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From the Director's desk...

Why you left and why are you here?

Recently, I had the honor of facilitating a retreat for a newly-formed group of county commissioners. Asked to share a "Colorado experience," many shared a story of why they came to Colorado.

Paths for each between that major life decision and the retreat were varied, but as elected commissioners their commitment as leaders in those chosen communities was surely as notable to others as it was to me. These were leaders accustomed to getting things done.

Their stories had a familiar structure. Part one was an empowering, affirmative experience: crossing a pass, descending a peak, meeting someone they admired—an experience that moved each enough to say, I need more of that because it will positively change the trajectory of my life. Part two was a negative experience powerful enough to move them to leave a place that didn't match their desire for opportunity—New Jersey, Oklahoma, or Kansas City were named specifically.

Knowing what leaders these people had become, I felt a little sad for these spurned places that failed to retain talent or draw it back once talent had seen another mountain top. I was struck by how emphatically each had chosen to leave. Why had they not chosen to stay and improve those places? What moved them to stay and work to improve their chosen communities?



These were not idle questions since the group had origins of dissatisfaction, feeling ineffective within another County Commissioner group. After years of battling from inside, these commissioners finally made an affirmative decision to try another path. Many at the retreat remained members of both groups. But being in a new group with internal alignment completely changed the conversation. The decision was paying off they were affecting policy at a state level.

I came to Western Colorado with no plan other than to live, work and learn from the small rural places that



attracted me on the Western Slope-Hotchkiss, Lake City then Eagle. I left behind successive cocoons of progressivism, in Portland, Oregon then at college to get here. I banked on finding common ground with locals in those communities and did, even though I knew from my rural Oregon family experience that I would likely not share their national politics. Often, I didn't. It seemed more like a challenge than an impediment. The existence of common ground amid differences was confirmed through my experience in local government. I problem solved for years side-by-side with people whom I did not know their party affiliation. No one was creating "wedge issues" to keep us from the sensible middle, either. We agreed and disagreed by turns, never allowing a label to keep us from a robust conversation focused on the business at hand.

It seems that the willingness to seek common ground and work through differences is waning in rural Colorado and across the country. Leaders only want to work within the comfort of their group. Our schools, neighborhoods and towns are increasingly being sorted by like-mindedness. At a national level, American leaders, and the country seem unable or unwilling to question themselves, or to cross rather arbitrary lines of affiliation to create coalitions. The result has short-circuited the democratic process and led to stalemate on nearly all of the most important issues facing us today.

These were tough decisions-stay & fight to improve a place, an organization or a party, or form a new one? It was fun, for a day, to work with a group that had made an uncomfortable leap, and was active in problem solving tough policy issues, even if it just may have further sorted Colorado.

Most of us have forgotten the basic choice to engage each other is in front of us each day. Those who don't want us to get things done must like it that way.



Jon Stavney

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Community Impact

As we review the impacts that NWCCOG direct services has on our communities, we are struck by how many people stop and take the time to send us heartfelt thanks for our efforts.

The Energy team received this letter recently and it had such an impact, we decided to share it here. We strive to protect the privacy of our clients so have left off the names, but rest assured, this letter is very real:

Thank
YOU
ALL !

Dear Doug, Nate, Neal, Dan and all the rest of you at NWCCOG,

From start to finish you were professional, competent, friendly, and encouraging. We were recovering from breast cancer and the problems with our cold house were overwhelming. Your team came out and eventually made our home warm again.

Every time you made the trip to our home, you were prompt, courteous, and cleaned up after work. The plumber you contracted with was also excellent. Marshall's Plumbing owner, Nathan Marshall, did an excellent job of making the repairs to our heating system. I finally have an option to build a fire rather than depending on a fire for warmth.

Honestly, your program saved us from having to move into a different home until the recovery from cancer was complete. Our gratitude to all of you is boundless.

Thank you so much!
T&L - Steamboat Springs

All in a day's work!

Supreme Court Opens the Door to online sales tax collection

By Jon

At NWCCOG we have ordered our office supplies from Quill Corporation for a number of years not knowing of the landmark 1992 case in of Quill vs. North Dakota which established that a "lack of a physical nexus" (store) was enough to exempt a retailer from having to pay state and local sales taxes. The Supreme Court this past week threw out that ruling by stating that an "economic presence" was sufficient, as well as another from 1967. The action opens the door to additional revenues at a very important time for the local governments we represent.

Like most consumers, we have a heart for buying locally, but our better fiscal judgement often steers us otherwise. And if the local store is just a poorly staffed national big box, rather than, say, a locally run bakery--well that's even an easier decision.



Just as NWCCOG had decided some time ago that it was both more time efficient to order online and have office supplies delivered a day later, as well as more cost-effective since national buying power insured better prices, and convenient since delivery supply chains have improved; the marketplace has spoken, and online retailers continue to gain market share over brick and

mortar stores. This has put a large hole in the revenue bucket that local jurisdictions rely upon. Long ago, most towns linked their primary revenue base to sales tax. It was a repair long overdue.

Note that NWCCOG doesn't pay sales tax anyhow, but that only underscores the convenience factor because at the local Office Depot every visit meant longer in the checkout line than actually shopping because each visit meant a new employee needed to be educated about how to handle a tax-exempt purchase. Online this was ironed out once, long ago by opening an account.

So an old revenue tool has been modernized. Next, how about a similar fix for transportation funding?

Model Water Quality Protection Standards for Local Governments

Clean water is essential to Colorado communities for a multitude of reasons, especially in the headwaters region comprising the Northwest Colorado Council of Governments Water Quality/ Quantity Committee (QQ). Water quality and streamflows are fundamental to the region's economy. Recreation-based tourism has become the leading economic driver in the region, where every tourist activity relies on water. As a result, "water in its natural water course is the most significant asset of the headwaters economies."

As the QQ region continues to grow, land use development has the potential to cause problems related to nonpoint source pollution such as degradation of fisheries and other wildlife habitat, damage to wetlands and floodplains, and increased water and wastewater treatment costs. Appropriate local government land use regulations can minimize these impacts.

The purpose of these model Water Quality Protection Standards (WQPS) is to provide municipal and county governments with model standards and requirements for land use development designed to protect water quality and quantity from nonpoint source pollution. Examples of WQPS are erosion and sediment control, stormwater control, hazardous materials management, snow storage and removal standards, and postconstruction inspection and maintenance requirements. [To see the full report, go here.](#)



Photo credits, clockwise from top left: Brent Gardner-Smith, Aspen Journalism; City of Aspen; Torie Jarvis.

Long Term Care Ombudsman

What Does an Ombudsman Do?

Have you ever seen a word and thought, "What is that, where did it come from, and what in the world does it mean?" For many, the word "ombudsman" elicits that response.

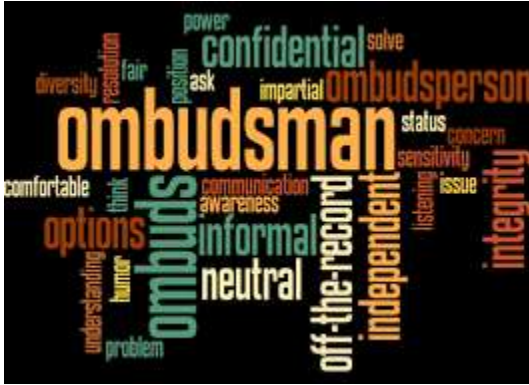
It's only early summer, but the Alpine Area Agency on Aging's part-time ombudsman staff and volunteers have already made over 30 visits to local long term care facilities and provided hours of consultation and education for long term care residents and their families. According to Erin Fisher, Director of the Alpine Area Agency on Aging and long term care ombudsman, "Although we do routine visits to long term care facilities, some residents and their families don't realize that we are an impartial advocate for the residents and we live by the motto: 'What Does the Resident Want.' Through the Alpine Area Agency on Aging, the ombudsman program covers Pitkin, Eagle, Summit, Grand, and Jackson counties and acts as an advocate for residents and represents their interests."

A recent article in the April edition of *Governing* highlighted the lack of over-site in assisted living facilities. According to the article, "states spend a reported \$10 billion in federal and state money

"A program to enhance the quality of life in long-term care facilities."

per year on Medicaid beneficiaries in assisted living facilities, averaging \$30,000 per patient, per year. But it's not clear whether governments are getting their money's worth in terms of quality of care and, critically, the safety and well-being of the facilities' residents."

While Colorado recently updated the state's assisted living regulations, the role of the Long Term Care Ombudsman remains important as ever. Colorado's long term care ombudsmen protect the rights of people living in nursing homes and assisted living residences. They act as advocates for the resident and assist the resident in resolving issues related to care, health, safety, and the resident's rights. Ombudsmen strive to resolve complaints that range from simple quality of care issues, such as a resident's preferred time for breakfast, to very serious, sometimes life-threatening, concerns involving abuse and neglect.

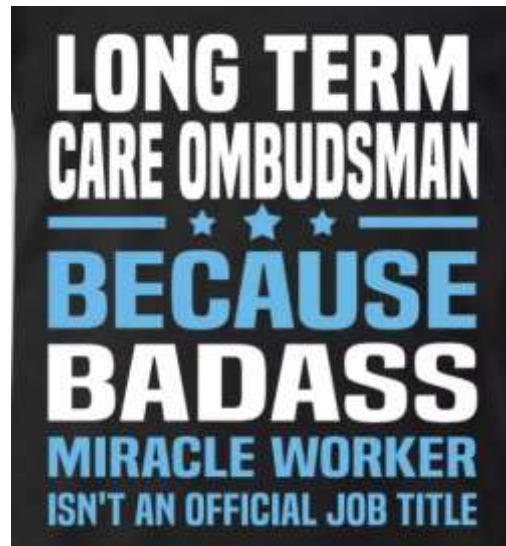


In Colorado, the LTC ombudsman program sits within Disability Law Colorado and ombudsman activities are contracted through the local Area Agencies on Aging. The Alpine Area Agency on Aging's LTC Ombudsman program oversees six facilities in the region and maintains two paid and two volunteer ombudsmen. The ombudsman program's federally-mandated advocacy service is free for nursing home and assisted living facility residents in the region.

In addition to the long term care ombudsman program, the Alpine Area Agency on Aging offers many services for seniors 60 and older in the region, including caregiver services, senior law days, advocacy and volunteer opportunities, and information and assistance. For more information, please contact Erin Fisher, Region 12 Long-Term Care Ombudsman, at (970) 468-0295 or aaa12@nwccog.org or visit the Alpine AAA website at www.alpineaaa.org

Reference:

<http://www.governing.com/topics/health-human-services/gov-assisted-living-oversight.html>



The Eyes Have It



Now that summer is in full swing we're all focused on making sure we've got plenty of sun protection for our skin. Higher altitudes mean more Ultraviolet (UV) rays can reach us. So we slather on the sun screen, wear hats, and even wear special clothes with UV protection.

But we may not be as protective of our eyes. Cool eye-wear is all the rage, and now is the perfect time to check how much UV protection your lenses have.

This article by Lauren E, a member of VSP Global and Vision Service Plan, describes why UV protection is important, and how to check your eyeglasses for optimum defense. Your eyes depend on it.

[Check out the article here.](#)

10th Annual Caregiver Conference



Over one hundred caregivers and vendors attended this year's tenth annual caregiver conference in Glenwood Springs, hosted by the Alpine Area Agency on Aging, Garfield County Senior Programs, and the Northwest Colorado Options for Long Term Care.

Attendees enjoyed presentations by Jane Barton, author of *Caregiving for the GENIUS*, who spoke about Resistance to Assistance and Living in Harmony. Sean Yeung, chaplain for Calaway Young Cancer Center, spoke about how to Connect the Dots and Create Community.

Caregivers were also treated to a free lunch and pampering. Quotes from attendees included: "The message was clear and really came at the perfect time" and "always new thoughts, ideas & avenues."



2018 NWCCOG COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE

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

970.468.0295

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