



From the Director's Desk

Closing Down 2020

I'm not a big fan of celebrations, especially those which arbitrarily mark a beginning or end, but in this year the familiarity of a ritual, especially one that gives some kind of personal reboot is vital to ones' mental health. So, during one of the longest, coldest nights this year not long after the solstice, as daylight hours begin to lengthen ever so slightly, and you can't really get away, let's agree to put the dumpster fire that was 2020 behind us however we may, shall we?

It will not feel right. The pandemic will not be close to extinguished on December 31st by any measure. Strangely, the November election isn't quite behind us either. In fact, the virus is spreading virulently. So are desperation and poverty creeping in amongst us like a second plague. Even if we are not sick, most of us are not well.



We find ourselves separated, disoriented, unrested and very much in the late middle of an experience which chose us. The clicks that will pass from 11:59 on December 31 to the next are neither a beginning nor the end unless we collectively choose to make it so.

We don't know yet how this will change us, personally or collectively. What we know is that we are still in it, it is changing us and from a historical perspective we have not adapted terribly well to repel it, yet in some manner, it is time for us to move on without pretending.

There is good news. Just this month vaccines are being distributed. This rollout provides some solace from the truth that daily deaths are currently averaging about 3,000 Americans each day, which increases the 300,000 COVID death toll by 1 % daily. That daily figure, for reference, surpasses the 2,977 who died on September 11, 2001. The total U.S. COVID death toll surpassed the 58,000 Americans died in Vietnam on April 28th. It surpassed the American fatalities in WWII this past month. By March, even as the vaccines begin to be more widely circulated, the death toll is likely to surpass the half a million soldiers who died in the Civil War. Yet, the toll on the living is also terrible.

We are not "close" to being through the virus or the damage it has done to us. For many local businesses in our region, it will take multiple years to recover-- if they hang on. For the economic and mental health of many individuals, some who were disadvantaged before, others newly so, the impact of this period may never really escape them—ever, unless we make fundamental policy changes as a nation. [This report](#) issued Dec 15th by the Universities of Chicago and Notre Dame states that **7.8 million MORE Americans**

are living in poverty now than were in June. That's about the population of Colorado and New Mexico combined. We've not been compassionate about poverty when it comes to national policy. Keep up your personal giving if you can but know that our individual giving is not keeping up. We have approached these challenges differently in the past with success. The difference is that we were not persuaded that there were others amongst us who were less fortunate because they were not trying as hard, or that they were fundamentally different.

Just one story on that. I could tell when we spoke yesterday that our communications director, Judi LaPoint was shaken. She had just completed three days of sorting, selecting, packaging and delivering presents from the Summit Rotary Adopt and Angel program to needy families. One of her last deliveries was to a single mother with two children living in a travel trailer "the size of a bathroom" as she put it... out in the open in a parking lot exposed to the winds...in Fairplay. The woman had to walk to get groceries because her bald tires could not climb the hill to the store. Somehow she made it to work in Summit County every day. More of us are getting glimpses like this than ever before.

For people such as the single mother in Fairplay, this has been an extra-brutal year. There are millions more who are living with similar challenges, and millions more are joining them as this progresses. And yet, we are a resilient people who have come together following more wretched episodes in our history. Find some way to mark the end of this year—you need to—then let us gather ourselves and next year press our leadership to meet that compassion with policy. We have that in us. Locally, in our communities, there has been a tremendous outpouring of public and private coffers for direct aid. Nationally, not so much since April with the exception of the last minute response announced just yesterday. Some might say too little, too late.

So, how DO we close out the Pandemic/Economic Crisis/Election/Thoroughly Unrestful Year 2020?

One strategy is to look back and reflect with greater clarity and identify what needs to be done differently in the future. For many Americans, the COVID year 2020 began the second week of March. For those of us surviving, whatever shelter we have, the rhythm of our lives was radically altered. Our sense of time, of scale, of self, of our place in history has warped considerably. We tend to be a people who has to live our history to learn from it.

When we begin again in 2021, there is that opportunity.

Jon Stavney
Executive Director
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Energize Colorado Grant Funding

The Energize Colorado Gap Fund program was announced in July 2020, as a combined effort between public funding from the CARES Act and private funding from Colorado donors. The intent of the program is to help sole proprietors, businesses, and nonprofits in support of tourism industries, with fewer than 25 full time employees by offering grants up to \$15,000 and loans up to \$20,000. There were two rounds of funding, with the first application deadline being September 14, and the second being October 26th. Thousands of applications were submitted state-wide, with over 600 applicants from the northwest Colorado region. Within that portion of Colorado, the Northwest Loan Fund (NLF), a 501c6 that makes business loans in the NW quarter of the State, was asked to score and verify applications, and administer funds for NW Colorado. Oversight for the NLF is the NWCCOG with the scoring criteria set by the Colorado Legislature.

Anita Cameron – Director of Business Lending and Scott Pugsley – Business Lending Assistant – along with 6 others, scored applications and verified information, with Pugsley leading this small dedicated group. During the first round of applications, \$545,748 in grant funding was awarded, with \$1,128,246 awarded in the second round accounting for grant funding being granted to over 20% of the applicants.

The following are just a few examples and testimonials from happy recipients:



Tim Pahula & Scott Pugsley

"Great talking with you today and thanks again for all your help with

the Energize Colorado Loan fund. This is much appreciated and will help with the modifications needed to convert our restaurant during the COVID era and help in the losses incurred while shut down for the 2 1/2 months, as well as surviving with limited capacity, etc."

-Tim Pahula, 8th Street Steakhouse, Steamboat Springs, CO

Replacing all their salad bars with prep. stations for the servers.



The Flying Crane Team

"It is with great appreciation that I write this email. Thank you for considering my application and making the funds available to me to improve and sustain The Flying Crane Boutique in Frisco, Colorado. I cannot overstate the positive impact this will have on my business, allowing me to sustain and improve so much! Again, thank you so much for awarding me this opportunity."

-Lua Ton, The Flying Crane Boutique, Frisco, CO



Kellen Baker, Revive Team Bookkeeper, Anita Cameron

"I wanted to thank you and Anita again for hand delivering the check this week."

It was great to meet you both and everyone at Revive REALLY appreciates the work you do. We read your award e-mail with the team"

-Kellen Baker, Revive Hemp, Steamboat Springs, CO



Anita Cameron, Erin Young, Scott Pugsley

"I would like to extend my profuse gratitude for the Energize CO Grant."

As a small business in ski country, the effects of COVID 19 to our business have been extreme. Small businesses rarely have access to the capital to modify their spaces the way large corporations do. This grant will allow my small business to adapt our outdoor seating for winter, update our HVAC system with MERV+13 filters, and provide a small closure buffer.

Thank you very much for this award."

**-Erin Young
Owner Red Buffalo Coffee & Tea
Silverthorne, CO**



Anita & Scott with Cassandra Marinez, and her husband

"Thank you so much! I can't tell you how much this means to our business!"

Thank you thank you thank you again!!!!"

-Cassandra Marinez, Massage Steamboat, Steamboat Springs, CO

They are using the funds to retain their Office Manager, who told them about the program after seeing it on the news.



Anita Cameron w/ Lisa Fleming

"I applied for the Energize Colorado Grant which listed some of the qualifications as small business in a resort town and female owned. This was me and my business!"

Anita called me and said I had qualified for the grant. This was wonderful news!

This is so much appreciated and needed! Thank you again for this Grant! I will be using this for employee payroll."

-Lisa Flemming, Owner, Strategic Design and Advertising, Steamboat Springs, CO

The next rounds of the Energize Colorado Gap Fund program will focus on the loans that are available up to \$20,000. If you are interested in additional information [click here](#).



2020 at the RTCC

by Charles McCarthy,
Mobility Manager NWCCOG

Two thousand and twenty was a challenging year, both from the onset of COVID-19, which caused the world to adopt new and inventive ways to do business, but also for the Mountain Ride program. In early July, IntelliRide was awarded the statewide brokerage contract for Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT), causing the Mountain Ride program, as well as other state NEMT brokerage programs, to shutter their doors.

We, as the Regional Transportation Coordinating Council (RTCC) council, rose up. As did the rest of the world when COVID struck, the (RTCC) invented new ways to come together as a group and lend our knowledge to the region. As we've learned through trial and error, reinventing your brand is never an easy thing and I commend all on the council for doing so. We're now beginning to grow larger than we ever were. As a well-respected council in the Colorado rural regions, adding members and councils from overlapping regions, (I70 coalition, Inter-mountain Transportation Planning Regions) allowed the RTCC to begin getting even more viewpoints and solutions from all over the region. This gives the council new avenues for communication, new connections for new solutions. As of October 28, I'm happy to report that we've received another year of funding for FY 2021. I have no doubt that FY2021 will present its own challenges, but as we've risen in the face of adversity before, we'll rise in the face of adversity again. In FY2021, we're expecting to have new discussion topics, new guest speakers every meeting and new solutions to new and ever rising issues.

As we (finally) close out 2020, I'd like us to reflect on the year gone by. Not on the issues we've faced, but on how we, as a community, came together for the greater good. Wildfire evacuations, COVID-19 and giant hornets, our RTCC and NWCCOG family came together to face these issues head on. I want to say thank you once again to everyone who stepped up in 2020 and I'm looking forward to the successes that FY2021 will bring.

Colorado Broadband Program Speed Test

The Colorado Broadband Program is requesting users to help them gather data for speed mapping. They are requesting residents and businesses to participate ensuring they get more accurate information incorporated into the map. If you can help with this study, please [go here](#).

If you are interested in the StoryMap that BPO has produced to describe the process and provide additional resources please [click here](#).

Next Council Meeting:

January 28, 2021

Details TBD