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## From the Director's desk...

I'm reading a book right now called *How Democracies Die*. Suddenly it's not an idle question. I am reminded that our governance model is a grand experiment.

In fact, I have been fond of reminding my entrenched peers on lowly town boards that "all policy is an experiment," meaning we should not accept all ordinances, codes and procedures as right just because they have grown dusty. I have also worked with folks who impatiently wanted to change everything just because they are in power. There is a balance.

While what is going on at a federal level is uncomfortable, it was without irony that one of the recurrent themes at the Colorado City and County Managers Association (CCCMA) conference in Glenwood Springs this past week was accepting failure.

That's right.

Nick Kittle, Chief Innovations Officer for Adams County advised that "Innovation is creativity implemented." His emphasis was heavy on IMPLEMENTED. Clearly educated in various models of innovation, Kittle espouses "Failing: smart, often, fast, forward and being honest about results." Then do it again and again. He quoted an elder who once told him, "If Plan A doesn't work, there are 25 more letters - stay cool." Kittle noted "your ability to succeed is intrinsically linked to your willingness to fail."

Patrick Ibarra of "The Mejorando Group" (Getting better all the time) said at CCCMA that too often we struggle with "analysis paralysis." Indeed. "Government deals with stress by making policy." He doubled down on Kittle with "don't think outside the box. There is no box." He made a case that "innovation is not a great political risk." Depending on the scale, of course.

I would argue that if you can look past the smoke (and the many explosions), one of the great lessons of the Trump era will be that Americans hunger for different approaches, and that the public has a much greater tolerance for taking risks (or innovating) than we think. There is a reason that local governments have been called "laboratories for democracy."

Time will tell about the many risks and norms being broken by this administration, and their affects. I'm referring to thoughtful, deliberate chances, creating a culture that encourages



innovation (and embraces failure) on a much smaller scale. The market calls this, that we should embrace as governments, entrepreneurship.

Kittle, whom Scott Vargo, Summit County manager confirmed will be brought back for a longer workshop later this year, spent a great deal of time talking about how irrational our fears are, and how the default too easily becomes "bureaucracide." Not Trump. Kittle cited Chapman University Annual Survey of American Fears which if one looks at the change from 2016 to 2017 shows some interesting trends. Look it up.

Top fear of the American public both years, "corrupt government officials." I'm not advocating that kind of innovation.

One of the interesting swings was that in 2016, the 10th greatest fear of Americans was Obamacare. In 2017, at #2, "Trumpcare." Three topics top 10 in both years, which does not bode well for the current "innovations" going on at the EPA; Americans fear pollution of water bodies, of drinking water, and clean air.

So, indeed, "all policy is an experiment." We should not fear earnest attempts to improve upon it. But as Kittle notes in his last step in the innovation cycle, being "honest about results" that is what makes failure productive.

*Jon Stavney*

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## **Fraud can happen to you...**

We've all heard about Medicare fraud, but we tend to think that fraud is what happens to someone else. Well in a recent case, it happened to a client of ours.

Our Medicare SMP (Senior Medicare Patrol) Program has been busy over the last couple of months. We've helped several people with Medicare to sleuth out whether they have Medicare fraud on their hands. When we put on our fraud detection hat, we look to see what level of Medicare fraud it may be.

Figure 1. Types of Improper Payments\*



One case we identified as fraud revolved around intentional deception of a client of ours, who we'll call Joan which is not her real name. Joan called us because she was not able to have her prescription refilled after the first of the year. As it turned out, Joan had answered a robo-dialed phone call from an insurance company out of another state. The agent told Joan that he understood that she needed to get a new prescription and supplement health plan before the end of the Annual Enrollment Period in early December.

Joan had recently received a notice from Rocky Mountain Health Plans that her current health with prescription coverage would no longer be offered in 2018. Since Joan is fairly knowledgeable about Medicare she said that, yes, she needed to select new health and prescription coverage.

The insurance broker ended up enrolling her in the Medigap supplement plan they discussed.....which is only good in another state! The state he chose was in a state with a higher premium than that of the same plan in Colorado. To add to the deception, he did not enroll her in the Part D prescription drug plan she thought he enrolled her in. Together Joan and our SMP Program team worked to put all of the pieces together. We worked with our State Division of Insurance, CMS (the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services), two pharmacies, the two different insurance carriers involved, and even obtained coupons for Joan to use during the month of January when she without life-preserving medication she needed.

In this case, all ended well. But we've got some lessons we learned from this instance that we'd like to pass on to you:

1. When someone calls you with an offer of help, it is often a scam. It is FAR better if **you initiate** the call. That way you



- know exactly who you are speaking with. If you can, get the number from an authentic website.
2. When in doubt, **call our Medicare SMP program**. Our trained team of experts will help you sort out your questions and put you in touch with people who can help. Please contact TJ at 970-468-0295 ext. 120.
  3. **Stay alert!** The best way to combat fraud is to expect it, then fight it.



## They dismissed his threats as pure bluster.....

With recent events in the news, it's not hard to imagine that these words were said recently, but these words referred to Marvin Heemeyer of Killdozer Fame when he told people 14 years ago he was "just going to bulldoze the town."

In a little over two hours on the afternoon of Friday, June 4, 2004, Marvin Heemeyer drove an 85-ton, steel-plated, concrete-reinforced bulldozer bristling with guns through 13 structures in the Colorado mountain town of Granby, leveling city hall, the electric company and the local newspaper. And it all started with a squabble over a sewerhookup.



A crowd of onlookers watches as a makeshift armored bulldozer is loaded onto a tractor-trailer after being extricated from the rubble of a warehouse in Granby, Colo., Saturday afternoon, June 5, 2004. PETER M. FREDIN / AP FILE PHOTO

As reported in last month's newsletter, Patrick Brower, author of *Killdozer: The True Story of the Colorado Bulldozer Rampage* spoke at the NWCCOG Council meeting.

This from a [current Route Fifty article](#):

Brower broke down the anti-hero myth and showed that Heemeyer allowed mundane government interactions to consume him with unjustified rage at an entrenched establishment he was convinced was out to get him.

The question that faces town and county officials all over the nation: How to best counteract that mistrust and often outright animosity as they go about the mundane and often thankless task of enforcing town codes, covenants and zoning regulations?

"These are very personal decisions you're making about people's property, and they're sensitive," said NWCCOG executive director Jon Stavney, former mayor of the town of Eagle and also a former Eagle County commissioner. "Scrupulous fairness, looking people in the eye and giving them their day-even the angry people. You need to let them vent and speak their piece, but you also need to be the keeper of the civility in the process."

There is so much to be learned from those events of 14 years ago that are applicable today. Being the keeper of civility in the process, listening to people, and letting them vent are all good places to start.

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On a somewhat related note, the Town Manager of Granby at the time of the incident, Tom Hale, recently passed away. You can read the [full article by Patrick Brower here](#).

If you would like to connect with Mr. Brower, here is his contact information:

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Are you getting enough.... sleep, that is?



Are you getting enough sleep at night? According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), about 70 million Americans have sleep problems that keep them awake when they want to sleep, and lead to drowsiness when they want to be alert.

Difficulty sleeping is especially true of many of us sleeping at altitude.

The NIH says adults need 7-8 hours of sleep each night to be well-rested, but that most people get less than that. They recommend these tips for getting a good night's sleep.

1. Go to sleep at the same time each night, and get up at the same time each morning.
2. Avoid naps after 3 p.m.
3. Stay away from caffeine and alcohol late in the day.
4. Avoid nicotine completely.
5. Get regular exercise, but not within 2-3 hours of bedtime.
6. Don't eat a heavy meal late in the day, but a light snack before bedtime is OK.
7. Make your bedroom comfortable, dark, quiet, and not too warm or cold.
8. Follow a routine to help you relax before sleep (for example, reading or listening to music).
9. Don't lie in bed awake. If you can't fall asleep after 20 minutes, do something calming until you feel sleepy, like reading or listening to soft music.
10. See a doctor if you continue to have trouble sleeping.

Many people who live in the high country have found that sleeping with oxygen makes the difference between sleeping well, and sleeping poorly. Most doctors will recommend a sleep study to determine the need for oxygen before writing a prescription. In some cases a comprehensive sleep study will be required to determine if you have sleep apnea. If you or someone you love is suspected of having sleep apnea, urge your doctor to arrange a sleep study. The long-term effects of apnea can be life threatening.

### Teens and Sleep

- Sleep problems are a special concern for teenagers. The average teen needs about 9 hours of sleep a night, but most don't get it. According to the National Sleep Foundation (NSF), lack of sleep is linked to depressive mood symptoms in teens. It can also hurt academic performance in the classroom and physical performance in sports.
- A sleepy teenager behind the wheel of a car is an especially dangerous combination. The NSF says drowsy drivers cause more than 100,000 crashes each year.

In addition to the sleep tips for adults, teens can also try:

- Avoiding screen time at least an hour before bed
- Banning all-nighters (Don't leave homework for the last minute!)
- Writing in a diary or on a to-do list just before sleep, to reduce stress
- Sleeping no more than 2 hours later on weekend mornings than on weekday mornings. Sleeping in longer than that will disrupt a teen's body clock and make it even harder to wake up on time Monday morning.

## We're hiring...

NWCCOG is seeking a qualified individual to serve as the Elevator Inspection Program (EIP) Administrative Assistant. Founded in 1993, the EIP covers 1,800 units across 39 jurisdictions in Northwest Colorado. The EIP Administrative Assistant is responsible for overall efficient and effective management of the office functions. The successful candidate will have a proven track record of effective administrative and communication skills, and be an organized and self-motivated individual looking to work on a small team in a progressive organization.

For full job description, see <http://nwccog.org/about/employment-opportunities/>.

To apply, submit cover letter, resume, and two recent references to David Harris, [davidh@nwccog.org](mailto:davidh@nwccog.org), by Thursday, March 8, 2018. For questions, please email David.

## 2018 NWCCOG COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE

**Thursday, March 22, 2018**

***Full Council & NLF Board Meeting***

**Location: City Hall Council Chambers, 101 West 8th St., Glenwood Springs, CO**

**Time: 10:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.**

**Primary Agenda Items**

**• Approval of final 2017 financials; program updates.**

**Thursday, May 24, 2018**

***Full Council & EDD Board Meeting***

**Location: US Forest Service Parks Ranger District Conference Rm, 100 Main St., Walden**

**Time: 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.**

**Primary Agenda Items: Review/acceptance of the 2017 audit**

**Thursday, July 26, 2018**

***Full Council Meeting***

**Location: Winter Park Town Hall Conference Rm, 50 Vasquez Rd., Winter Park, CO**

**Time: 10:00 a.m. - noon**

**Primary Agenda Items: Approval of 2019 dues; approval of 2018 budget revisions; discussion re: Annual Planning Meeting Agenda**

**Thursday, August 16, 2018**

***Full Council & EDD Board Annual Planning Meeting***

**Location:** Airport Operations Center (AOC) Conference Rm, 1001 Owl Creek Rd, Aspen

**Time:** 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

**Agenda Items:** Strategic Planning for 2019

Thursday, October 25, 2018

***Full Council Meeting***

**Location:** Community & Senior Center Fremont Rm, 83 Nancy's Place, Frisco, CO

**Time:** 10:00 a.m. - noon

**Primary Agenda Items:** Review of draft 2019 budget

Thursday, December 6, 2018

***Full Council, EDD Board & Foundation Board Meeting***

**Location:** Eagle County Government Garden Level Classroom, 500 Broadway St., Eagle

**Time:** 10:00 a.m. - noon

**Primary Agenda Items:** 2018 budget revisions; approve 2019 budget; adopt 2019 meeting schedule; annual NWCCOG Foundation Board meeting.

**Northwest Colorado Council of Governments**

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

970.468.0295

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