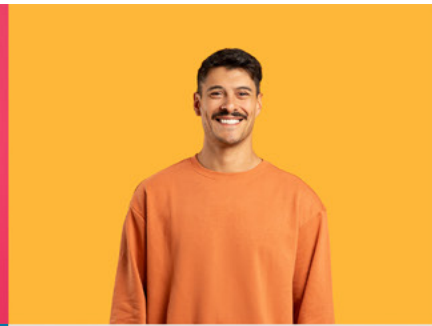
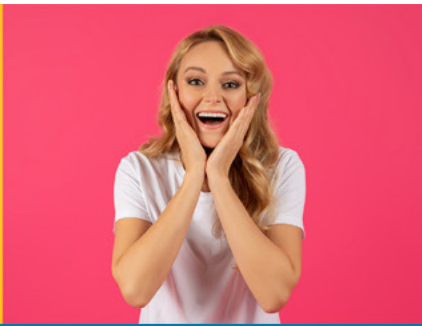


Colorado Municipalities

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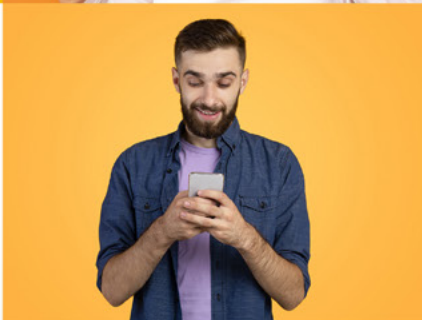
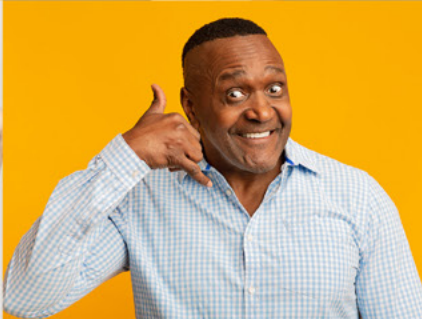
ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNICATION





**“One of the biggest lessons
we’ve learned in Lakewood is that
residents don’t necessarily
connect with projects, policies,
or programs — they connect
with people.”**

— ANGELA RAMIREZ,
LAKEWOOD COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER





ABOUT SOME OF OUR CONTRIBUTORS



KEVIN BOMMER IS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE COLORADO MUNICIPAL LEAGUE, WHERE HE HAS SERVED ON STAFF SINCE 1999. HE WAS APPOINTED EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR IN APRIL 2019 AND REPORTS TO THE LEAGUE'S 21-MEMBER EXECUTIVE BOARD. OVER MORE THAN TWO DECADES WITH CML, KEVIN HAS HELD MULTIPLE LEADERSHIP ROLES, INCLUDING DEPUTY DIRECTOR, LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY MANAGER, AND LOBBYIST. FROM 2000 TO 2019, HE PLAYED A CENTRAL ROLE IN SHAPING AND LEADING THE LEAGUE'S STATE LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY PROGRAM AND HELPED GUIDE THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF CML'S STRATEGIC PLAN. IN 2024, HE WAS HONORED WITH THE NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES' JOHN G. STUTZ AWARD, RECOGNIZING 25 YEARS OF SERVICE TO MUNICIPALITIES THROUGH CML.



TODD BARNES IS THE COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR FOR THE CITY OF THORNTON AND THE CHAIR OF THE CML COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT SECTION. HE STARTED WORKING IN THORNTON IN 2001 AFTER WORKING FOR NEARLY A DECADE AS A NEWS PRODUCER FOR 9NEWS AND THEN OPERATING HIS OWN PRODUCTION COMPANY, WHICH CONTRACTED TO PRODUCE SHOWS FOR DISCOVERY CHANNEL, HOME & GARDEN TV, AND FOOD NETWORK, AMONG OTHERS. TODD SERVED AS CHAIRPERSON FOR THE COLORADO CHANNEL AUTHORITY BOARD, WHICH OVERSEES VIDEO PRODUCTION FOR THE STATE LEGISLATURE, BEING APPOINTED TO THE POSITION BY GOVS. JARED POLIS AND JOHN HICKENLOOPER. FOR EIGHT YEARS, TODD SERVED AS THE PRESIDENT OF THE COLORADO COMMUNICATIONS AND UTILITY ALLIANCE (CCUA). TODD IS A COLORADO NATIVE AND NOW ENJOYS TRAVELING AROUND THE STATE TEACHING COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA RELATIONS TO OTHER GOVERNMENTS IN ADDITION TO HIS ROLE WITH THORNTON.



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DURANGO POLICE CHIEF **BRICE CURRENT** HAS MORE THAN 25 YEARS OF PUBLIC SAFETY EXPERIENCE, BACKED BY A BACHELOR'S IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND MASTER'S IN PUBLIC SAFETY LEADERSHIP. HE BEGAN WITH THE SAN JUAN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE IN NEW MEXICO, SERVING NEARLY 20 YEARS IN PATROL, UNDERCOVER NARCOTICS, TACTICAL OPERATIONS, AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS. HE SPENT MANY YEARS ON SWAT AS A SNIPER AND COMMANDER. HE DEVELOPED A STRONG BACKGROUND IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS, FOCUSED ON ACCOUNTABILITY, INTEGRITY, AND PUBLIC TRUST. BRICE IS A GRADUATE OF NORTHWESTERN'S SCHOOL OF POLICE STAFF AND COMMAND, FBI-LEEDA, AND PERF'S SENIOR MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE FOR POLICE. HE JOINED THE DURANGO POLICE DEPARTMENT IN 2019 AND BECAME CHIEF IN APRIL 2024. AS CHIEF, HE EMPHASIZES COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS, PROFESSIONALISM, TRANSPARENCY, COLLABORATION, AND RESPONSIBLE USE OF TECHNOLOGY TO ENHANCE SAFETY.

CORRECTION

In the April 2026 issue of *Colorado Municipalities*, the article "Colorado municipalities shape the Centennial State" included a list of municipalities incorporated in Colorado by 1875 that unintentionally omitted Black Hawk and Central City. The list was developed by History Colorado using the 1951-1955 State of Colorado Year Book, created by the Colorado State Planning Commission. Unfortunately, this document listed an incorrect date of incorporation for Black Hawk and Central City. History Colorado has updated its statehood research records to reflect the correct incorporation date of Black Hawk and Central City. CML thanks City of Black Hawk Mayor David Spellman for catching the error.

ABOUT SOME OF OUR CONTRIBUTORS



KRISTIN KEMP IS CML'S ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER. SHE OVERSEES CML MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY AND RELATED PROGRAMS, WHICH INCLUDE PUBLICATIONS AND TRAINING. SHE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THESE PROGRAMS AND OVERSEES CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS. KRISTIN PARTNERS WITH THE LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY AND LEGAL TEAMS TO PROMOTE THE VALUE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT. SHE JOINED THE LEAGUE IN 2026.



ANGELA RAMIREZ IS COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER FOR THE CITY OF LAKEWOOD, WHERE SHE LEADS STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS, SOCIAL MEDIA, AND DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS. BEFORE JOINING LAKEWOOD IN 2023, ANGELA SERVED AS A SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGIST

FOR THE CITY OF TAMPA, FLORIDA. THROUGHOUT HER CAREER, SHE HAS FOCUSED ON LEVERAGING EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES, DIGITAL TRENDS, AND INNOVATIVE STORYTELLING TECHNIQUES TO INFORM, ENGAGE AND CONNECT RESIDENTS. ANGELA SERVES AS CO-VICE PRESIDENT OF THE GOVERNMENT SOCIAL MEDIA ASSOCIATION (GSMA) AND REGULARLY SHARES INSIGHTS ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY WITH PEERS ACROSS THE PROFESSION. SHE HOLDS A MASTER OF ARTS IN DIGITAL STRATEGY AND A GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN SOCIAL MEDIA STUDIES FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA.



JEN SCHREUDER HAS BEEN COMMUNICATING TO THE PUBLIC IN VARIOUS WAYS FOR MORE THAN 25 YEARS. WITH A DEGREE FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM, SHE STARTED AS A TV NEWS ANCHOR AND REPORTER IN MONTANA AND

COLORADO. SHE TOOK SOME TIME TO SOLELY COMMUNICATE WITH HER KIDDOS AS A STAY-AT-HOME MOM AND THEN RETURNED TO WORK PART-TIME IN THE CITY OF COLORADO SPRINGS' COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT. SHE NOW MANAGES VIDEO PRODUCTION FOR THE CITY, OVERSEEING CONTENT CREATION, SOCIAL MEDIA, THE CITY'S GOVERNMENT ACCESS TV STATION AND VIDEO PROJECTS FOR ALL CITY DEPARTMENTS. SHE ALSO ENJOYS HOSTING THE AWARD-WINNING GOVERNMENT PODCAST "BEHIND THE SPRINGS." A COLORADO NATIVE, JEN ENJOYS SPENDING TIME OUTDOORS WITH HER FAMILY AND FRIENDS.



LINDA CARPIO SHAPLEY IS A LONGTIME COLORADO JOURNALIST WHO WAS MANAGING EDITOR AT THE DENVER POST AND COLORADO POLITICS AND PUBLISHER AT COLORADO COMMUNITY MEDIA. SHE IS CURRENTLY INTERIM

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MINSOO SONG IS A SENIOR INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM COORDINATOR WITH THE CITY OF AURORA'S OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL AND IMMIGRANT AFFAIRS (OIIA). IN THIS ROLE, SHE SUPPORTS INTERNATIONAL PROTOCOL AND OVERSEAS PROGRAMS WHILE ALSO SERVING

IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE COMMUNITIES. SHE MANAGES AURORA'S CITYWIDE LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN, ENSURING LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE SERVICES MEET THE COMMUNICATION NEEDS OF THE CITY'S DIVERSE POPULATION. MINSOO IS A CERTIFIED EQUITY CHAMPION AND HAS COMPLETED BOTH THE AURORA NATURAL HELPERS TRAINING AND THE TRAIN-THE-TRAINER PROGRAM. SHE OVERSEES AND SUPPORTS NONPROFIT PARTNERS IN DELIVERING THE AURORA NATURAL HELPERS TRAINING. SHE IS A PROUD GRADUATE OF LEADERSHIP AURORA, CLASS OF 2023. SHE EARNED HER B.A. IN HISTORY FROM DUKSUNG WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY IN KOREA AND HER M.A. IN ART HISTORY, WITH AN EMPHASIS IN MUSEUM STUDIES, FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF DENVER.

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Emma Donahue, legislative & policy advocate

Haley Doyne, receptionist & administrative assistant

Elizabeth Haskell, legislative & policy advocate

Kharyl Jackson, marketing & communications specialist

Kristin Kemp, engagement & communications manager

Lara Larkin, executive assistant

Maeve McHugh, municipal research analyst

Alex Miller, publication & design specialist

Karen Rosen, meetings & events planner

Robert Sheesley, general counsel

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Allison Wright, finance & administration manager

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PURCHASING

Pam Roeding, Longmont procurement specialist

COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT

Todd Barnes, Thornton communications director

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTORS

John Burke, Westminster city engineer

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Tammy Hart, Kiowa mayor

DISTRICT 6

Kirk Crespín, Lamar mayor

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DISTRICT 10

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DISTRICT 15

Ken Riley, Keystone mayor



About CML

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.

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.

Letters to the editor

Have thoughts about an article that you read in *Colorado Municipalities*?

Want to share those thoughts with your colleagues across the state?

CML welcomes thought-provoking letters to the editor! Send comments to CML Engagement & Communications Manager Kristin Kemp at kkemp@cml.org.

Advertise

Each issue of *Colorado Municipalities* reaches 4,000 municipal officials and decision makers. To reach those who lead Colorado cities and towns, contact CML Engagement & Communications Manager Kristin Kemp, kkemp@cml.org.

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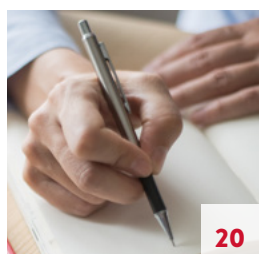
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Go digital



An e-version of *Colorado Municipalities* is available on cml.org once the issue is published. Between editions, keep up with CML on Facebook and LinkedIn.

Join CML

For associate membership information, contact CML Marketing & Communications Specialist Kharyl Jackson at kjackson@cml.org.



Your member-owned building is located two blocks south of the Capitol at 1144 Sherman St. in Denver. Members are always welcome.

CML Executive Board members elected at Annual Conference

Board selects officers to lead CML for the coming year

BY KEVIN BOMMER, CML EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Good governance was a central theme throughout CML's Annual Conference. Governance of the League itself also rests with member municipalities participating in the Annual Business Meeting held each year during the conference.

At the meeting on June 24, 2026, members approved the 2026-2027 CML Policy Statement and amendments to the CML Bylaws. The centerpiece of the meeting was the election of more than half of the CML Executive Board.

Members elected four representatives from the small population category, three each from the medium and large categories, and one from the largest category. All will serve two-year terms except for one small category representative elected to complete a one-year term because of a vacancy in April.

Nine candidates competed for four seats in the small population category. Members reelected Norwood Mayor Candy Meehan, Kiowa Town Administrator Kim Boyd, and Estes Park Town Attorney Dan Kramer. They also elected Glendale Mayor Pro Tem Storm Gloor. Gloor will serve a one-year term.

In the medium population category, members reelected Golden Mayor Laura Weinberg. Northglenn Mayor Pro Tem Shannon Lukeman-Hiromasa returns to the Board after previously serving, and Durango City Manager José Madrigal joins the Board for the first time.



Members reelected Parker Mayor Joshua Rivero in the large population category. Centennial Mayor Pro Tem Amy Tharp, who was appointed in January to fill a vacancy, was elected to a full term. Boulder Council Member Matt Benjamin, a former chair of the CML Policy Committee, also was elected.

Aurora Council Member Angela Lawson was reelected to a two-year term in the largest population category. Under the newly amended CML Bylaws, all three municipalities in that category — Denver, Aurora, and Colorado Springs — may now directly appoint a qualified representative to the CML Board.

Following the Annual Business Meeting, the newly constituted Board held its first meeting and elected officers for 2026-2027:

- President: Laura Weinberg, Golden mayor
 - Vice president: Carol Saade, Breckenridge council member
 - Secretary-treasurer: Joshua Rivero, Parker mayor
- They will be joined by Lone Tree City Manager Seth Hoffman, who will serve as immediate past president.
- CML thanks everyone who ran in the 2026 election. Because Board terms are staggered, half of the 18 elected seats will be on the ballot during CML's Annual Conference in Keystone, June 22-25, 2027. Members interested in running for the Board or learning more about it can contact CML Executive Director Kevin Bommer, kbommer@cml.org.



Staff photo by Alex Miller

The 2026-2027 CML Executive board, from left, Immediate Past President Seth Hoffman, Lone Tree city manager; President Laura Weinberg, Golden mayor; Dave Frank, Montrose city councilor; Shannon Lukeman-Hiromasa, Northglenn mayor pro tem, Dan Kramer, Estes Park town attorney; José Madrigal, Durango city manager; Duane Gurulé, Rocky Ford mayor; Storm Gloor, Glendale mayor pro tem; Anna Stout, Grand Junction councilmember; Amy Tharp, Centennial mayor pro tem; Kim Boyd, Kiowa town administrator; Candy Meehan, Norwood mayor; Secretary-treasurer Joshua Rivero, Parker mayor; Jason Gray, Castle Rock mayor; Sarah Johnson, Colorado Springs city clerk; and Sharon Davis, Arvada council member. Not pictured: Matt Benjamin, Boulder councilmember; Liz Hensley, Alamosa mayor pro tem; Angela Lawson, Aurora council member; Vice President Carol Saade, Breckenridge council member; Scott Trainor, Fountain city manager.

2026-2027 CML Executive Board officers



President

Laura Weinberg,
Golden mayor



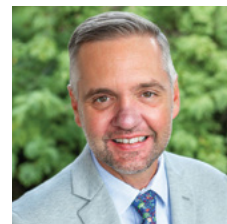
Vice President

Carol Saade,
Breckenridge council member



Secretary-treasurer

Joshua Rivero,
Parker mayor



Immediate Past President

Seth Hoffman,
Lone Tree city manager



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Behind the Springs

The secret to Colorado Spring's
standout podcast? Keeping it simple

‘Behind the Springs’ host explains how to produce a successful municipal podcast

By **JEN SCHREUDER**,

Colorado Springs senior communications specialist

*“The less I know, the better.
The less we have to do, the better.”*

These statements don’t apply to most of the work I do, or I probably wouldn’t have a job! They do, however, apply to our City of Colorado Springs podcast, “Behind the Springs,” which tells the stories of our local government at work from the people who know it best.

Let me start with the importance of not knowing. As the host for the past seven years, I have found great benefit in approaching my interviews with basic knowledge about the subject matter. That way, I can ask some of the questions our residents might ask. I can encourage guests to share the most important information that would be helpful to the most people.

We explore a huge number of topics on our podcast; everything from the mayor’s priorities to wildfire mitigation to our community’s new senior center. No matter who I’m interviewing or what we’re talking about, I strive to keep

things simple so that our listeners get bite-sized pieces of information about the work of their local government employees and elected leaders. It’s my assumption that most residents don’t want to dive deep, but they do want to be aware of what’s happening and how their tax dollars are spent. Plus, I work to focus on the person I’m interviewing and not just the job they do or the news they’re sharing. That helps humanize local government and build trust.

When it comes to the technical side of producing a podcast, doing less is the key to our success. We have created a high-quality, efficient production system. We are fortunate to have a small studio space and several people sharing the workload. We have great equipment and record both audio and video to share each episode on multiple platforms. We do not edit the conversations for two reasons. Most importantly, it cuts down on our post-production time and allows us to release the episodes the same day we record them, if desired. Plus, we can assure our listeners that we do not alter the content. What was said

RECENT EPISODES



SAFETY SNAPSHOT WITH CHIEF VASQUEZ

A conversation with Colorado Springs’ police chief on drones, speed safety cameras, and crime trends.

tinyurl.com/CSpolice



TALKIN’ TREES

Find out how the Colorado Springs forestry team cares for thousands of trees across the city.

tinyurl.com/CStree-talk



Host Jen Schreuder interviews Colorado Springs City Forester Matt Puckett on an episode of the “Behind the Springs” podcast.

is what you hear, and it’s not perfectly polished! I believe this authenticity also builds trust.

When a colleague and I started “Behind the Springs” in 2019, we could not find any local governments in the country producing a podcast. A law enforcement agency in Kansas provided a few podcast pointers and then we

took the leap. Planning, logistical, and financial discussions are important before you take the plunge. If you have the support from leadership, however, just begin. Don’t overthink, keep it simple, shine a light on your employees, and invite people to learn about the important work of local government!



READY, SET, GO!

Colorado Springs Fire Chief explains how the department is preparing for wildfire in a hot, dry year.

tinyurl.com/CSready-set-go



MAJOR MILESTONES

Local historians talk about the importance of pausing and reflecting as Colorado turns 150 and the U.S. turns 250.

tinyurl.com/CSmilestones

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Lakewood uses social media to cut through the noise

By **ANGELA RAMIREZ**, Lakewood communications manager

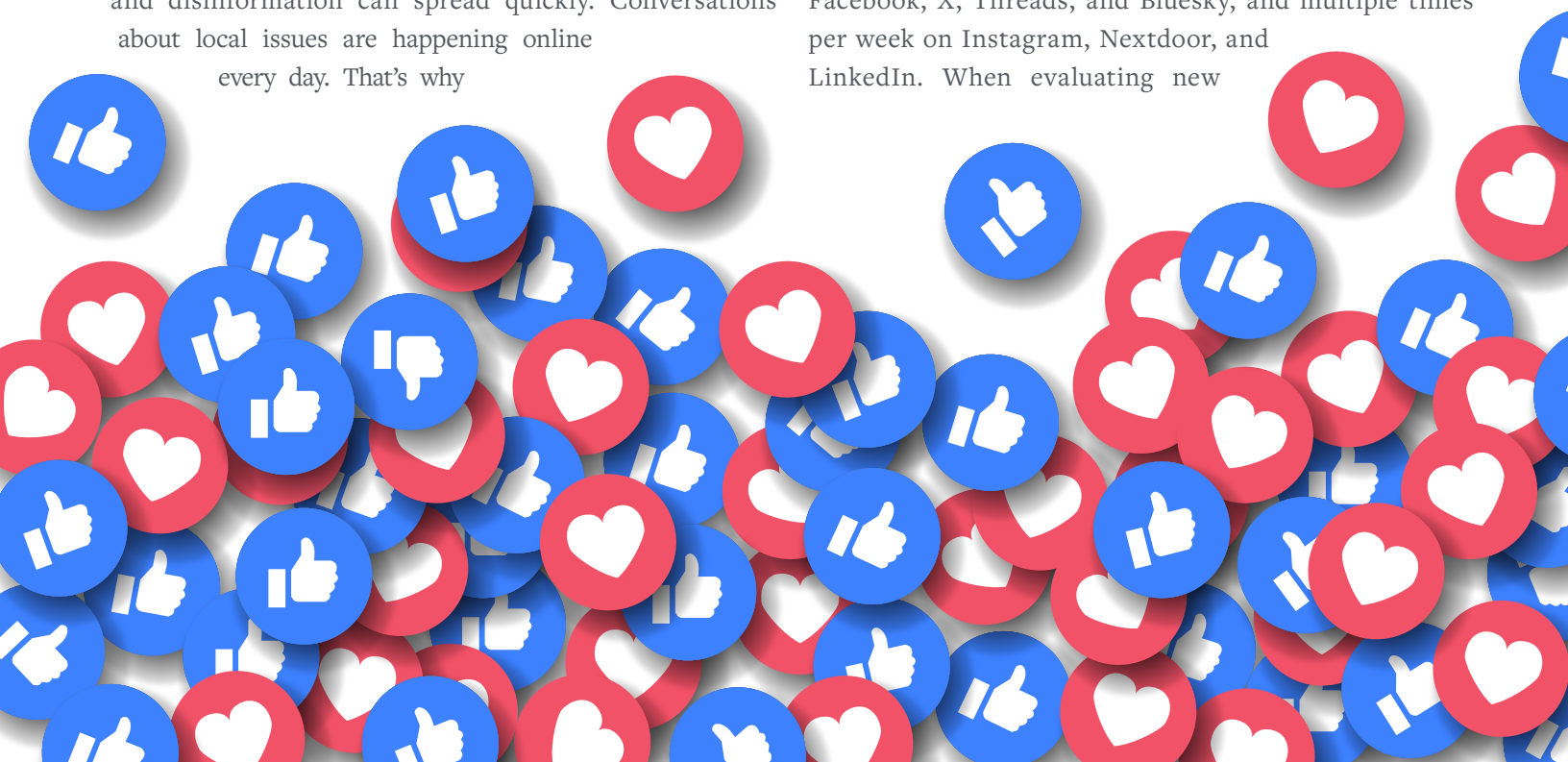
IN today's digital world, information constantly competes for attention. Residents scroll through news headlines, community groups, family updates, and viral videos — all from the palms of their hands. For local governments, this presents both a challenge and an opportunity: how do we break through the noise and ensure residents have access to accurate, reliable information?

Social media has fundamentally changed how people consume information and engage with their communities. It has also become a space where misinformation and disinformation can spread quickly. Conversations about local issues are happening online every day. That's why

it's so important for municipalities to have a presence in these digital spaces and serve as trusted voices in the community.

At the City of Lakewood, social media is an important part of our overall communications strategy. We use it not only to share information, but to tell the story behind the service, create meaningful engagement opportunities, and connect residents with the people, projects, and programs that make our community thrive.

Lakewood is active on multiple social media channels, posting an average of five times per day on platforms like Facebook, X, Threads, and Bluesky, and multiple times per week on Instagram, Nextdoor, and LinkedIn. When evaluating new



platforms, we consider where our residents are spending time, whether the platform supports our communications goals, and if we have the capacity to maintain it consistently.

While every community's needs are different, maintaining a consistent presence helps ensure residents can find timely, relevant information when they need it. Yet even the most important information can go unnoticed if it doesn't reach the right audience. That's why our approach focuses on three key goals: stopping the scroll, sparking engagement, and showcasing impact. Here are a few lessons we've learned in Lakewood that have helped us do just that.

1 STOP THE SCROLL

News headlines, sports highlights, family photos and viral videos are all competing for attention in residents' feeds. Capturing that attention requires both art and science: the creativity to tell compelling stories and strategy to understand how residents consume and engage with content online.

In Lakewood, short-form vertical video and swipeable carousel posts have become some of our most effective communication tools because they align with how people

naturally consume content online. These formats allow us to break down information into concise, visual, and easy-to-understand pieces.

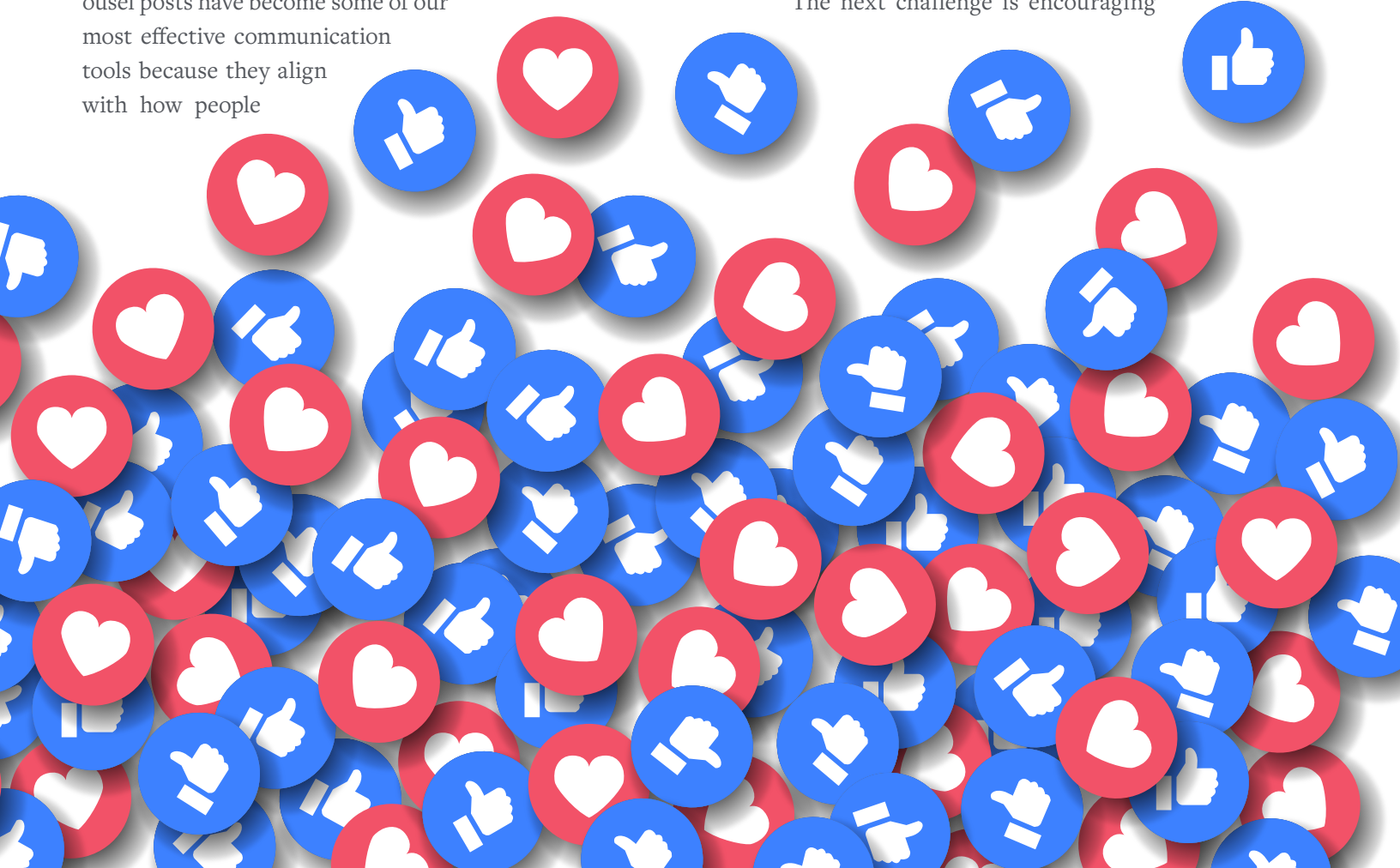
We also look for opportunities to thoughtfully participate in trends when they align with our mission and message. One of Lakewood's most successful posts was inspired by a viral trend parodying entertainers Siegfried & Joy. By adapting the trend to highlight a street maintenance project, we were able to connect with residents in a familiar format while still delivering meaningful information. The post generated more than 300,000 views and 30,000 interactions.

Not every trend is appropriate for government communications, and we certainly don't chase trends for the sake of being trendy. When a trend aligns with the message and audience, however, it can be an effective way to increase visibility and help important information break through the noise.

2 SPARK ENGAGEMENT

Getting residents to stop scrolling is only the first step.

The next challenge is encouraging



them to engage with the content. Engagement matters because social media platforms increasingly prioritize content that generates conversations, comments, and shares. When residents interact with a post, it is more likely to be shown to additional people, extending the reach of important information.

One tactic we've recently adopted is automated keyword replies on Instagram using Linktree. Residents can comment a specific keyword on a post and automatically receive a direct message with additional information or a link to learn more. Popularized by influencers and businesses, this tool has practical applications for local government as well, making it easier for residents to access resources and learn more with just a few taps.

We also focus on creating content people want to share. Some of our most successful posts are our "Good News" features, which use concise, scroll-stopping headlines to highlight positive news in the community. This style of post is commonly used by news media organizations to quickly communicate information and encourage sharing, and we've found it can be just as effective for local government. Whether celebrating a local success story, a unique service example, or a city milestone, these posts are designed to be easily digestible and highly shareable.

3 SHOWCASE IMPACT

While short-form content is excellent for capturing attention and driving engagement, some stories deserve a deeper dive.

One of the biggest lessons

we've learned in Lakewood is that residents don't necessarily connect with projects, policies, or programs — they connect with people. That's why some of our most meaningful content focuses on the story behind the service.

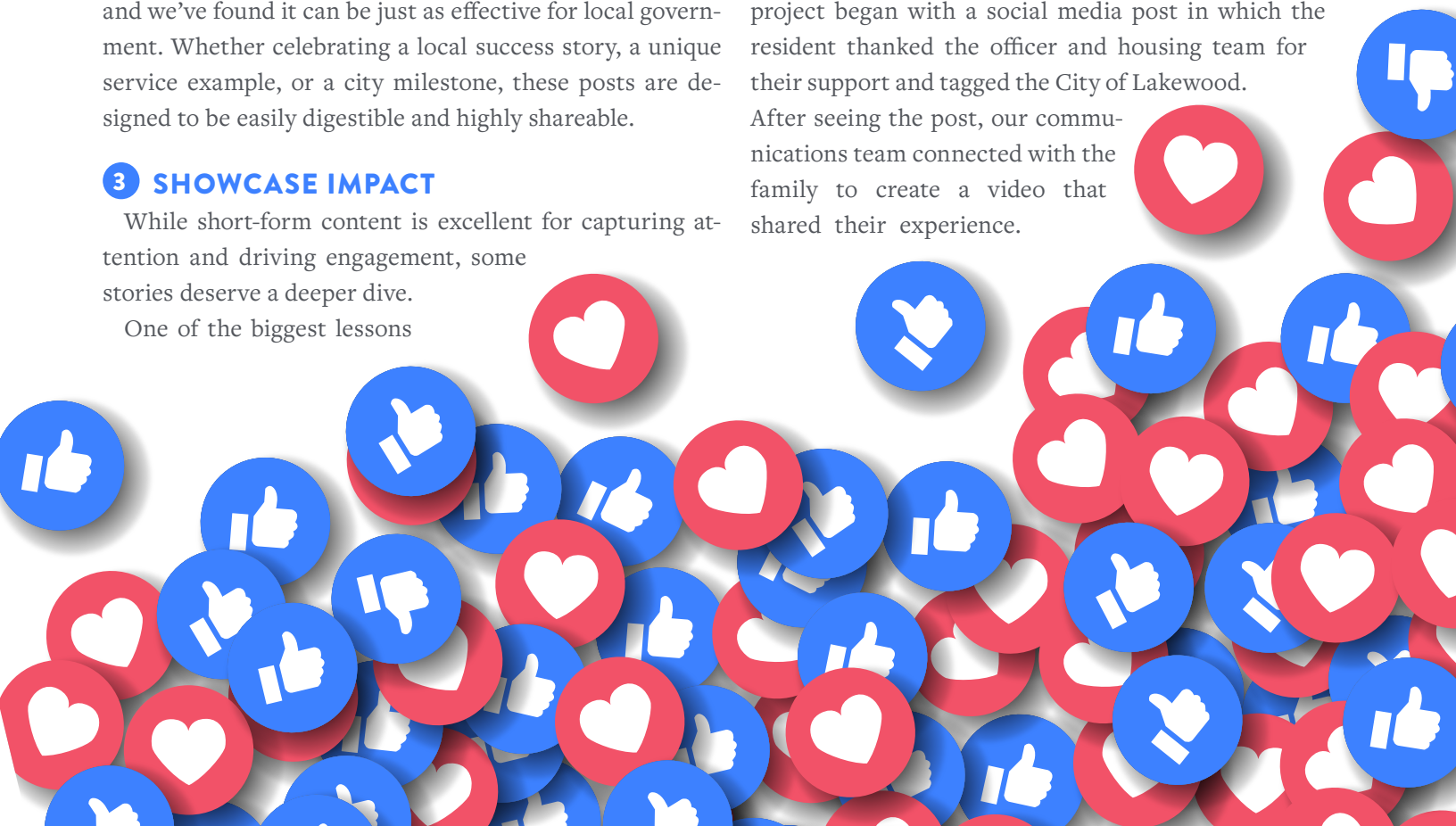
Our Unsung Heroes video series highlights city employees whose work often happens behind the scenes. Inspired in part by shows like *Dirty Jobs*, the series in-

troduces residents to the people championing recycling, repairing infrastructure, and carrying out the everyday jobs that keep our city running. By spotlighting the individuals behind the work, residents gain a deeper understanding of how local government serves the community every day. Just

as importantly, the series humanizes public service by putting faces to the people working hard for our community.

We've also found success in highlighting stories from our residents. One example is our Heart of Service video, which tells the story of how a Lakewood police officer and housing navigator helped a family transition from nearly a decade of living in motels into permanent housing. The project began with a social media post in which the resident thanked the officer and housing team for their support and tagged the City of Lakewood. After seeing the post, our communications team connected with the family to create a video that shared their experience.

SOME OF OUR MOST MEANINGFUL CONTENT FOCUSES ON THE STORY BEHIND THE SERVICE.



Stories like these help residents see the human impact behind local government services.

At its best, social media is not just about distributing information. It's about building trust, strengthening community connections, and helping residents better understand the value local government provides.

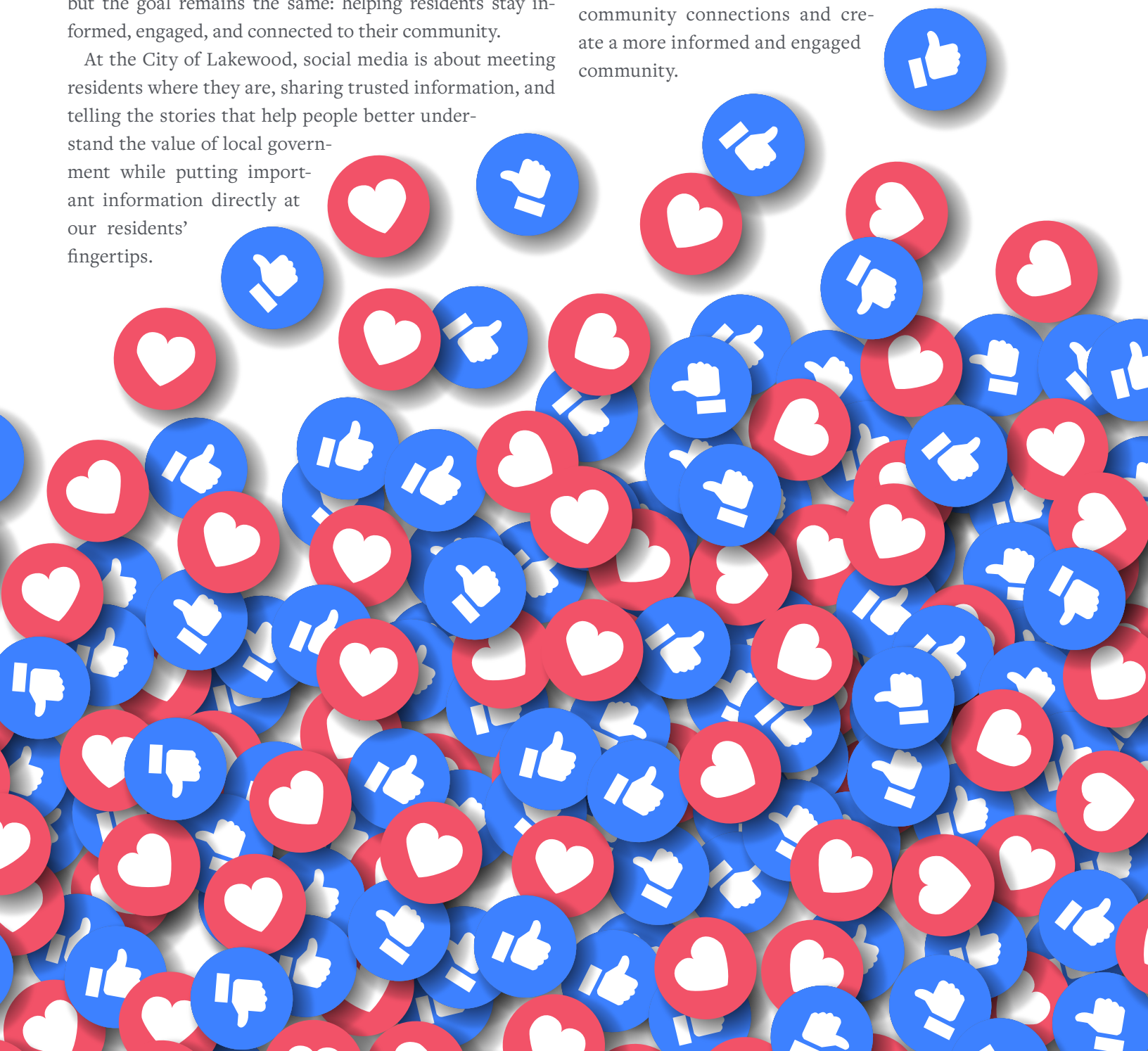
BUILDING TRUST IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Platforms, trends, and algorithms will continue to evolve, but the goal remains the same: helping residents stay informed, engaged, and connected to their community.

At the City of Lakewood, social media is about meeting residents where they are, sharing trusted information, and telling the stories that help people better understand the value of local government while putting important information directly at our residents' fingertips.

Just as importantly, those connections should be accessible to everyone. Creating content that is inclusive of residents with disabilities is a critical part of public service. Features such as alternative text, captions, and audio descriptions help ensure all community members can access the information they need and participate in the conversation.

Social media may be just one tool in the communications toolbox, but when used thoughtfully, it can help municipalities build trust, strengthen community connections and create a more informed and engaged community.





Adobe Stock

Public officials & the press

Trust is the key to building productive relationships with local journalists

By **LINDA SHAPLEY**,

interim CEO/president of Rocky Mountain Student Media at Colorado State University

In most news organizations, journalists abide by the Society of Professional Journalists' Code of Ethics: seek truth and report it, minimize harm, act independently, and be accountable and transparent.

You don't see "antagonize elected officials and government staffers" on that list.

That doesn't mean that journalists aren't going to take those folks to task when they need information, but most journalists don't view government officials as adversaries.

"Elected officials, especially in small places, are working for very little money, sometimes no money at all. They have a passion for serving the public and they, for the most part, want the truth out there as much as we do," said Erin McIntyre, co-owner and publisher of The Ouray County Plaindealer.

With more than 80% fewer journalists in the nation than there were in 2002, it may be more rare that municipalities are connecting with journalists, but among both groups, the consensus is that a relationship still matters.

"In some places, there's a perception that government leaders don't really need journalists anymore and that they can just ... push out their own message and try to control a narrative," McIntyre said. "They can try, but most constituents are pretty savvy and they're going to want an independent, trusted source, and that's usually not the government itself."

McIntyre had a few examples in the seven years that she and her husband have run the Plaindealer of when interactions did not go well, but more often than not, she said they've been able to build relationships with public servants where the officials felt com-

fortable giving them a heads up that a situation was forthcoming.

"Some of them actually see us as a resource for dealing with rumors and misinformation," she said. "We have a certain amount of trust built up for that sort of thing."

With those relationships, the trust is at the foundation, McIntyre said.

"The promise I've always made to them is that you're not going to like everything that we write, but I promise you we will try our best to get it right and be as fair as possible," she said. "It's one thing to say that, but actions over time will prove that out."

In Elbert County, communications director Wendy Manitta Holmes, APR, values the connection with local journalists because it's beneficial to building strong community relationships.

"Whether you're with county government, state government, federal



Unsplash image by Korie Cull

government or local government, there's one thing we all have in common, ... it is that declining trust in government by those we serve, and by journalists," she said.

"All of us who choose to be in government communication have to overcome, and there's really only one way to do that," Holmes said. "It takes time, it takes work, and it takes a mindset that you have to commit yourself to, which is: This is not a transactional relationship."

What Holmes instead tries to build, and what she hopes to receive from others she works with, is a trusting, mutually beneficial relationship, where it becomes a little bit more of a "dance" between the government and the media. She'll take newly elected officials to meet with reporters, or coach a staffer through an interview.

"Every time we're given the opportunity to sit with a reporter and teach them about local government, that's one more reporter who better understands what we do," she said. "It's an investment that, frankly, we are obligated to make."

Summer Nettles, a former television producer for the City and County of Denver's Channel 8, who went back to journalism to found The Canary Report, says the worst thing a communicator can do is not reply to their inquiries.

In the same way nature abhors a vacuum, "no comment" can be the space that allows misunderstandings (or, even worse, misinformation) to thrive.

"Think less about Occam's Razor and more about Rubik's Cube," Nettles said. "You can give me a direct an-

swer (the simplest answer, in Occam's Razor parlance), but a good journalist is going to continue to look for the indirect answer that helps tell a more complete story."

By not responding, that Rubik's Cube goes unsolved, which doesn't serve the community that needs the information.

Many journalists that I surveyed on LinkedIn gave similar advice: If you don't know or, in some cases, simply cannot say, just be open with them

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about that. If there's someone else who can provide information or background, send them to that person, or let them know you'll investigate and get back to them.

The best thing a staffer can say to a journalist? According to Ouray's McIntyre, it's three words.

"What's your deadline?" is huge," she said. "Considering deadlines is so important, because even though you're working with an outlet that ... is only publishing weekly, it shows that you're aware and you're agreeing to a timeframe of when to get back to somebody."

There's nothing wrong, also, with asking for help. Journalists I interviewed and those in my LinkedIn survey suggested media coaching, especially if there's a big initiative on the horizon.

"Communication is a skill," said Ruby Jones with Empower Media Exchange, a Denver group that trains organizations in storytelling. "It's not necessarily an instinct, and I think that people who are elected to public office or who are working in government or public service, they're not necessarily trained communicators in the areas that they work in. So, I think media readiness really helps leaders gain confidence when it comes to their own stories."

Even if coaching isn't in the budget, there are other ways to expand your skills. When she was with Douglas County, Holmes set up meetings with communications directors and PIOs in nearby cities, towns and special districts to share information and tactics.

"I don't necessarily think that we're offering much value when all we're trying to do is secure a story," she said. "(Journalists) are not there to be part of our communication team. They are a conduit between us and the public."

Sam Mamet, a longtime executive director with the Colorado Municipal League, said it's the relationship that makes the difference.

"You're going to have disagreements," he said. "By the same token, you have legitimate facts and information that you want to get across, but the relationship should not be adversarial. Communication is a two-way street, after all."



Municipal communications

Life in the information age

By **TODD BARNES**, Thornton communications director

IF “Jack” is the person handling communications for your municipality, he had better be nimble and be quick! Today’s communication environment has many professionals beginning the day wondering just how they may need to “pivot” to spring into action for the unique issues that lie ahead. Whether it is making sure your community knows about a change to an important event, a developing infrastructure situation, or heading off a cornucopia of misinformation, communications work these days often feels like a track meet fraught with unpredictable hurdles.

For communicators, those first waking hours each day likely include perusing the news, emails, and social media to see what pertinent information has come out overnight, and how it may impact your local government.

While being proactive about communications is always a best practice, an equal amount of reactive needs to be available for the information shared in your community that is simply inaccurate. Engaging with these information sources promptly is a necessity these days, because if the community doesn’t get the facts from you, they will get the *story* from someone else. Professional communicators know this, and that is why they understand and integrate efforts needed to be informed each day. Developing and maintaining a trusting relationship as the primary information source about your government is always top of mind.

What a lot of people do not see or know about in communications work these days is the vision and organizational awareness needed to navigate your municipality’s many different issues and interests. Bringing consistency and clarity

to communications about what are often complex issues can be an intense effort, as it quite often deals not only with multiple people and departments, but sometimes multiple governments and community partners. It isn’t simply an effort of stringing a few sentences together with pertinent facts, a relevant picture or graphic, and distributing it out to the public; today, it’s more like a multimedia research project with a tight deadline, produced in such a way that multiple audiences find understandable and valuable. This complex

dynamic is one reason communicators should be included, or at a minimum thoroughly briefed, on planning and policy development for your municipality. If these fundamental practices are in place, there exists a good opportunity for successful communication with your stakeholders.

The days with little to no sudden need for a quick pivot (undoubtedly welcomed by your communicators), are easily filled with a full menu of

forward-looking communications efforts. Developing social media posts and campaigns, video production, maintaining current community calendars, graphic design, and meeting print deadlines for flyers and newsletters, all require a substantial amount of effort and organization. Navigating resource challenges is also a reality for most communicators these days. Having the capacity to adequately meet the communication needs and expectations of your community is likely a constant challenge.

So, if you run into “Jack” you might have a better understanding and appreciation for the dedicated focus on efforts to keep the flame burning on the candlestick that is your municipality’s message, brand, and reputation.

**DEVELOPING AND
MAINTAINING A TRUSTING
RELATIONSHIP AS THE
PRIMARY INFORMATION
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GOVERNMENT IS ALWAYS
TOP OF MIND.**

Language access & immigrant integration in Aurora

By **MINSOO SONG**, senior international program coordinator
with Aurora's Office of International & Immigrant Affairs

Aurora, Colorado, is one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse cities in the country. About 86,500 of our residents are foreign-born — nearly 22% of the population — and more than 160 languages are spoken in our schools. This diversity is one of Aurora's greatest strengths, and the city has been intentional about embracing it as a source of community pride and economic vitality.

At the heart of this effort is a simple idea: language access matters. Being able to communicate with residents in the language they are most comfortable with isn't just helpful, it's essential. It allows us to better serve, connect with, and support Aurora's international community, which plays such an important role in making our city vibrant and globally connected. That's why "ensuring city services are accessible to speakers of other languages" is one of the key goals in Aurora's Immigrant Integration Plan.

Back in 2018, the city conducted a Language Access Study that included surveys of both frontline staff and department leadership. We learned that more than 41% of frontline staff interact with multilingual residents every day, often relying on informal ways to communicate. It became clear that we needed a more consistent and coordinated approach to provide language assistance.

In 2019, the city manager tasked the Office of International and Immigrant Affairs (OIIA) to lead this work. Since then, the city has built a more structured Language Access Plan, with clear policies and tools to support staff. Today, employees can easily request in-person or phone

interpretation and translation services through a centralized system. Currently, we focus on providing services in the top five languages and are working to expand to the top 10 languages, particularly for critical public safety, emergency, and health-related information. According to the 2018 Language Access Study, expanding to the top ten languages would cover more than 95% of Aurora's multilingual community.

We've made efforts to make civic participation more accessible. Spanish interpretation is provided at the start of city council meetings during the "Public Invited to Be Heard" period, and other language interpretations can be arranged when requested.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, this work became even more important. The city quickly translated and shared critical, life-saving information from federal, state, and local sources. We learned that how we share information matters just as much as what we share. In addition to the city website and printed materials, we partnered with local ethnic media and used diverse platforms like WhatsApp, KakaoTalk, Weibo, and LINE to reach people where they already are.

Even with these efforts, we know there is more to do. Some community members still feel disconnected, sometimes due to language barriers, and sometimes due to a lack of trust or connection with government. That's why OIIA continues to work closely with community leaders and ethnic media to build relationships and share information in more meaningful ways.

**AT THE HEART OF
AURORA'S EFFORT IS A
SIMPLE IDEA: LANGUAGE
ACCESS MATTERS.**



Adobe Stock

One example is Aurora's Natural Helpers program, a nationally recognized initiative that identifies, trains, and empowers trusted community leaders who can help newcomers navigate life in the United States and connect residents to available city resources. These leaders play a key role in making sure information reaches people in a way that feels accessible and trustworthy.

OIIA uses social media, including Facebook, to highlight not only city programs but also cultural events and celebrations across Aurora's diverse communities. This helps recognize and support the many cultures that make up our city.

Recent surveys and focus groups continue to show that language barriers are still a real challenge. In fact, if a program isn't available in Spanish, it may be out of reach for a large portion of our community. That's why language access will continue to be a priority. Moving forward, we want to keep improving how we communicate by using the right channels, working with trusted community voices, and making sure all residents feel informed, included, and able to participate in city life.

MORE TO DISCOVER



IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION PLAN

Aurora's plan to help integrate immigrants and refugees into the cultural, economic, and civic life of the community.

tinyurl.com/Aurora-Immigration



LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN

Policies, procedures, and practices to help Aurora city employees better serve residents with limited English proficiency.

tinyurl.com/Aurora-language



Online hub ‘Our City’ keeps Fort Collins residents informed & engaged

By **WILLIAM BEVIL**, Fort Collins communications & engagement manager

When the City of Fort Collins launched its Our City platform in 2017, the goal was simple: create a place where residents could participate in civic conversations when and where it worked for them.

Powered by EngagementHQ, Our City gives community members a way to learn about projects and stay informed throughout the lifecycle. On Our City, they can pose questions, share ideas, and provide feedback — all outside of attending a traditional public meeting. This is especially useful for community members when schedules, transportation, childcare, or other barriers might prevent them from participating.

Noteworthy is that the platform mirrors the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation, supporting a wide range of engagement activities, such as informing, involving, and empowering. This not only aligns with but reinforces the City of Fort Collins’ foundational approach to public engagement — ensuring community members have meaningful opportunities to participate in decisions that affect them.

One of the platform’s strengths is its flexibility and variety of tools. Project teams can use interactive maps, discussion forums, idea boards, polls, and other widgets to gather input and foster community dialogue. The platform supports staff in analyzing responses and reporting back to participants and decision-makers, helping understand community sentiment, close the loop, and demonstrate how public input is being used.

Since launch, Our City has hosted more than 120 projects spanning nearly every city service area. The platform has welcomed almost 500,000 visitors and generated more than 33,000 contributions from residents. Some of the

city’s most visible initiatives include annual budget and strategic plan cycles, City Plan (an update to the city’s comprehensive plan), updates to the land use code, and Connexion (municipal broadband) to name just a few.

Like most organizations, Fort Collins saw engagement patterns shift during the pandemic. While some projects paused and priorities changed, Our City proved useful as a virtual engagement space at a time when face-to-face participation was limited. In the years since, we’ve renewed

our focus on training, governance, and best practices to help staff make the most of the platform’s capabilities.

Today, Our City continues to serve a special role in terms of how we approach public participation, even as we constantly seek to offer a diverse array of participation avenues. We still rely on a mix of in-person approaches, including public meetings, open houses, outreach events, and neighborhood

conversations. Our City isn’t intended to replace those methods, and we carefully consider its place in the broader landscape of public engagement practices.

A major digital transformation is underway at the City of Fort Collins, which includes all our online communications tools. The recent launch of our new website (FortCollins.gov), prompted the need to take another fresh look at what distinctive purpose the Our City platform plays. This is happening amid a broader assessment of our public engagement practices and processes. As part of that work, we’ll be exploring opportunities to refresh and better integrate Our City into the city’s evolving digital engagement ecosystem.

In other words, stay tuned! The next chapter of digital engagement in Fort Collins is already underway — with lots more to come.

**THE OUR CITY PLATFORM
HAS WELCOMED ALMOST
500,000 VISITORS AND
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FROM RESIDENTS.**



Before the downhill

Why relationships must be built prior to the crisis

By **BRICE CURRENT**, Durango chief of police

A *New York Times* reporter once visited Durango, ran the trails, and left me with a phrase that stuck: the people here “have no chill.” What he saw wasn’t just intensity; it was a habit of choosing the harder path. On a mountain bike trail, success isn’t about the ride itself; it’s about preparation, judgment, and decisions made long before the challenge appears.

On many trails, a left turn is the bailout, the easy way out when things get hard. The right turn is the longer loop. It’s commitment over coasting.

On a local trail, I used to ask my son, “right or left,” knowing left wasn’t really an option. It became our mantra: in life, we take right turns.

Those choices, one more mile, refining technique, resisting shortcuts, don’t feel urgent in the moment, but they determine whether you’re ready when the trail stops being forgiving.

That same principle applies to policing: the edge isn’t built in the moment; it’s earned beforehand.

TRUST IS OPERATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

In many industries, relationships manage reputation. In policing, they sustain legitimacy.

Research from the DOJ and National Academies consistently shows that trust drives cooperation, information sharing, and effectiveness. Community policing isn’t messaging, it’s a system.

If relationships are the foundation, the question isn’t

whether to build them but whether we do so intentionally before we need them.

THE CREST & THE DOWNHILL

As riders approach the crest of a climb, most ease up and coast over. Stronger riders push through the hardest point, so they hit the downhill with speed.

Policing has the same moment.

After critical incidents, agencies often hold listening sessions, conduct outreach, and host forums. As attention fades, so does effort. The urgency disappears.

That’s when leaders should push harder.

Crises test relationships; they don’t build them.

The DOJ/BJA/COPS guide notes that strong police-community relationships require sustained effort and are hardest to maintain during high-profile incidents. Trying to build them mid-crisis isn’t relationship building; it’s negotiation under pressure.

THE FLATS: WHERE OUTCOMES ARE DECIDED

On a trail, the flats feel easy. Many riders coast.

Experienced riders don’t. They build momentum.

In policing, the flats are ordinary days, community meetings, school events, routine contacts, quiet conversations. These moments lack urgency, but they determine outcomes.

DOJ guidance is clear: trust requires engagement before, during, and after a crisis. FEMA echoes this: relationships built before a disaster reduce risk. You can’t improvise trust.

On the street, that work happens in everyday interactions. Procedural justice turns routine contact into trust-building. Research shows that daily officer behavior is one of the strongest drivers of community trust.

CADENCE & GEARING

On a climb, gear choice matters.

The easy gear keeps you moving but reduces control. The terrain dictates your path.

The harder gear demands more but gives authority. You carry momentum and choose your line.

Leadership works the same way.

You can operate in the easy gear, reacting, conserving energy, letting circumstances dictate direction.

Or you can take the harder gear, investing early, building relationships before they're needed, choosing direction before pressure forces it.

One is easier. The other gives you control.

WHEN I TRIED TO BUILD A BRIDGE IN THE FLOOD

About eight years ago, I attended a leadership session with Simon Sinek. He told a room of police chiefs they should partner with Black Lives Matter.

The reaction was immediate. Many leaders viewed the movement through a lens of conflict and criticism.

Sinek's point wasn't agreement; it was connection. Build the relationship before you need it.

I agreed and did nothing.

Years later, after George Floyd's death, agencies rushed to connect during protests and unrest. I found myself trying to build those relationships in real time.

It was too late.

It wasn't just a missed opportunity; it was a missed investment. Like skipping training and expecting performance on race day.

Sinek puts it simply: take care of people in good times, and they'll take care of you in hard times.

Good times don't mean agreement. They mean engagement when nothing is on fire.

THE LONG LOOP OF PARTNERSHIP

Partnership begins with conversation, not agreement.

Early in my career, I spoke with a woman I had arrested

who was in recovery. Over time, we built mutual respect. She joked she would've hated me in high school; I admitted I might have overlooked her.

What mattered wasn't the difference; it was the connection.

Relationships create familiarity. They turn strangers into known voices. In a crisis, that difference matters.

That's the longer loop. It's not easy, but it builds something real.

WHERE LEADERS WIN

If relationships are infrastructure, leaders need a system, not a one-time effort, but a sustained rhythm.

Department of Justice, Police Executive Research Forum, and FBI guidance all emphasize the same point: build relationships early. Leaders familiar with their communities make faster, better decisions under pressure.

That means identifying key partners, maintaining consistent contact, tracking changes, and keeping relationships current. Not assumed, but managed.

Relationships built in the flats are genuine because they aren't transactional.

BEFORE THE DESCENT

In policing, the "left turn" is avoidance, staying in comfortable spaces, delaying engagement, and conserving effort.

The "right turn" is harder, engaging early, especially with critics, showing up without an agenda, communicating with respect, even when outcomes differ.

Critical incidents reveal what was built beforehand.

If engagement starts after something goes wrong, it's a response, not leadership.

But if you've done the work in the flats, you have something different: people who answer calls, meet you halfway, and help stabilize difficult moments.

That's why the mantra matters.

We take right turns.

Not because they're easier, but because they build the kind of leadership that doesn't have to create trust in the middle of a storm. When the downhill begins, the line is already chosen.



CML 104th Annual CONFERENCE



Photos by Amanda Maughmer

Conference emcee Amelia Earhart stands before a packed ballroom at the 2026 CML Annual Conference in Westminster.

By **KRISTIN KEMP**, CML engagement & communications manager

Thank you to the 1,150-plus members, sponsors, presenters, and guests who devoted your time to learning, networking, and information sharing at CML's 104th Annual Conference. The in-person conference in Westminster featured more than 40 informative sessions, 65 sponsoring exhibitors, two engaging keynote speakers, a candid fireside chat with outgoing Colorado Gov. Jared Polis, endless networking ... and even snuggle time with puppies.

Can't remember the name of someone you met (even if you were certain you'd remember)? All attendees have access to the list of attendees, sponsor contact information, session presentations, and more in CML's new app: CML Connect. Visit tinyurl.com/cml-connect for download instructions.

Your feedback matters! CML strives to repeat successful conference programs and adjust elements that need improvement. We're thrilled that 98% of survey respondents said they were satisfied with the 2026 conference. Better yet, 84% indicated they were *very* or *extremely* satisfied!

Save the date for the 105th Annual Conference!

June 22-25, 2027, in Keystone, Colorado

“

The experience exceeded every expectation I had, and I returned to Cedaredge inspired, better equipped to serve our community, and with new ideas, practical resources, and professional relationships that will benefit our town for years to come. Beyond the outstanding educational sessions, one of the greatest benefits of the conference was the opportunity to connect with municipal professionals from across Colorado. I developed relationships with peers who generously shared their knowledge and experiences, creating a network of trusted resources that I know I will rely on throughout my career in local government.

”

— Jared Burson, Cedaredge deputy town administrator



Attendees share a laugh during a conference session.



CML Executive Director Kevin Bommer stands with keynote speaker Justin Wren.



Lone Tree Mayor Marissa Harmon speaks to attendees.



Conference attendees chat during a reception.



Keynote speaker Ryan Avery presents “Go from A to *THE*.”



Centennial Mayor Christine Sweetland speaks with Civic Results Program Manager Maggie Graves in the exhibit hall.



Westminster Mayor Claire Carmelia speaks at the conference.



Photos by Amanda Maugher

CML Executive Director Kevin Bommer, right, interviews Colorado Gov. Jared Polis at the Meeting of the Minds Luncheon.



CML Legislative Advocacy Manager Bev Stables, center, moderates a conference session.



An attendee listens during the Meeting of the Minds Luncheon.



Fun Run photos by Kevin Bommer

5K Fun Run participants gather before the race.



Blue River Town Manager and Clerk Chad Hull was the Fun Run's overall winner, with a time of 18 minutes, 59 seconds.



Photo finish! Severance Deputy Town Manager Lindsay Radcliff-Coombs, left, edges out Rico Mayor Pro Tem Cristal Hibbard to be the first woman to finish, with a time of 25 minutes, 40 seconds.



CML Receptionist and Administrative Assistant Haley Doyne holds a baby goat. Yes, baby goats were featured at our exhibitors' hall!



CML photos

CML Executive Board Member Storm Gloor chats at a conference reception.



CML staff gather at the start of the conference.

Ridgway mayor, Lakewood city manager win governance awards

By **KRISTIN KEMP**, CML engagement & communications manager

The Colorado Municipal League honored Ridgway Mayor John Clark and Lakewood City Manager Kathy Hodgson with Sam Mamet Good Governance Awards on June 24 in Westminster at the 104th CML Annual Conference.

The award, which was established in 2019 and named in honor of retired CML Executive Director Sam Mamet, recognizes two individuals annually who exemplify and strive to promote the principles of good governance. The winners were selected from a competitive pool of local government nominees from across the state.

“Mayor Clark and Ms. Hodgson reflect the essence of the Sam Mamet Good Governance Award,” CML Executive Director Kevin Bommer said. “They are true leaders who inspire others and serve as models for inclusive governance and civil discourse. I applaud their commitment to leading with integrity, empathy, and transparency.”

“I’m humbled to have been selected for this award, and even more so after seeing all the other nominees. I love the Town of Ridgway with all my heart, so it’s immensely rewarding to be recognized for the work I’ve done on its behalf for all these years,” Clark said.

“I am deeply honored to receive



CML Executive Director Kevin Bommer, center, stands with the 2026 Sam Mamet Good Governance Award winners, Lakewood City Manager Kathy Hodgson, left, and Ridgway Mayor John Clark.

this recognition from the Colorado Municipal League. It has been a privilege to work alongside dedicated employees, elected officials, and community members who care so much about our city and its future,” Hodgson said.

Any of CML’s 270 member municipalities may submit nominations for the Sam Mamet Good Governance award. This year, 28 individuals were nominated.

More information on the winners can be found on the CML website, www.cml.org.



Retired CML Executive Director Sam Mamet speaks at the award ceremony.

CML THANKS OUR CONFERENCE SPONSORS

DIAMOND



**SAFER
TOGETHER**



PLATINUM



GOLD



SILVER

- ◆ ACCELA
- ◆ CHARLES ABBOTT & ASSOCIATES
- ◆ CIRCULAR ACTION ALLIANCE
- ◆ CIVICPLUS
- ◆ CIVIC RESULTS
- ◆ COLORADO CREDIT UNIONS
- ◆ COLORADO CIRCULAR COMMUNITIES/CDPHE
- ◆ COLORADO RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION
- ◆ COLORADO WATER RESOURCES & POWER AUTHORITY
- ◆ CPS HR CONSULTING
- ◆ DECKARD TECHNOLOGIES

- ◆ EMPLOYERS COUNCIL
- ◆ ENVISION IT
- ◆ GOGOV
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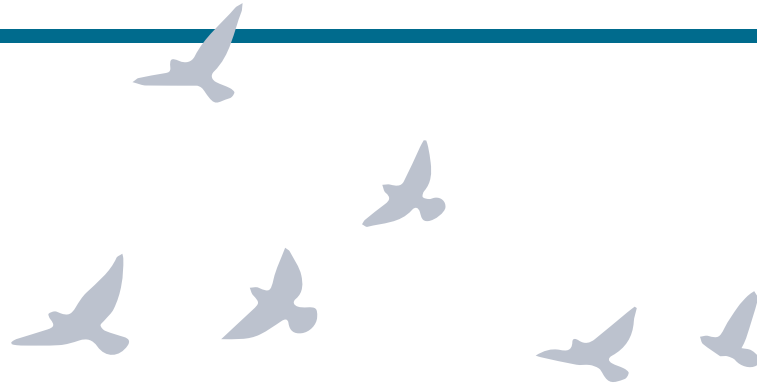
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BRONZE

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- ◆ DJCA
- ◆ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL OF COLORADO (EDCC)
- ◆ HDR

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- ◆ MURRAY DAHL BEERY RENAUD LLP
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- ◆ RBC CAPITAL MARKETS
- ◆ STIFEL
- ◆ UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO DENVER SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
- ◆ WIDNER JURAN



2025-2026 CML

ANNUAL REPORT

CML's 2025-2026 Annual Report offers a snapshot of the League's efforts over the past year. It is one way we measure our progress toward achieving our vision of "empowered cities and towns, united for a strong Colorado." Behind each number is a story of Colorado's cities and towns working to serve their communities and ensure our state remains the best place to live, work, and play. We are honored to work alongside our member municipalities and remain committed to advancing this progress in the years to come. Read the report online at tinyurl.com/CML-2026-Report

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Kevin Bommer,
CML Executive Director

The Colorado Municipal League exists **for** our 270 member municipalities and **because** of our members. Everything CML does is rooted in our mission, vision, and values. From Colorado's smallest towns to our largest cities, CML supports excellence in municipal governance in every corner of the state.

Every day, the Colorado Municipal League works to implement our vision of "empowered cities and towns, united for a strong Colorado" by focusing on our foundational core functions of advocacy, information, and training.

This Annual Report is a compilation of information and data that shows the progress your League is making on the broad vision and goals established through the hard work of the CML Executive Board and the CML staff that finds effective and innovative ways to implement them. It is CML's "report card" for our members, and I am proud to say that CML is delivering results to you.

On behalf of the CML Executive Board and staff, I would like to thank all municipal elected officials and staff who work tirelessly in service to their cities and towns. It is our honor to serve you.

ABOUT CML

Founded in 1923, CML is a nonprofit, non-partisan organization representing and serving Colorado's cities and towns. Our membership consists of 270 municipalities, representing nearly 100% of the municipal population in the state. The League advocates on behalf of municipal interests at both the state and federal levels and is also a reliable source of training and information for municipal staff and elected officials across Colorado. CML's policy focus areas are approved by the CML Executive Board and developed with input from our diverse membership. A staff of 17 carries out daily operations, guided by a comprehensive strategic plan that informs key priorities and goals that support the League's mission, vision, and values.



MISSION

Advocacy, information, and training supporting exceptional municipal governance.



VISION

Empowered cities and towns, united for a strong Colorado.



VALUES

Commitment, service, collaboration.

ABOUT CML

KEY PRIORITY PROTECT

- Advance and defend municipal interests at the state and federal levels
- Provide expert municipal legal services to support CML members
- Empower members to be leaders on municipal issues and advocate for CML policies and positions
- Be the leading statewide information resource on municipal issues

KEY PRIORITY ENGAGE

- Provide quality opportunities for meaningful member interactions with CML and each other
- Provide innovative and personalized training and outreach opportunities
- Implement a robust communications and training plan focused on increased engagement and improved content delivery
- Increase the resources available for municipal staff and elected officials
- Collaborate with organization partners to maximize resources and increase efficiency
- Provide effective and timely delivery of information and outreach opportunities
- Envision the future needs of CML and member municipalities

KEY PRIORITY LEAD

- Support the development of leaders within municipalities
- Inspire participation in CML by elected officials and staff
- Promote principles of good governance and civic dialogue to advance individual and collective municipal interests

PROTECT

ENGAGE

LEAD

PUBLICATIONS

CML’s numerous publications provide municipalities and their employees with up-to-date information and guidance around common issues. CML produces a bi-weekly newsletter, quarterly magazine, books on several relevant topics, Knowledge Now white papers, a weekly Statehouse Report during the legislative session, and other publications as needed to ensure municipalities have critical information at their fingertips.

4

Books published

▶ 2026 Election Book

▶ Open Meetings, Open Records

▶ Laws Enacted Affecting Municipal Governments

▶ 2026 Municipal Directory

4

Editions of *Colorado Municipalities* magazine

▶ 37 articles

▶ 16 guest authors

25

Editions of *CML Newsletter*

20

Editions of *Statehouse Report*

12

Editions of *Municipal Law Update*

PROTECT

ENGAGE

LEAD

DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

Social Media

f

Facebook followers

1,644

in

LinkedIn followers

2,507

X

X followers

2,575

Engagement

4,206

CML Newsletter subscribers

210

Engagement emails sent

Including CML Newsletter, Statehouse Report, legislative action alerts, municipal law updates, Lessons on Local Government outreach, event outreach, associate member news, and other promotions

7

CML listservs

Including attorneys, clerks, finance, managers/administrators, human resources, public information officers, public works)

Subscribers across all listservs: 1,698

26

Sam Mamet Good Governance Award nominees in 2026

44 COLORADO MUNICIPALITIES JULY 2026

PROTECT

ENGAGE

LEAD

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

928 Individuals participated in CML trainings
(not including conference)

9 Webinars

7 In-person training opportunities
(including conference)

14 Spring district meetings
Participants: **502**

14 Fall district meetings
Participants: **466**

MUNiversity

MUNiversity is CML's program to recognize municipal elected officials for increasing their knowledge of municipal government.

**2026 MUNiversity
diploma recipients**
95

Graduate-level
11

Leadership-level
36

Fundamental-level
48

PROTECT

ENGAGE

LEAD



LESSONS ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Lessons on Local Government provides teachers with free local government resources and curriculum materials that meet state social studies standards, preparing students to be informed residents.

4 Lessons on Local Government newsletters

325 State Social Studies Conference attendance

2 New lessons created

285 Teacher Librarian Day attendance

PROTECT

ENGAGE

LEAD

CONFERENCES

2025 CML Annual Conference

1,285

Attendees (including sponsors and guests)

50

Sessions

165

Municipalities represented

2025 National League of Cities Congressional City Conference in Washington, D.C.

108

Colo. municipal officials

24

Colo. municipalities represented

16

Colo. Youth commissioners

2025 National League of Cities City Summit in Salt Lake City, Utah

53

Colo. Municipal officials

24

Colo. municipalities represented



PROTECT

ENGAGE

LEAD

ADVOCACY

Numbers are for the 2026 legislative session.

CML’s legislative advocacy team works directly with members of the Colorado General Assembly and other organizations to advocate on behalf of Colorado municipalities.

714

Bills introduced in the 2026 legislative session

218

Bills tracked by CML

96

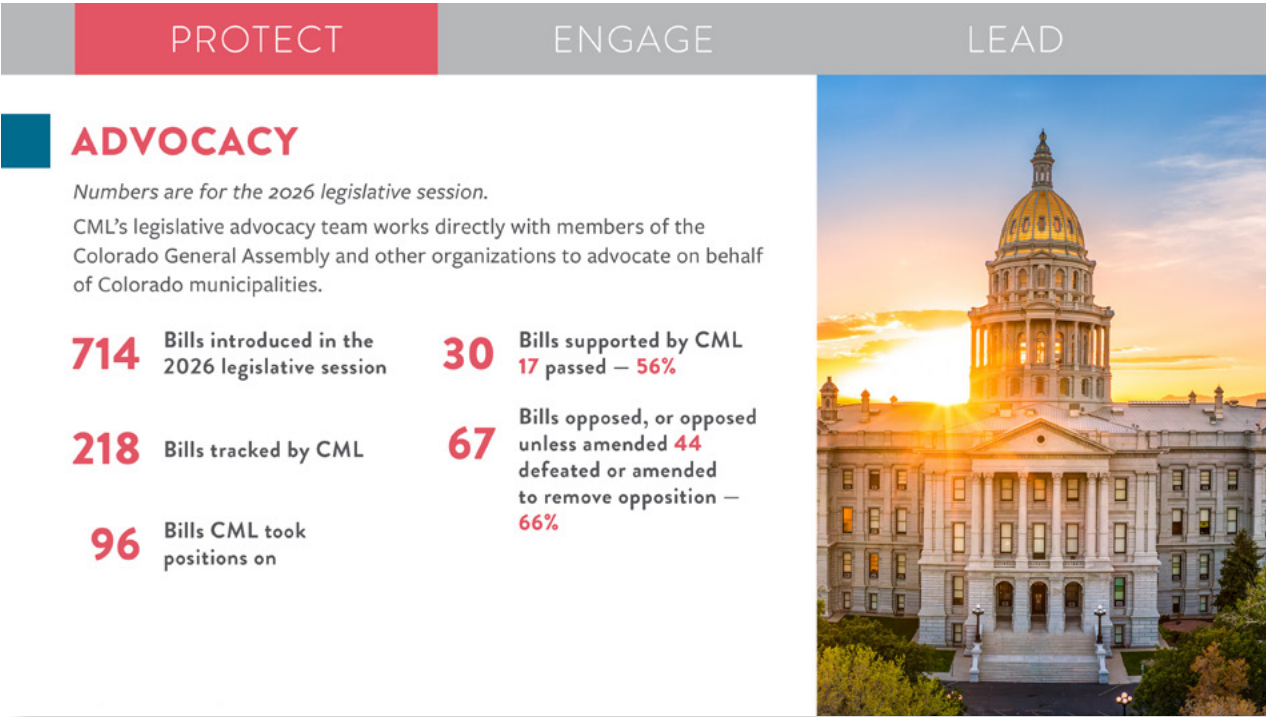
Bills CML took positions on

30

Bills supported by CML 17 passed — 56%

67

Bills opposed, or opposed unless amended 44 defeated or amended to remove opposition — 66%



PROTECT

ENGAGE

LEAD

ADVOCACY

CML supported **30 bills** throughout the 2026 legislative session. Of these, **17 passed**. Below are some of the priority bills CML supported that passed the Colorado General Assembly.

HB26-1065

Transit and Housing Investment Zones

HB26-1202

Strategy to reduce and Prevent Homelessness

SB26-080

Cradle to Career Grant Program Creation

HB26-1101

Criminal Offenses Related to Critical Infrastructure Metals

HB26-1257

Local Regulation of Massage Facilities

SB26-113

Require Recovery Residences to Obtain BHA License

SB26-142

Development of Thermal Energy Resources

HB26-1138

Retail Theft Prevention Program

SB26-001

Workforce housing and Housing Tax Credit

SB26-182

Updated Clean Energy Plan Municipally Owned Utility

PROTECT

ENGAGE

LEAD

ADVOCACY

For the 2026 legislative session, CML helped defeat **17 bills**. CML secured amendments to another **18 bills** which allowed the League to remove opposition. Below are some priority bills CML was able to defeat or amend.

HB26-1037

Ban Government Purchase of Personal Data from Third Party **DEFEATED**

HB26-1190

Alcohol Beverage Manufacturer Sales **DEFEATED**

SB26-071

Use of Surveillance Technology by Law Enforcement **DEFEATED**

HB26-1114

Allowed Minimum Lot Size for Subject Jurisdictions **DEFEATED**

HB26-1276

Protect Safety of Individuals Who Are Immigrants **AMENDED**

SB26-093

Workers' Compensation Insurance Coverage Verification **AMENDED**

HB26-1130

Public Restroom Diaper Changing Station **DEFEATED**

HB26-1308

Lot Splitting Approval by Subject Jurisdiction **DEFEATED**

SB26-097

Decriminalize Adult Commercial Sexual Activity **DEFEATED**

HB26-1134

Fairness & Transparency in Municipal Court **AMENDED**

SB26-070

Ban Government Access Historical Location Information Database **DEFEATED**

SB26-114

Spirituous Liquor Manufacturer Sales Rooms & Other Alcohol **AMENDED**

SB26-129

Mitigate Impacts of Tax Increment Financing **DEFEATED**

PROTECT

ENGAGE

LEAD

LEGAL

CML provides legal services including providing legal and operational education programs and conferences throughout the year, consulting with CML members on various legal questions, and preparing *amicus* or “friend of the court” briefs in court cases with significant municipal impact.

- 7 Amicus curiae briefs
- 33 Continuing Legal Education session credit hours
- 174 Annual Seminar on Municipal Law attendees
- 24 Legal Corner newsletter articles



HOW CML PURSUES ITS GOALS

FINANCE ASSETS & REVENUES 2025

Fiscal year 2025 reflects Jan. 1, 2025 - Dec. 31, 2025

\$6,137,911 ASSETS	PERCENTAGE OF REVENUE RECEIVED THROUGH DUES 71% Annual percentage increase in municipal dues	PERCENTAGE OF REVENUE FROM OTHER SOURCES 18% Annual Conference
\$3,552,069 REVENUE	3.7%	7% Investment income
		2% Workshops & meetings
		1.5% Publications & other

HOW CML PURSUES ITS GOALS

FINANCE EXPENSES 2025

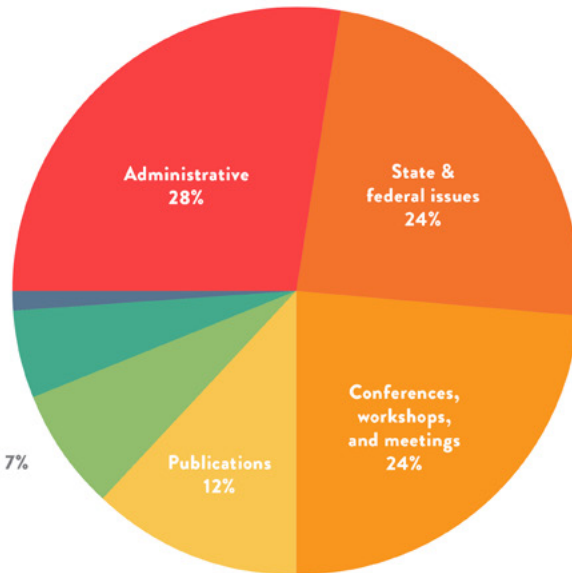
Fiscal year 2025 reflects Jan. 1, 2025 - Dec. 31, 2025

\$3,663,517
EXPENSES

Lessons on Local Government 1%

Advocacy & legal services 5%

Building costs 7%



COLORADO CITIES & TOWNS

BY THE NUMBERS POPULATION**5,956,729****COLORADO
POPULATION****4,461,034****RESIDENTS LIVING
IN CITIES & TOWNS**About **75%** of the state population and up **1%** from last year**108****HOME RULE
MUNICIPALITIES**All are members of CML, with a combined population of **4,207,889****164****STATUTORY
MUNICIPALITIES****251,982** residents live in statutory municipalities**1****TERRITORIAL
CHARTER TOWN****1,179** residents live in the territorial charter town, Georgetown**270****CML MEMBER
MUNICIPALITIES**That's **98.9%** of Colorado's **273** municipalities**DENVER****LARGEST
MUNICIPAL MEMBER**Population **728,309****LAKE SIDE****SMALLEST
MUNICIPAL MEMBER**Population **15**

Source: Colorado State Demography Office municipal population data, vintage 2024

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COLORADO MUNICIPALITIES

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Colorado Municipalities Online

A DIGITAL VERSION OF
COLORADO MUNICIPALITIES
IS AVAILABLE ON **CML.ORG**.

BETWEEN EDITIONS, KEEP UP
WITH CML ON SOCIAL MEDIA
VIA FACEBOOK AND LINKEDIN.

Join CML

FOR ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP
INFORMATION, CONTACT CML
MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS
SPECIALIST KHARYL JACKSON AT
KJACKSON@CML.ORG.

Fall District Meetings

CML staff will crisscross
Colorado in September,
visiting municipalities and
meeting members face-
to-face at our annual Fall
District Meetings. Look
for the schedule soon at
www.cml.org.



Put your brand in front of the right audience

Reach decision-makers and municipal leaders with
an ad in *Colorado Municipalities* magazine. Advertising
with CML makes you visible where it matters most.



contact CML communications & engagement
manager kristin kemp, kkemp@cml.org



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