



## From the Director's Desk -

### Progress, Culture and The Trust Gap – Another Angle

Do you consider Operation Warp Speed, the historic, rapid discovery and deployment of a COVID vaccine to be a national peak achievement of the past half century? I bet not.

Honestly, I've gone stale pursuing these questions. The forces of polarization and polit-iz-a-tion of nearly every idea or effort that comes to pass gives me too a deep-seated frustration. For some, it fuels the current populism, for most all of us, mistrust. The polling speaks to this. Writ large as a culture, this stalemate is turning hostile. We confront each idea, question, or thought first with the binary question of which "side" it falls upon, and second judge whether we should be for or against it; then shallower, does it align with my identity, or brand? At that point, we've jumbled our politics with our identity, limiting the inquiry by half, impeding our problem-solving ability. Slap a label on it, say, whether it is politically correct, woke, socialist or misinformation, a conspiracy (choose your own label here). By then, the thing is defined by externals – no longer open. In that cycle, ideas lose their power. Ideas no longer have a chance to breathe first, be contemplated, mulled. So labeled, an idea dies for living on one side or another, fitting in one box or another, beyond earnest consideration. That survival cycle stifles inquiry, creativity, innovation. For sure, the human need to categorize and dismiss is a survival instinct. While trust which could be built in true consideration, instead remains low, we calcify in this survival mode. It impacts our individual and communal ability to wrestle with ideas, solve problems and make progress.



The news drones on, social media grinds on, reinforcing our entrenchments. The stagnation becomes pernicious poisoning what could be solved right in front of us. Where should we begin to repair, with trust? With deconstructing our positions? How about with a shared desire for progress? Which brings me back to Operation Warp Speed.

*"Outside wealth, one of the most powerful variables (to our success) was trust in government among the public. Trust is a shared resource that enables networks of people to do collectively what individual actors cannot,"* quotes Derek Thompson. Like solve major existential problems, like homelessness, poverty, the housing crisis, the climate crisis or delivery of a vaccine to market.

I recommend you take the time to read [\*"The Eureka Theory of History is Wrong: The Real Reason American Progress Has Stalled"\*](#) for yourself. In the article, Thompson exclaims that Operation Warp Speed (the US effort to get a COVID vaccine to market), "a wartime policy



applied to a health crisis” is on equal footing with “the Apollo program and the Manhattan Project as one of the most important technology programs in the history of modern federal policy.” What? Such a huge, recent success that no one claims? How can that be?

Thompson poses this conundrum. Democrats have not boasted

of Operation Warp Speed since it emerged during the Trump presidency, and Republicans don’t claim it because they’ve positioned as “anti-expertise, anti-science and anti-establishment.” President Trump also undercut the success of the historically rapid vaccine invention and rollout famously by undercutting demand by supporting conspiracy theories against the vaccine’s effectiveness. He did so even as his administration was going about one of the most significant public efforts of modern history, a success that he doesn’t even brag about. Thompson points to a parallel conundrum with progressives “denouncing the oil industry (while) Texas produces more renewable energy than deep-blue California....” Progressives have substituted belief in progress for “negative prescriptions for improving the world” such as regulation and red tape states Thompson, and “progressives have in meaningful ways become ‘anti-progress’” culminating in this statement:

*“When you add the anti-science bias of the Republican Party to the anti-build skepticism of liberal urbanites and the environmentalist left, the U.S. seems to have accidentally assembled a kind of bipartisan coalition against some of the most important drivers of human progress. To correct this, we need more than improvements in our laws and rules; we need a new culture of progress.”*

Thompson gets to this ingeniously by telling the shop-worn story of the invention of the smallpox vaccine, and the rollout. I’ve read about it repeatedly recently in pandemic literature. What do I tend to remember? The milkmaid with cowpox and the servant’s son whom the doctor injects with the serum and then smallpox virus to test it. What Thompson adds to the story reveals our over-reverence for the “inventor” and our subsequent devaluing of the less dramatic process by which things become implemented. Think of how we revere CEOs, Nobel Prize winners rather than the process, discipline and organizations behind them. Today that also translates to an interplay between public and private investment. The U.S. policy to invest heavily in R & D after WWII, fueled decades of invention and progress—think of how many of today’s inventions came out of the space race—until it was eventually joined by the orthodoxy of U.S. government focusing on discovery rather than deployment, leaving that to the private sector. This has resulted in a “valley of death” for many inventions, not least of which are those which could solve our housing issue or our climate crisis.

As a metaphor for our conundrum, “Operation Warp Speed was ingenious and admirable. But it doesn’t matter what you discover or invent if people are unwilling to accept it,” Thompson says, ending on the hopeful note that “we might be moving from a eureka theory of progress to an abundance theory of progress, which focuses on making our best ideas affordable and available to everyone.” His article didn’t really make that case but given the high stakes of figuring out how to refocus our culture, I’ll take it. It is a wonderful call for unity following a thought-provoking reflection on the many myths that hamstring us. We can do better.

**Jon Stavney**

Executive Director - NWCCOG

[JStavney@nwccog.org](mailto:JStavney@nwccog.org)

## NWCCOG Hires Regional Grants Navigator

*Access to Funds less complicated for Member organizations*

**Silverthorne, CO, January 30** - NWCCOG announces the hire of Jonathan Godes, with whom it will contract to serve Region 12 as the Regional Grants Navigator, assisting 31 member organizations across 6 counties to connect to funding opportunities from recent, historic Congressional funding opportunities.

The hiring process was managed by Executive Director Jon Stavney who noted that the position is funded by the State through Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT) directly to each Council of Governments (COG). The posting for the position had several excellent candidates. “Godes’ research ahead will clarify the nuances of myriad funding opportunities through the Infrastructure and Jobs Act (IIJA), the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), and Notice of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs) coming out from various federal agencies,” says Stavney, “as his knowledge base grows, he will become an increasingly valuable asset to NWCCOG members.” Godes’s head start begins with his talent as a connector and communicator as President of CAST (Colorado Association of Ski Towns), years of experience running an early childhood non-profit and as the current Mayor of the City of Glenwood Springs.

"We are excited to offer Godes this opportunity to advance his public service at a regional level. His growing understanding of the IIJA and IRA funding streams will provide guidance to local governments on how best to access the multitude of funding streams," notes Stavney. He will begin as soon as OEDIT finalizes the contract with NWCCOG. In the meantime, Godes can be reached by entities within Region 12 anticipating technical assistance in fulfilling their capital project needs. He will also work to establish strategic collaborations across jurisdictions to pursue grant funding as well.



## MEET Jonathan Godes

Jonathan has lived and worked in the mountain communities of the Western Slope building relationships, fostering collaborations, and working in, and with, local governments and the nonprofit community for the last 20 years. He founded the Boys & Girls Club of Craig and served as its Executive Director before moving to Glenwood Springs to work for the City of Aspen. There, he started and directed the nonprofit Early Childhood Network for seven years prior to his most recent work in private business finance. Elected to the Glenwood Springs City Council in 2017 he has served a four year term as the mayor since 2019. His term on Council ends in 2025.

Jonathan is a strong believer in regionalism and is a long-serving board member of the largest rural transit system in the country (Roaring Fork Transportation Authority). He also serves as the current board president of CAST (Colorado Association of Ski Towns). He is a federal appointee to the Small Community Advisory Subcommittee of the EPA and has testified many times at the state legislature on issues impacting mountain

communities. His recent areas of work have been in housing affordability, infrastructure resiliency, and ensuring that rural communities are not overlooked. His consensus-building approach will be a strong asset for this position and our member communities.

Jonathan is excited to speak with NWCCOG member counties and municipalities to assess community needs, identify potential regional partnerships, and align submittals to appropriate funding opportunities. This is a once-in-a-generation federal investment, and it is important that the region positions itself to leverage as many opportunities as possible. Jonathan's outreach will launch shortly to arrange calls and meetings to see how he can best assist you. Please feel free to reach out to him at [jgodes@nwccog.org](mailto:jgodes@nwccog.org) in the meantime.

## Northwest Loan Fund (NLF) provides Liberty Skis with Supply Chain Advantage



Liberty Skis Corporation is one of the ski industry's largest independent ski manufacturers, and a leader in the manufacture of carving, touring, powder, and twin-tip skis. Founded in 2003 by James Satloff and Dan Chalfant, Liberty Skis has grown to be one of the largest independent ski manufacturers worldwide. With COVID driving pent up energy to outdoor activities, Liberty received pre-orders for their products that were going to be challenging to fulfill based on current supply chain issues. Satloff, Liberty CEO, said, "We knew if we could get adequate funding, we would be able to provide payment to our supply chain partners in advance, rather than in arrears, which gave us a timing advantage. With skis, as you can imagine, you need to have them made and delivered to shops before the snow flies!"

Liberty has no shortage of funding options – they are regularly solicited by banks, lenders, and private investors. "That said," Satloff remarked, "We had a very good experience with NLF in the

past, and since we are a relationship business, we wanted to continue working with a partner we knew and trusted."

The ski manufacturer had had a loan with NLF previously and Liberty is interested in building on that relationship. "Anita and the NLF were a breeze to work with. We are hopeful we can rely on the NLF for futures support for our expansion."

Liberty Skis is headquartered in Avon.

*Pictured: Dan Chalfant, Co-founder and C.O.O. Liberty Skis, Anita Cameron, Director-Business Lending Northwest Loan Fund, Braden McMillan, Executive Vice President First Bank*

## Energy Program Acquires Additional Space in Gypsum



The Energy Program is now providing services out of its newest office in Gypsum. In preparing for the 2022/23 Program Year which started on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022 the management of the Energy Program realized that neither the Silverthorne office nor the New Castle office could expand any further. There was limited parking at both locations and office and warehouse space was maxed out. With the increased funding in the Weatherization Assistance Program one or both of the existing offices would have to move to a larger space, or a third location would have to be found.

The Energy Program has been collaborating with Eagle County Government to increase the number of Eagle County homes served. Eagle County also wanted to provide Beneficial Electrification (B.E.) for residents that couldn't typically afford to install these upgrades themselves. B.E. replaces all fossil fuel appliances in a home with efficient electric appliances. The propane fired furnace would be replaced with a cold climate air sourced heat pump. The water heater would also be upgraded to heat pump technology, the gas fired oven would be replaced with an induction stove top.

The BEECH program (Beneficial Electrification of Eagle County Homes) started as a pilot program in 2020 and by 2021 early results showed the incredible benefits this program provided to the people living in the Dotsero Mobile Home Park. Eagle County was eager to provide these upgrades to more residents and generously offered financial support to the Energy Program to help buy a new warehouse space and also provide additional funding to work on more Eagle County homes. In the past, the Energy Program would weatherize 5-7 Eagle County homes in a program year. With the increased funding from Eagle County government, we are going to weatherize at least 17 homes this year with that number growing in future years. The goal is also to provide the complete B.E. package to those homes as well.

The Gypsum warehouse allows us to expand responsibly. The goal is to have a staff of at least four Energy Efficiency Technicians, an auditor/inspector, warehouse manager, and Program Director working out of that location. They will focus mainly on Eagle County but will also work in adjacent counties.

The space is large enough to accommodate a training facility as well. The warehouse/office/conference room space is 4,400 square feet. The exterior lot is 8,400 square feet. There is no central training facility for Weatherization staff in Colorado and this space could, eventually, fill that need. Currently, we have used it as a central training space for Energy Program staff. Pictures show the Colorado Energy Office Technical Staff demonstrating proper wall insulation techniques. Future plans include a conference room above the office space for classroom training. We will also develop a furnace troubleshooting space and perhaps even a small mobile home in the back lot for training on manufactured homes.

The office and conference space are heated/cooled by a new cold climate air sourced heat pump that also provided staff training on its installation.

The Gypsum office just received its first electronic vehicle- a Ford Lightning, that will be used for audits and inspections out of the Gypsum office. There will be two charging stations for up to four vehicles when construction is complete. We are excited about the possibilities offered with this new space and look forward to positively impacting the surrounding communities.



## Steamboat City Councilor featured on NPR's 1A "Is the 'Airbnbust' upon us?"

"What you don't expect is to lose your town over short term rentals," says Steamboat Springs City Counselor, Joella West on the January 25<sup>th</sup> radio show 1A on NPR hosted by Niala Boodhoo. The show discussed with a panel the arc of the Short-Term Rental STR phenomenon across various markets. Guests included Jamie Lane, Vice President of Research for Air DNA, Michael Tobin of Bloomberg News and a NWCCOG local, West (who comes in around the 12min mark on the 46 min show). The provocative title— [Is the Airbnbust upon us?](#) – arose from metrics in some locations revealing that STR markets in some places are becoming saturated. Some hosts are seeing reduced occupancy, while Airbnb's revenues continue to rise. It turns out the market disruption caused by STRs is a world-wide issue. Brand name STRs are streamlining entry processes for hosts, touting use of alternative assets in a dynamic economy. Saturation means something different in the high country. West discussed Steamboat Springs overlay zoning plan for STRs, restricting them in old town, expecting them in "condos on the ski mountain" she says the city needs to know where STRs exist. They did that by employing a company to do a scan of the STR market which found they had 3,000 STRs of about 10,000 dwelling units. "That's overwhelming," said West, including "misbehavior in hot tubs... which certainly doesn't please the neighbors... wildlife...bears (leading to) a significant number of calls." The show is worth a listen.

## Medicare by the numbers

# OVERVIEW OF 2022 MEDICARE OPEN ENROLLMENT

We are thrilled to have another Medicare Open Enrollment in the books with a wonderful group of volunteers and new growth!

*When beneficiaries were asked after meeting with a SHIP counselor if they felt more confident in their access to medical care, 98% of the beneficiaries said yes.*

Many come to us confused and overwhelmed about Medicare. We are able to alleviate stress, educate, and save them money. We are committed to making improvements to our Medicare SHIP Program, and increase access to Medicare information in our communities.

## Beneficiaries served by year

2022 Open Enrollment = 314

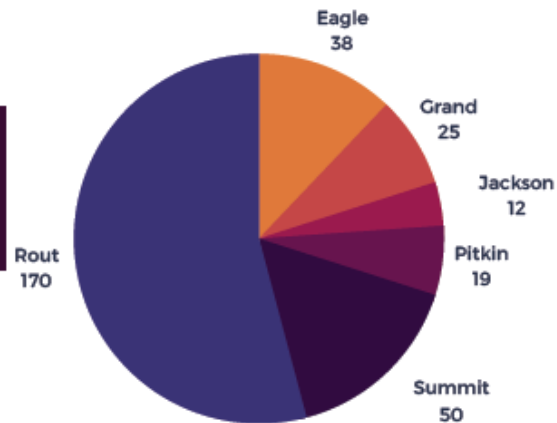
2021 Open Enrollment = 221

2020 Open Enrollment = 160

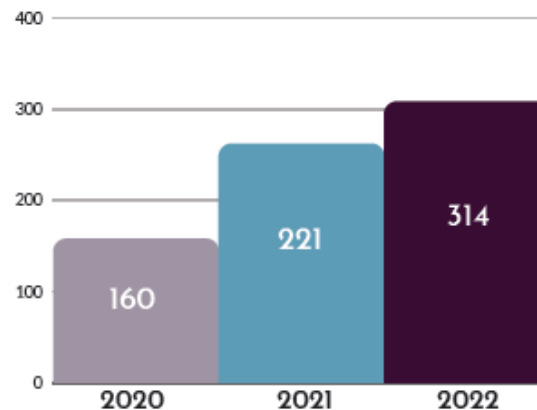
We helped 93 more beneficiaries this year!

*Of the beneficiaries whose income was collected, 1/3 are living at or below 150% of the poverty line and qualify for low-income assistance with the state such as Medicare Savings Plans, and Extra Help.*

## Beneficiaries helped based on county



## Year vs. Number of Beneficiaries Served



## Hours that Volunteers spent counseling during Open Enrollment

2022 = 308 hours

2021 = 262 hours

2020 = 158 hours

## We increased our counseling hours by 46 hours

The value of a volunteer hour in Colorado is \$31.50 X 308 = \$9,702

*Our volunteers are invaluable and are the heart of the SHIP program.*

*We can not do this work without them! Thank you!!!*

If you are interested in Volunteering please reach out to [JGlassman@NWCCOG.org](mailto:JGlassman@NWCCOG.org)

We are proud of the number of hours we spent helping people understand their Medicare options, and we could not do this without our valued team of volunteers:

thank  
you



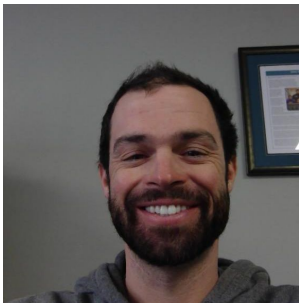
TO ALL OUR  
VOLUNTEERS FOR  
THEIR HARD WORK!

Ed Ozark  
Dyann Gray  
Bernadette Kromhoz  
Maria Cevallos  
Karen Eyrich  
Ed VanWalraven  
Patty Kravitz  
Amy Eagertson-Throm  
Jeni Holloway  
Joan Lucas  
Judy Hiester  
Sherrie Ford  
Betsy Packer  
Maria John-Detty  
PhyllisHarrelson

## Teen Mental Health

If you are a podcast or radio listener, KUNC has assembled a [series on Childhood Mental Health](#). My favorite by Rae Solomon was published January 23<sup>rd</sup> called "Help in the Moment: In Eagle County, in-school therapists tackle a youth mental health crisis." It is a seven-minute listen, about the same length as others in the series, quoting Dana Erpelding who has spoken with the NWCCOG Council on mental health in past years.

## The Energy Team Continues to grow



### NICK FIORELLA

Nick Fiorella has joined the NWCCOG as an Energy Efficiency Technician. He relocated from Philadelphia to the mountains of Colorado in 2012 on a snowboarding expedition and has been here ever since. His degree of Sustainable Studies will be put to good use as he works to help homeowners lessen their overall impact on the environment. He said, "I'm excited I'll have a job where my education will be useful."

As with many who come out for a season, he enjoys all that outdoor recreation has to offer and spends as much time as he can snowboarding, hiking with his dogs, kayaking, and listening to music.

**CJ PRICE**

A newcomer from Naples FL, CJ Price will be working as an Energy Efficiency Technician. He's previously worked as an engineer for Clark Construction in Bethesda, MD, a construction crew leader for Habitat for Humanity in Salt Lake City, and a framer/finish carpenter for a Tiny Home manufacturer in Chattanooga, TN.

About his new assignment CJ says, "I am most looking forward to making a real difference in people's lives and doing my part for the planet."

Luckily, his interests include skiing and backpacking.



## Next Board Meeting

### Next Council Meeting - Thursday, March 23, 2023

Full Council Meeting, EDD Board Meeting

Location: NWCCOG Silverthorne Conf. Room and ZOOM

Time: **Council** 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM - **EDD** 12:30 PM - 2:30 PM

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