



[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

From the Director's Desk....



I'm feeling especially mortal this month. Some of it is commuting over Vail pass and across the region through a huge snow season. Then "there are only two un-fixables in life-aging and dying," says Dr. Atul Gawande in the special "Being Mortal" which we are showing across the region. After attending two "Being Mortal" events hosted by Amanda Rens-Moon of our Alpine Area Agency on Aging in Summit and in Grand Counties, I've had much drive time to reflect upon what our local panelists-Doctors, chaplains and hospice workers-those frequently bedside with our community members in their final days-have shared while leading discussions about end of life planning. "To rage against the dying of the light" through exhausting "treatment," leveraging shards of hope for a fix, or completing their journey in a more deliberate way. Having options requires crucial conversations with caregivers and loved ones, and planning ahead-for more resources go to www.alpineaaa.org. Or if you get a chance to attend an upcoming Being Mortal event in

Eagle, Garfield or Pitkin county-do it!

Our NWCCOG programs are so diverse, I am still learning all we do (even as I speak on TV 18 in Winter Park and elsewhere about our programs). This past week I attended the Northwest All-Hazards Emergency Management Region committee meeting in Glenwood Springs with Kim Cancelosi, our regional coordinator for the grant which comes through the state from Homeland Security. The group is Emergency Managers from a region larger than just NWCCOG's which annually disperses grant dollars for equipment, training-- and badges, lots of scannable badges-- for disaster preparedness. This past year NWCCOG has bought portable light trailers and corrals, among other items through the grant. I learned how even in hazard preparedness, vigilance is required to protect our portion of funding from being reallocated to Front Range needs. Thanks to Joel Cochran for serving as our Chair-he is moving up in the ranks at Summit County as Undersheriff, and congrats to Andy Martsolf, Mesa County, the NWAHEMR incoming chair.

January started at NWCCOG by participating in a celebration in Rio Blanco County for the rollout of their broadband initiative which is making reality of the lofty goal to provide 1 gigabyte of fiber to each home or business in Meeker and Rangely and wireless internet across the entire county! Years in the making, the project also improves cell service and EMS connectivity across the remote region. Nate Walowetz's was thanked at the event for his part in their journey as NWCCOG Regional Broadband Coordinator. I was proud to attend, take notes and write a press release to help share their success. For more information on this see NWCCOG in the news on our website.

E-mail or call me and tell what NWCCOG should be sharing about you.

Jon Stavney, Executive Director
jstavney@nwccog.org

Council Spotlight Sarah Wyatt

If you want the right to complain, you need to be willing



Sarah & daughter Ekho

to get involved and fix the problems. That philosophy is what got Sarah Wyatt to run for Walden Town Council nearly two years ago. Like many rural towns in the NWCCOG region, they struggle with not having enough economic development, and with not having the ideal budget levels to maintain infrastructure like roads, sewer, gas, etc. Sarah's been on the Town Council for nearly 18 months where they tackle issues like the above at every meeting.

One of the infrastructure challenges is in not having the robust broadband capabilities that can support economic development. Knowing about the Regional Broadband Strategic Plan created by the NWCCOG, Sarah was interested in becoming even more involved. She was the natural fit for being appointed to the NWCCOG Council.

In addition to learning more about the Broadband plans, she also looks forward to learning more about what the COG does in the region. Sarah is excited to interact with others on the council, learning how comparable communities have solved problems similar to those in Walden. She's also curious about how the NWCCOG generates funding through the grant processes. She has seen the effects of NWCCOG weatherization efforts in her area, and wants to learn more about all of the programs offered by the COG.

Sarah is a true native of Colorado. Her parents lived in Walden when she was born and she's lived there ever since with the exception of the time she spent away at college. She thinks being involved in the community is special; be it helping with the Food Trucks, or the schools, or serving on the Town Council and now on the NWCCOG council. She volunteers her efforts out of love of her community.

In the summer, you'll find Sarah in her garden where she loves growing flowers. She's also an avid reader and spends hours wiling away her limited spare time with a good book. She's looking forward to attending the NWCCOG council meetings face-to-face, and becoming an active council member.

Call for Photographs

The creation of the 2016 NWCCOG Annual Report is currently underway and we are seeking photographs of events and scenery from all corners of Region 12. If you have photographs of your community you'd like to share, please send them to judi@nwccog.org. We will happily give you photo credit. Please make sure we have information about the photos you send. We'll accept photos through February 15th.

This is a great way to show off your community!

Feel the Speed - NWCCOG Celebrate Rio Blanco Broadband



Mount Lobo, one of eight sites under

Late last month the residents and businesses in Meeker and Rangley began to feel the speed of the Rio Blanco Broadband Project. When the NWCCOG Regional Broadband Strategic Plan which included Rio Blanco county was finalized in December of 2013, broadband was but a gleam in the eye of many rural communities. Through the concerted efforts of many entities over the following three years, Meeker and Rangely have gone from having extremely limited options for internet to having world class bandwidth options that are the envy of even highly populated urban areas.

According to Nate Walowitz, NWCCOG Broadband

per second download speeds and upload speeds of 3 megabits per second for a very affordable price.

Nate says, "At those speeds citizens can download Ultra High Definition TV programs, educational content, and movies. They can skype with their kids and grandkids, and they can conduct business using 21st century technology. And in fact, everyone in these towns can sign up for Gigabit Internet access (1,000 Megabits per second download and upload) for as low as \$70 per month! That's a really good deal."

In the familiar saying, "It takes a village", that is exactly what happened in Rio Blanco. In 2014, citizens voted to repeal SB 152 which stated local governments and the public sector could not create their own broadband infrastructure nor create partnerships to obtain broadband services. Once that hurdle was cleared the county began plans to deploy the necessary infrastructure to put the network in place. The Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) provided funding and along with federal mine lease revenue and money from the general fund, county commissioners came up with the funding they needed to move the project forward. Internet Service Providers (ISP) such as Local Access Internet (LAI) and Cimarron Telecommunications will finish the build-out to homes and businesses.

As the NWCCOG Broadband Coordinator, Walowitz is excited to see the huge forward push that gives the residents of Meeker and Rangely access to capabilities that will change their lives for the better. The next step for Rio Blanco County is completing a tower project that will bring 25 down/3 up to most residents living in rural areas of the county.

For additional NWCCOG Broadband information, contact Nate Walowitz at nwalowitz@nwccog.org.

BEING MORTAL PRESENTATIONS START TOUGH CONVERSATIONS



Granby Library

Throughout the month of January, with local partners, Amanda Rens-Moon, Program Specialist for Alpine Area Agency on Aging, is hosting "Being Mortal," based on a book by Dr. Atul Gwande, and a Frontline special film which is being shown to kickoff panel discussions across the Northwest Colorado Council of Governments (NWCCOG) 5 county region with the goal of starting some very important and difficult conversations.

According to the Hospice Foundation of America, more than 650 organizations throughout America are hosting nearly 900 "Being Mortal" sessions to help people think about end-of-life preferences and make those wishes known to loved-ones before it's too late.

Based on the book by Dr. Atul Gwande titled *Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End*, families all over the country are rethinking paradigms that have defined the dying process and how the goals of medicine may not always match up with the human spirit.

The film investigates the practice of caring for the dying and explores the relationships between patients and their doctors. It follows a surgeon and the author, Dr. Atul Gawande, as he shares stories from the people and families he encounters. When Dr.

Gawande's own father gets cancer, his search for answers about how to best care for the dying becomes a personal quest.

Dr Gwande notes, "The two "unfixables" are aging and dying." Most people at this point in their journey with their condition and their doctor, can often get focused on fixing and don't focus on making what time they have left of the best quality possible. That is what this film and these discussions are about.

In Summit County on January 11, more than 90 people signed up for the presentation at the Summit County Community and Senior Center.

After the film's screening, panelists Loren Pierce Coleman of Bristlecone Health Services, and Dr. Marshall Denkinger, Chief Medical Officer of St. Anthony Summit Medical Center, helped answer questions primarily focused on hospice care requirements and services available, palliative care availability in the county, different types of end-of-life documents needed, and treatment options.



Summit County community and Senior Center

In Grand County, on January 13, in the Granby Library, a similar number of people were interested in the topic. Panelists there were Becca Aither and Dawn Matthews and Dr. Elizabeth Buell.

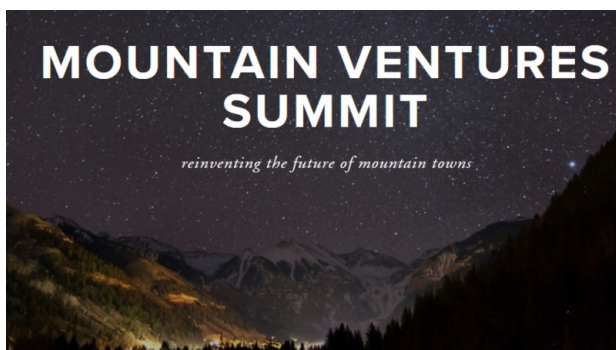
Dr. Buell, managing physician at Middle Park Medical Center in Kremmling, said at a recent showing in Granby, 'Have these conversations early. Even if it seems years away.'

Dawn Matthews, a social worker with Northwest Community Home Health and Hospice in Grand County underscored the importance of families talking about death through a situation. She said, "Sitting down with four siblings –each with very different opinions about a non-responsive mother who was also in the room, is too late for the mother to speak up about the array of options– from cremation to burial in a specific place being discussed." She also notes, "When you share your wishes, it greatly reduces the stress on your caregivers (who often are family members or close friends)."

One common theme is that although there are not as many resources in our communities as in a metro area, people in our mountain region often don't understand that, "Nobody has to suffer in pain anymore in this day and age– if others understand their wishes," says Matthews.

Several other screenings have been scheduled throughout the region. For more information about the schedule, check out the events calendar at AlpineAgency.org.

**NWCCOG - EDD to Attend
Mountain Ventures Summit**



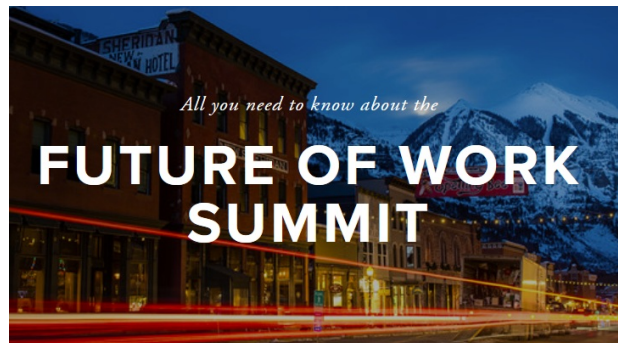
The Telluride Foundation and the Telluride Venture Accelerator is hosting the first Mountain Ventures Summit in Telluride February 2-4, 2017. The purpose of the Summit is to discuss ideas about how to reinvent the future of mountain towns through entrepreneurship – especially through start-ups, co-working arrangements, and other ideas for incubators and/or accelerators.

Because of the work having been done on incubator start-ups in Region 12 in partnership with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), and others, Rachel Lunney, NWCCOG - Economic Development District (EDD) Director has been invited to attend this invitation-only Summit. In addition to discussions about creating an incubator/accelerator program, there will also be discussions on how to attract angel/investor networks and mentorship programs to facilitate the success of new start-ups.

This three-day workshop, using an informal conferencing format, will tap the talents of the attendees to identify best practices, new ideas, and explore topics that can help entrepreneurs to make faster, more reliable progress in our mountain communities.

Topics, from the website, will include:

- The nuts and bolts of setting visions, getting buy in, and the execution of efforts such as: Co-working, accelerators, incubators, housing, broadband, venture capital funds, angel networks, events, working with governments, working with ski areas, avoiding small town politics, regional strategies, etc.
- Learn how to create an entrepreneurship ecosystem in your mountain town. The goal is to learn from other communities and share experiences from your community.
- The Future of Work: how the changes brought about by the Internet affect our ability to leverage skills, and how we can get talent to adopt a future-forward approach to their careers; one that makes mountain living + impact realistic rather than a dream.



Rachel and other attendees throughout the region expect to return with many ideas they can begin implementing in our Region 12. We'll have additional information on the outcome of the Summit in future issues of the newsletter.

2017 NWCCOG COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE

Thursday, January 26, 2017

Full Council, EDD Board & NLF Board Members

Location: Colorado Mountain College Vail Valley, Room #258, Edwards

Time: 9:30 a.m.

Primary Agenda Items: Introduction of new members/representatives; elect executive committee & officers; adopt 2017 meeting schedule; annual Northwest Loan Fund (NLF) Board meeting; EDD Board meeting & election of officers.

Northwest Colorado Council of Governments

www.nwccog.org

970.468.0295

THANK YOU FOR YOUR MEMBERSHIP IN NWCCOG!

