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From the Director's Desk: What golden threads in your work connect to other communities?

Each month in this newsletter, I do my best to highlight stories that thread issues and news from among our 28 member towns & counties to illuminate common challenges. With so many innovative and progressive jurisdictions across the region, at least one of our members is addressing an issue just ahead of another member who will start-from-scratch to research the very same issue for their own purposes.

From my perch, when I squint and see the civic realm blends across the membership, it can appear that the we continually readdress the same issues-- just not at the same time, or place, or with the same inputs. Sometimes debates of an issue are held in the same council chamber, months or years apart. It can feel like a madness. Morris Udall famously said, "everything has been said, but not everyone has said it." If you've attended a fraction of the public hearings that I have since 1998, you too know what Mo knows.



Our membership has regularly confirmed how much they value the information sharing role of NWCCOG. I would like to find methods to do it more systematically, and better. I am currently working with CCCMA on a project for the Winter Conference that may do just that, and we have submitted to DOLA for a grant in 2020 that would fund various research projects. More on that below in **"NWCCOG wants to know what you want to know."**

I don't often go out of my way to celebrate Silverthorne which isn't a NWCCOG member, but this month, I couldn't resist after hearing Town Manager, Ryan Hyland speak at the West Slope Angel (Investors) event which NWCCOG co-hosted with the Town. Two local venture capital groups that are trolling around the West Slope right now (see **"Angels Visit a Town Near You"** below). We heard from them the week before at the Eagle Outdoor Summit. Hyland in his welcome shared the vision behind an entire block being leveled right now across from the theater, how important it is to persevere and be deliberate with vision when it would be easy to just say "yes" to the Chick-fil-a that has other ideas for a key property in that vision (see **"...downtown Silverthorne"** below). Also, Project THOR came to Silverthorne in October..

Speed and Reliability Intersect at I-70 and Project THOR in Silverthorne

The construction milestones for Project THOR are rapidly being met right now as crews with subcontractor Bonfire are installing hand holds along I-70 to connect CDOT Fiber to local fiber (see photo below of Silverthorne/Dillon Exit 205 work on 10/17/2019). This month the project connected fiber to the primary Internet Exchange point (IXC) also known as the internet Point-of-Presence (POP) establishing the NWCCOG Meet-Me-Center in Denver. This will serve both ends of the entire 400-mile fiber loop. Fiber connections to the 200-gig I-70 backbone will be completed along the entire 178-mile length to Glenwood Springs this month.



The 100-gig connection from Denver to Steamboat Springs is now lit as are the resilient connections and Meet-Me-Centers serving Granby and Kremmling. These are now operational at both Middle Park Health locations. In Kremmling, beside serving local community anchors, that location is already serving a new ISP, Visionary Broadband, which is delivering wireless broadband service starting at 50 Mbps to government, business and to the public. Conversations are ongoing with Grand County entities and NWCCOG

about how Project THOR can serve additional communities in the future.

Elsewhere, Project THOR is already being leveraged by the City of Aspen and Rio Blanco County to serve customers on their existing networks. Though connected, those locations are not yet "perfected." As soon as network construction and performance & redundancy testing is completed, Project THOR will also immediately be serving local ISPs and community anchor institutions through meet-me-centers in Steamboat Springs, Craig, Meeker, Breckenridge and Glenwood Springs. Project THOR Phase I will be fully operational by the end of 2019.

NWCCOG continues to field inquiries from additional communities along the loop and beyond about how their communities can be supported by Project THOR in a Phase 2 deployment. Such inquiries should be directed to Nate Walowitz at nwalowitz@nwccog.org. NWCCOG will begin to schedule, price and design additional network architecture with operator Mammoth Networks in the first quarter of 2020. The Project THOR steering committee has created base and MSRP pricing for transport and bandwidth for the entire network. This information is currently available for interested ISPs and community anchors through each local meet-me-center host.

The photo above shows the Summit County/I-70 connection to Project THOR being placed at the Silverthorne exit just blocks from our office! This is tantalizing as NWCCOG, like many of our partners, suffer weekly internet outages resulting in calls dropped in mid-sentence with clients, and daily internet glitches that impact our ability to do business. Frankly, it has become a little embarrassing. But as they say, "Winter is Coming" and fortunately for our partner communities, that means Project THOR is imminent.

We must brag about a city block creating downtown in Silverthorne.

Kicking off the West Slope Angel (Investors) event, Ryan Hyland, Silverthorne town manager talked about 4th Street Crossing, one of the massive redevelopment projects currently in process at the town now. I'll just quote him right from my notes, (parenthesis are mine):



"Downtowns are where we show our age and where we were born (as towns). For most towns, the downtown is the heart and soul of the community. Our town is organized differently. You could argue that our rec center is

that place. About 10 years ago we started discussing how we could develop a downtown that would reflect who we are. When Chick-fil-a is calling three times a day, and that auto parts store is calling a key landowner every week, it can be difficult (to regularly have to explain that we have a different vision for this land as our opportunity for a coherent town center).

Hyland continues: "The back story is boring, Tax Increment Financing, re-Zoning, a Comprehensive Plan revision, lots of meetings -- what is exciting is that the project, 4th Street Crossing, is now breaking ground. We made some (civic investments) to show our commitment. This new theater is our commitment. The town purchasing two properties along Highway 9 are part of 4th Street, and the next project show that we are not 'just talking' about a downtown, we are putting our money where our mouths are. All of a sudden, people are getting interested in Silverthorne, including Milender White, the developer of 4th Street who is already looking at the next block. Those other communities have their history. We imported ours from Dillon (meaning the Lake Dillon Theater Company) which imported it from the Dillon that is now at the bottom of the lake." Hyland dryly joked in a self-deprecating way about Silverthorne finally coming of age with a downtown project, "We are really cutting edge with this project -- curbs, sidewalks, on-street parking. It is all so new I'm not sure if it will work."

Hyland continued about what this event, the 4th Street project and adjacent new Theater and Angry James Brewery and other projects mean to Silverthorne's strategy and how it related to the event geared for entrepreneurs which he was welcoming, "Transformation is our theme. We think we are positioned to be the entrepreneurial center of Summit County. We are not technically a resort community tied to a resort. This could be a great place to bring those entrepreneurial jobs. Council is investing in the future with fiber and broadband. People (after years of this being known as the place with the Factory Outlet Stores) are now looking for something a little creative and risk taking as a municipality."



Some communities still seem to think that waiting on the private sector to bring them projects is the primary role of a town. That strategy may work for in-fill, just if the desired result is civic transformation. Silverthorne gets that.

Photos: Depiction of 4th Street Crossing from Google Images. "Affordable Housing" old fashioned-style moved from the bottom of Lake Dillon, now located between NWCCOG offices and 4th street project.

Overheard when Angels visited a Town Near You

Ecosystem, rainforest, coral reef – call it what you will, there are a lot of angels hovering around Western Colorado looking for where disparate elements of a local entrepreneurial "ecosystem" are being organized into something fertile.

Eagle [Outdoor Innovation Summit](#), October 10th, West Slope Angels, [The Summit: Investing, Startups and Real Estate in Mountain Towns](#) by Four Points Funding, October 16th, Steamboat Springs Chamber Economic Summit, October 18th: in concurrent weeks I attended similar community organized events with similar attendees seeking to connect outdoor industry leaders (or just entrepreneurs and start-ups) with local communities and with investors.



Curt Nichols - Founder, Glade Goggles

Both the State of Colorado ([OEDIT](#)) and, apparently, a growing Venture Capital groups are looking for businesses and places that want to get in this game, or want West Slope communities to get into this game. According to Nathan Fey, Director of the Colorado Office of Outdoor Recreation Industry, who spoke in Eagle, OEDIT has money for places that want to organize the way Montrose and Grand Junction have in recent years. In Eagle, it was the local entrepreneurs seeking to spark a discussion and connect a potential developer with other entrepreneurs and with investors. In Silverthorne, it was the investors hosting an event hoping the community would "come up with a strategy"

so they could open an office there. Marco Vienna, organizer and emcee of the Summit Event, and co-manager for West Slope Angels said, "I hope this gathering was eye-opening to the amount and quality of resources entrepreneurs and investors have in our region." In Steamboat Springs, it was a well-established [Economic Development Council](#), hosting an annual event with panels of local

business clusters and, among other speakers, Mike Freeman, CEO of [Innosphere Ventures](#), a Front Range VC group who closed by stating, "Innosphere Fund would open up a Steamboat Office once you determine your strategy here." Bam.

Prominent in Silverthorne and in Eagle were representatives from [Four Points Funding](#) which is also [West Slope Angels](#) Investments. They have "a focused intention to fill the holes in the funding landscape for rural Colorado," and the [Greater Colorado Venture Fund](#) managed by three partners with \$17M that "can only be invested in Rural Colorado" according to co-founder Jamie Finney. That group has already funded 10 companies, some from the Eagle River Valley.

At the Eagle event, Finney stated, "a growing rural Colorado Ecosystem is leveraging a robust front range ecosystem. It is already a national leader for its innovative economies. We need to use our unfair advantage of the mountains which attracts wealth and intellect."

The October 10th, Outdoor Innovation Summit convened by Jake Roach of QuietKat and Justin Bradshaw of REVER, two Town of Eagle based outdoor companies was by invitation only to special guests including developers, investors, local government representatives, startup entrepreneurs from around Western Colorado. Speakers included owners of Weston Snowboards (Minturn) Sync Apparel (East Vail), HALA (Steamboat Springs) and Mountain Flow Eco Wax (Carbondale). The group was convened to weigh in and discuss as Bradshaw put it, "insights into the ecosystem" and as Roach put it, "how do brands like ours maintain and be able to build their companies that were founded in rural Colorado" find ways avoid the "common theme of grow and then grow out when we don't think it has to be so."

At the Summit Event, Carrie Schiff represented OEDIT to share about the many tools the State has deployed, "since banks have moved away from character lending," many of which can be found at www.choosecolorado.com including Rural Jump Start which is a statutory program in which only 15 of the 40 counties eligible are utilizing that can allow employees at eligible companies to have state taxes waived. Of course one of the long-standing tools is housed at NWCCOG, the Northwest Business Loan Fund. Other speakers included Shawn Bertini from West Slope Angels, Curt Nichols from Glade Goggles, Judi LaPoint from the Summit Prosperity Initiative and Cory Finney from the Greater Colorado Venture Fund, Dave Northrop from Gravity Haus, Chris Montgomery from Four Points Funding and Silverthorne Town Manager, Ryan Hyland (See "**Dangit...**" above).



Carrie Schiff - EDC

What does it all mean, Basil? (Austin Powers 1999)

For one, when you step back, there are a whole lot of exciting start-ups and young companies creating wealth, jobs and exporting from the West Slope which are all but "hidden" in their communities that these events are highlighting. To name a few: Glade goggles and Gravity Haus featured at the Summit Event. REVER, QuietKat, Mountain Flow ski was, HALA, Sync Apparel, Weston Backcountry all featured at the Eagle event, and a panel of CDB entrepreneurs as well as Mountain Dog Media, FloodSimple and Dev IQ featured at the Steamboat event this year.

For two, Economic Development professionals are beginning to wake up to the fact that the big companies in the United States cut back on as many jobs as they produce each year, and that "young" firms in "advanced technologies" as Ross DeVol, President and CEO at Heartland Forward, who spoke at Steamboat said based on research from his previous employer, the Milken Institute.

Complex systems best discussed over a box lunch in nature

Many NWCCOG/QQ members and friends attended the August 29th West to East Slope Tour hosted by Northern Water Conservancy District. The tour started at Granby Reservoir and

highlighted the Northern District's trans-mountain diversion facilities with a bus ride through Rocky Mountain National Park to District's headquarters in Berthoud, CO.

A few attendees lunched together near the site of the proposed Chimney Hollow Reservoir, part of the Windy Gap Firing Project, discussing the impressive and complex systems build to connect the west and east slopes - and remarking how nice it was to enjoy a day out of the office together!



From L to R: Representative Dylan Roberts, Torie Jarvis (QQ), Ashley Bembenek (QQ), Jim Pokrandt (CO River District), Karn Stiegelmeier, Kathy Chandler-Henry, and Representative Julie McCluskie.

NWCCOG wants to know what you want to know

NWCCOG has requested a modest amount of money from DOLA to be used for research projects in 2020. At the October NWCCOG Meeting we will be discussing some options for what information sharing projects (surveying/researching practices among the membership) would be of most interest.

Some of our past information sharing projects have been as simple as a blast email resulting in a spreadsheet, like the auditor spreadsheet we built this year that showed which auditors and how many years an entity had utilized that auditor which was well received. That week of work answered a question hundreds of elected officials ask each year-how often do others change auditors, how long is appropriate? It can be reassuring to understand how your jurisdiction compares. As a past trustee, mayor, commissioner and town manager, I have hundreds of such questions rolling around in my mind that I know would be of value to the members if only I had time to do the research. For

instance,

- Does your jurisdiction have a Capital Improvement plan for all utilities, vehicles, heavy equipment, facilities and pavement? Are there ratios or best practices for those Cap plans?
- How much does your jurisdictions keep in reserve for emergency operations, and how many months could it fund basic functions and rebuilding with zero income?
- Parks, Open Space, Trails and Recreation Paths: how many acres and miles do you manage? Who has the best signage, what recent investments have been made to facilities, how are these funded, does the funding have a maintenance budget? Are these managed by different departments, by a commission or generally by a "public works" department?
- Who has a downtown re-development plan, how is it funded, what are the strategies and how actively or successful are efforts to implement it?



I am excited by how much there is to learn when I take the time to periscope up from my management workload to watch, listen and actively seek out common threads that wind through these stories. I do this for a few reasons, one, there is a tremendous volume of quality work done every day in the public sector, most of which goes unrecognized and uncelebrated; two, although we are fiercely local in debating and deciding, often the framework and background research that informs a board's policy decision on something like short term rental, or e-bike regulations isn't so different across boundaries. There are also many issues which benefit from a regional angle, for instance USFS policy, housing and transportation. Not to mention the revolving doors of local governance that often make what seemed settled policy last year new again. So what should NWCCOG be focused on? Let us know by sending me an email at jstavney@nwccog.org

Grant-writing - part art, part science



If you or the non-profits organizations in your community are raising money through grant-writing, you already know the competition is fierce. As more needs arise each day outstripping available funds, the story you tell can be the difference between receiving funding or not. Grant Writing USA is hosting two workshops in Colorado in November.

The goals of the workshops are how to write grant proposals from start to finish and how to locate and track relevant grant opportunities.

Beginning and experienced grant writers from city, county and state agencies as well as nonprofits, K-12, colleges and universities are encouraged to attend.

All NWCCOG members will receive a discount using the code COASSN during registration.

The first Workshop is in partnership with the Grand Junction Police Department on November 12-13 - you can [register for this workshop here](#).

The second workshop is in partnership with Denver Regional Council of

How does Colorado Rank in Rural Highway Pavement funding?

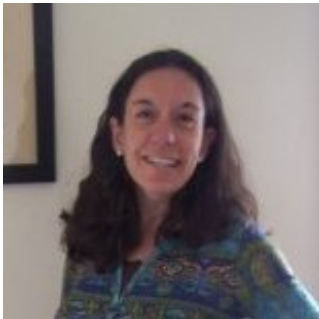
It may not surprise you to know forty seventh according to the [Reason Foundation](#). Rural pavement in poor condition rating - 47th in the nation, just above Alaska and two states without data! If you are into transportation and really like metrics and rankings, the study is quite interesting. It was referred to during a recent tour by representatives from the Colorado Department of Transportation who have been making the rounds to Transportation Planning Regions and just wrapped up a listening tour of all TPR regions and have highway segment by segment feedback as a result that will result in a document called "The TPR Vision."



Perhaps an unfair image, but real nonetheless.

Speak to your TPR representative for more information. Interestingly, Colorado does not rank poorly in all categories. For urban pavement in poor condition, Colorado is 28th. One participant opined that it would be great if there were an app, or road signs identifying the rating of each bridge, or last time a segment of road were paved as you crossed it.

NWCCOG welcomes Maria Cecilia Peterson



The AAAA recently hired Ceci Peterson as Program and Data Support Specialist to assist with planning, coordinating, and administering local and federally funded programs primarily serving older adult residents in Region 12.

Originally from Buenos Aires, Argentina, Ceci moved to Grand County in 2003 where she worked for Grand County Public Health. Her experience as a Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) educator and as a medical interpreter have made her uniquely qualified for this position and we're excited to have her on the team.

When asked what she was looking forward to with her work at NWCCOG, she responded, "I want to be productive and efficient in the workplace. It is very important for me to have a supportive, enthusiastic and efficient team, and to work in a place where we get things done and we have fun at the same time." And with that mind-set, she's come to the right place.

Ceci and her husband enjoy skiing and snowshoeing in the winter, and fly-fishing and riding bicycles in the summer. While in Argentina, she taught English as a Second Language for 5 years.

Aaron Mayville Farewell



District Ranger for the Eagle Ranger District of the White River National Forest was feted and roasted by colleagues and a wide slice of the community recently, from Vail Resorts to most of the towns in the valley. For a guy who was in his job less than a decade it was the celebration's speeches felt like those usually reserved for a retirement (which Aaron is far from). The evening was a reflection on Aaron's collaborative and outgoing spirit, and also a reminder just how intertwined our communities are with the National Forest.

My favorite memory of Aaron was after a lengthy, detailed Powerpoint at a recent Eagle County Mayors/Managers meeting showing the data from what Front Country Rangers (funded by towns and counties) accomplished (# rogue campsites closed, fire pits dismantled, tons of human waste removed, etc.) , he was able to laugh when heckled, "Yes, Thanks Forest Service for finally doing your job."

Yes, that is actually a photo of young Aaron.

NEXT 2019 NWCCOG COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday, December 5, 2019

Full Council, EDD Board & Foundation Board Meeting

Location: NWCCOG Office, Silverthorne, CO

Time: 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Primary Agenda Items: 2019 budget revisions; approve 2020 budget; adopt 2020 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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