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From the Director's Desk....
Guest author Rachel Lunney
Director - Economic Development District



I moved to Summit County 21 years ago and immediately fell in love with this community. Not just for its natural beauty, abundant sunshine (I grew up in Buffalo, N.Y., so I had never seen so much sunshine in my life!), and recreational opportunities, but mostly because of the wonderful people who live here. This is a place that attracts like-minded people who care about being healthy and active, care about the environment, appreciate the beauty of the mountains, and who are passionate about protecting and preserving this unique place and quality of life.

I have been working for NWCCOG for 13 years, and most recently have taken the role of Economic Development Director. Some may think economic development only means growth, attracting businesses and private investment, and creating more jobs. Some of that is true, but really what economic development is about is creating the conditions for economic prosperity and improved quality of life for communities. This includes supporting the workforce with affordable housing, healthcare, and childcare; supporting existing businesses;

attracting new businesses that diversity the economy and offer higher-paying jobs; protecting the environment which is one of our most precious assets; and working to make our economy more resilient.

In 2010, NWCCOG became an Economic Development District under the auspices of the Economic Development Administration (EDA). NWCCOG receives funding every year from the EDA. Part of becoming an EDD is to create a regional strategic plan for economic development called a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). This CEDS contains goals, objectives and an action plan on which key stakeholders will focus during the next five years. Part of the strategy is to help bring a more diverse business model to the mountains - which includes creating an environment that supports entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneurs need gathering spaces to work and collaborate, affordable places to live, good broadband, consulting on how to start and grow their business, opportunities to access capital, and a climate of supportive local governments. Ultimately, this will lead to more higher paying jobs, and will allow us to utilize the highly-educated and talented workforce our region attracts. Particularly in rural communities, entrepreneurs are the engines for job growth and, with support, can become anchors for community economic development.

Within the NWCCOG region there is already a great deal underway already, led by those passionate about entrepreneurship and innovation, including co-working spaces, Startup weekend events, events to educate the community about accessing capital and building funding networks, entrepreneur groups, efforts to improve broadband, training events for businesses, and the list goes on. Our role will be to bring all these pieces together to collaborate, and to be that regional "hub" to support efforts so that our mountain region can create an economy that is diversified, sustainable, and resilient.

If you want to be part of the conversation, please let me know - rachel@nwccog.org. For up-to-the-minute status, check out our website at northwestcoloradoregion.org

Northwest Loan Fund update

It's been a while since we updated the status of the Northwest Loan Fund (NLF), and our Director of Business Lending, Anita Cameron, has been very busy. During the past year, the NLF approved 9 loans which will create 29 new jobs.

Here are just a few business profiles:

Vail Brewing Company (VBC), a brewery in Eagle-Vail, had the opportunity to open a Tasting Room in the Solaris Center in Vail Village. The NLF provided funds for the Tap system and working capital.

Singletrack Trails based in Fraser, provides comprehensive single track trail design, plan, and build. They manage some of the largest trail construction projects in the country. Singletrack Trails is the pre-eminent developer for bike parks in the Northern Rockies; they have constructed more pump-tracks and bike parks in Colorado and Wyoming than any other builder.



Some of their completed pump-tracks and bike parks are in the Cities of Fruita, Grand Junction, the Town of Ridgeway and for two Wyoming State Parks - Curt Gowdy and Glendo State Parks. They have also constructed linear pump-track trails and/or free-ride trails for Bike Granby Ranch, Curt Gowdy State Park's Middle Kingdom area, and for the Bureau of Land Management in Grand Junction and Fruita.

The NLF loan for Singletrack Trails helped to fund working capital.

First Class Automotive, in Granby since 2008, provides comprehensive auto repair services. First Class saw a way to add jobs and economic growth while bringing balance to a somewhat seasonal community. The NLF loan helped to purchase additional equipment.

Rocky Mountain Adventure Rentals (RMAR) also in Eagle-Vail provides Dirt Bikes, Electric Bikes, Paddle Boards, RZR, Razor ATVs, Timbersleds, Snowmobiles and Slingshots! Client demand caused RMAR to expand adding staff and new equipment.

Out on your own and wondering where to go? RMAR has great ideas and Colorado Backcountry Maps that include GEO location, and of course they have up to the minute snow reports and river reports!

Back-country safety gear....RMAR has it all. The NLF in partnership with their bank, helped RMAR fund their expansion.

Coulter Lake Guest Ranch was established in 1934. Recently, it was for sale and the prospective buyers came to the NLF for funds to complete the transaction. One of the Rocky Mountain's most beautiful year around guest ranches, Coulter Lake Guest Ranch is nestled in a beautiful valley on a pristine mountain lake in western Colorado.



This popular guest ranch consists of 6 guest cabins, a main lodge, commercial kitchen, gift store, caretaker's cabin and barn with tack room. Each guest cabin is spread spaciouly among the aspen trees with lake views and is an easy walk to the lodge. Coulter Lake Guest Ranch has done an amazing job of being able to profit year around by offering a large variety of guest experiences for both summer and winter visitors.



Perhaps one of the most unique aspects of this ranch is its Off the Grid "green" energy production. Coulter Lake uses solar panels and hydropower to generate most of the electricity. Propane generators back-up the electrical system in the event of increased demand. This system, plus the spring fed water system, helps complete the ranches claim of sustainability and peacefulness.

Coulter Lake Guest Ranch is a licensed outfitter and has been guiding Colorado elk and deer hunters since 1934. Coulter Lake Guest Ranch is located 20 miles from Rifle, Colorado. The ranch is located within an hour and a half from the Grand Junction and Vail

Regional Airports and the world famous ski resort of Aspen.

For additional information, check out the website at northwestloanfund.org, or contact Anita at anita@northwestloanfund.org.

Senior Field Trip to the Capitol



Eagle and Pitkin Seniors

Politically-minded seniors from Eagle County and aging advocates from Pitkin County represented Region12 for the 2017 Senior Day at the Capitol. Held annually in March, Senior Day at the Capitol provides an opportunity for elected officials and older adults to meet and discuss aging challenges and proposed legislation. This informative event includes presentations by AARP and the Senior Lobby, and it often includes a short visit from the Governor.

This year, Governor Hickenlooper answered a question on alternative energies posed by Eagle County's Katherine Delaney during his remarks. He announced that he had recently turned 65, and he remarked the value of the wisdom he gained from the older adults in his life. While discussing Colorado's budget and TABOR, he explained his understanding that many seniors are on a fixed income, and that "to a certain extent, the State's on a fixed income as well." He explained that Colorado may have to make some difficult choices on how to streamline service delivery. He also discussed potential ramifications of the American Health Care Act on low-income seniors.



Our lively group of Region12 representatives took Colorado Senior Lobby Senior Community Recognition Recipient, Mary Catherine Rabbitt's, declaration to "vote and agitate!" to heart. They were often spotted speaking with Kelli Fritts, AARP Colorado Associate State Director of Advocacy, discussing concerns with other advocates, or being interviewed by MetMedia. MetMedia is the "Student Voice of Metropolitan State University," and was present to document the event.

Erin Fisher and Amanda Rens-Moon felt privileged to

spend time with these vocal regional advocates and wish to thank Linda Carr, Coni Aguilar, Liz Gauthier, Katherine Delanoy, Jackie Schempf, Chad Federwitz, and Commissioner Steve Child for attending. It was truly an inspirational day.

Mountain Ride Transportation Resource Call Center



The Mountain Ride Resource Team receiving the "Friends of the Seniors" Award in May, 2016

In August of 2016, the Mountain Ride Transportation Resource Call Center celebrated its second full year of operation. The mission of this group is to coordinate existing public and private transit providers with other human services providers in a network that is accessible to veterans, older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income adults. Rides are typically provided to assist recipients to get to and from medical appointments.

With two full years of service under our belt, it is easy to assess the impact we're having on the eight county rural areas we serve; Eagle, Garfield, Grand, Jackson, Park, Pitkin, Routt, and Summit.

In 2016, we logged 8,470 one-way trips through the Call Center which is an increase of 74.1% from the 2015 total of 4,864 trips. Most were part of the regional Non-Emergency Medical Transport (NEMT) Medicaid billing project. This project is a pilot demonstration coordinated with the Colorado Department of Healthcare Policy and Finance and the Human Services Departments of the participating counties with our region.

The table at the right details one-way rides by county.

We're proud of the work the team is doing to coordinate this much-needed service. Funding for this project is provided by the Federal Transit Administration, The Colorado Department of Transportation, and the Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative grant - all funding that may be at risk with current budget cuts being considered by the Administration.

Eagle	947
Garfield	4
Grand	3,660
Jackson	68
Park	2,280
Pitkin	224
Routt	1,043
Summit	444
TOTAL	8,470

If you have questions, please contact callcentersupport@nwccog.org or go to www.mtnride.org

Wish for a Lifetime might just include a dog sled ride!



In February, the Alpine Area Agency on Aging was invited to join in granting a wish by *Wish of a Lifetime*. This amazing non-profit organization, based out of Denver and founded by local legend, Jeremy Bloom, operates much like the Make-A-Wish Foundation. In this case, wishes are granted to senior citizens instead of children.

Wish of a Lifetime granted a 90 year old Mississippi



woman's dreams of going dog sledding. They flew Henriette and her daughter up to Breckenridge to dog sled with *Good Times Adventures* and the AlpineAAA was able to join in the festivities. It was a doggone good time!

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.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR MEMBERSHIP IN NWCCOG!