Northwest Colorado Council of Governments eNews May 2019



If you know someone who would enjoy our newsletter, please forward them to this link.

Join Our Mailing List!

# From the Director's Desk

Forgive us if we can't get over the Economic Summit NWCCOG hosted this month. We are grateful for the group of rock stars who presented and spoke this year. Some things I noted:

Perhaps a little too early in the morning for it to really sink in, **Rick Garcia**, the new DOLA Executive Director announced that his office is committing **\$5M each year for five years to rural broadband**. This is amazing news for our membership, 86% of which stated in our 2019 Member Survey they have plans to be actively involved in local broadband efforts. This is exactly what NWCCOG has been advocating with the new administration: Don't stop funding DOLA's broadband, and please keep funding positions like Nate's so that public projects and public dollars have an advocate with technical expertise.



Listening to State Demographer Elizabeth Garner, I couldn't help thinking of a quote from Shakespeare's Much Ado About Nothing, "the world must be peopled."

Colorado is producing 5,000 fewer babies each year since 2007. Those babies will not be here as workers in 20 years. Translation: The work force may not meet the demand for jobs. Colorado had the largest decline in teen pregnancy according to Garner. That's good news because those who make it out of high school without getting pregnant have a 90% chance of not entering a cycle of poverty. But the high country also saw a net out migration since 2010 with Eagle County, for instance, loosing 2,500 citizens of all ages. The loss of 3,373 construction jobs in the region had something to do with that.

"Jobs are people," says Garner. Colorado may be the 6th youngest state but it is also the 3rd fastest aging in the number of over 65 in the nation. Eagle County alone will double the number of over 65 adults in the next 11 years. Yet the out migration of those 65 and older from the high country is also troubling. Garner asked the room **"how many of you have a strategy to retain older adults?"** Few hands raised.

Garner also noted that the labor force is 60% Hispanic. The group was also asked **"how many of you have an outreach and engagement strategy for the Hispanic population?"** Two hands were raised.

Bottom line, we need to make more babies, support those who are in that child-bearing age while also engaging and retaining the aging and Hispanic populations. Perhaps next year's summit will just focus on those three things.

### NWCCOG Regional Economic Summit May 2, 2019 Summary

Over 130 attended the event, including elected officials, town and county managers and staff, business owners, chambers of commerce, federal and state agency partners, and non-profits. Feedback from participants indicated they thought it was awesome:

The Speaker and Panelist Bios and the Agenda can be accessed <u>here</u>. Presentations from the event can be accessed <u>here</u>.



**Rick Garcia**, Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) welcomed the audience and made the announcement referenced above.

Many thanks to DOLA for providing funding for this event for the second year in a row through an Energy and Mineral Impact Assistance grant.

#### **Regional Demographic and Economic Overview**



**Elizabeth Garner** provided a compelling and thoughtprovoking overview of demographic and economic trends in the NWCCOG Region.

In addition to some of the topics above, Elizabeth pointed out some "Transitions to Watch" with changes to industries including booms, downturns, the effects of automation, how technology affects the retail industry, and trends in construction. As mentioned, our region has increasing racial and ethnic diversity, and this trend will have significant affects on our labor force. We are experiencing slowing income growth, and we

need to plan for this slowed growth.

Download her presentation here.

#### Kids Who Code and CodeBeetle

#### Tech in the Mountains

**Aaron Landau**, Managing Partner of EVO3 Workspace and CodeBeetle in Frisco gave a presentation on "Tech in the Mountains". One strategy to grow good jobs is through tech education for the workforce currently here, as well as the future workforcei.e. students in the K-12 system. Aaron operates both coding schools in a tech-focused co-working space in Frisco. Notably in one program he has trained more than 600 school aged children to code, and another called "CodeBeetle" is for older nontraditional students. Both programs provide opportunities to diversify our economy in that they serve to support and grow technology-related careers in local residents as well as K-12 students...the future of our workforce. These blended-learning models provide



coding classes aimed at training and growing the pool of individuals interested in technology-related careers, where the current need, outstrips the available talent.

According to Landau, "There are more tech jobs available right now in our communities than we have people qualified to step in. And these are all good

paying jobs."

Download his presentation here.

#### **Growing Good Jobs**



Jessica Valand, Regional Director of Workforce Development for the northwest and rural resort regions talked about the importance of working on strategies for "Growing Good Jobs". Jessica asked the audience whether or most of our jobs are truly "good jobs" in our region. According to Jessica we might be growing jobs --just not GOOD jobs.

To be a GOOD job, it must provide employees with four basic needs: (1) Pay and benefits must be fair for the work compared to others, and meet the minimum standard for livability; (2) schedules must be stable, predictable, and include adequate hours for livable earnings; (3) career paths must be well laid out and provide clear and fair advancement opportunities to higher paying jobs; (4) security and safety means that the employee should be able to keep the job if they are performing well, and conditions under which they perform must be safe.

Jessica offered some suggestions to the audience: if you are a business, consider consolidating multiple low-paying or part time jobs into well-paid full-time jobs; if you are an economic development organization/chamber, carefully consider what businesses are doing to grow good (or great) jobs and actively work with area employers on their strategy for growing good jobs. If you are in the education arena, define skill- building curriculum that compliments industries offering good jobs/career ladders.

See her presentation here.

Workforce Housing: Successful Public/Private Partnerships



**Clark Anderson** from Community Builders was asked to moderate a workforce housing panel. What would a mountain resort area gathering be without a discussion on workforce housing? We invited a group of panelists who could offer success stories on public/private partnerships in the region which address the conundrum of providing housing that is affordable to our workforce yet still profitable for a private developer.

**Aaron Blair**, Granby Town Manger, commented on how municipalities need to shift on development review. He remarked, "A sense of urgency is the shift you have to make. We are going to shepherd this project through as if it were our project. We are part of the team that is going to get this done."

On municipalities falling in love with their own plans before finding a development partner, **Michael O'Connor** of Triumph Development said, "Pretty pictures can be cost prohibitive. Instead, RFQ and find the right partner."

**Melissa Sherburne** of Brynne Gray Partners added, "don't lay out all the details. We want to add that value with what we bring to the table knowing the market."

All the solutions presented involved public/private partnerships, recognizing that the private sector cannot do it alone. They need the participation of the public sector in order to make projects work.

#### Affordable, Attainable Healthcare & Mental Health: Vital to our Workforce



Judi LaPoint Executive Director of the Summit Chamber, moderated the healthcare/mental health panel opening with an introduction to new and innovative programs intended to address the untenable cost of healthcare in our region and the mental health crisis that is impacting our workforce.

The panel included discussions about work at the state level to lower costs for all Coloradans through legislative means -- including the Reinsurance bill being signed by Gov. Polis this week. **Jill Ryan**, newly appointed CDLE Director, asked, "have you ever worked on a project when you felt you were hitting your head on the wall for years on years?" That is what Summit and Eagle County voices felt like for years. She described how that has changed with the new administration. "The dam has broken," she said.

**Chris Romer,** CEO of Vail Valley Partnership, described working at the regional level with Chambers of Commerce who have introduced a comprehensive and cost-effective alternative to traditional plans for their members. **Tamara Drangstveit** the Executive Director of the newly-formed Peak Health Alliance, described a first-of-its-kind health care collaborative in Summit County that is being billed as a potential, serious long-term fix to high health care costs in the mountains.

And last but not least was a discussion about Building Hope, a community wide initiative designed to create a more coordinated, effective, and responsive mental health system that improves access to care and support for everyone in Summit

County. **Jennifer McAtamney**, newly named executive director of Building Hope said, "Collaboration is a Division 1 sport in Summit County." We should all be able to say that!

#### **Sustainable Tourism**

#### Public Lands: Our most Valuable Tourism Asset



**Scott Fitzwilliams**, Forest Supervisor for the 2.4 million acre White River National Forest, gave a presentation which sought to answer the question: are we loving our public lands to death? To access his presentation <u>click here.</u>

Managing Public Services



in Wake of Surging Visitor Numbers

**Shannon Haynes**, Assistant Town Manager for the Town of Breckenridge gave a talk on strategies the town is formulating to manage public services in the wake of surging visitor numbers and increased full time population in our mountain towns.

She described the scale of their travel demand management planning where for a single high-activity weekend Highway 9 traffic counts went from an already overburdened 18,000 trips per day to 37,000 creating gridlock everywhere.

This perfect storm created issues for first-responders trying to get to calls, long delays for transit services, a very poor parking experience, and unhappy locals and visitors.

The scale of the Breckenridge challenges and the impact of grappling with these issues is likely to pertain to many communities in our region at some point. Some strategies being used to set future plans was detailed in this article in the <u>Summit Daily news</u>.



As you can tell, the 2019 Summit was an action-packed day filled with information relevant to many of us in Region 12. If you'd like more detail check out all presentations and the <u>complete summary here</u>.

Thanks to all the moderators, presenters, panelists, and of course **Betsy Markey** Director of OEDIT, our keynote speaker who brought us up-to-date on the many programs available to our communities through OEDIT which foster economic resiliency and vitality.

#### SAVE THE DATE FOR NEXT YEAR'S SUMMIT!

Thursday, May 7, 2020

## **NWCCOG Sound Bites**

As always, there's a lot going on at NWCCOG. This month we thought we'd give you just a taste of what we've been up to.

#### **New RAV4 Fleet**

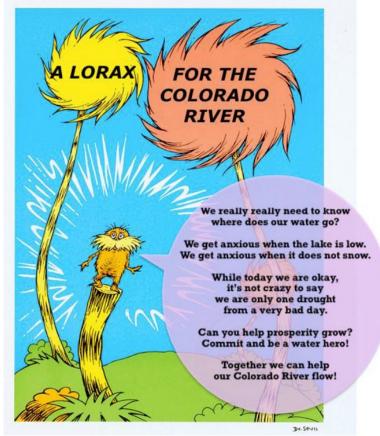


Get ready to see us everywhere starting this month. We have ordered and received 8 RAV4 fleet vehicles! Our team is very excited about the new look. The 5 elevator inspection program field staff, including Director David Harris and ED Jon Stavney, are especially excited about the plan to assign vehicles to begin daily work from home rather than reporting first to the office. This will be a more efficient use of time as well as an appreciated privilege. We're sharing this so you are not surprised if you see or hear that a NWCCOG RAV4 is parked in a driveway overnight on a regular basis. It's all part of the plan.

#### QQ COMMUNITIES COMMIT TO "GROWING WATER SMART"

Headwaters communities joined with QQ for a three-day workshop hosted by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy's Babbitt Center and Sonoran Institute, exploring options for integrating water planning into land use planning and development approvals. A signature of the workshop is for each team to walk away with a year-long action plan identifying next steps to growing ever-more water smart. For the complete report and photos of the event, <u>click here.</u>

This spring's workshop was the first one targeted at a specific region of the state-the QQ headwaters region. Integrating water and land use has long been a QQ priority, both locally and statewide. QQ's priorities and its current work assessing member land use codes and authoring best practices for incorporating water quality and



Verse by Torie Jarvis

water conservation measures in part led to this exciting opportunity.

The Growing Water Smart workshop introduced participants from five communities and 24 local government agencies and organizations to a full spectrum of communications, public engagement, planning and policy implementation tools necessary to realize their watershed health and community resiliency goals. Topical sessions and teambased action planning focused on context for how local governments can meet several land use and water efficiency goals stated in the Colorado Water Plan, as well as practical steps for leading a community through a process to become more water smart.

Participants concluded the program with a commitment to improved collaboration among multiple disciplines, agencies, and decision-makers involved in

water and land use planning, answering the call for local action in response to the Drought Contingency Plan adopted for the Colorado River Basin. They also returned to their respective organizations equipped with specific actions that will allow them to immediately put into practice what they learned. For more check the QQ page on our website.

### **BE AWARE OF DNA TESTING FRAUDSTERS**

With the popularity of DNA testing out of curiosity, scammers are jumping on the bandwagon. But beware -- genetic testing vendors look to you to pad their own pockets.

Here are some of the tricks they might use:

- They will invite you to a **special event** where you can get tested.
- These events may have a **doctor you don't know** there
- These tests are **unnecessary**, in fact, It is **very uncommon** that you need the tests
- They want you to use their services to make money.
- They will tell you that Medicare will likely pay -- but your claim will be denied and you'll be responsible for their fees.

Here are some tests they are likely to offer:

- CGx a test to detect genetic cancer and is for those with a history of cancer
- PGx a test to predict reactions to certain prescription combinations of medications and at rick for a condition called polypharmacy

#### Here is the truth:

Medicare will legitimately pay for genetic testing ONLY if there is a documented medical necessity **from your doctor**.



## **Senior Awards Celebration:**

If you have not RSVP'd yet, contact Amanda here or call 970-468-0295 x 117.



Caregiver Conference - June 11, 2019



## NEXT 2019 NWCCOG COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday, May 23, 2019 *Full Council & EDD Board Meeting* <u>Location</u>: Breckenridge Grand Vacations Community Center Hopefull/Discovery Room <u>Time</u>: 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. <u>Primary Agenda Items</u>: Review/acceptance of the 2018 audit

Northwest Colorado Council of Governments <u>www.nwccog.org</u> 970.468.0295

THANK YOU FOR YOUR MEMBERSHIP IN NWCCOG!

Join Our Mailing List!