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## From the Director's desk...

### All Disasters are Local

In 20 years as a public servant in municipal and county positions, I was fortunate that the big one never hit on my watch. But that was luck, not preparation; so a two-day class I took in January of 2017 on emergency management revealed much that I didn't know and really shook me.

One thing I learned, is that the best prepared communities usually were whacked by a big incident. Experience may be a cruel teacher, but it is a powerful one. The learning doesn't have to happen that way.

I learned that all incidents begin and end as local events, even if response and recovery far exceed local capabilities. From interviewing Victoria Simonton, Town Administrator from Lyons, Colorado, during the disastrous September 2013 flood; that 5 years later she is still managing a community in recovery. That is how the state and FEMA see it, and if you don't have a framework of preparedness, more sophisticated than "I'll call 911," then watch out.

I'm lucky enough in this position at NWCCOG to be able to assist other officials to be more prepared than I was, especially those in municipalities without an emergency management professional (or even a point person).

[Registration for our December 7th Disaster Preparedness Workshop for Local Officials is open.](#) It could help you not have a day that lives on in infamy.

Simonton from Lyons is our special guest to kick off the day. The National Weather Service called the September 2013 flood that hit Lyons "Biblical." It was rated between a 500 and 1,000-year event and completely scoured the water, wastewater and electrical utilities out of the ground while separating the town into 6 islands. There was no cell service for 36 hours, no helicopter rescue for 36 hours. Eight counties all the way to the Nebraska border were affected. Twenty percent of the housing stock in Lyons was destroyed. The Mayor of Boulder at the time suggested that "maybe Lyons shouldn't be rebuilt." Five years and over \$55 million later, the Town Administrator says there are 43 open FEMA projects and the town is still recovering. Simonton shares her thoughts on how even the smallest community should be prepared, and what she has learned.



The good news is that the increase in wildfire conditions, and incidents has caught officials' attention. Nearly every county in the NWCCOG region was touched this summer by wildfire, with a number escaping major disaster by the hair on their chinny, chin chins. Local officials gained powerful knowledge. At the workshop we will have a session entitled Lessons Learned from July 2018 Lake Christine Fire - with an esteemed panel from Eagle County deconstructing the incident.

The rest of the day is structured to be a plain language, explanation of concrete steps for community leaders to be better prepared. Emergency Management is a field awash in jargon, in overlapping agencies with highly technical training, paperwork and regulations. This day is intended to provide clarity through that toward concrete steps forward.

So while the "worst event" of my tenure as Mayor of Eagle was the Kobe Bryant trial, which was also the year

that Granby experienced Killdozer. Stuff happens. And many of our resort communities very quietly, deliberately manage major events - concerts, ski races-as incidents with many departments coordinating in an incident management framework, precisely so that the best day in that town, when awash in visitors having a good time, pumping cash into sales tax coffers, doesn't turn out to be your worst day.

We have a lot to learn from each other. I'm looking forward to December 7th, 2018.

*Jon Stavney*

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## Kumbaya and countercurrents in Steamboat Springs

Reporting by Jon



This year's annual Economic Development Summit hosted by the Steamboat Springs Chamber on October 19th was themed "Backcountry to Boardroom: the business of the outdoors."

Few Colorado communities outside a metro area have grown outdoor sector manufacturing better than Steamboat Springs which boasts local startups, Smartwool, Big Agnes, HALA Gear, and Moots Cycles. With an isolated location and a population of over 12,000, few are as independent and close-knit as Steamboat. While not exactly shrinking in population, according to data from Elizabeth Garner, the State Demographer, it is also true that few communities have a talent pool aging as rapidly and

not being replaced by young people or their children as Steamboat Springs.

So, while every respectable town in what OEDIT has newly coined the "Rockies Playground" region wants to grow or attract outdoor recreation businesses, in Steamboat itself, the question lingers, how can a community retain those businesses, grow/attract the needed talent to support them, and overcome some of the structural challenges of a remotely located business?

One unspoken observation of the day-especially from listening to Sarah Schrader, owner of Bonsai Design in Grand Junction who was the last speaker--was that outdoor recreation business people have passion for what surrounds where they live - meaning the public lands, and usually strive to connect their employees to the nearby outdoors, but they don't often get to connect the dots with how that passion has the power to alter their community and the built environment that makes places great. Schrader told a story that depicted how she has made that leap as a business owner and citizen.

Kicking off the day, Luis Benitez, Colorado's first State director for the Outdoor Recreation Industry Office addressed the elephant in the room, the August announcement of Smartwool relocating from Steamboat to Denver in a consolidation move by parent company VF Corp solicited by the State of Colorado. His presentation roamed from the outright boosterism one might expect to a message echoed by other speakers--softly delivered tough-love.

First the boosterism; Benitez boasted that the outdoor recreation industry is larger than the U.S. auto industry "fiscally," citing Colorado specific data from 2017 which is scheduled to be updated this next week, pointing to

- 229,000 direct jobs
- \$28 million in consumer spending
- 9.7 million in wages
- \$2 billion in state and local revenue.



*Luis Benitez*

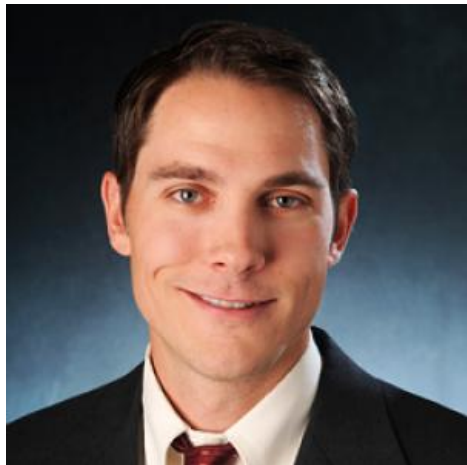
Nationally the industry accounts for \$887 billion in consumer spending and over 7.6 million jobs, approximately 2.2% of the national economy. So, you would think an industry that large would know how to throw its weight around to affect policy. Not really notes Benitez referring to only 3 industry lobbyists in D.C.

Contrast that to the Coal industry which OpenSecrets.gov says has approximately 64 registered lobbyists.

You would also think the industry would know how to leverage its values to educate consumers to keep up the playground we share. Other than some of the big players like Patagonia which lobbied to move the Outdoor Industry Association trade show from Utah to Colorado, the outdoor recreation industry is only just beginning to feel its oats in this area as well. According to Benitez, Colorado is trying to change that through a formal relationship with "leave no trace" and development of the not yet publicly released quirky cartoon video "Care for Colorado; it's the only one we got" which he previewed for the group. He mostly steered clear of references to climate change. Locally, communities need to actively share outdoor ethics with consumers if they want the rapidly growing industry to be economically sustainable.

Benitez spoke of "baggage" about how we recreate which needs to be shed to see change clearly. For instance, the resistance of "pay to play" on federal lands which millennials, hunters and motorized users embrace, needs to become the way to fund the management and repair of public lands for future users. Evidently in the old model my baggage is that federal land agencies used to fund maintenance and we enlisted ambitious efforts like a Civilian Conservation Corps to build beautiful outdoor infrastructure for increased use and enhance the public domain. Reality is that nationally we continue to defund agencies that manage the public assets such as land, water and air, in a race to manage these assets to the bottom in an ideological effort to shrink the federal government. OK, no one at the summit said that, but that is what I was thinking.

From a local policy as well as a business development standpoint, we also need to shed old perceptions about new technologies like e-bikes, doing yoga on an SUP or camping in a trailer "the size of a coffin." Benitez joked that he never thought he would "lust after" something like a teardrop trailer as he does today. What we knew about how we learned to enjoy the outdoors, the tools, like an aluminum canoe, are no more relevant and keep us from adapting for opportunity.



Speaking of baggage to be set aside, Brian Lewandowski, of the CU Leeds School of Business who also spoke at the event said we need to get used to nearly a decade of "free money" in the form of low interest rates. That is gone; as is unemployment making this officially "an employee market." Lewandowski also gently pointed to how immigration policy will affect mountain towns since historically 20% of construction workers are "foreign born" as are approximately 13% of service workers. These figures seemed far undercounted. He followed Elizabeth Garner, the State Demographer who presented a wealth of data as usual, and underscored that although Colorado is growing, the rate at which it is growing is slowing... and the impacts (and the advantages of growth) are not equally dispersed. For instance, most of the population (and job growth) in the state will be occurring a few mountain passes to the East of Steamboat.

Having heard Benitez' pitch a few times, Jessica Valand, Director of Workforce Development in Northwest Colorado finally had the chance to pose some counter points (although he had left); specifically that outdoor recreation thrives off of tourism, and that for our mountain service sectors most workers at \$12 - \$14/hr are "paid about half a living wage and are living in poverty." She stated "by and large the kind of jobs that tourism creates do not pay the bills," and said the issues to which we "whack-a-mole with policy-housing, child care, health care-- all come down to a discourse around what workers cannot afford."

There was push-back to that from the audience about how service workers "make bank" from tips, though it was also pointed out that no community is helping visitors navigate how much to tip a housekeeper, or a raft guide or a shuttle driver. Valand pointed out that while we all know we are paying extra to be in the mountains that relying on tips and "paying with powder days" are not a substitute for wages. Her pitch: that the outdoor recreation industry has an opportunity to do what just about every other industry has failed to do lately - champion workers earning livable wages for the places where they live.

It's a challenge we continue to contemplate.

To see the rest of Jon's comments on the Summit [check out his personal blog here.](#)

## Community Assessment Survey of Older Adults

The Colorado Association of Area Agencies on Aging (c4a) met on October 18th in Breckenridge with the Colorado Commission on Aging, the State Unit on Aging, the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a), the Governor's Senior Advisor on Aging, and other leaders in the aging network. The purpose



of the meeting was to roll out the statewide and regional 2018 CASOA (Community Assessment Survey of Older Adults) reports, a statistically valid survey of the strengths and needs of older adults, which was conducted and reported by the National Research Center (NRC).

Survey participants were asked to rate their overall quality of life, as well as aspects of quality of life. They also evaluated characteristics of the community and gave their perceptions of safety.

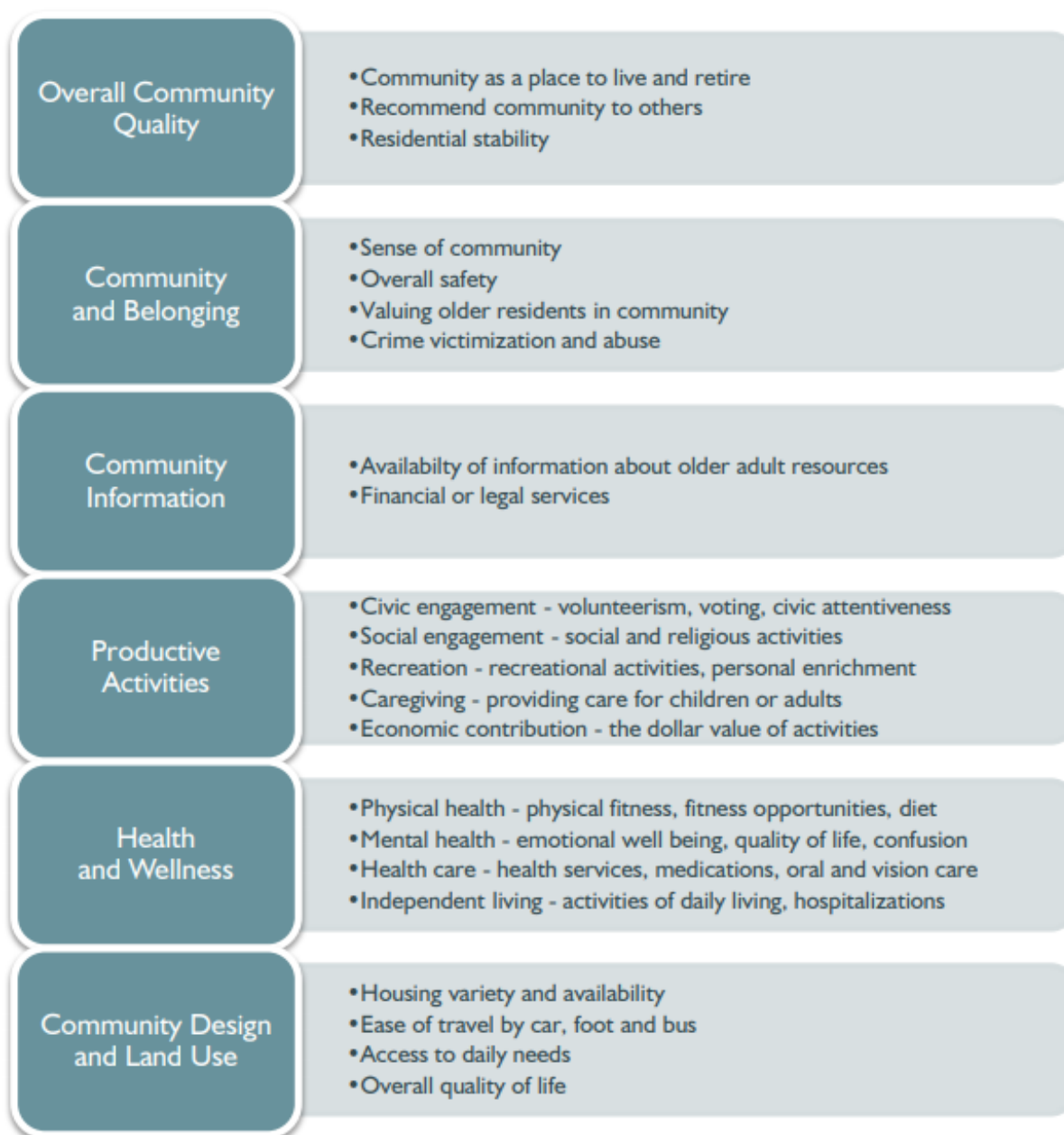
The questionnaire was used to assess the individual needs of older residents and involvement by respondents in the civic and economic life of

Colorado. Each section discusses older adult ratings of the community, participation in activities and potential problems faced by older adults as related to each of the six dimensions. The final section of the report, Community Readiness, summarizes these dimensions as index scores and provides an overall picture of Colorado as a livable community for older adults.



*c4a Attendees*

The six dimensions that survey recipients were asked to rate.



The results of this exploration provides useful information for planning and resource development as well as to

## Civility - impacts on your health and wealth

Like many of us lately, our psyches have been touched in ways unknown by the lack of civility that seems to have recently permeated our culture. I think it's not as recent a phenomena as many people fear. When I think back to my days in the BIG corporate world a couple of decades ago, I can distinctly remember meetings where bosses would routinely reprimand a team member in front of the entire group. In those days, our organization saw the problem well enough to send ALL managers to what we affectionately called "sensitivity training." The idea was to help managers motivate their teams with positive reinforcement instead of negative.



Now, however, there is a whole new wave of what constitutes incivility, disrespect, and rudeness. Of course it's all in the eyes of the beholder. While some may think it's disrespectful to text while talking to someone, to others it's perfectly acceptable. But the main point is how we make people feel.

This incivility is pervasive everywhere these days - at the grocery store, online, on TV, at home, in schools, and in the workplace. So why discuss this in a business newsletter? Christine Porath, a management professor and researcher at Georgetown University, shares scientific evidence that incivility in the workplace can cause stress, poor performance, lack of motivation, aggression, and even violence. Not to mention loss of valuable human resources when well trained people quit. Incivility impacts your business and not in a good way.

In her [Ted Talk](#) and books, she discusses how a toxic workplace can breed incivility, which further exacerbates the problem. Incivility is contagious and can be caught anywhere - online, at home, from a customer, from a boss or co-worker. And even if just witnessed, the simple act of watching an uncivil exchange can impact the observer. How we treat others impacts emotions, motivation, performance, attention, and brainpower. Incivility can chip away confidence and robs people of their potential. In short - incivility can directly impact your bottom line in a negative way.



*Christine Porath*

On the other hand, civility can lift people up. It has been proven to increase productivity, creativity, helpfulness, health, and happiness. Each one of us has hundreds of touch-points every day - opportunities to spread incivility or civility. By being mindful of how we treat people, how we pay attention (are we constantly texting or reading our emails in meetings), by being respectful - we can lift others up - online, in homes, in schools, at work.

Start spreading civility - it's good for your health, good for your bottom line, good for business, and many would say it's just the right thing to do.

Christine Porath teaches at Georgetown University's McDonough School of Business. She's the author of [Mastering Civility: A Manifesto for the Workplace](#) and co-author of [The Cost of Bad Behavior](#)

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Resort towns all over the mountain west are struggling to find solutions to house seasonal workers. Recognizing that the workforce is such a vital component of our regional economy, we are working on a Regional Workforce Housing Report, which will highlight the many great programs, projects and initiatives going on in both NWCCOG member communities as well as members of the Colorado Association of Ski Towns (CAST).

The report will include a one-page summary for each town and county in both NWCCOG and CAST highlighting workforce housing projects, programs, initiatives, and resources underway in each community. It will also contain a matrix of "tools" used by each community.

NWCCOG has been working on this comprehensive report since the beginning of the year. We will be releasing a final draft by December 31, 2018. We plan to update this report every year.

You can keep up with our progress here with the [Draft Regional Workforce Housing Report](#). If you know of other projects or people who might be interested in this report, please forward to interested parties.

## CDOT Mobility Management Grant facilitates continued transportation services

A big part of what we do at NWCCOG is to leverage membership dues with grants enabling us to provide far more programs and services than with just dues alone. Thus, most of our directors are skilled at writing grants that tell the story of community needs to be fulfilled with the funds we receive.

Recently we were awarded a program grant that will allow the Regional Transportation Coordinating Council and Mountain Ride to continue their focus on addressing the transportation challenges faced by seniors, veterans, low income, and individuals with disabilities.



This funding will allow us to:

- Hire additional staff to support our clients
- Cultivate new members for our Regional Transportation Coordinating Council
- Develop Transportation providers in the 7 County region

We're grateful to CDOT and our team in support of these efforts.

## 2018 NWCCOG COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE

### Thursday, October 25, 2018

Full Council Meeting

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

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

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

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