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From the Director's desk... Getting Transitions Right

Congratulations to active NWCCOG members who were re-elected to County Commissioner seats this month-Jeannie, Patti, Kristen! We appreciate your dedication to NWCCOG and service to your counties!

Getting Transitions Right

Election 2018 is in the books, at least in Colorado. The clock is ticking for Governors-elect to identify teams and cabinet members and come up with strategies to accomplish priorities. Commissioners or Mayors on the other hand usually come arrive with a competent "civil service staff" in place, institutional momentum and often strong strategic plans.

For an incoming Governor or President that momentum has to be created through an effective transition. According to Nobel Prize winner [Joseph Stiglitz](#) in a 2016 Vanity Fair article, "when a new president is elected more than 3,000 officials are appointed... nearly half of which need to be confirmed by the Senate." A recent book by Michael Lewis,

The Fifth Risk, tells the unflattering story of the current administrations transition in three federal agencies whose work is not widely known or appreciated. It outlines some of the massive public risks involved. It is a good read if only to brush up on the value of the Department of Energy which manages our nuclear stockpile and the Department of Commerce that manages the census and NOAA. Lewis dives into what happens when industry critics with a narrow self interest are placed at the top of organizations that they don't understand and don't have an interest to understand. It underscores that an appointment does not a transition make.

The incoming Colorado Governor appears to understand that difference. On Nov 9th, the Colorado Sun reported that [Governor Elect Jared Polis announced his 51 person transition team](#) to help identify key appointments and policy direction for his incoming administration which needs to hit the ground running in January. [This letter. Boldly Forward, from transition lead](#) Crisanta Duran, adds additional details and open positions.



At NWCCOG, we are proud to note that the local Keystone Center is facilitating the transition effort, and that commissioners Jill Ryan from Eagle County and Dan Gibbs from Summit County have been tapped to the Health and Human Services group while Commissioner Tim Mauck of Clear Creek County which is participating in Project THOR is a member of the group overseeing transition for CDOT, DOLA and "broadband." By the time of publication, there may be other local officials identified too.

The peaceful transfer of power is a hallmark of our system, yet it is a daunting and massive public vulnerability exercise that sets the tone for a term. As Governing Magazine reports, [With a Divided Congress, States Will Likely Pick up the Slack](#) on moving federal policy forward on most fronts and continue to be laboratories of democracy as "red" and "blue" states seek to move forward on many of the same issues from widely different perspectives, not the least of which will be access to health care, voter rights/fraud, redistricting, transportation and tackling opioids.



As we learned in 2016 at the federal level, transitions bring an opportunity for continuity or the possibility of radical shifts in direction. While many NWCCOG programs were proposed for the chopping block by the Trump administration in 2017, those fears have not panned out partially because of an ineffective transition. Though our programs work with eight different state agencies, our current anxiety about the state transition is more targeted-what will happen with rural broadband as a state priority?

Jon Stavney

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Public Access TV - Cable Companies want your channel back

The new FCC continues fulfilling an industry wish list that is unfavorable to local governments with rules that would effectively allow cable companies with franchise agreements to avoid paying franchise fees by citing "fair market value" for a number of "in kind" services delivered to the community. This includes PEG channel payments, reduced cost broadband services to schools and libraries all being weighed against a 5% maximum franchise fee cap to local governments.



The fee was intended to compensate governments for use of public right-of-way for cable utilities through a small fee charged monthly to each customer. The rule would allow industry to pocket this fee by showing other community benefits and could effectively cut off "cash" franchise fee payments to local governments that use them to operate Public TV channels and other programs. The proposed rule would impact previously negotiated revenues and likely cause many local governments to shutter one of the most potent tools for public transparency they have-televised or video recorded meetings that citizens watch at all hours of the day and night to keep up with local governments and hold them accountable.

The Colorado Communications and Utility Alliance (CUCA) ([see letter here](#)), an organization that represents local governments is being represented by Ken Fellmen of Kissinger & Fellman who has assembled local government responses and is preparing reply comments for a December 14th deadline. Fellmen is scheduled to call in to the December 6th NWCCOG Council meeting to update and seek further input before bundling responses for a December 15th deadline.

Providers have long sought to gain back bandwidth from the 1,500 PEG studios and 3,000 channels across the US reports [Route Fifty](#). Fellman noted in a recent phone conversation, "this FCC has not been the friend of local governments or American people on a variety of issues recently including net neutrality and tower citing. I was glad to see may local governments filing comments on this issue." He said that after filing responses to industry comments, his firm will monitor the FCC review of the rulemaking process which is likely to take the next six months, during which time the issue may be taken up by Congress

CCUA Colorado Communications and Utility Alliance (www.coloradocua.org) is an association of local governments that has worked together since the mid-1990s in broadband, telecom and other communications issues. Fellman continues, "There is a huge threat out there and it could happen if rules go into effect. It would likely go to court and be challenged." He notes that there has already been talk of legislation to counter the rulemaking in the House. One key player in the situation could be Colorado Senator Gardner who is on the committee that oversees the FCC. Fellman can be reached at kfellman@kandf.com.

Project THOR - Anticipated announcement

from DOLA first week of December

by Jon



Nate Walowitz, Regional Broadband Coordinator, and I were able to make our pitch for Project THOR in front of the Energy Impact and Mineral Assistance committee for DOLA in Burlington last week. We have ten participating partner entities waiting eagerly to know if this project can move forward in 2019.

Making the drive and the pitch helped us reflect that we have had a tremendous [5 year run](#) at NWCCOG providing technical support local broadband efforts across the 5 county region and our 4 partner counties that together with 50/50 DOLA grant funding that combined with local investments represent \$13,244,252 invested in Broadband across 20% of the

landmass of the state since 2013 when the Regional Broadband Plan was released.

Project THOR which has been submitted to DOLA for \$1M of grant funding for the \$2.5M project would provide 100G middle mile network services to 23% of the state population that lives outside of the 9 front range counties. The lack of redundancy that THOR aims to address continues to be underscored by outages like this one highlighted in the [Vail Daily](#). We know that to have any hope of delivering THOR and continuing to support local projects that we will need to make a robust pitch to the Polis team to continue state support for rural broadband deployment in one form or another.

Reports from around the Region

Affordable Housing Owners are Aging in Place challenging access for the next generation of workers in Aspen/Pitkin County



It's not news to those of us who live in the resort communities that we have a housing challenge. As it is, employers are finding it difficult to hire employees because they have nowhere to live. Housing is just too expensive.

Many communities in our region have deed restricted homes, or workforce housing, or subsidized employee housing where some requirements include having two people in every bedroom. The issue is hitting critical mass.

And while many communities have this problem, there is an added challenge on the horizon that is barreling down on us at the speed of time. The time it takes for us to age, and to retire. Aspen calls it the ticking time bomb.

According to a recent article in the [Colorado Sun](#), Aspen is working feverishly to solve the dilemma of figuring out how to house workers, AND build community. Many of the deed restricted homes are now owned by workers who are soon to retire. Thus taking a home that was once considered "affordable housing for our working locals", and turning it into a home owned by someone who no longer meets the rules about employment or earnings.

According to the article, Rachel Richards has worked nearly 30 years serving Aspen and Pitkin County as mayor, councilwoman and county commissioner. She helped refine the affordable-housing program that has become a national model, funded by a real estate transfer tax that was approved by voters.

Richards is one of the people who believe that the affordable-housing program is about building neighborhoods and creating a community that doesn't ebb and flow with the seasons.

She is quoted as saying "Our community plan has always called for trying to maintain a real community here for all generations," said Richards, who moved into an affordable home in the late 1980s.

The housing shortage in Aspen has "pushed everyone to the point where they are trying to take a slice of everyone else's pie," Richards said.

Families ask for larger homes. Singles want a larger selection of smaller units. Others now are urging more retirement homes, which do not exist in the housing authority's offerings.

Richards wants the retiree conversation to lean toward building a lasting community, but she agrees that housing is a critical need for employers seeking to lure workers - and not just those workers floating Aspen's tourism economy, but a diverse collection of workers, young and old.

Lawyers, doctors, dentists and skilled trade workers require housing assistance in Aspen. And they won't come if they are told at, say, age 45 that they will have to move before they pay off the 30-year mortgage on their home.

"A policy of 'Move out upon retirement' is the definition of a community in permanent transition and says that you want a temporary workforce at all times," Richards said. "That's not the community we want. We would be building only dormitories if we did."

Communities around Colorado are watching how Aspen manages the looming wave of retirees who have anchored the resort economy. The affordable-housing programs in Vail, Crested Butte, Breckenridge, Telluride and Steamboat Springs are not as old as Aspen's. Their housed workers are not as close to retirement as Aspen's. But it's on the horizon.

[If you read just one link in this newsletter, read this.](#)

Disaster Preparedness Workshop for Local Officials on Dec 7th is filling up. To register, click [here](#).



Disaster Preparedness Workshop for Local Governments

Friday, December 7, 2018

8:00 AM - 3:30 PM

Eagle County Building

500 Broadway, Eagle, CO 81631

Cost: \$25 includes lunch

[Agenda](#)

**Make checks payable to NWCCOG, PO Box 2308, Silverthorne, CO 80498
or pay online [HERE](#).**

RSVP: to rachel@nwccog.org by Friday, November 30.

Visit [NWCCOG's website here](#) for more information.

Kudos to the Energy Program Team

SUCCESS STORY | Dumont, Colorado



Job loss following a cancer diagnosis can compound the hardships faced by members of our communities, as it did for this senior couple in Dumont. Their manufactured home was a high energy user with an old furnace—only 63% efficient—delivering more heated air to the outside rather than inside. A sewer leak and an incorrectly vented water heater also presented serious health and safety concerns. The improvements made to this home through weatherization helped these seniors stay in their home by reducing household energy costs and addressing health and safety issues.



"I can't say enough about how wonderful this program is. You have helped my family so much. About a year ago, my husband was diagnosed with aggressive cancer. We haven't been able to work as his care is daily. So this has been a miracle for my family. You're not only professional in what you do but your hearts are awesome in how much you care for people in need. Thank you so much."
 —Dumont weatherization services recipient

Dumont Participant Qualification: Colorado Old Age Pension

Weatherization Service Provider: Northwest Colorado Council of Governments

Weatherization Completed: October 2017

Energy Conservation Measures: air sealing, attic & crawl space insulation, high-efficiency furnace, ENERGY STAR refrigerator, replacement window and storm windows, LED lighting

Health & Safety Measures: carbon monoxide mitigation, dryer venting, sewer leak repair

Improvements:

- Air leakage reduced by 45%
- Attic insulation improved R11 to R46
- Crawl space insulation improved R0 to R19
- Furnace replaced—efficiency increased 63% to 95%
- Refrigerator replaced—usage reduced 1570 kwh to 370 kwh
- Replacement window and 5 storm windows installed

Energy Savings:

- Gas bill decreased by 50%
- Electric bill decreased by 23%
- \$150/year saved on wood fuel for heating (none needed after weatherization services)

Utility Company: Xcel Energy (Gas & Electric)

The Colorado Weatherization Assistance Program received \$2,805 in rebates from program partner Xcel Energy.



1580 Logan Street, Suite 100 | Denver, Colorado 80203 | www.colorado.gov/energyoffice

Be especially mindful during the Holidays to evade injury

With all of the things going on during this holiday season, it's easy to forget to **think** about some of the important things. Don't just fly on autopilot. Here are a couple of reminders to be more mindful.

Basic safety on the road

Every year, more than 32,000 people are killed and 2 million more are injured in motorvehicle accidents on US roadways, according to the CDC. In addition to never driving drunk or exceeding the posted speed limit, seat belts also play a major role in saving lives every day. The CDC urges drivers and passengers to **"use a seat belt in every seat, on every trip, no matter how short."**



Pediatricians drop age limit for rear-facing car seats

It also stresses the importance of choosing the appropriate type of car seat for children, based on their age, height and weight.

The CDC recommends children sit in the back seat, in a rear facing car seat, until about



age 2. Then, they can sit in the back seat, in a forward-facing car seat, until "at least" age 5.

"Once children outgrow their forward-facing seat, they should be buckled in a booster seat until seat belts fit properly," the CDC says. "Proper seat belt fit usually occurs when children are 4 feet 9 inches tall and age 9-12." **No child should sit in the front seat of car or truck until they turn 13.**

Can't stop texting while driving? Use this 01:14

"One of the biggest problems for this generation is texting and driving," says CNN Chief Medical Correspondent Dr. Sanjay Gupta. "There's been plenty of evidence to show how much you can divert your attention just by looking at your phone for a split second, and how long you can actually travel during that time." According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), "Sending or receiving a text takes your eyes off the road for 5 seconds. At 55 mph, that's like driving the length of an entire football field with your eyes closed." The agency says 3,450 people died as a result of distracted driving, which includes texting and driving, in 2016.

Laws regarding using a cell phone while driving vary from state to state, but anything that takes your attention off the road is always dangerous, even if it is not illegal. "Your best bet is to do something I've started doing myself, which is to just put the phone out of reach, in the glove compartment or even in the trunk," says Gupta. "Those calls, texts and emails can all wait until you get where you're going."



Be safe, be mindful, enjoy your holidays.

2018 NWCCOG COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE

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. - 2:00 p.m.

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

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR MEMBERSHIP IN NWCCOG!

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