

Colorado Municipalities

Vol. 96, No. 3, June 2020



GOVERNING IN THE AGE OF COVID-19



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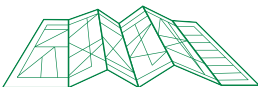


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The Colorado Municipal League is a nonprofit association organized and operated by Colorado municipalities to provide support services to member cities and towns. The League has two main objectives: 1) to represent cities and towns collectively in 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

Volume 96, Number 3

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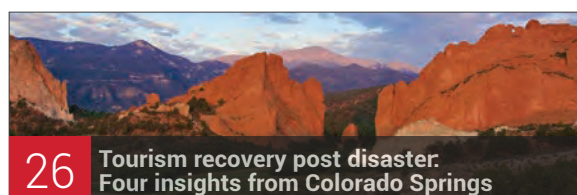
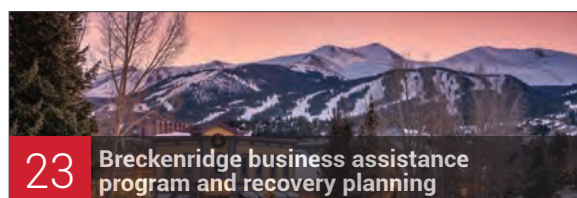
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About some of our contributors



Jay Brunvand earned a B.S. in Business and Finance from the University of Northern Colorado in 1983. After several years in the

private sector accounting field, he then worked eight years as the lead accountant for the Summit School District in Frisco, Colo. In 1998, he began at the Town of Minturn as the town clerk and town treasurer. He holds a Master Municipal Clerk certification from the International Institute of Municipal Clerks and served six years as board secretary of the Colorado Municipal Clerks Association. He served two years on the Planning Commission and eight years on the Town Council in Silverthorne, and eight years on the Summit School Board of Education.



Arielle Hodgson is the special events and communications coordinator for the Town of Lyons. Originally hired in July

2014 as a two-year grant-funded communications specialist following the 2013 flood, Arielle's role became a permanent town-budgeted position when the grant closed out. She has since advanced through different positions with the town, which including Main Street Manager and economic development associate. Drawing inspiration from her mom, Lakewood's city manager, Arielle is passionate about local government administration and aspires to be a city manager herself. She will complete her Master of Public Administration program from CU Denver in December

2020. Working in a small municipality has allowed Arielle a broad span of roles and involvement with each department; however, perhaps most unique remains her experience with disaster recovery. Arielle has received four FEMA IS certifications and continues to work toward additional emergency management accreditations. She also serves as a member of the Board of Directors for the Lyons Volunteers and the Lyons Arts and Humanities Commission, and is involved with CCCMA's Emerging Managers. Arielle enjoys living in Lyons, and spends most of her free time fly fishing.



Danielle Jardee is the town clerk for the Town of Winter Park. Originally from Wisconsin, she has a bachelor's degree in

Elementary Education from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. She made the choice to move to the mountains with her sister in 2011, and happily landed in Winter Park, Colo. She has been employed with the Town of Winter Park for about six years. She started in a seasonal position as a gardener, then moved on to a full-time position as the court clerk/public works administrative assistant. In 2017, she transitioned into her current role as town clerk. She is currently working towards her CMC designation, and is looking forward to her final year at Clerk's Institute. In her free time, she enjoys being outside living that mountain lifestyle, skiing, hiking, and camping.



Haley Littleton manages communications and marketing for the Town of Breckenridge, as well as public relations and public information. The

Town of Breckenridge protects, maintains, and enhances our sense of community, historical heritage, and alpine environment. We provide leadership and encourage citizen involvement.



Kaylyn Mercuri is the outreach coordinator for the Louisville Historical Museum. She is a recent graduate of the University of Colorado

Denver, where she earned a Master of Arts in Public History.



Kelli Narde is the director of communications for the City of Littleton. Her duties include management of all city

communications, special events and citizen engagement. She earned a bachelor's degree in technical journalism from Colorado State University. She is chair of the CML Public Information Officers section. She is a Certified Public Communicator and is a graduate of FEMA's Emergency Management Institute as an All Hazards Public Information Officer. She enjoys skiing, golf, gardening, quilting and Denver Bronco games.



As the customer experience manager for Centennial, Colorado since 2012, **Kelly Ohaver** is believed to be one of the first customer

experience professionals in local government. Kelly leads a customer experience program; proposes service improvement initiatives; manages the city's website; and runs the city's leadership academy, Centennial 101.



Cathy Ritter has been director of the Colorado Tourism Office since 2015, overseeing a \$22.8 million budget in a state where the stakes

for tourism are high. She is chair of the National Council of State Tourism Directors and serves on the Executive Committee of the U.S. Travel Association.



Lauren Ripko is the owner of Studio Q Events, an event production company in Manitou Springs, Colo.

In addition to her passion for event planning and the hospitality industry, Ripko enjoys spending time with her two sons, Finnegan and Cormack. She is a lover of building community, art, art history, snowboarding, good food, whiskey and wine.



Alexea Veneracion joined VCOS in February 2020 after spending five years at a public relations agency. She oversees VCOS' internal

and external communications, including media and influencer relationships, social media strategy and editorial content. Ask her about the next 14er on her hiking list or her adorable (but mischievous) golden retriever named Ranger.



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Governing in the age of COVID-19

Melissa Mata, Colorado Municipal League municipal research analyst
Sarah Werner, Colorado Municipal League engagement and communications manager
Laurel Witt, Colorado Municipal League associate counsel

A few short months ago, state and local government officials were faced with a monumental task—jumping into action to deal with a global pandemic that spread rapidly into our backyard. Local governments quickly began making tough calls and implementing plans with little to no direction or guidance. Municipalities statewide rose to the challenge.

Local government employees and officials worked tirelessly to lead, protect, and support their communities at every turn in the constantly changing landscape. During the first quarter of 2020, local governments had to quickly take measures to protect public health, adjust to economic changes and budget shortfalls, run elections in the safest way possible, and govern cities remotely. These changes occurred not over a period of years, but days and weeks, all while new regulations were being ordered at both the state and federal level. Municipal leaders and employees took steps to overcome these challenges and continue to provide excellent service to their citizens. Their success was astounding. This article, and this magazine as a whole, will look at some of the challenges and successes that occurred.

Emergency declarations

With the onset of coronavirus in Colorado, the first action by many municipalities involved declaring an emergency under the Colorado Disaster Emergency Act, C.R.S. § 24-33.5-701 *et seq.* City and town managers, along with their staff, quickly drafted declarations that allowed municipalities to utilize emergency response plans, budget dollars, and implement many other tools available during times of crisis. These declarations allowed municipalities to respond to coronavirus nimbly and to access resources when local capabilities became overwhelmed.

Executive orders

A challenging piece of this crisis involved an ever-changing and uncertain future. No one knew how long residents would need to follow strict social distancing and quarantine requirements. In response, the state government needed to continually tweak and adjust orders to meet these changing dynamics. Municipalities had little time to digest statewide orders and implement the requirements and guidelines into their own jurisdictions. For example, the need arose to find masks and other personal protective

equipment for those government employees considered to provide essential-to-government functions, such as police officers. These employees interact with residents constantly and had a higher likelihood of encountering coronavirus. This equipment was in extremely short supply, but municipalities worked with suppliers and other governmental entities to find ways to help these employees to keep our communities safe.

Telecommuting

One of the swiftest changes for municipalities was the transition to conducting government business online. Municipal officials had to quickly develop telecommuting policies and find resources to purchase computers for employees who could conduct their work from home. The transition took place in a matter of days or, in some cases, hours. These policies also had to consider the need of residents to still conduct business with the municipality, if needed.

Meetings

Part of the transition to remote work included an essential element—local officials still needed to run the government during the crisis.

Municipalities could not postpone board or council meetings for months when decisions needed to be made to address the crisis. Most municipalities transitioned to meeting electronically, which caused a host of problems. For example, we all became familiar with the term “Zoom bombing,” where those who have no intention of participating constructively in a meeting seek out publicly-posted Zoom meetings to broadcast inappropriate content. Municipalities throughout Colorado learned together about best practices for preventing these attacks and ensuring that those who wanted to participate in their municipal government were able to do so. In fact, many municipalities actually saw increased participation from their residents once meetings became remote. More than a few Colorado municipal officials can now add “Zoom expert” to their resumes.

Elections

In April, many statutory towns were faced with a difficult reality: the towns did not have authority to postpone their elections. Beyond the 64-day deadline for cancellation of an uncontested election set forth in C.R.S. 31-10-507, the Colorado Municipal Election Code contains no option for postponement or cancellation. While local officials are authorized to move the location of an election due to emergency, there is no procedure under state law for a statutory town to either cancel or postpone their regular election date due to emergency. Coronavirus came past the deadline to switch to mail ballot elections. Those statutory towns with polling place elections had to quickly find ways to ensure the safety of their voters and staff. As you will read later in this magazine, municipalities were able to pull this off; many with higher than average voter turnouts.

Budgets

In April, the Colorado Municipal League (CML) partnered with the Colorado Department of Local Affairs, Colorado

Counties, Inc. and Colorado Special Districts Association to survey local governments on COVID-19's fiscal impacts. The survey was conducted between April 3 and April 10, 2020, and a total of 551 Colorado counties, municipalities, and special districts responded to the survey, including 134 cities and towns, representing almost 50% of all Colorado municipalities.

Ultimately, three themes emerged from survey responses: Municipal officials are concerned for their employees and the lasting effect of furloughs and layoffs in providing essential services for years to come, for their local economy and the ability for local businesses to bounce back once stay-at-home orders are lifted, and for their residents and the impact of COVID-19 on their well-being.

Results show that Colorado municipal governments are bracing themselves for both severe revenue loss and increased expenditures related to COVID-19. Given the uncertainty of the coming months, not all municipalities offered an estimate of the total revenue decline. Of those who did, the average anticipated revenue decline is \$10.5 million dollars. Even in the face of their own tightening budgets, however, Colorado cities and towns are offering support to their local businesses and residents in need through a variety of methods.

Supporting local businesses

As the financial struggles of small businesses became apparent, municipalities quickly crafted grants and support programs to help. From all corners of the state, municipalities worked with their already tight budgets to find money to support these businesses. Alamosa, as an example, established a loan fund at 0% interest to qualified Alamosa businesses to help bridge any financial gap experienced. Castle Rock funded a grant program for non-home-based Castle Rock businesses to receive up to \$5,000 each. Frisco likewise offered \$5,000 grants for businesses and set up a rental assistance program for

residents struggling to pay their rent because of the pandemic. Pagosa Springs partnered with the First Southwest Community Fund to offer micro-grants to small businesses and larger business loans, and is currently developing a Rapid Response & Recovery Fund to help stabilize the local economy. Quick actions like these have helped struggling small businesses statewide.

Supporting residents

Another quickly arising concern for municipalities was the number of residents experiencing unemployment or reduction in pay due to the onset of coronavirus. Municipalities grappled with how they could support residents and came up with varied approaches. Pagosa Springs allocated \$50,000 in \$200 Visa gift cards to individuals who have been laid off or who can show that their hours were drastically reduced. Glendale is providing Target or King Soopers gift cards for varied amounts to residents identified by the police department as needing assistance. Estes Park established a Community Relief Fund (\$250,000) and awarded about \$80,000 to local nonprofits to be used to address food insecurity, housing/shelter assistance and transportation assistance. Among other things, the funds have been used to provide over a thousand hot meals to those in need and about \$40,000 in direct rent relief. Creede, among many municipalities, has waived late fees for utility payments. Victor waived base water rates for commercial and residential locations for the months of March and April.

Every single Colorado municipality went above and beyond to work towards a common goal: facing this public health crisis and protecting, leading, and supporting the municipalities we know and love.



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Law enforcement adapts to a new world

Kelli Narde, director of communications and marketing, City of Littleton





We've all experienced the sadness and sense of loss from past events that have shaken our nation. Even in Colorado, when fires and other natural disasters have affected many communities, we've always come back strong. With our country's history of resilience, we'll do it again when this pandemic is over.

While no one could have imagined the tragedy of COVID-19, there are many examples of employees, businesses and citizens rising to the challenge to help and serve one another. When just about everything we knew was turned upside down, public safety remained reliable and uncompromised. Law enforcement agencies were able to quickly adapt to a rapidly-changing world.

As Incident Commander (IC) for the City of Littleton during the pandemic, Police Chief Doug Stephens convened daily meetings with the city's Leadership Team to coordinate its response to the virus. He worked closely with the Arapahoe County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and other agencies to keep the team updated. The OEM divided the county into six areas and Division Chief Gene Enley took on extra duties as IC for the west area which includes Littleton, Sheridan, Bow Mar and Columbine Valley.

In response to COVID-19, Stephens implemented operational changes for the Littleton Police Department (LPD), including:

- Directing low and medium non-emergency calls for service to online or telephone reporting to minimize officer contact.
- Creating staffing plans (although not yet implemented) that utilize 12-hour shifts for patrol officers and dispatchers. If implemented, the modified work schedule includes 7 days on/14 days off for those personnel.
- Screening all police personnel, including dispatchers, for fever prior to the start of each shift.
- Deploying social distancing for officers, utilizing PPE as needed, and contacting residents by telephone whenever practical.
- Increasing high-visibility patrol at critical businesses such as grocery and home improvement stores.
- Redirecting School Resource Officers to



patrol teams after Littleton Public Schools closed.

- Integrating police personnel into the Arapahoe County Incident Management Team and coordinating response to requests for services and supplies throughout the area.
- Supplying street officers with N95 masks, surgical masks, and loads of hand sanitizer to keep them, and the people they encounter, safe and healthy.
- Ensuring regular cleaning of all facilities and patrol cars each shift, and a full decontamination completed each week by the Arapahoe County Hazmat Team using electrostatic disinfection devices.

Regional cooperation in the south metro area has always been strong. Arapahoe County's OEM invited participation from the jurisdictions in the county. A Joint Information Service was established. This is most commonly known as a Joint Information Center (JIC). It included Public Information Officers from the municipalities within the county. Due to social distancing, this group met virtually every other day to coordinate the release of information to citizens and the media.

The county also convened a Recovery Working Group with representatives from each city as well as staff from hospitals, education, and other sectors, to coordinate planning around phased reopening of facilities. The goal was to balance health, safety and the economy to prepare for the Stay at Home Order to be lifted.

Serving as the law enforcement agency for the City of Centennial, the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office was involved in the following activities for the city:

- Transforming its fairgrounds into the state's only Alternate Care Facility for COVID-19 patients to alleviate crowding at local hospitals.
- Sheriff Tyler Brown was interviewed by several children for a new website their mom helped create to help the elderly and vulnerable during the crisis.
- A lieutenant organized an effort to create and collect artwork to distribute to local law enforcement agencies, fire stations and hospitals to support their staff. They also gave some of the artwork to two truck stops in eastern Arapahoe County to show appreciation for the folks who keep supplies coming.
- Logistics Technician Josh Krauss played his bagpipes at the sheriff's office one night to inspire hope to people in times of distress. Bagpipes are often played as a sign of community spirit when the nation is in crisis.
- The hazmat team decontaminated its fleet of patrol cars each week and those of most other police agencies in the county, as well as the county's dispatch center and the jail.
- At the end of April, the Arapahoe County OEM had distributed 97,304 pieces of PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) to medical facilities and first responders including masks, gloves, goggles, gowns, etc.

Our neighbors to the south in Lone Tree joined forces with residents to launch Lone Tree Feeds, a campaign designed to provide free meals to those on the frontline of the pandemic. The funds for the campaign were raised through online donations. The team, which consisted of residents, city staff and former mayors, worked with local restaurants to coordinate the delivery of free meals to Lone Tree first responders, such as the staff at Sky Ridge Medical Center, South Metro Fire Rescue and the Lone Tree Police Department. Park Meadows Retail Resort was among one of the first businesses in Lone Tree to join this cause by helping to provide dozens of meals to first responders. To date, this campaign has raised more than \$24,000 and provided hundreds of meals.

The City of Lone Tree and local volunteers worked around the clock to make and deliver cloth masks to dozens of essential businesses and first responders. So far, the city has delivered nearly 400 cloth masks to more than 20 businesses in Lone Tree to help ensure all essential employees in the city are equipped with a face mask to prevent the spread of coronavirus. In addition, masks were provided to all members of the Lone Tree Police Department.

Littleton's Fleet and Facilities division (LFF) provided essential operations in support of all city departments and divisions. Staff moved forward on projects while holding contractors to public health orders. Staff used PPE where necessary, disinfecting vehicles and work areas and hyper cleaning everywhere. They staggered shifts to achieve required social distancing and safety, while allowing crucial time off to be home with their families. They acquired and dispersed untold quantities of PPE, hand sanitizer, wipes, alcohol and bleach, as well as other disinfecting chemicals while thinking ahead to the eventual reopening of facilities to employees and the public. Access, Distancing and Disinfecting (ADD) will be the key components of the reopening plan.

Littleton's Home Depot store donated 60 respirator masks, along with about 100 pairs of safety glasses and gloves to the LPD. The masks were N100 rated, with replaceable filters. They are designed for painters and others who work in contaminated areas and are exceptionally effective in filtering viruses and bacteria from the air.

We are deeply appreciative of the show of support from the community, both in the donations we have received, but also in the words of encouragement. Numerous citizens donated masks, gloves, food, sent cards, made and posted signs, and shared moral support. We are fortunate that we work in a community where we have such an exceptional relationship with the public. Our country has been so divided, I am hopeful that this horrible pandemic will have a silver lining in reminding people to take care of each other.





Minturn gets creative to put on a successful election

Jay Brunvand, town clerk and treasurer, Town of Minturn

With the United States enduring an almost complete shutdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the municipal elections of April 7, 2020 held unprecedented and unique challenges. The statewide shutdown of all but essential services, retailers that are open are on a limited basis, shelter in place, and new terms such as social distancing put many polling place elections in a state of confusion. Concerns of how the election would be run in a safe, efficient, and secure manner were on every municipality's mind. Equally unique are the Constitutions of both the United States and the State of Colorado, which simply do not legally allow a contested election to be canceled. The cornerstone of our representative government is public participation and to cancel an election reeks of non-representative, non-transparent, verging on non-democratic governance.

In Minturn, we have always had polling place elections. We are a small mountain town of about 1,100 and citizens enjoy the small-town atmosphere and government inclusion; they enjoy seeing their friends and neighbors as they turn out to elect their town council. Although the state allows for mail ballot elections, the timeline to conduct one requires months of advance planning, policy adoptions, and an approved process; time we didn't have when we learned the extent of the pandemic and the ensuing shutdown. What to do? The answer: Make things work. I have seen the slogan or mantra "We Got This!" all around the town, the county, and the state. With this in mind, Minturn implemented the following:

1. A very public and very aggressive absentee ballot program. This process included newspaper ads, posters on the doors, email blasts, sidewalk posters, messages in the town newsletter, and notices on the town website. In

an average year, we have about 20 absentee ballot applications and 200-225 total votes cast; in 2020 we had 147 absentee ballots and 90 day-of ballots cast.

2. Adjustments were made in the voting area to allow six feet between each of the three judges and any voter. By pulling some strings, we were able to get a case of hand sanitizers when none were on the store shelves. We had plenty of rubber gloves and even N95 masks for our judges. We set the voter distance from the judge by setting tables up doublewide and hung a clear shower curtain down the middle of the two tables lengthwise. We had one entry and one exit so no one had to brush past and the tables were set up far enough apart for safety, but close enough for the judges to speak and hear each other and the voters.

3. All chairs were removed except for the judge's chairs. The voter booths were set up in front of the judges, but far away from the judges and each other. I then tied the pens to each voter booth so that they didn't walk away. I had wipes available to clean the pens, at each judge's table, and at the entry and exit of the room.

4. When Judge #1 was ready, she could call the next voter to come forward from the lobby. We set up a queue area in the outer lobby with 6 foot markers to keep the voters apart. The last marker instructed the voter to "stand here until directed by the judge to proceed" and we had several signs through the queueing area to remain 6 feet apart and to remember social distancing, etc.

5. As the voter arrived outside the Town Hall, there was a queueing area and six-foot signs on the sidewalk to limit how many entered the lobby or judge area at any given time.

6. Absentee voters who had their ballot could drop it off at a fourth judge without the need to go inside. Using the signed and sealed absentee ballot security envelope ensured the integrity of the vote process.

Two points that we did not consider but became important in hindsight were being able to prevent the queueing area from becoming too overcrowded. Because I was at the table outside, the fourth judge could be the control gate to the queueing area, which then controlled how many were in the voting area at any given time. Second, because I was outside, we were able to prevent high risk groups from even being in the proximity of multiple people.

The control point for Minturn's election was outside because of the size of the town hall. Although we never really had a "rush" it still allowed voters to ask questions, Sonic vote, etc. This permitted the non-voting concerns to be handled away from the judges, allowing them to focus on voting integrity and registration. I did have a secondary voter list and the early voter ballot list so I could accept and mark off the hand-delivered ballots. I could also answer most registration questions, control the queueing area, and do additional absentee voting by continuing the absentee process all the way through 7 p.m. on Election Day. If the person had a registration question that required a call to the county, I could do that too.

Points to be considered: Minturn is MUCH smaller and 237 votes in total is lower than what other communities might experience. That said, having a sworn judge who could accept absentee ballots and monitor the access entry to the queueing area and then the voting area was a large benefit. Your last question would be, "why doesn't Minturn just do a mail ballot election?". The simple answer is cost. \$2,000 was budgeted but I anticipate costs reaching no more than \$1500-1750. A mail ballot election would be nearly double that amount.



KEEP CALM and VOTE ON

Dani Jardee, town clerk, Town of Winter Park

Election Day, April 7, 2020, was one for books...the history books that is! Clerks across Colorado holding elections were faced with unforeseen challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The number one challenge was keeping people safe during a time of uncertainty.

The Town of Winter Park is a relatively small mountain town that faced the challenge of getting voters to the polls amidst "Stay at Home" messaging. Winter Park has about 840 registered voters and two weeks before Election Day had only received about 35 absentee applications. When the "Stay at Home" order was announced, it was time to get creative and figure out how to transfer the new behaviors of sanitizing, mask-wearing, and social distancing to an election.

"Keep Calm and Vote On" was the message that became clear - this election was happening despite the tricky circumstances. With the Winter Park Town Hall being closed to the public, we decided to do a strong push for absentee voting. Citizens could make a 15-minute appointment between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. the week before the election to cast an absentee vote. This allowed citizens to only briefly interact with one staff member instead of coming to the polls where more interactions would be inevitable.

The absentee ballot application was available online so people could print and bring it to their appointment, along with their own pen. Once the application was completed, citizens were given their absentee ballot and a sanitized room in which to vote. After they left the room, it was disinfected before the next appointment arrived. The absentee voting message was pushed out through the town's communications channels: website, e-blasts, and social media. People took advantage of this option and in a span of one week, the town's absentee ballots increased from about 35 to about 95.

The next obstacle to overcome was the set-up and procedure for Election Day. In our election messaging, we encouraged people to wear masks and to bring their own pens. Winter Park's polling place is the Council Chambers in Town Hall - thankfully it is a large room, so on Election Day the judges were spaced out. Only one voter was allowed in the room at a time. The front doors were kept open to avoid door handle touching, and as the public entered the lobby they were greeted with a hand-sanitizer, gloves and mask station, and social distance markings on the floor.

When the voter entered the Council Chambers, they went from one judge to the next in an orderly manner, voted, and exited where a hand washing station was available. All judges were



masked and gloved, and hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, and Lysol spray were readily available to the public and the judges. The election judges followed proper protocol, and the public adapted and accepted the new norm of voting in 2020.

Because of everyone's cooperation, our municipal election was a success! Congratulations to my fellow Colorado clerks who made it through their elections, and a huge thanks to CML, Karen Goldman, and all the clerks on the CML Listserv. If it wasn't for the constant guidance and advice from everyone, this election would have been an even bigger challenge. With another election in the books, Town of Winter Park hopes 2022 will be a little less exciting!



A sure but not simple path to Colorado's economic recovery

By Cathy Ritter, director, Colorado Tourism Office

Amidst the sadness of this global pandemic is a ray of hope pointing the way to economic recovery. Unlike the last two recessions, this one will not require unwinding the twisted schemes of either terrorists or greedy traders. This recovery hinges on reactivating consumer spending.

The global economy froze as the threat of infection stopped consumers in their tracks, bringing travel and tourism across the planet to a halt. Widely recognized as the industry most savaged by coronavirus, tourism represents just 3% of the U.S. GDP, but accounts for 36% of our nation's job losses. The U.S. Travel Association projects the ultimate impact will be nine times worse than 9/11.

Often taken for granted, the tourism industry is now showing

its true might – in reverse. The impacts of the absence of tourism are staggering, constricting employment, business earnings and tax revenues for governments large and small. Here in Colorado, along with disruption of the energy economy, the tourism downturn has helped dig a \$3 billion hole in the state's budget outlook.

In mid-April, traveler spending in Colorado was down 89% compared with the same week in 2019, the biggest dip since the numbers began to freefall in early March. Oxford Economics reported that travelers spent a total of \$49 million in Colorado the week of April 18. That was down \$387 million from the \$436 million spent that same week in 2019.

With signs of re-opening now flickering across the country, U.S. Travel believes the week of April 18 may have represented

the trough of coronavirus impacts. Even if that is true, the climb back to the prosperity of February will be long and challenging.

While 2019 numbers are still coming in, it's clear that Colorado marked its 10th consecutive year of record-breaking growth last year, and the new decade was off to a roaring start. At last count, Colorado travelers in 2018 directly injected \$22.3 billion into the state economy, generating \$1.37 billion in tax revenue, with 61% going to local governments. That economic impact will be far, far less in 2020.

Typically, our office promotes Colorado in collaboration with local destination marketing organizations – from VISIT DENVER to the Durango Area Tourism Association to the Alamosa Convention and Visitor's Bureau. These organizations play a critical role in stimulating travel spending in their communities, but most have been crippled by the sudden loss of their lifeblood – taxes on local hotel stays.

Across the state, these organizations – along with hoteliers, restaurateurs, outfitters, attractions, museums, special events and more – now are looking to the Colorado Tourism Office (CTO) as their best hope for attracting the dollars of travelers.

For many years, our national "Come To Life" marketing campaign, publications, media placements and Colorado Welcome Centers have inspired travelers from across the U.S. and targeted international markets. Colorado.com is one of the nation's top-performing state websites, and our campaign routinely ranks among the top 10 percent nationally for ROI. All that work steadily built our national market share over the past decade from 18th place in 2009 to ninth place in 2018.

Now our CTO team has developed a new four-phase marketing plan we're calling, "Wait. Ready, Set, Go!" Unlike the usual plan, its rollout will hinge not on dates, but on data, both from public health authorities and from traveler sentiment.

The highlights of our Wait mode: our much-acclaimed "Daily Dose of Colorado Calm" on Facebook, a Colorado playlist on Pandora and a fun new campaign called "Waiting to CO!," underscoring the yearning of so many to be free and outdoors again.

As our state re-opens, the focus shifts to those most likely to travel first: the people who live here. We're already working with the Colorado Restaurant Association on plans for a statewide Colorado Restaurant Week (dates yet to be set) to help the heaviest hit tourism sector of all.

And there will be lots of special offers. With research showing that post-COVID travelers will be seeking and expecting value, we have invited industry partners statewide to contribute Special Offers for display on Colorado.com. We'll be using part of our digital advertising buy to drive travelers directly to those offers.

Rather than asking our industry to discount, we are encouraging the creation of special opportunities. The Glenwood Springs Chamber Resort Association, for example,

is providing with every hotel stay a \$50 gift certificate that can be spent at any local business. Those dollars will go right back into the local economy.

As more of Colorado reopens for travel, our attention will turn to those who will hop in a car for their summer vacation, as well as what our strategy agency MMGY Global calls "resilient travelers." About 16% of American travelers love travel so much that they're willing to endure inconvenience and even some risk – and many will be choosing domestic rather than international destinations this year.

Colorado is exceptionally well-positioned for road-trippers. Even apart from our fortunate geography and topography, Colorado is blessed with 26 scenic and historic byways, far more than any other U.S. state. Itineraries for each can be found on our searchable "Colo-Road Trips" microsite, which includes more than 200 trips to every corner of Colorado. And in May, we'll be unveiling a new "Scenic and Historic Byways" microsite with videos, travel tips and even more guidance to exploring the communities on all 26 of those byways.

We'll also be leveraging another huge competitive advantage for Colorado, our statewide focus on destination stewardship through our "Care for Colorado" initiative. Last summer, 27% of Colorado travelers said a destination's stewardship practices were "very important" to their choice of destinations, up from 15% just two years earlier. We'll be fulfilling that interest with new low-impact travel opportunities, a series of fun "Etiquette" videos and new editions of our "Are You Colo-Ready?" brochure tailored for specific audiences, like cyclists.

Finally, once these strange new norms feel more normal, we will shift into Phase 4 of our "Let's CO!" campaign – full-on promotion of Colorado to our highest-potential national targets.

While it's a solid plan, challenges abound. Competition will be fierce. Every single destination across the globe and the U.S. shares an identical goal of restoring its tourism economy as fast as possible. Every destination will be in the market at the same time, and those with big budgets will be the loudest.

Here in Colorado, we will face the extra challenge of managing a patchwork re-opening, with some communities ready to throw open the doors to visitors and others intent on keeping outsiders away. We'll only promote those communities that tell us they are open for business. But to alleviate resident – and visitor – concerns about travel, we're also creating a new "Care for Coloradans" initiative.

The biggest challenge by far will be overcoming fear of coronavirus. The latest wave of U.S. Travel research with MMGY shows that COVID-related fears outstrip every other consideration for travel, including "concerns for personal financial situation."

The key to this recovery is clear, but far from simple: restoring consumer confidence and making it safe to travel.



Breckenridge business assistance program and recovery planning

Haley Littleton, communications and marketing coordinator/public information officer, Town of Breckenridge

When the COVID-19 closures began in Summit County, there was an immediate and abrupt stop to the traditionally busiest months (March and April) of Breckenridge's tourism season. Sales plummeted, and businesses closed their doors. Many Breckenridge employees were furloughed until a later date or laid off. The Breckenridge Town Council immediately recognized the need to act to ensure the vibrancy of our local community and economy. Our local businesses and employees are what makes Breckenridge an authentic mountain community, which is precisely why others love to visit.





After forming a task force with local business owners, the council realized that rent was the biggest hurdle for both businesses and individual employees. Within a matter of days, the Town of Breckenridge pulled \$1.5 million from the general 2020 budget to put towards financial assistance: \$1 million for small businesses and \$500,000 for employees. The program was designed to operate as a bridge between urgent, immediate needs and the dissemination of state and federal loans and funds.

Business assistance

Council approved \$1 million for the Breckenridge Small Business Relief Program (<https://bit.ly/2YLzsJ1>). The purpose of this grant program is to provide some immediate rent support for the town's entrepreneurial small businesses. It is intended to be a bridge grant allowing the business tenant to pay rent while other relief options are pursued. The ultimate goal of the program is to help keep small businesses in a position to re-open as soon as the COVID-19 crisis is over. All funds are distributed electronically to qualifying applicants' landlord as a direct deposit.

The town began with criteria that were limited to applicants with 16 or fewer full-time employees, but then expanded the eligibility to businesses with 35 or fewer full-time employees after the first round of grants were distributed. Eligible companies are required to have a physical location in Breckenridge, be under a full or partial forced closure due to public health orders, and be a year-round business. Rent is paid up to \$4,000, and any business owner that also owns their building or unit receives \$2.58 per square foot up to \$4,000. As of April 29, the Town of Breckenridge has assisted 202 small businesses with \$608,566 approved.

Employee assistance

In designing the assistance program with individual employees, Breckenridge wanted to ensure that the program was more holistic and cumulative than a simple check. Instead of running the program internally, town council provided a \$500,000 grant to fund the COVID-19 Advocacy Program through the Family Intercultural and Resource Center. This grant's focus is to provide access to resources and financial relief, through rental assistance, to those who work in



Breckenridge and have been furloughed. This is not dependent on residence, but employment.

The COVID-19 Advocacy Program offers rent relief for qualifying individuals, but also helps guide individuals through accessing other resources and assistance. Individuals participate in a needs assessment that explores what steps individuals have taken with their landlords and evaluates their financial situation. After the evaluation, FIRC reaches out to landlords and schedules a virtual appointment with the individual. This advocacy program also provides individuals with assistance in applying for unemployment and state and federal programs. The FIRC received over 900 applications for community-wide rental assistance and hired additional staff to process applications and connect residents with resources like filing for unemployment or utility assistance.

The FIRC also runs a food pantry and has provided over 100,000 pounds of food to the community, with over 2,000 households served.

Recovery planning

At the Town of Breckenridge, we understand that economic recovery will extend far beyond these initial financial assistance programs as our community moves forward into uncertain times. We are partnering with our Destination Management Organization, Breckenridge Tourism Office, to begin to plan ahead for recovery in outlining clear, succinct steps towards a gradual reopening of Breckenridge. Our Breckenridge Recovery Taskforce is meeting frequently to outline transitional steps for local businesses and eventual reopenings for tourism.

Breckenridge is a resilient community that has thrived throughout the many iterations of life in Colorado. We are confident that we will get through this together and come out stronger on the other side. We are aware of the challenges ahead but trust that all of the innovative organizations and individuals in our town will help us adapt and evolve to the future. When we invest in our businesses and individuals that make our community thrive, we invest in a better and brighter future.



Photo credit: Colorado Springs CVB - Pikes Peak and Garden of the Gods

Tourism recovery post disaster: Four insights from Colorado Springs

Alexea Veneracion, communications manager, Visit Colorado Springs

While the Pikes Peak region isn't new to disaster recovery, the 2020 coronavirus pandemic has brought an unprecedented challenge. In the not-so-distant past, the region faced the Waldo Canyon fire of 2012, as well as the Black Forest and Royal Gorge fires of 2013. With both the fires and now the pandemic, travel and tourism were and are greatly affected. However, the COVID-19 pandemic proposes a different challenge, as it has impacted all destinations and determining the "right" time for recovery is much less clear cut.

Though the types and impact of each disaster are like comparing apples to oranges in some regards, there are four top takeaways that apply to both when it comes to priming a destination for a quick, effective recovery and bringing tourists back to a city, town, or region.

1. Practice over-communication and transparency from the onset. When disaster strikes a destination, it's common for the region to want to go silent while figuring out next steps. It's okay to take the time to put an effective strategy in place, but "going dark" is not the answer. Let visitors and the community know the situation that's developing and when they can expect next steps. For the duration of the disaster, keep all audiences informed across every channel to ensure updates are thoroughly communicated and received, while using sensitive language and remembering that you are a conduit to the news and not a journalist. There's nothing that drives fear and misinformation more than lack of communication and transparency.

2. Guide both the resident and visitor communities to the right resources. In the face of disaster, communication often appears scattered. Content is dispersed across city officials, first responders, public health departments and the media. The best thing a destination can do is create a central location where all resources and updates live in one place. Once the crisis begins to settle and visitors are in planning mode, they'll want to know the status of the region. Future visitors should be able to quickly access the resources they need to learn how the region has been handling the disaster and where closures/restrictions still stand. These efforts will give them the background necessary to book their trips. For example, Visit Colorado Springs created a COVID-19 updates page (<https://bit.ly/3crEdew>) that is updated several times each day.

3. Give all the support to the local economy. If a municipality's businesses can't operate through a disaster, generating tourism to the region post-disaster will be a failed effort. Tourism relies on a destination's lodging, restaurants, attractions, retail and everything in between. Regions should do everything they can to bring local businesses and neighborhoods together and inform the community on how they can still offer support, even if it looks different than the norm. Just like with the 2012 and 2013 fires, the Pikes Peak region has encouraged support of the local economy during COVID-19 through online shopping from retailers, curbside pickup from restaurants, virtual classes with the fitness and arts communities, virtual experiences of local attractions and more. Initiatives like "Carry On, Colorado Springs" and "Support the Springs" have generated community awareness of actions they can still take. A strong economy post-disaster will ensure a much quicker recovery of tourism.

4. Implement a phased approach to tourism post-disaster. Once a crisis begins to settle, it's important not to jump right back into a pre-disaster strategy. In the event of a fire, pandemic or other crisis, the most important consideration is the people. Not everyone will be ready to travel immediately, and certain promotional material will read as insensitive or offensive. The current pandemic isn't black and white when it comes to recovery signals, so follow the lead of public health experts and surrounding markets before returning to standard advertising initiatives. With the 2012 and 2013 fires, the trigger to resume advertising was 100% containment of the fires. It's not as clear cut with a pandemic. Create a phased approach, starting with a hyper-sensitive content strategy that keeps your destination top of mind without pushing people to visit immediately. Put forth efforts that are more feasible for the given crisis first. In this case, start with reaching the drive market before spreading out further. Once stay-at-home restrictions are lifted, encourage exploration of the region's less-populated areas, parks, trails and outdoor recreation options that can be enjoyed while still practicing social distancing. In the very last phase, once it aligns with the slowing and end of the pandemic, gradually weave in pre-disaster strategies, adjusting the imagery and messaging to reflect our "new normal."

No disaster is the same, and the current pandemic is certainly a new challenge for all cities, towns and regions. Tourism recovery will not be immediate, and it won't be easy. But by following these four practices, destinations can set their regions up for a quicker, stronger recovery.





Local creatives launch "Support the Springs" initiative in partnership with the city of Colorado Springs

Lauren Ripko, owner, Studio Q Events



“We’re all in this together.” On Friday, March 13, a small group of change makers in the Colorado Springs small business community received this email from Lauren McKenzie, Founder and CEO of REN Creativ: “I am feeling really called to creatively help and support our small businesses and I consider you all allies or vital members of the Colorado Springs small business community.” Less than three hours later, twelve people were sitting in a conference room brainstorming how to support Colorado Springs small businesses facing the realities of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In that meeting, the Support the Springs initiative launched. Since, the committee has been working around the clock to gather up-to-date information in partnership with the City of Colorado Springs and Mayor Suthers’s Office. On Monday, March 16, www.supportthesprings.com launched with more than 200 businesses providing their updated information.

The goal of Support the Springs is to embrace camaraderie and positivity while keeping the public informed with up-to-date information and resources during and after the pandemic. In addition to the website,

the initiative also manages a social media campaign focused on engaging and connecting the community through social distancing. Social media platforms on both Instagram and Facebook offer daily tips with rotating subjects including "Mindfulness Mondays" and "Work Out Wednesdays" as well as prompts for residents to help small businesses in creative ways.

The website, www.supportthesprings.com, acts as a centralized informational and motivational platform of resources for residents and businesses in the Pikes Peak region with a mission to unite the community to become stronger together through this pandemic. In addition to business updates, it also offers resources for residents including tips on staying healthy and fit, assistance for employers and employees, seniors, the arts community and more.

Lauren McKenzie, owner of Ren Creativ said, "The community members or business owners alike can log into the site and find updates on information regarding takeout for restaurants, online activities that families and individuals can take to maintain their health and wellness...updates on loans that are accessible to small businesses, resources for seniors, for parents with small children. The goal is to have a cohesive, positive message of how we can all support the small business community and each other."

Throughout the Springs, yard signs can be seen that were designed by Support the Springs in partnership with the Creative Consortium, a local business that has also been severely impacted by the pandemic. The yard sign partnership is an opportunity for the community to support a local business and to spread positivity from their front yards. Signs have been seen at COVID testing sites, in front of businesses and sprinkled throughout the entire city of Colorado Springs and beyond.

The group has also worked with local businesses

including the Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce and EDC and the Cultural Office of the Pikes Peak Region to create virtual events. On Mondays, the Chamber hosts a Facebook Live event with mindfulness as the topic, and on Thursday afternoons, they offer a lighter subject with local restaurants and bartenders demonstrating the art of creating cocktails while learning about liquors. Ian Dedrickson of Ephemera Dinners participated and commented he was grateful for the "reassurance and energy for the future" the platform gave his small business.

When the stay at home order hit and the city's art galleries were faced with forgoing the season's kickoff First Friday, Downtown COS, Old Colorado City and Manitou Springs collaborated to create a virtual event with Support the Springs. On Friday, April 3, 15 galleries grossed more than \$19,000 in sales through the virtual platform. The second Virtual First Friday was held on May 1 with double the number of participating artists and galleries. The event also provided \$4500 in grants from the Bee Vrandenburg Foundation and the Downtown Development Authority to match purchases of \$50 or more. The event is hosted on www.peakradar.com in partnership with the Cultural Office of the Pikes Peak Region.

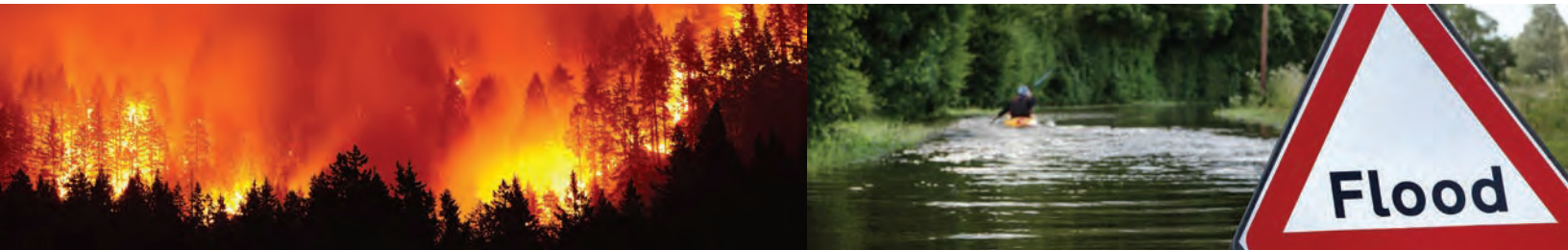
As businesses reopen and adjust to the new normal, Support the Springs will continue to promote shopping local small businesses with several initiatives that are yet to be announced.

Members of the committee include Sara DeRose of Fixer Creative, who said "We are a small business. Some of our clients are small businesses. And this is our home. We've got this, if we've got each other."

To learn more, please visit www.supportthesprings.com or follow along on Instagram and Facebook at @supportthesprings.

Manitou Springs "shows their Manitude" to bring visitors back following disaster

Leslie Lewis, executive director, Manitou Springs Chamber of Commerce, Visitors Bureau & Office of Economic Development



The City of Manitou Springs was faced with two disasters back-to-back: the Waldo Canyon Fire in 2012 and then extensive flooding from the Waldo fire in the summer of 2013. The message we put out in both years was that Manitou Springs was still "Open for Business." In 2012, the Mayors for Colorado Springs and Manitou Springs did a bus tour (with media) from downtown Colorado Springs through Manitou Springs and up to Woodland Park to show that everything was open. Because the fire hit in June, a lot of outside promotions were in place (State Vacation Guide, Pikes Peak Region Guide, AAA publications). We either had or were in the process of launching a new website and used the camera in downtown (Weatherbug) to promote live photos of Manitou Springs on the site. Everyone answering calls (at the Chamber or lodging properties) was assuring guests the fires were out and it was safe to keep their visit as scheduled. We also used social media to share what businesses were doing. We increased local and regional promotions (Colorado Springs and Denver) and promoted events through press releases.

In 2013, we increased the marketing budget by \$20,000. Unfortunately, the floods made national news. One of the challenges was that following the August 9 flooding incident, the media came to Manitou Springs every time it rained and focused their cameras on the creek. Also, the flood sirens would go off and businesses were told to evacuate their customers. Using a Public Relations firm,

we held a media roundtable event to create positive messaging for Manitou Springs with the media. We continued to promote more locally, with the local military, and regionally (within Colorado).

A local campaign "Show your Manitude" (strong, beautiful, giving, and resilient) was launched in the fall with a weekend block party (Friday through Sunday) with a lot of live music, art demonstrations, and specials going on throughout town. Posters were created and handed out as well as poster board for businesses to create their own weekend special poster. The event was successful and another event "Manitude – Holiday Style" aka "Frosty Fun Festival of Festivities and Fives" was created for the first weekend in December. Show your Manitude and FrostyFun Festival of Festivities and Fives were the brainchild of a local business owner. We created a space for Santa at the Town Clock. On Saturday evening, we gave out cider and had a fireworks display. There were live performances and activities going on in some locations. Businesses were again offering some type of special and were encouraged to tie it to the "fives" part of the theme. These events were promoted through social media, press releases, and the December event, through the holiday promotions budget. The December event was not as successful because the weather was frigid that weekend, but it might be something to bring back in future years!





Tourism after disaster

Arielle Hodgson, communications and special events coordinator, Town of Lyons

As municipalities contemplate how to begin to welcome tourists back following COVID-19, lessons can be learned from how we recovered from previous events.

In September 2013, Lyons was inundated by a historic 500+ year flood, declared as an emergency by Governor John Hickenlooper and a national disaster by President Barack Obama. Over 200 businesses and about 1,000 residences were disconnected from water, sewer, electric and gas utilities for at least eight weeks following the event.

Following the national disaster, it was hard to know where to start; Lyons was primarily sustained by volunteer-driven efforts, a 15-person town staff, and a community of small, independently-owned businesses. Yet, despite the devastation, the community pulled together, and forward momentum slowly began after the initial disaster response.





Planning for recovery began immediately; hundreds of citizens participated in creating the Lyons Recovery Action Plan, which laid the framework to chart our course to recovery. Economic development recovery focused on restoring a prosperous local business environment, with primary focus on partnering with organizations for support and getting visitors into our businesses.

One of the first endeavors we undertook was joining the Main Street Program, as administered through the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA). This program allowed the town access to noncompetitive grants, technical services, and expert assistance in revitalizing the commercial district.

Committees comprised of town staff, the economic development commission, the Chamber of Commerce, business owners, and volunteers were formed and worked diligently to get businesses and the town back on their feet. As it turns out, there's nothing quite like a natural disaster to prove that just about anyone can be transformed into an expert grant writer. Leveraging the various designations and eligibilities, the entities joined forces to apply for and administer grants related to strengthening Lyons' economy through marketing, events, and tourism. In some cases, the town agreed to manage grant accounting for volunteer-based entities who were awarded funds but weren't equipped with the necessary tools or resources.

The driving goal of grant funding was to attract tourists by leveraging the town's unique retailers, history, natural setting, and relationship with the music, arts, and outdoor recreation. After hiring a consultant to help author a new marketing plan, we launched a printed brochure campaign across Colorado; created a new tourism website (lyonscolorado.com); conceived and produced new community events; and hired a local marketing firm to rebrand Lyons as "The Hip Little Town Everybody Loves."







Throughout the planning and implementation of marketing strategies, we remained cognizant about the reality of 'disaster tourism' – as often experienced in communities following disaster, people traveled from all over to see the devastation of the flood. Without question, this was not something on which we would capitalize. From the beginning, the intent of our message was firm: we were not seeking the pity of those looking in, but instead, to hear us roar. This once-in-500-years thing happened and it was horrible, but the point is we are resilient. We are Lyons Strong.

Lyons is in its seventh – and likely final – year of recovery. By the end of 2020, we will have received approximately \$65 million in state and federal grants for recovery. With an annual town budget of \$2.2 million and around 30 town staff total managing recovery and normal daily town operations, it has certainly been a challenging road. But, spend a day in Lyons and see for yourself why the community is proud to be small but mighty.



Colorado's Resiliency Office aids in recovery

By Kate Guibert, rural prosperity manager, Colorado Resiliency Office

The Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) Colorado Resiliency Office (CRO) is Colorado's expert in building resilience to disruptions and supporting long-term recovery efforts. The CRO is housed in DOLA's Division of Local Government (DLG). The division is a committed local government partner and provides strategic expertise, advocacy, and funding to strengthen Colorado.

We have been involved in recovery conversations with state and local partners since the COVID-19 pandemic was reported

in Colorado. Recovery begins during response to an event. This is the moment in time where communities organize how they will approach an event and start to define their vision for what they want the community to look like as they recover. Decisions we make in response will impact how we recover.

This pandemic has been unprecedented and therefore our response must be unprecedented. By all accounts it has been. Local governments are partnering with business communities for a bottom up approach to tackling economic recovery.



Entrepreneurs and small businesses in communities are stepping in to provide personal protective equipment (PPE) and provide for unmet needs in communities such as food for the unemployed and frontline workers. As a state, we are working together across jurisdictional and geographic boundaries better than we ever have before. We are testing new models quickly and adapting as things change. Colorado communities are remarkably resilient.

Our office has also created a Community Recovery Starter Kit, which can be found at <https://bit.ly/3dzv1OL>. In it, we encourage the following:

- Pull together a recovery taskforce made up of stakeholders from local government, emergency response, public health, industry representation, nonprofits, workforce development, and business leaders.
- Set the vision you want for your community and identify the challenges and opportunities in attaining that vision during recovery.
- Do scenario planning to account for a number of futures and build out strategies to be prepared for various conditions.

- Utilize many of the great resources out there to begin planning for economic recovery such as Richard Florida's 10-Point Economic Action Plan (visit <https://bit.ly/2Wmi7EH>).

In partnership with the CRO, the Colorado Main Street program is providing critical and rapid response to our communities to help prevent the loss of businesses and jobs and to support the reopening of businesses over the next few months, as well as the sustainability of the local Main Street program. In addition to a customizable, accessible, and holistic framework for community-led downtown revitalization, officially designated communities within the Colorado Main Street Program receive annual mini-grants, scholarships, and consulting services. In response to COVID-19 and its impact, official communities will have access for up to three years' worth of mini-grants and scholarships to fund critical projects and technical assistance related to the recovery. Secondly, Main Street consulting services are being realigned to focus on recovery efforts and strategies.

As you begin your recovery conversations, DOLA has a fantastic team of regional managers who can connect you to resources and help you navigate the recovery process.



CLOSED

**To the public until
further notice.**

We will be offering sales by phone for
shipping or delivery. Please refer to
our FB Page for available items.

Thank you for your support ☺



**COVID-19 in Louisville:
Today's experiences,
tomorrow's history**



The Louisville Historical Museum is encouraging residents to record their experiences through a COVID-19 Experience Kit.

Kaylyn Mercuri, Louisville Historical Museum



In these unprecedented times, towns and cities have a unique opportunity to engage their residents and help promote a strong feeling of community. One way they can do this is by utilizing their historic organizations. After all, for many historical organizations in Colorado, collecting, preserving, and sharing local history and stories is the paramount way they serve their communities. With that in mind, the City of Louisville's Historical Museum is offering COVID-19 Experience Kits to help individuals and families process and record their reactions to the virus. These kits are available to all via online survey or digital download. They can be utilized in various ways - as a reactionary survey, as a process journal, as an educational activity, and as a historical record.

At the museum, we recognize the historical weight of COVID-19 and the importance of documenting our community's experiences. The future of historical records relies on stories that are shared and collected today. The museum wants to document personal anecdotes about COVID-19 in order to provide context for future interpretations of this historic time. Generations from now, will there be personal stories to shed light on the data from this pandemic?

We want to make sure these stories are heard and recorded.

We also hope that the kits will serve as a vehicle through which people begin to process their thoughts, emotions, fears, and hopes regarding this pandemic. As historians, we look to the past for ways to understand the present. Quarantines due to disease outbreaks are completely new for most of us, but comparable historical experiences can provide context and even comfort. We have compiled resources on the 1918-1919 Influenza Pandemic and the 1946-1947 Polio Epidemics, two outbreaks from which we have personal accounts. These show how people in Louisville (and greater Colorado) have navigated similar events in the past. Historic comparisons and anecdotes, like these, can bring feelings of solidarity and hope. Likewise, we know the stories that we collect from our community with the COVID-19 Experience Kits will provide context for future generations.

We asked, and our community showed up! We have received a range of responses but always welcome more. Some have chosen to download the full COVID-19 Experience Kit while others have taken the online survey. We want to share snippets of personal responses, not with the intention of



spreading fear, but in the interest of showing solidarity and inspiring others to reflect on their own situation. Here are some of the things that the Louisville community has said in response to COVID-19:

- "It reminds me to give thanks for what I have because for the first time in my life I am becoming aware of how easily things can go away."
- "We only have left the house twice for going to the grocery store during COVID-19 this far."
- "I have been very frightened and sometimes feel very isolated with my feelings."
- "My husband and I have worked together to make over 100 masks for neighbors and essential businesses in the area."
- "There has been nothing in my entire life that has approached the true meaning of surreal. Of course, we say something is surreal out of exaggeration or a popular usage of the word. But seeing your work get closed and your school get shut down; seeing the fear in people that you never thought would be outwardly fearful. It's truly surreal."

**Louisville photographer
Chris Wheeler, in partnership with
Louisville's Downtown Business
Association, captured these photos
of Louisville business owners during
the period of Stay At Home.
The photos have been shared
with the Historical Museum
as a record of this time.**

NOTICE

Temporarily CLOSED

Out of an abundance of caution and to assist with efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the following amenities are closed until further notice:

- Playgrounds
- Picnic Shelters
- Skate Park
- In-line Hockey Rink
- Community Dog Park
- Davidson Mesa Dog Off-Leash Area
- Ball Fields
- Tennis Courts
- Basketball Courts
- Louisville Sport Complex
- Public Bathrooms

All other amenities and activities encourage the current social distancing recommendations of staying six feet apart. Groups or gatherings of more than 10 people are prohibited.

For more information on COVID-19, please visit
www.LouisvilleCO.gov/COVID19



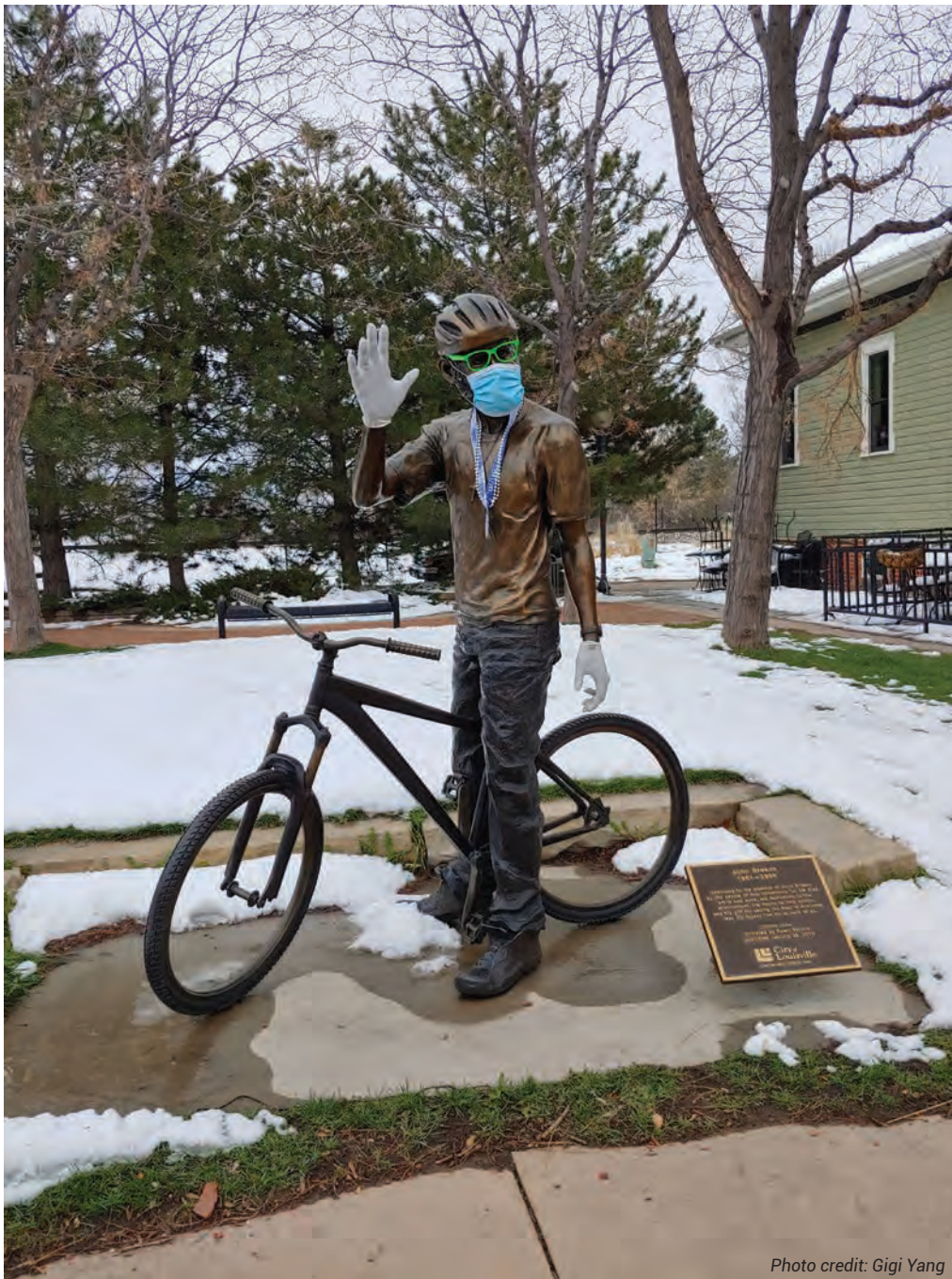


Photo credit: Gigi Yang

Towns and cities have an opportunity to employ their history organizations both to help communities through stressful times and to document individual experiences and reflections. Every town and city is experiencing COVID-19 differently. We see this as an opportunity to gather these local stories, an option that is available to every respective town and city. We hope you will consider encouraging your historical organizations to embark on similar projects. If any of the sample statements that we shared resonate with you, we also invite you to take our online survey or find another way to record your own experiences. For more information, access to our COVID-19 Experience Kits, and other digital resources, please visit: www.louisvilleco.gov/museum.

COVID-19 FRAUD AND SCAM

**SCAM
ALERT!**



Navigating scams, cybersecurity, and open meetings during the COVID-19 crisis

Colorado Department of Law

As the coronavirus public health crisis continues to impact the state, Colorado Attorney General Phil Weiser and the Department of Law have issued warnings and advice for consumers, businesses, and public entities.

Scammers often follow headlines, especially during a crisis, so we all need to be vigilant to protect ourselves and others. The Department of Law received more than 900 consumer complaints related to COVID-19, demonstrating how bad actors are seeking to take advantage of Coloradans.

As scam risks increase, so do cybersecurity threats. While people are working remotely, they may be more susceptible to these threats, which is why it is even more imperative that businesses and organizations follow cybersecurity regulations.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also impacted public-facing boards and commissions, but that does not mean they cannot conduct business while working remotely. Open meetings can be held virtually if the law is followed in regard to public access and notice of the meetings.

How consumers can avoid scams related to COVID-19

Scammers have been using fake phone calls, emails, texts, and social media posts to lure consumers into paying for non-existent coronavirus tests, prevention or treatment drugs, and personal protective equipment such as masks and gloves. Sometimes they direct unwary consumers to phony websites to steal important personal or financial information. They also hope to take advantage of our residents by using relief checks the federal government is sending to many Coloradans as part of the federal CARES Act to encourage people to steal bank account numbers or other sensitive personal information.

As Attorney General Weiser has warned, scammers take advantage of natural disasters and emergencies, but by working together we can protect ourselves and others.

"By learning how to avoid scams related to COVID-19, we can work together to ensure no one in our state is taken in by these malicious attempts to defraud Colorado consumers during this public health emergency," he said.

The following are ways to avoid COVID-19 scams:

- Be wary of online offers for vaccinations. There are currently no FDA approved vaccines, pills, supplements, potions, lotions, lozenges, or other prescription or over-the-counter products available to treat or cure COVID-19.
- Don't respond to texts and emails about checks from the government. For more information about stimulus checks, go to www.irs.gov/coronavirus/economic-impact-payments.
- Know that no state or federal government agency will ever call to ask for your Social Security number, bank account, or credit card number, or ask you to pay any fee or fine with a prepaid gift card or wire transfer. They will certainly never ask you to pay anything up front to receive a stimulus check. Anyone who does so is a scammer.
- Don't click on suspicious links contained in unexpected emails or texts, or any other communication from unfamiliar sources. Those links could direct to a phishing website to steal personal or financial information or download viruses onto their computer or device.
- Check websites and email addresses offering information, products, or services related to COVID-19. Be aware that scammers often use addresses that differ only slightly from those belonging to the entities they are impersonating. For example, they might use "cdc.com" or "cdc.org" instead of "cdc.gov." For the most up-to-date information on COVID-19, visit the websites for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (cdc.gov) and World Health Organization (who.int).
- Phony charity sites or people asking for donations in cash, by gift card, or by wiring money, should not be trusted. Do not be lured by "urgent" appeals. Before you make any donation, check the validity of charities by going to www.charitynavigator.org or www.charitywatch.org.

The department's Consumer Protection Division has been in contact with representatives from various online retailers like Amazon to coordinate efforts to address potential extreme price gouging on items such as paper products, cleaning supplies, hand sanitizer and soap, and other goods. It is important for Colorado consumers to remain vigilant and report any scams. With these reports, the department will be able to work with other law enforcement agencies, including on a national level, to protect Colorado consumers and stop fraudsters.

If you see any scams, fraud, price gouging, or other attempts to take advantage of Coloradans during this public health emergency, contact Stop Fraud Colorado at 800-222-4444 or www.StopFraudColorado.gov.

Why following cybersecurity laws is vital, including when working from home

Colorado's consumer data protection laws require companies and government agencies to protect the personal identifying information they collect and maintain and provide notice when there has been a data breach. These laws must still be followed, even as many businesses have transitioned to working from home.

Steps the law requires entities to take to protect personal identifying information that they maintain, own, or license

Any person, commercial entity, or governmental entity that maintains, owns, or licenses personal identifying information of Colorado residents in the course of its business, vocation, or occupation is required to take reasonable security measures to protect personal identifying information, taking into account the nature and size of the business and the type of personal identifying information they are collecting. See C.R.S. § 24-73-102 for more information for governmental entities, and C.R.S. § 6-1-713.5 for individuals or commercial entities.

Requirements for disposal of personal identifying information

People, commercial entities and government entities that maintain, own, or license personal identifying information in the course of their business, vocation, or occupation are required to develop and implement a written policy to ensure it is destroyed when it is no longer needed. See C.R.S. § 24-73-101 for more information for governmental entities, and C.R.S. § 6-1-713 for individuals or commercial entities.

What is required in case of a security breach

In case of a security breach—the unauthorized acquisition of unencrypted computerized data that compromises the security, confidentiality, or integrity of personal information—the person, commercial entity, or governmental entity maintaining that information must conduct a prompt, good faith investigation to determine the likelihood that personal

information has been or will be misused. Unless the investigation determines that the information has not been misused and is not reasonably likely to be misused, they also must provide notice to the affected Colorado residents.

That notice must be provided in the most expedient time possible, without unreasonable delay, and within 30 days after the date of determination that a security breach has occurred.

If the security breach is reasonably believed to have affected 500 or more Colorado residents, notice must also be provided to the Colorado Attorney General in the most expedient time possible and without unreasonable delay, but not later than 30 days after the date of determination that a security breach occurred. See C.R.S. § 24-73-103 for more information for governmental entities, and C.R.S. § 6-1-716 for individuals or commercial entities.

Notice to the Attorney General should be sent to the consumer protection program manager at databreach@coag.gov.

For more information about Colorado's data protection laws, go to <https://coag.gov/resources/data-protection-laws/>.

The Colorado Open Meetings Law and virtual meetings

The Colorado Open Meetings Law (COML) allows for virtual meetings to be held, and the department is providing guidance based on both this law and the Colorado Administrative Procedures Act to state agencies about best practices. Go to bit.ly/OpenMtgsFAQ for more information.

Virtual meetings

The COML recognizes that "meetings" of public bodies may be conducted "by telephone, electronically, or by other means of communication." § 24-6-401(1)(b). The law provides that all "meetings" at which two or more members of a state public body, or three or more members (or a quorum) of a local public body, discuss "public business" must be "open to the public at all times." § 24-6-402(2)(a). A meeting accessible only electronically, such as by webinar, online video conference (e.g., Zoom), or telephone conference, complies with the COML so long as the means to access the meeting electronically are made available to the public.

The law also authorizes local public bodies to use electronic-only posting of notices of their meetings. § 24-6-402(2)(c)(III). For state public bodies, the statute requires that there must be "full and timely notice to the public." State bodies should adopt a 'flexible' standard that considers the interest in providing access to 'a broad range of meetings at which public business is considered,' as well as the public body's need to conduct its business 'in a reasonable manner.'" (Benson v. McCormick, 195 Colo. 381, 383, 578 P.2d 651, 652 (1978)).

Converting an in-person meeting to an electronic-only meeting

Under the existing law allowing for flexible standards in connection with notices of public meetings, it is permissible

for a public body to amend a previously posted notice of a public meeting. *Town of Marble v. Darien*, 181 P.3d 1148, 1152 (Colo. 2008). Amendments can include the addition of new topics, changes in the location of a meeting, or the means of accessing the meeting, but the COML requires at least 24 hours' notice for public meetings of local public bodies. § 24-6-402(2)(c)(I).

While there is no similar provision for state public bodies, 24 hours' notice should be sufficient for a public meeting of a state public body, especially if there are extenuating circumstances that warrant a short notice period. Providing notice for more than 24 hours is appropriate where feasible. In addition, it is also important to consider whether a particular public body's statute, ordinances, charter, or rules require more than 24 hours of public notice. If so, then the more specific notice provision will control over the general provision in the COML.

Public comment

The COML does not require a "public comment" period, or any other form of public input during a public meeting. Rather, the purpose of the statute is to allow the public to observe, not necessarily to participate. § 24-6-401. Note, though, that many local public bodies do have such requirements in their ordinances or rules. If that is the case, the public body will need to use a technology for its electronic meeting that facilitates a public comment period.

Many current virtual-meeting services readily enable this function. The body may alternatively rely on the "chat" or similar functions of online video-conference systems such as Zoom or Skype, which allow participants to send comments to the body in writing.

How to set up electronic-only access for an executive session in conjunction with a meeting of the public body

If the public body uses a commercial internet-based video conferencing service such as Zoom, the service will allow for the creation of side-bar meetings into which selected participants may join the portion of the meeting that has been closed to the public. This will allow for the public meeting portion of the electronic meeting to remain open while the executive session is conducted.

Otherwise, in the absence of a commercial video-conferencing system, the safest way to conduct a closed executive session during a body's meeting is by having a two-mode method for accessing the electronic meeting. That is, if the meeting is conducted by both webinar and a concurrent telephone dial-in conference bridge, the webinar portion of the meeting can be suspended or recessed while the executive session is conducted by telephone. Once the executive session is completed, the body's board members would then rejoin the webinar video conference.

Remote Inspections

Centennial transformed building inspections to better serve the community

By Kelly Ohaver, customer experience manager, City of Centennial

As Coronavirus-induced self-quarantining and social distancing recommendations were being rolled out across the nation, the City of Centennial faced challenges over what actions to take to protect the community and staff members while continuing to provide essential services. Three weeks prior to the Governor issuing the stay at home order, Centennial approached SAFEbuilt as the city's building services contractor and asked what services could be provided in the event city buildings were shut down. SAFEbuilt responded by offering to leverage technology as a means of conducting remote building inspections.

This option allowed the city to continue conducting inspections on the interior of homes while minimizing exposure between city employees and the public, adhering to the direction of public health officials about social distancing. The team moved forward in developing detailed remote inspection guidelines, and a week before the city building closed to the public, Centennial began offering remote inspections. Based upon resident and contractor feedback, the process was user friendly and utilized the commonly-available technologies of Skype and Facetime to complete remote video inspections. This innovative program has been well-received by the public and the Centennial Building Department successfully completed approximately 200 remote inspections in the first five weeks of implementation.

The City of Centennial has always focused on maintaining lean, efficient and effective government through smart contracting and public-private partnerships. Through the innovative use of existing technology, Centennial and its partner, SAFEbuilt, adopted new processes enabling the city to better meet the changing needs of our community. As a result, when closures and restrictions are lifted, the city will not have a backlog of inspections. In fact, the unique response to this unprecedented experience may foretell the future of residential inspections as remote, easy-to-conduct video inspections that are convenient for homeowners and contractors and cost effective for local jurisdictions.

The full remote inspection guidelines are available on the City of Centennial's website at centennialco.gov/eta.

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