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Banner Year For Broadband



Monumental progress was made last year with the Regional Strategic Broadband Plan. As those of us living in rural Colorado know, the need for broadband access continues to grow. We not only need it to connect businesses with customers, employers to employees, and governments and political representatives with their constituents, we want it to connect with our families and friends. More importantly, we need it to be fast and reliable with full capacity to support all of the things we actually do online these days, including streaming movies and video content, news broadcasts, reading online publications, and using internet-based telephone or online video chat services.

To help drive this development, in late December, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), issued an order that increases the minimum broadband speeds for projects that use Connect America Fund money. This order highlights the commitment to provide high quality services across our country.

According to Nate Walowitz, NWCCOG Regional Broadband Coordinator, "NWCCOG continues to lead the state in the development of measurable, attainable broadband projects. The key is assisting in the development and deployment of solutions that specifically address the needs of each individual area. A one size fits all approach is not the optimal solution for our region."

The list of accomplishments and progress in 2014 is long and varied. Full details will soon be available on our website. Until then, here are just a few highlights:

- Open and direct dialogue with numerous broadband providers began with the intent to deliver more robust network connections and services to the entire region.
- A Regional Working session with diverse stakeholders was facilitated to find common ground for open communication in support of services for each of their local areas.
- Broadband network infrastructure projects to improve speed, capacity and pricing were developed in Rio Blanco, Moffat, and Routt Counties.



- A Carrier-Neutral Location (CNL) was launched in Routt County, providing a single point of aggregation for government, schools, and other traffic - thus allowing multiple service providers to compete for business, keeping costs lower in the area.
- The Town of Red Cliff developed a start-up wireless ISP (WISP) strategy to provide broadband service and Voice over IP (VoIP) telephone service to the community and is slated for completion in summer of 2015.
- Concerted efforts among service providers and governmental agencies resulted in the activation of a fiber connection between Steamboat Springs and Craig, providing additional bandwidth and capabilities to western Routt County.
- Pitkin County released an RFP and selected a partner to help develop a county specific strategic plan to provide broadband to unserved and underserved areas throughout the entire Roaring Fork Valley.
- The Town of Kremmling approved construction of a new Verizon Wireless cell site expanding 4G cell phone coverage in many parts of town and cell service at the local schools.

These results have only been possible through the dedicated efforts of an entire team of Internet Services providers, government officials, local experts, and community members. Thanks to all who participated. We look forward to great things in 2015. For more information, contact Nate Walowitz, 970-406-0252 or nwalowitz@nwccog.org.

Board Member Spotlight Karn Stiegelmeier

It is fitting that our first Board Member Spotlight be the Chair of the NWCCOG Council, Karn Stiegelmeier, who is also a Summit County Commissioner.

Karn has been actively involved with the NWCCOG as a Council Member for four years, serving as Chair for 2013 and 2014.

People might wonder what the Council is responsible for and in Karn's words, "The Council oversees the budget, grants and programs, and the Executive Director. We are thrilled to have Liz Mullen at the helm managing an array of diverse programs that provide benefits to our region."

Karn is a Colorado native, born in Colorado Springs; and growing up in a much smaller metro area of Denver. After graduating from CU, then having one "ski bum season" working at Copper Mountain, she headed to Oregon to work for the USFS with a "Don't Californicate Colorado" bumper sticker on her car. After a few years in Oregon, she lived in Northern California for 20 years before returning to Colorado. Summit County has been home



for 20 years now, and she can't imagine wanting to live anywhere else.

Karn is impressed with how the NWCCOG serves such a wide range of people in this region. She points to the rapid growth and ever changing new challenges that entail working with local entities to determine best solutions as being very rewarding with far reaching impacts. She remarked, "We are much more capable of finding solutions to our unique challenges in Colorado by working together."

According to her, the NWCCOG has been very successful working on all our big issues: transportation, health care, high cost of living/housing in our resort areas, energy savings through weatherization, aging populations, economic development, assisting small businesses, protecting our water and other natural resources that our economies depend upon, and more.

When asked, what do you think would surprise people about what the NWCCOG provides to the community? She responded, "Loans to small businesses in our communities that are able to establish viability and value, but are unable to get a loan from a commercial bank."

When asked to describe her favorite activities, she had this to say. "I am a typical Summit County recreationist, with more value in my skis and boots than in my vehicle. I love every kind of skiing - alpine, Nordic, XC, backcountry. During the summer, I'm happiest wandering by foot, at the highest elevations, exploring wildflowers and views in our beautiful mountains."

Staff Member Spotlight

Jean Hammes - Director Alpine Area Agency on Aging



Jean started working with the NWCCOG in her current position in 2004 and thinks that some of the best things about working with the organization is that it's so multi-faceted; changing and adapting to new situations and regional needs as required.

According to Jean, "One of the things I like most is that the staff is committed to the highest standards of professional service, leadership, and integrity. The success of the NWCCOG depends on the talents, skills, and expertise of its board and staff working as a team."

Born, raised, and educated in Iowa, Jean began her career teaching at a small Iowa high school until it was closed through consolidation. She headed to Colorado in search of another teaching job and ended up in Summit County. While waiting for that next teaching job to open up she worked at a Real Estate

Company and the Chamber of Commerce. An opportunity to work on school-to-work partnership initiatives took her to California for 5 years before returning to Summit County in 2004.

As the Director for the Alpine Agency on Aging (AAAA) Jean's primary responsibilities are to:

- Administer and coordinate the delivery of funds through the Older Americans Act Programs in Region 12;
- Administer the Area Plan in accordance with fiscal and programmatic requirements;
- Report funding expenditures and delivery of services as required by the State Unit on Aging;
- Build and maintain positive working relationships with NWCCOG Council, Regional Advisory Council, providers, state and local representatives; and
- Provide support, education, assistance, and guidance to subcontractors and the regional aging network.

When asked what she thought might surprise people about the NWCCOG, she had this to say, "I think people would be surprised at how many things the NWCCOG is involved in. The variety of programs and services that are offered directly from, or administered through the organization is truly remarkable."

In addition to camping and traveling, Jean also enjoys sports; tending to follow sports activities appropriate for each season.

Alpine Area Agency on Aging Looking for a few good men -- and women!



The Alpine Area Agency on Aging (AAAA) looks to the Region 12 Regional Advisory Council (RAC) to provide input and guidance to the AAAA in a number of different areas. From the planning and distribution of federal Older Americans Act and Older Coloradans Act funds, to assisting with oversight of the funded programs, to acting as advocates for older adults and their care-givers, to gathering information and ideas that help coordinate delivery of services to older adults in the five county Region 12 area, the RAC is there! And they need your help.

We are currently reaching out to our community to help fill vacancies in two critical areas:

- The first vacancy is on the Regional Advisory Council itself. This at-large position would best be filled with a person who is passionate about the issues faced by older residents in our communities. While the majority of members of the RAC need to be 60 or older, we are looking for members of all ages, from all parts of the region. We believe a diverse group will provide better ideas and options. The council meets six times per year, with most meetings conducted via conference calls.
- The second vacancy is on the Grant Review Committee for 2015. We are looking for individuals to review grant proposals for the upcoming Region 12 Area Plan funding competition. This is an excellent opportunity to work with colleagues in aging services and community-minded individuals, contributing your knowledge and experience to the Region 12 efforts to select high-quality aging services to the older persons and their family caregivers in our area. All members of the Region 12 Grant Review Committee

serve as at-large representative of the 60+ population without affiliation to county, town or service organizations.

If you are interested in either of these volunteer opportunities or would like additional information, please contact Jean Hammes, 970-468-0295, or aaa12@nwccog.org. Applications for the Grant Review Committee are being accepted through February.

2015 Training & Funding Opportunities Page on EDD Website - new information!

Check out the NWCCOG EDD website for updated information on 2015 [training](#) and [funding](#) opportunities. Here are some highlights (please note these pages are continuously updated):



- 2015 Colorado Fiscal Forum - Feb. 25, 2015 in Frisco
- City Builders Forum - offered by Downtown Colorado, Inc. - Feb. 4, 2014
- FREE Webinars offered by Northwest Colorado Small Business Development Center - [REGISTER HERE](#): (all webinars 8:30 am - 10 am)
 - Wed. Jan. 14 - Lender Updates
 - Wed. Jan. 28 - Business Economics for Beginners
 - Wed. Feb. 11 - Show me the Money
- [FREE Workshops](#): Coffee Club with Edward Jones (offered by NW Colorado SBDC) - free workshops held from 9:30 - 10:30 am at NWCOSBDC Office at Colorado Mountain College Dillon Campus. [REGISTER HERE](#). Topics:
 - Thurs. Feb. 5 - Bonds
 - Thurs. March 5 - 2015 changes in IRS rules re: retirement contributions
 - Thurs. April 2 - Talking with family members about their wishes
- Grant Writing Training - Denver - March 2-3, 2015

[Funding Opportunities:](#)

- Community Connect Grant Program - 2/17/15
- HUD Choice Neighborhood Implementation Grants - due 2/9/15
- Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Training Program - deadline 3/5/15
- Community Facilities Grant Program - deadline 12/31/15

Incentive Programs:

- [Advanced Industries Investment Tax Credit Program](#) - offered by the Colorado Office of Economic Development & International Trade. Designed to stimulate private sector capital formation by rewarding local investors for taking equity stakes in start-up companies with high growth potential. The program targets technology sectors with a

strong presence in Colorado, and is complementary to the Advanced Industry Acceleration grant program. Qualified investors who make qualified investments on or after January 1, 2015 in qualified small businesses in one of Colorado's seven Advanced Industries (Advanced Manufacturing, Aerospace, Bio-Science, Electronics, Energy/Natural Resources and Cleantech, Infrastructure Engineering, or Technology and Information) may be eligible for Colorado state income tax credits.

Weighty Work For Weatherization

As we look back to 2014 accomplishments, we'd like to bring you up to date on a major project undertaken by the NWCCOG Weatherization team.

In late September 2014, we received approval from the Colorado Energy Office to begin weatherization work on two of the five buildings at Riverview Apartments in Eagle-Vail, which is part of the portfolio of the Eagle County Housing Department.

Work began October 1, 2014, and continued until late December, to weatherize 27 apartments in two buildings. Long-term plans are to weatherize all of the apartments at Riverview as funding levels allow.

The approved energy audit called for measures such as air sealing, insulation of pipes and water heaters, replacing all incandescent light-bulbs with Compact Fluorescent Light-bulbs (CFLs), and installing water-saving shower-heads where needed. These measures were installed by our team of skilled technicians.

Since the apartments have electric heat, which can be very expensive to operate, automatic set-back thermostats were installed by an electrical contractor for all of the baseboard heaters. The electricians also replaced several baseboard heaters that were unsafe or no longer operational. We also improved the ventilation and indoor air quality of each apartment by installing more powerful bathroom ventilation fans, and working with our electrical contractor to install automatic controls to optimize the indoor air quality inside each apartment.

All refrigerators within the 27 apartments were metered for electrical consumption, and where the existing refrigerator used excessive amounts of electricity, an Energy Star® refrigerator was installed and the old unit hauled away for recycling.

All in all, it was a big job with potential for big savings!

This was a cooperative project drawing together several players and funding sources. The project is being funded with Department of Energy funds funneled through the Colorado Energy Office. This project is also receiving additional funding contributed by Holy Cross Energy, the utility company that provides electricity to the apartments.





The Eagle County Housing Department, led by Jill Klosterman, was instrumental from the start in helping get the project off the ground. Their assistance was invaluable in notifying tenants of the work schedule, working with NWCCOG to perfect the ventilation strategy, coordinating access for the electricians, and many other ways.

Riverview's office and maintenance personnel have been a pleasure to work with extending us every courtesy; they are among the most professional apartment managers we have ever worked with. The Riverview residents are also outstanding. Their friendliness made our crews feel welcome while work was being done on their apartment.

NWCCOG wishes to thank the residents of Riverview, the Eagle County Housing Department, Holy Cross Energy, the Colorado Energy Office, The Department of Energy, MD Electrical Services Inc., and the entire NWCCOG Weatherization team, for all doing their part to bring this project to fruition and improve the energy-efficiency of Riverview Apartments.

Earn An EXTRA Paid Day Off For Meeting Your Wellness Goals?



Are you still trying to figure out how to implement a wellness program in your place of work? We've come up with what we think is a great idea:

The NWCCOG Worksite Wellness program invites its employees to participate in the 2015 health and wellness challenge.

Here's how it works: We asked our employees to set a wellness goal that can be achieved during the first 6 months of the year. It is completely up to the employee, and completely confidential. Wellness goals can focus on any aspect of health and wellness: physical, social, emotional, environmental, spiritual, intellectual, or occupational.

We asked that the goals follow these **SMART** guidelines:

- **Specific:** Specific goals have a much greater chance of being accomplished.
- **Measurable** - Establish concrete criteria for measuring progress toward the attainment of the goal you set.
- **Attainable** - Should be important enough to the employee that he or she begins to figure out ways to make it come true.
- **Realistic**- Must represent an objective toward which the employee is both willing and able to work. A goal can be both high and realistic; each person must decide just how high the goal should be.
- **Timely** - Should be able to be reached by June 30th, 2015 (in six months).

This is an honor-system challenge and we've put some guideline in place that makes it easy and fun! If the goal is met by our deadline, the employee gets an extra day off - WITH PAY - to be enjoyed during the last half of the year.

Some ideas for improved wellness might include:

- Incorporate more physical activity into your day or week
- Stretch daily
- Add a new physical activity
- Healthy eating goals - examples: cut out/down on sugar; switch to whole grain; add a salad once a day; eat three servings of fruit every day
- Attend a health fair
- Cut down on alcohol consumption
- Cut out ½ hour of TV
- Mediate 15 minutes a day
- Walk with a friend

The list is endless. We just want our employees to be even more mindful of their own wellness.

2015 NWCCOG Meeting Schedule

Thursday, January 22, 2015

Full Council, NLF Board & EDD Board Meetings

Location: Buffalo Mountain Room, Summit County Commons, Frisco

Time: 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Full Council Meeting

Location: NWCCOG Office/Conference Call

Time: 10:00 a.m.-noon

Thursday, May 28, 2015

Full Council & EDD Board Meeting

Location: Gypsum Town Hall

Time: 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Thursday, July 23, 2015

Full Council Meeting

Location: NWCCOG Office/Conference Call

Time: 10:00 a.m.-noon

Thursday, August 27, 2015

Full Council& EDD Board Annual Planning Meeting

Location: Garden Level Classroom, Eagle County Administration Building, Eagle
(tentative)

Time: 10:00 a.m.-3:00p.m.

Thursday, October 22, 2015

Location: NWCCOG Office/Conference Call

Time:10:00a.m.-noon

Thursday, December 3, 2015

Full Council& Foundation Board Meeting

Location: NWCCOG Office/Conference Call

Time:10:00a.m.-noon

Northwest Colorado Council of Governments

www.nwccog.org

970.468.0295

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