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From the Director's Desk

How does government know what citizens want?

Hint, it may be time to re-think your "communications department." As citizens evolve further into consumers, becoming increasingly busy and distracted, some local governments are experimenting with how to lure input from citizens.

In our region, most innovative public engagement is being rolled out for one-time community development initiatives, often in partnership with a consultant. In this newsletter we feature a few of these, about an airport, Mad-Libs, a "Planapalooza ©," painting roads first and asking questions later, and the proliferation of websites like Engagevail. One county is posting a "storyteller" position. These are mostly one-offs.

Steamboat Springs appears to be consolidating interactions between the organization and the public with a standing website www.engagesteamboat.net. It may be one of the first signs of a fundamental, holistic shift. Departments and job titles with "innovation" in them are proliferating. At the Colorado State Internet Portal Authority (SIPA) conference this past week, Brandon Williams "Innovation and Strategy Manager" for Eagle County highlighted the early stages of a three-year effort for all county services to be on smart phone apps eliminating the need to enter "brick and mortar." That retail reference is not an accident.



Williams began by touting on a different engagement tool the county "rolled out" this year - a custom bus named "MIRA" for (Mobile Intercultural Resource Alliance). It travels each week to a different under-served neighborhood for a few days, stays open in the evening and brings more than 30 county, and partner NPO services to under-served, overworked, often second language citizens who

simply did not walk through the door before. [See the bus in action here.](#)

With busses or apps, here is the connection: "We are making it easier for people to participate in shaping their community...because they can do it from home or kids soccer

practice or work instead of having to show up to a specific meeting, and their opinions are no less valid because they didn't attend a meeting" said Allison Scheck at CCCMA in February. She was transitioning from the Public Engagement and Operations Manager (note the title) in the "community resources department" for Lakewood to the Administrative Services Director for Wheat Ridge. On a [podcast](#) about that work, she points out that "people care, but often don't care enough to rearrange their life" to provide input the way public entities have traditionally gathered it. She touts a company called "Bang the Table" that helped Lakewood with their citizen engagement which is ongoing.

What do all of these have in common? Chelsey Bright of Qualtrics who also spoke at SIPA, says it is a result of "the Amazon effect." She says, "how citizens engage with the world is changing while satisfaction with government is plummeting." To keep doing what was good enough 10 years ago is no longer good enough." People expect attractive, well-structured, experiences, they "expect to be engaged." Bright says, "trust in government is based on individual experiences." She advises governments to "collect feedback from citizens at every touchpoint." Most of our members are not there yet, but as we saw while researching for this newsletter, changes are afoot.

Just a few examples of community engagement in our Region:

The Town of Snowmass Village Comprehensive Plan was adopted in December of 2018. It was kicked off in October of 2016 with a "Planapalooza" © lasting an entire week. Julie Ann Woods, TSMV Community Development Director and planner for 30 years said this event was "the most innovative and fun and exciting of all our sessions." Led by Town Planning & Urban Design Collaborative (TPUDC) out of Franklin TN, Snowmass sought to engage "skiers, visitors, second homeowners, employees, merchants, developers, decision-makers and residents" - a very broad definition of "public" through "pop up surveys," and placing pins on a GIS map with stories through the Plan Snowmass website. Some developer sketches were included for input, which ruffled some feathers on the planning commission about the Comp Plan usurping or getting out in front of their authority, but in the end it they directed the sketches removed and the plan re-organized. The document is now at the printer. We look forward to seeing the "magazine style" document.

EngageVail: The Town of Vail's engagevail.com represents the first "window of engagement" on for towns Civic Area Plan update process. It had over 500 participants on-line and in person to help define key areas of study for the plan. That order of magnitude of input would be unheard of in a meeting style format. Council was updated February 19th. Staff has posted all responses in an on line report. Survey questions included "What makes a great civic space? What is currently missing? What kind of legacy?) The website for the 10-acre study area-not the entire town-has news articles, slide shows and a podcast about the project. Especially interesting is how they turned the 11 key takeaways into a dynamic graphic.

ASE Vision: Aspen/Pitkin County Airport Comprehensive Plan update is taxied down the runway for takeoff. What could be more ho-hum than an airport plan update? Most are updated with fanfare but little input. Nobody told Pitkin County that. At our January NWCCOG meeting, Commissioner Clapper reported that they had 116 applicants for what was intended to be a small steering committee. Evidently, the airport is kind of a big deal in the Upper Roaring Fork valley. The way Clapper tells it, the leadership team took a step back and decided that instead of selecting a handful of participants and turning roughly 100 others interested citizens away, they created 5 Airport Advisory Groups to keep all interested parties involved. The ASE Vision [website](#) leads with a video, has three prominent action buttons, and a cartoonish roadmap, public process flow charts of the process. The stuff we used to put print on cardboard and put up on easels, then store in the cellar for years-all lives on the website. It is becoming increasingly common for local governments to build separate websites for such projects.

Elevate Eagle: The Town of Eagle's Eagle Community Plan being "embarked upon" is estimated to take 2/5 years by the town's estimation. "Elevate Eagle" was proclaimed to be "going on the road." Through email blasts by one neighborhood association, "Beginning Tuesday January 29th, town staff, citizen committee members, and our consultant team will be popping up in various locations throughout the Town of Eagle to develop a vision of where Eagle will be in 20 years. We have been gathering feedback since October 2018 on the strengths, opportunities, threats and aspirations of the community." Th hook was asking folks to "... Drop in for a quick mad-lib game or rank our ideas on the emoji scale to take us to the next level (and get entered into a drawing for a

\$50 gift card...." www.ElevateEagle.com. The 1996 and 2010 "old school" comp plans updates were dominated by looming large developments. Those plans had extensive citizen participation which also took years. Since then the town has embarked on an impressive series of [sub-area plans](#). Interesting to see what comes out now. The Com Dev staff of two is also undertaking a Land Use Code Update and a Highway 6 Corridor Plan. It should be interesting.

The Town of Avon is on a diet, [Beaver Creek Boulevard Redesign project](#): in 2018, Avon experimented with striping to create a "[road diet](#)". Though local governments are accused of cheap talk, of studying concepts into dust, Avon took an approach that is beginning to take hold elsewhere. Call it that Paint is Cheap approach. Locals, of course were skeptical of adding bike lanes, changing parking, adding planters and all the other expensive changes, so Avon decided to paint out the concept on the streets, and live it for a year. [See "Road Diet Here to Stay" Vail Daily 5/31/18.](#) As a follow up, Design Workshop brought their real-time click voting tools to a series of public open houses following the rollout, "the results ensured that residents felt heard as public preferences for different aspects of the project became clear," according to Avon Town Planner Mack Pielsticker. Beyond that, he said, "we found that boots on the ground proved to be some of the most valuable input to the project - meeting people. Meeting residents and businesses on the street seemed fitting for a project that would impact day-to-day mobility."

The City of Aspen Mobility Project: Went from full speed ahead in early 2018 to on-hold in late 2018 to being shelved in 2019. Lots of changes in Aspen between the election and new management. We look forward to the ambitious concept moving forward someday. That project had a series of overlapping pilot projects which were planned to launch for a summer, get input, then decide on long-term solutions geared to reduce the traffic in town. That problem is not going away.

NWCCOG knows solar



After decades of development and political debate about solar energy, the industry is finally ready to stand on its own. Solar power projects around the world are beating fossil fuels on price without subsidies, and each time they do, the future looks a little brighter. Added to the lower costs, are the facts that solar energy is the most abundant source of energy available, it is totally renewable, there are low maintenance and running costs, and finally there are almost no toxins released into the environment. What's not to love about solar energy?

That said, the NWCCOG Energy Program has completed its first low-income residential solar project this year. To help install a 3.5 KW rooftop solar panel system, the Energy Program partnered with Atlasta Solar, LLC. The size of this rooftop solar panel should translate into roughly \$70 per month in electricity savings, which is a significant amount for this home in Garfield County. NWCCOG plans to complete a total of 4 Low Income Solar Jobs throughout this current grant cycle.

We are excited to be able to contribute to the reduction of the carbon footprint, while at the same time, helping our customers save money on their utility costs.

HIGH SIDE Brewing a Northwest Loan Fund Success Story



Germany is known for having beer gardens everywhere and many years ago when David Axelrod known as "Ax" was teaching skiing there, he noticed that the atmosphere in the gardens was a way to bring people together - families, friends, old and young- around a thing he loved, Beer. People gathered, ate, drank beer, and chatted with each other instead of staring at rows of TV's. To David the sense of fun and community just felt right.

When he moved to Summit County 22 years ago, he reinvented himself several times from being a ski instructor and a rafting guide, to then getting his MBA in sustainable business and starting a business in Mozambique as well as being a collaborative change consultant. Finally he started Broken Compass Brewing. He opened Broken Compass with the express intention of creating a place reminiscent of brew pubs

in Germany - where people gathered to be with each other - and not be distracted from a sense of community with walls of streaming live TVs. Broken Compass was a huge success and it was bursting at the seams, and when Frisco's Backcountry Brewery came up for sale, Ax decided to purchase that location and turn it into another Broken Compass.

But life happens, and the partners went their separate ways so a new brewery was born. Ax pulled together an amazingly experienced team of experts to open HighSide Brewing and they wanted to experiment with new beers and create a community based sustainable brewery. Highside was the perfect name for this new venture. It is a rafting term used to keep a boat from flipping when you've taken a new line or hit a rock and bounced off course. The team at Highside prides itself on being experimental, doing the fundamentals right and having fun. One beer is called "Swim" beer. This is the beer that you buy for your friends or fellow guides when you flip and they help you pick up the pieces.



Even though he'd had the experience of owning and running a successful brewing tap room, when he wanted to start HighSide Brewing on the corner of Main St., and Summit Boulevard in Frisco, it was as if he was starting over again. Traditional lenders considered HighSide as startup and financing was more than difficult to attain.

Enter the Northwest Loan Fund and Anita Cameron Director of Business Lending with the NWCCOG. Dave's banker had worked with Anita on other loans and thought she might be able to help with a financing solution. Working together, NLF and HighSide were able to come to terms for a loan that helped with equipment and working capital to hire staff.



The location is a huge advantage; the 2100 square feet was perfect for the large seating area, and the 300 square foot stage was made for live music. The views are spectacular from the spacious back deck, and there is plenty of free parking.

HighSide offers a diverse lineup of beers that changes frequently to reflect the tastes of the community including IPA's, Lagers, Ales, Browns, and Stouts. It also serves up several non-alcoholic options that are divine thirst quenchers. The Highside Kitchen provides just the right variety of munchies sure to satisfy any palate. Their event calendar is always full, and live music is a regular occurrence. Their space will be growing this spring with triple the space. Private event rental, a great upstairs deck, a game room and yes TVs in part of the space for you beer and sports fans out there. [Check out their](#)

[website here.](#)

Ax is extremely grateful for the help that the NLF and Anita provided during the start-up period. He says, "Without her dedication and passion, we would not be where we are today."

THERE'S STILL TIME TO REGISTER! NWCCOG 2019 Regional Economic Summit on May 2 in Silverthorne!



2019 REGIONAL ECONOMIC SUMMIT

The economic Summit promises to be an entertaining, and information rich seminar with the theme of the day asking the question: What are the Ingredients of a Resilient Regional Economy?" The main focus areas are:

- Supporting the Workforce
- Diversifying the Economy
- Creating Sustainable/Responsible Tourism

The DRAFT agenda is being developed and it is sure to provide something for everyone.

Speakers include:

Elizabeth Garner, State Demographer, State of Colorado Demography Office who will provide a Demographic & Economic Overview of the NWCCOG Region and a peek at Census 2020.

Jessica Valand, Regional Director, NW/RR Workforce Regions will give us her perspective on creating higher-paying jobs and career pathways.

Betsy Markey, Executive Director, OEDIT is our lunch time keynote speaker.

Afternoon sessions will be focused on ways to support our workforce including Workforce housing with Public/Private Partnerships, Healthcare options and Mental Health initiatives, and sustainable tourism relative to protecting our natural resources.

The day promises to be thought provoking and will provide actionable ideas that each county may want to replicate. If you haven't already reserved your spot, [register here!](#)

Elevator Inspection Program welcomes new team members

Bryanne Busato - Administrative Assistant



Bryanne moved to Colorado in 2015 from the Chicago area and is currently living in Alma. She hopes to be able to find a home in Summit County, since the commute to Silverthorne is long. She started her career in the fashion industry, which evolved into event planning for everything from skiing, floral designing, and furniture décor. During that time, she cultivated a strong ethic in customer service and organization skills - which are important to her role as Administrative Assistant in the EIP group.

She's excited about her new position and says, "I enjoy working alongside all the kind and friendly faces I have met already. It's also great to be working in and being a part of the community."

Bryanne's hobbies are diverse and include hiking with her husband and three dogs, skiing, sewing and any sort of crafting.

Joe Shankland - Elevator Inspector



Having grown up in San Jose, California, Joe Shankland moved to the Vail Valley more than 23 years ago. While working as a property manager at a condominium complex in Avon, he answered an ad for Elevator Inspector for the NWCCOG. Joe's skill set prepared him for the year-long training period as an Elevator Inspector before taking the certification test that is required of all members of the team.

About his assignment with NWCCOG, Joe says, "I'm looking forward to creating a new trade and having a clear career path."

His hobbies and outside interests include teaching his son about all things outdoors including skiing, mountain climbing, motorcycle trips, rafting, etc. He's an avid traveler and wants his son to learn the joys of being in nature.

Alpine Area Agency on Aging is Changing the Narrative

The Alpine Area Agency on Aging has re-branded its quarterly newsletter to The Momentum: Rocky Mountain Aging. The [online version may be found here](#) and it contains timely and pertinent information for older adults, caregivers, providers, and anyone else interested in aging in our community.

The re-branding stems from the Alpine Area Agency on Aging's dedication to "Changing the

Narrative" around aging. Changing the Narrative is a strategic communications and awareness campaign to increase understanding of ageism and shift how Coloradans think about aging. Built off the FrameWorks Institute's national work, we recognize that what we were seeking to communicate about aging and ageism, and the social challenges and opportunities posed by demographic change, was not getting through in the way intended to the general public.

Research finds that explaining implicit bias helps people better understand the problem of ageism and actually reduces it. We are taking part in this by changing the language we use (moving from the word "senior" to "older adult" and removing the word "consumer"), understanding our own implicit bias, and advancing a positive view of aging and eliminating ageist practices. The Momentum is our move towards using language that more appropriately describes the incredible opportunities for communities to benefit from the experience and talents that older people have developed over the years.



Colorado Communities for Climate Action to hold workshop in Summit County

Colorado Communities for Climate Action invites you to a special workshop on climate policy advocacy for CC4CA members, prospective members, and allied organizations. The workshop will be May 23 from 9 a.m. - noon at the Summit County Commons in Frisco (tentative). A light breakfast will be served.

The workshop is structured to give local government elected officials and climate/clean energy program managers the tools they need to be more effective in influencing decisions on legislation that affects climate and clean energy policies, at both the state and local level. Leaders from CC4CA local governments will join with staff and CC4CA's professional lobbying team, all of whom bring deep experience in the workings of the Colorado legislature, to lead the workshop discussions. This workshop is open to all Region 12 municipalities.

Workshop attendees will:

- Become familiar with CC4CA and the power of local government coalitions in state policy advocacy.
- Learn how to make the case that climate protection matters to local governments.
- Learn about the essentials of Colorado's legislative structure and processes.
- Hear a review of the remarkable progress on climate and clean energy legislation during the 2019 legislative session.
- Learn about essential techniques to use in lobbying, engaging constituents, and testifying before legislative committees.
- Learn how to design strategies and tactics to generate support among community leaders and the public to influence legislative action.

For additional details contact Jessica Burley at the Town of Breckenridge. jburley@townofbreckenridge.com, or Jacob Smith of the CC4CC at jsmith@cc4ca.org.

NWCCOG knows wellness

Reducing mental health stigma - it's good for business

With 20% of all Americans living with a mental health condition, it's time to realize how not dealing with issue could negatively impact your bottom line. As business leaders, it's important to set the tone in your workplace to start the conversation. Most forms of mental health - like many illnesses - are treatable, but negative stereotypes about mental health persist and many who are afflicted may feel as though they are viewed as having character flaws or personal weaknesses.

Research shows that most people living with mental health conditions are productive, reliable workers who live fruitful lives. For many however, the stigma they feel keeps them from seeking treatment. That's why as leaders we all need to help create a culture of acceptance.



Kaiser Permanente - Business reports on the "Cost of Staying Silent" and urges companies to not stay silent about mental health in the workplace - in fact doing so can negatively impact your bottom line.

- Mental illness is the single greatest cause of worker disability in the U.S.
- 62% of missed work days can be attributed to mental health conditions.
- Employees with untreated mental health conditions use nonpsychiatric health care services 3 times more than those who do get treatment.
- Depressed employees are 20% to 40% more likely to become unemployed because of their condition.

Many companies have made progress supporting the physical health of their employees. It's time to do the same for mental health.

[For additional information read the complete article here.](#)

NEXT 2019 NWCCOG COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday, May 23, 2019

Full Council & EDD Board Meeting

Location: Breckenridge Grand Vacations Community Center Hopefull/Discovery Room

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

Primary Agenda Items: Review/acceptance of the 2018 audit

Northwest Colorado Council of Governments

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