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## ***From the Director's Desk....***

***Guest author Erin Fisher***

***Director - Alpine Area Agency on Aging***



I always seem to get a bad case of Spring Fever this time of year. Glimpses of spring and not-so-distant dreams of summer hikes and river trips coinciding with the closing of the ski resorts and end of winter sales have me eager for a change. And there's some scientific evidence to back me up; a 2008 study found that in the fall and winter, "there is a greater level of what's known as serotonin transporter in the brain, which removes more serotonin than during the spring and summer. Known for its role in mood, serotonin is likely involved in that sudden lust for life we feel in springtime. It may also account for the increase in energy that makes some people feel restless and distracted, just itching to spend time outdoors."

Springtime is a time of renewal and change at the Alpine Area Agency on Aging as well. As the light at the end of the proverbial tunnel (the state fiscal year) comes into view, we will begin issuing contract option letters and budgeting for next year. We have also been reviewing the newly released [Senior Gap Analysis](#) and delving into the details, deciphering the data to find the right strategies and programming moving forward. The gap analysis is an update to the one

commissioned by the COG six years ago and the catalyst from which the Regional Transportation Coordinating Council was formed. If you haven't already, I would encourage you to review the [Executive Summary](#) to see how the rapidly aging population in our region will likely affect our future. We are also available to present the findings to your community; contact us at [aaa12@nwccog.org](mailto:aaa12@nwccog.org).

Just like the perennials in the ground, we have a few annual events that come up every year. This year's Senior Awards Ceremony will be held on May 3rd at the Summit County Community and Senior Center. The special event coincides with Older Americans Month, of which the Administration for Community Living has designed this year's theme to be [Age Out Loud](#), giving aging a new voice - one that reflects what today's older adults have to say. We also have the upcoming [Caregiver Conference in Glenwood Springs on June 5th](#). This always popular event will include several speakers, many vendors, and some much needed pampering.

In the spirit of change, we're keeping a close eye on the political pulse as we prepare for potential changes to Medicare, Social Security, Medicaid, the Older American's Act, the Affordable Care Act and other programs that will affect seniors and their families.

I'll leave you with a great quote from Doug Larson that we all can relate to: "*Spring is when you feel like whistling even with a shoe full of slush.*" Happy spring, y'all!

## **Special Budget Update from Jon**

At NWCCOG, as of March 16, we know how much our programs and services are valued by the Trump administration. Answer - not much, and for some of our programs not at all.

Grants to state, local governments and agencies such as NWCCOG make up 1/3 of non-defense discretionary spending. For NWCCOG, more than 36 % of our funding is directly from federal programs, and another 26 % comes from state grant funding which originates as federal funding. This 26% number happens to be the amount of the entire Colorado state expenditures which originate with federal funding.

So when the March 16 documents says "the budget also recognizes a greater role for State and Local Governments and the private sector to address community and economic development needs" we clearly see that as code for a massive defunding and shifting of responsibility to already cost-burdened state and local governments.



The White House "skinny" budget published March 16 proposes complete eradication of many of our programs - Weatherization, Economic Development District, the RSVP volunteer program to name a few, and also appears to significantly defund most of our AAAA programs for Seniors, the HUD CDBG program which provides funds the Northwest Business Loan Fund, funding for Homeland Security for local Disaster preparedness (I could go on).

It is not clear how much proposed defunding of EPA, for instance, will "trickle down" to reduced funding of state agencies such as the CDPHE which funds our water monitoring efforts. As noted, there will be other examples emerging since federal grants make up 26% of state spending in Colorado, especially in the area of Medicare, senior services, economic development and income qualified programs to support rural places such as weatherization.

There is some comfort taken that the proposed White House March 17 "skinny" budget has been widely proclaimed "dead on arrival" by many in Congress. That said, we anxiously anticipate the complete proposed 2018 White House Budget which is scheduled to be published in Mid-May. So NWCCOG will keep a close eye on Congress which is scheduled to take action on the Continuing Resolution by April 28th (to fund continued operations through 2017). Unless the Continuing Resolution is significantly modified, many of our programs which are more than 60% funded through various federal agencies should be "safe" from the administration and Congress for most of the remaining calendar year.

As for what transpires between the administration and Congress with regard to adopting of a budget for 2018-just like you, we are watching.

## Why Our Programs Matter

In our first article by Erin Fisher, she talks about just a very small part of the very much larger program encompassed by the Alpine Area Agency on Aging - just one of the programs in the sights of the Administration's targeted reductions. Another program - Weatherization could also be on the chopping block.

We asked our weatherization team for a couple of stories that illustrate the importance of the group -- here are two:



We had a client that was a Crisis Intervention Program (CIP) client. Her furnace duct-work was improperly installed. The return air that the furnace sucks in and heats up was vented very close to her water heater. The water heater was making a lethal dose of carbon monoxide and when the water heater was running and the furnace came on the air handler that sucks air in through the return air grill was back-drafting the water heater flue and pulling that exhaust air into the delivery system and pumping it throughout her home.

She had carbon monoxide detectors throughout the house and because the water heater was producing 5000-8000 parts per million of carbon monoxide all alarms would go off every time the furnace and water heater were running at the same time. We re-vented the return air into the hallway instead of right next to the water heater and de-rated the water heater so that it was only producing 2ppm of carbon monoxide -- problem solved.

Combustion Analyzer BEFORE -  
Carbon Monoxide (CO) Level - 4956



Combustion Analyzer AFTER -  
Carbon Monoxide (CO) Level - 2



Luckily, this client had working carbon monoxide detectors, but many of our clients have them only when the weatherization team has completed their work. Levels shown in this home were exceedingly dangerous before the team determined and corrected the problem.

Our second story is about providing weatherization on a 120 year old home. The client knew her home was hard to heat and was an energy drain. She wanted the work done, but was initially worried that her "historic" home might be damaged in the process. We installed wall insulation throughout her entire home which turned out beautifully, and we installed upwards of 30 storm windows. After the work was completed, our team took her around the home with the thermal imaging camera and she was absolutely tickled by how nicely the repairs to her walls turned out and how good a job the New Castle crew did insulating. The home was built in 1897 and hadn't had any insulation since then.

When we asked for photos of the house, here's the quote from Doug Jones, our field supervisor, "I don't have any good photos of the work we did on this house. We drilled holes in every stud bay on the interior of the house to insulate the walls. The catch is you can't see them because we did such a great job patching and painting. :-)"

These stories and many more underscore the essential work being done by our teams and the kinds of services that would be severely impacted by the Administration's current budget.

## Spring Surveys and Special Resources

### Survey Spring:



Notice: there are two surveys out right now. The 2017 NWCCOG member survey which was distributed to each NWCCOG representative in the region. Note that two were sent via e-mail to each jurisdiction, one to an elected official and one to a staffer. We are eager to get perspective on NWCCOG from each. Results will be shared with the Council at the May meeting and should help lay a groundwork for strategizing. The second survey went out to most all elected officials at towns and counties across the 10 county Northwest All Hazards Management Region. The focus of that survey is to get baseline information on how informed elected officials are with regard to emergency preparedness.

### 152 (Broadband) Opt Out election Resources

After attending Broadband meetings with Pitkin, Summit, and Eagle county commissioners in which the same topic of arose, Nate Walowitz and Jon Stavney sat down and wrote a memo about Opting out of SB 152. They compiled resources published by CCI and CML. Local efforts at broadband are progressing to a point where the patchwork of counties and towns in the region which have and have not opted out will soon become an impediment to implementing those efforts. In order to help local jurisdictions consider opting out, NWCCOG has packaged those documents which can be found on the NWCCOG [website on the Broadband Program page](#).

**Please steal this Handbook**

#### **SB152 Resources**

- Opting Out of SB152 Summary NWCCOG
- SB152 Ballot Measure Language
- Joint CML CCI Memo SB152 Elections
- Pitkin County SB 152 White Paper
- CML Knowledge Now
- Broadband Case Studies

NWCCOG would again like to thank the Council, our program directors and member jurisdictions staff which assisted in the new [Employee Handbook](#). In the spirit of not re-inventing the wheel, that document is available on the NWCCOG website for your own R & D efforts.



### [Get the Stories and the Stats](#)

We're pleased to announce the completion and publication of the 2016 Annual Report. Please take a moment to browse through it. Not only do we think you'll enjoy the new look, but we had many accomplishments over the past year that we want to share with you.

Putting together the annual report is a great way to take stock of the past year's work achievements of the organization and the Region, even as we plan for a bright and hopeful future. We hope you'll be impressed!

It's available on our [website here](#), or you can [contact Elaina](#) for a paper copy.

## **Short Term Rental Strategies**

On April 10, NWCCOG attended the Grand County Mayors/Managers meeting in Fraser where Grand County continued the conversation about strategies with regard to regulating short term rentals. They were pitching for partners and alignment with municipalities in the county. Their proposal will go to the Planning and Zoning Commission this month, and they hope to adopt new regulations in time to be in effect this summer.



NWCCOG is watching closely to see if we have an informational role in this emerging challenge of 127 web sites now offering STRs across our tourist-dependent region. Though the issue in Grand county was brought forward by a commissioner as a means to increase county revenues to help pay for aging infrastructure, the spread of STRs is widely acknowledged as affecting parking, trash, and partying in neighborhoods, as well as impacting the stock of rental housing for workers.

The current Grand county proposal to modify the permit system for STRs was summarized by Lee Staab, Grand County Manager as follows: sales tax license required, 24 hour point of contact living within XX minutes required, still considering considerably increasing to as much as \$200, the current \$20 permit fee which does not now cover staff time (340 properties listed). They are still "working on enforcement" provisions which Staab notes, "most communities are having an adventure doing enforcement." The county is strongly considering engaging a third party provider who would "provide back office support" by monitoring the many web listings, managing complaints, compliance and the permit process. The provider would aim for an 85% compliance rate, and has an app which allows registration and payment on line, renewal, or submittal of a complaint in 4 clicks-10 minutes, or quicker than you can drink a latte. One agency under consideration represents at least 6 other entities in Colorado and says there are more than 1,700 current STRs listed in Grand County. The selected agency would be the point of contact, keeping record of complaints, confirming compliance, and tax remittal.

Jim White, Grand Lake Manager, said that their 6 year old STR permit system with a \$150 permit and sales tax license required with a \$400 annual renewal fee was just increased to \$600, with the additional \$200 going toward an affordable housing fund. He said their adding the requirement of a point of contact within 30 minutes has greatly reduced complaints and increased compliance. Renewals with no complaints are just a matter of paperwork. Grand Lake has also considered contracting with a third party agency which claims that of the 779 housing units in Grand Lake, more than 82 are registered as STR-10 % of housing stock. Grand Lake has fewer than that now registered.

Fraser representatives noted that with only one hotel, and a very large stock of second homes and rental housing, the town relies heavily on STRs to accommodate the visitors who bring in sales tax. They have not been aware of many complaints.

It was noted that according to County Assessors, even a 24/7/365 use of a property as STR does not change its' classification to commercial under Colorado tax law. Also discussed was the concern that this use will likely need to be regulated through zoning. Right now the focus is in getting a handle on the numbers, and being able to permit to respond to the impacts of the growing use of STRs.

# Are you interested in helping a family member, friend, or neighbor who is taking care of an aging loved one get a break?

Become a Respite volunteer with the Alpine Area Agency on Aging

970-468-0295 ext. 122

volunteers@nwccog.org

Upcoming FREE training:



Training has taken place in Summit  
(see photo at right) and Eagle.  
Coming to Grand County soon.  
If you would like training in your area,  
call the number above.



## Work Place Wellness Update



You may remember from previous newsletters, that we are committed to creating an environment that enhances healthy habits in our workplace. Using the Colorado HealthLinks online resource center, we found Amy Lieberman, a local resource who could help with stress management.

We invited Amy to give us some tips for dealing with daily stressors. Amy is a Duke-certified health and habits coach who understands how too many demands on our time can cause stress and impact our sense of well being.

She has a complete toolkit of strategies that one can use to "overcome overwhelm", as she says. A quick formula she taught us was the 4 Ps (Pause, Plan, Prioritize, Practice), as well as tips, exercises, and worksheets, to help us get re-focused and moving towards a more positive,

fulfilling, healthy life.

You can see more about Amy and how she works at her website [amylieberman.com](http://amylieberman.com). We think you'll be glad you did.

## 2017 NWCCOG COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE

### Thursday, May 25, 2017

Full Council & EDD Board Meeting

Location: North Branch Library, Blue River Room, Silverthorne

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

Primary Agenda Items: Review/acceptance of the 2016 audit

### Thursday, July 27, 2017

Full Council Meeting

Location: Community House, Grand Lake

Time: 10:00 a.m. - noon

Primary Agenda Items: Approval of 2018 dues; approval of 2017 budget revisions; discussion re: Annual

Planning Meeting Agenda

**Thursday, August 24, 2017**

Full Council & EDD Board Annual Planning Meeting  
Location: Airport Operations Center (AOC), Aspen  
Time: 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
Agenda Items: Strategic Planning for 2018

**Thursday, October 26, 2017**

Full Council Meeting  
Location: NWCCOG Office/Conference Call  
Time: 10:00 a.m. - noon  
Primary Agenda Items: Review of draft 2018 budget

**Thursday, December 7, 2017**

Full Council, EDD Board & Foundation Board Meeting  
Location: TBD - Summit County  
Time: 10:00 a.m. - noon  
Primary Agenda Items: 2017 budget revisions; approve 2018 budget; adopt 2018 meeting schedule; annual NWCCOG Foundation Board meeting.

**Northwest Colorado Council of Governments**

[www.nwccog.org](http://www.nwccog.org)

970.468.0295

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR MEMBERSHIP IN NWCCOG!**