



From the Director's Desk

Community Metrics and Council Pay

Since the publication of the Mountain Migration report in 2021, people ask, what is next for NWCCOG?

Assisting our membership with grants and federal funding is hot. After many conversations, we are re-purposing the Mobility Manager Job Description to provide our CDOT Transportation Planning Region the full-time it deserves. I'm submitting the 2024 Grant this month to elevate the RTCC work with transit providers and more-broadly address transportation funding needs across the region. In our 2023 Member Survey, you rated the new Regional Grants Navigator position 50%- Very Important and 38% Indispensable. These are two ways NWCCOG will provide additional support to the region. I like Indispensable!



A close follow up to Mountain Migration which is top of mind for myself and Margaret Bowes, Executive Director at CAST are two joint projects. One addresses the spring surge of SB23-213 which – Thank you Margaret and CAST Housing Committee as well as CML for your leadership in amending the bill--didn't pass. Everyone in the know seems to think it will return in part or full this winter. Jared Polis said so in [The Atlantic](#) this month. Those who spoke out should be ready to show progress and provide data next time around. To that, two important projects are:

1. **The Community Metrics Survey** which NWCCOG has contracted with Insights Collective with the lead on the survey being Chris Cares and RRC. Please, if you were one of the leaders at NWCCOG or CAST who received the link, take the time to help us learn what metrics matter to you RIGHT NOW, so that we can structure the next phase to help tease out what is going on with perceptions about tourism and quality of life in the minds of locals, visitors and second homeowners. Report out at July NWCCOG Council meeting.
2. **The 2023 Workforce Housing Report:** Rachel Tuyn, our Economic Development Director is spearheading this update to the 2019 report which comprehensively covered what is going on in each of our communities with regard to housing with tables so we can SHOW progress. That report will have a special pullout section specifically addressing the key

Workforce Housing



provisions of SB23-213, ADU regulations, zoning changes, regional housing planning, and (if we get some grant support) how water availability and the cost of Water and WW infrastructure relates to any mandates for additional housing. Another part of that will be highlighting some attempts at regional planning for housing that are in the works.

To that, if you get a request to complete the survey, please do. Yes, we've all been bombarded with surveys recently. If your planning staff gets a request to provide information and data for the Housing Report, please let them know the context of this report with state mandates looming in the background. If we don't show our work and what is actively underway across our region, we deserve and will have changes forced upon us.

Alongside Frisco Manager Tom Fisher and Dillon Mayor Carolyn Skyowyra, I was honored to participate in a panel for the nascent Town of Keystone's Charter Commission in May. Congratulations to the voters of Keystone for incorporating with a Home Rule Charter. Many excellent questions were asked by the Charter group led by Kenneth Riley. One was about pay for a mayor and trustees and how much? The same question came up during the Glenwood Springs Town Council retreat I facilitated earlier in the month.



Pay increases for electeds came up recently in Vail from an angle of equity. The Vail Daily covered a question before the VTC in June. Pay for Vail electeds hasn't increased since 2007, and many might just query if you can afford to live in Vail, do you need to be paid? The very question presumes that only those who can afford to give away their time ought to be making decisions. Council members make \$7,620 per year, the mayor \$12,000. That isn't enough to pay rent in Vail and wouldn't make for the most equitable or inclusive council for anyone relying on it. It may make the difference like a second or third side job might to some demographics. Vail has made strenuous efforts over the years to preserve a foothold for working families and "a new generation of leaders." It is no wonder they are wrestling with this question. You can read about it at [Can increasing compensation boost Town Council diversity?](#)



The question has come up for legislators too. The Colorado Sun covered the same conversation going on under the Golden Dome. ["Colorado lawmakers are paid about \\$42,000. That influences who drafts, debates and votes on bills."](#) No kidding. We have been very fortunate in recent years with our representation across NWCCOG districts, but looking closer, anyone choosing state elected office as their main gig has to have other income from somewhere – retirement, a power spouse, or be too young to have the debt load most younger workers face when they want to stay or raise a family.

In facilitations, I emphasize that elected office is intended to be non-professional at the local level. When I was Mayor of Eagle, we increased pay from \$250 per month to \$400, for what was often 25 hours of work on top of my day job. When I was elected County Commissioner, the \$80,000 pay was a cut from

my work in construction management, but it did allow me to fully focus on being a public servant and my learning curve shot up with that "extra time." It may be time to admit that we should acknowledge we need semi-pro legislators to deal with the level of issues they face.

Jon Stavney
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Northwest Loan Fund client receives additional funding

The Craig Press announced that [Mountain Pine Manufacturing just received a \\$160k](#) grant from the U.S. Forest Service's Wood Innovations Grant Program. The following summarizes the article:

June 16, 2023 Craig Colorado -

Mountain Pine Manufacturing, known for its WoodStraw erosion control product, has received a substantial federal grant, leaving owner Trent Jones grateful and optimistic. The U.S. Forest Service awarded the company \$160,000 through the Wood Innovations Grant Program to expand and complete their sawmill. Jones is elated, stating, "It's just fantastic, you know."

Over the past four years, Mountain Pine Manufacturing faced significant challenges in revitalizing the old sawmill and making the business viable. The \$160,000 grant, though not a large sum in terms of building a sawmill, is crucial for their sustainability.

Mountain Pine Manufacturing had previously invested in a scrap mill operation, partially funded by the [Northwest Loan Fund](#) and a grant from **Moffat County's Local Marketing District**. This federal grant provides the final push, enabling them to complete the mill and establish themselves in sustainable manufacturing.

WoodStraw, their flagship product, is an erosion control material made from small wood strands. Jones proudly shares that his company is one of only two manufacturers of this product in the United States. WoodStraw finds application in various scenarios, from restoring wildlife burn areas to controlling stormwater during construction projects. Jones emphasizes the vast potential market for WoodStraw and its positive environmental impact.



wildfires.

Receiving the grant marks a crucial turning point for Mountain Pine Manufacturing, as they had reached their financial limits. Jones expresses relief, stating, "This federal grant gives us that little push over the hill and allows us to really complete the mill the right way and put us on the map for the sustainable future."



Energy Program welcomes Workforce Development Manager

Darcy is a rare Colorado native having grown up on a small cattle ranch near Peyton Colorado. She moved to Steamboat Springs in 1986 to attend Colorado Mountain College and has been based in Northwest Colorado for most of the last 30 years. She has worked in the workforce and economic development or human resources roles covering nearly all of the NWCCOG Energy Program's 13+ counties.

Her previous work history includes:

- State of Colorado Department of Labor and Employment and Office of Economic Development and International Trade – Employment Specialist and Program Manager – 8 years
- National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) – Wilderness Risk Conference Manager – 2 years
- Colorado Mountain College – Adjunct Instructor of Human Resources & Training and Development Courses – 12 years

When asked what she was looking forward to with her work at NWCCOG, she remarked, "I'm looking forward to supporting and expanding the strong efforts already in motion to attract and retain an amazing crew of folks dedicated to energy efficiency and helping people. I'm excited to help realize the vision of bringing more training opportunities and on-the-job learning tools to the team. Helping people reach their personal goals through their work and career has long been motivating and inspiring for me, and I'm very grateful to have this opportunity right here in rural Northwest Colorado."

When she's not working you can find her hiking and backpacking. She's got a big family and a wide circle of friends who live all over the Rocky Mountains, Southwest, and the Pacific Northwest so she travels regularly to spend time with them.

NWCCOG is excited to welcome Darcy to the team and we're looking forward to using her wide array of talents.



Happy 45th Birthday!!

Happy birthday to the Area Agency on Aging! Forty-five years ago, Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) were formally established in the 1973 Older Americans Act (OAA) as the "on-the-ground" organizations charged with helping older adults live with independence and dignity in their homes and communities.

Staff from Vintage, the Region 12 AAA, took a moment to celebrate in June and reflect on the evolution of the AAA and the exciting plans they have for the future.

Vintage Staff Celebrates AAA B-day



Next Board Meeting

Next Council Meeting - Thursday, July 6

Full Council Meeting, EDD Board Meeting

Location: On site TBD and ZOOM

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

Agenda : Approval of 2024 dues; discussion re: Annual Planning Meeting Agenda, Goals/Objectives.

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