



Thrive Snowmass: Keeping Our Community Rooted in the Place We Love

It's a niche nail-biter, resonant within our resort towns, watching the November forecast and yearning for that stormy relief. When the snow finally clings, our spirits soar: planning accelerates, workloads ramp up, and we are energized by a shared commitment to hospitality and our outdoor lifestyles. This surge in momentum is part celebration, part added workload, and always a reaffirmation of the values that bind our towns together.

Yet beneath that picture-postcard snow-covered charm lies a deeper challenge threatening our way of life: long-time residents, the people who teach our children, staff our clinics, run our restaurants, and keep our streets safe, are struggling to stay. This is not merely a housing problem; it is a community-survival issue, centered on enabling residents to thrive, not just survive. We recognize that we are not alone in this struggle; other resorts in our mountain communities are grappling with similar challenges. While we stress about snow forecasts, there's a much bigger concern on the horizon, the affordability gap 'chasm', that is driving our locals out of town. This shared experience underscores the urgency of our situation and compels us to take action.



We write from Snowmass Village as Mayor and Town Council member to share 'Thrive Snowmass' or 'thrive not just survive' an initiative we are honing to keep residents rooted in the life they helped create. While our commitment to local housing efforts remains steadfast, we recognize the critical importance of retaining our local residents who are striving to maintain their place in the face of displacement by the luxury real estate market, second-home buyers, and high-end investors. Those year-round residents who risk being priced out of the very community they have helped to nurture and sustain. We value the contributions of second homeowners as part of our community fabric, and our strategy aims not to shift resources from them but to avoid displacing our essential, existing workforce. Thrive Snowmass provides a framework for identifying ways to alleviate the everyday cost-of-living increases that burden our working residents and complicate year-round living in a resort community.

Our journey to bridge the affordability gap is not merely about addressing symptoms; it highlights the strength and determination of our residents who have navigated recent challenges. These obstacles are regional and cultural, representing an inflection point in our shared experiences. Each story of perseverance reflects the spirit of our community, guiding us forward. We see neighbors striving to keep their homes and businesses afloat, legacy operators closing or selling as economics shift, and families leaving because staying requires impossible tradeoffs. These losses erode the authenticity visitors seek and weaken the very social fabric that sustains our mountain towns.

Thrive Snowmass embraces a vision for the future that transcends housing, subsidies, or economic development. Snowmass Village is 96% built out, and new deed-restricted housing opportunities are limited. Our approach must be creative, valley-aware, and focused on retaining year-round residents who are already rooted here, working among us, but risk being lost as they are displaced by external pressures.

As a council, we have begun brainstorming themes and priorities for Thrive Snowmass, reflecting topics we have already begun to discuss and those we plan to explore. Grounded in our core principles, these themes help us identify opportunities for greater balance and a more adaptive approach that reflects our shared values:

- Retention of Local Residents and Workforce — Prioritize measures to prevent displacement and ensure year-round residency, including targeted financial support, property-tax relief pilots, and tenant assistance. Keeping our workforce here stabilizes schools, emergency services, and the small businesses that define our town.
- Reducing Everyday Cost Burdens — Aim to alleviate day-to-day pressures that make life unsustainable by expanding childcare facilities and accommodating seasonal hours, promoting fare-free transit, and considering e-bike subsidies. By relieving these burdens, we hope to restore residents' time and capacity to engage in community life.
- Acknowledging Disruptive Challenges — Listen to residents facing construction fatigue and climate-driven risks. It is essential to balance necessary development with cultural preservation and climate awareness, ensuring that growth respects our landscape and our people.
- Cultivating Local Businesses — Protect and uplift our mom-and-pop enterprises through procurement preferences, small business support, flexible permitting, and targeted marketing. Our businesses are vital to our economy and community identity.
- Preserving Our Natural Landscape — Honor the environment that draws people here. Immediate access to wilderness and open spaces may be the number one reason many choose to live and work in this community, despite the financial strains they endure to do so. We must continue to keep this vital access point in focus as we address the challenges ahead. Conservation efforts and responsible tourism management are integral to our long-term prosperity.

The bigger-picture challenge transcends mere implementation; it requires full community buy-in and an authentic pursuit of happiness. Our elevated expectations resonate within our community and with our visitors, reaffirming our shared commitment to the spaces, places, and people who live, work, and play here. This "special sauce" that enriches our community is at risk of being lost, and we recognize the urgent need to preserve it.

This week, we are adopting our Destination Management Plan, which is one step in a broader effort to reevaluate our policies, plans, and budgeting processes that impact our community. Our approach must recognize that the affordability gap is greater than the sum of its parts. We are dedicated to ensuring that our community-first approach takes precedence over resort priorities. If we don't maintain constant vigilance over this delicate balancing act, we risk overshadowing the very community that forms the foundation supporting the resort experience our guests cherish.

Thrive Snowmass is not merely about adding workforce housing; it seeks to support existing workers and residents while enhancing their quality of life, through living-wage pathways, access to recreation, and resident-directed grants. We plan practical first-year steps: implementing our Destination Management Plan, considering building a steering committee with longtime locals and employers, conducting rapid needs assessments and surveys focused on retention risks, and tracking metrics related to displacement, cost burdens, and resident participation.

We share Thrive Snowmass because the forces at play are regional, and our solutions are grounded in the lived experience many of us - those who make up the tapestry of our communities - share. When residents can thrive, not just survive, our communities can remain resilient, authentic, and vibrant for generations to come.

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Silverthorne Office Upgrades Thanks to NEEP



The Energy Program is making meaningful strides toward reducing its carbon footprint and improving building performance, thanks to recent upgrades at the Silverthorne Office funded in part by the [Nonprofit Energy Efficiency Program \(NEEP\)](#) grant dollars. These improvements support NWCCOG's continued commitment to energy efficiency, sustainability, and responsible stewardship of public resources.

Over the past several months, the Silverthorne facility has received several major mechanical and electrical improvements. The most significant is the installation of a new high-efficiency heat pump system, which will replace older heating equipment and greatly improve energy performance throughout the building. The system will also support more comfortable working conditions for staff and visitors while reducing long-term operating costs.

In addition, the office has now installed a new dual port electric vehicle charging station on site. This investment, funded in part by the Charge Ahead Colorado Grant, directly supports the Energy Program's growing electric vehicle fleet and reduces reliance on fossil-fuel-powered

transportation. The new charger allows staff vehicles to plug in at the office, making it easier to complete field work and site assessments while eliminating tailpipe emissions locally. This completes a three year effort to install level 2 charging stations at all 3 of the NWCCOG's Energy Program offices.

To continue enhancing indoor comfort and air quality, the team is also moving forward with an energy recovery ventilator (ERV). Once installed, the ERV will provide improved fresh-air circulation while minimizing heat loss—an important step for a more efficient and healthier indoor environment in a high-altitude climate.

Supporting technology needs, a new cooling system for the server closet is also being added. This upgrade protects critical equipment, improves system reliability, and reduces overheating risks in a space that generates significant heat.

These efforts demonstrate how targeted infrastructure investments can produce lasting operational, environmental, and financial benefits. Energy Program Director Doug Jones shared during a recent staff meeting that "these upgrades not only support the Energy Program's mission, but also set a strong example of best practices for facilities throughout the region."

This project would not have happened without the tremendous support of NWCCOG's amazing Office Manager, Moira Vander-Meer. Thank you, Moira!

Energy Program Presents at Western Resilience Center

Doug Jones, Energy Program Director and Nate Speerstra, Energy Program Manager represented Northwest Colorado Council of Governments at the Western Resilience Center (formerly Yampa Valley Sustainability Council) Routt County Climate Collaborative Public Open House on Wednesday, Oct. 22 in Steamboat Springs. Doug presented highlights of three *current* weatherization success stories funded through a generous grant as part of their 2022-2026 strategic Climate Action Plan *and the potential of a future partnership to achieve more in the region in the years to come.*

<https://routtclimateaction.com/>.



Event Description "Learn what local governments are doing to fight climate change at the Routt County Climate Action Plan (CAP) Collaborative Open House. Hear presentations on recent wins for decarbonization, local projects taking place with CAP funds and the most recent Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory. Refreshments, childcare and Spanish interpretation provided.

Resources: YVSC now WRC: <https://www.steamboatpilot.com/news/steamboat-nonprofit-changes-name-to-western-resilience-center/>

EIP Employees on the Move: Highlighting Bryanne Busato



Bryanne Busato joined the Elevator Inspection Program in 2019 as an administrative assistant and quickly became a key player in enforcement. During the rapid shift to remote operations in 2020–2021, she helped develop processes that allowed the program to continue functioning seamlessly—despite already working remotely herself.

In 2023, Bryanne and colleague Nicole sought to deepen their technical understanding by pursuing Certified Elevator Inspector (QEI) training. By 2024, both enrolled in a year-long program that required extensive coursework and field training, all while maintaining their full workloads. That same year, Bryanne

stepped into the Operations Manager role and took the lead on developing a new program database, demonstrating her adaptability and commitment to strengthening the program.

On November 8, 2025, Bryanne successfully passed the rigorous eight-hour QEI exam in Phoenix, becoming a Certified Elevator Inspector—an impressive milestone in a highly specialized field. EIP Director David Harris shared his appreciation for her leadership, noting that “Bryanne is an absolute pleasure to work with—her self-motivation and commitment to the program truly show. Bryanne has really taken the ‘bull by the horns,’ and I’m incredibly proud of her accomplishment.”

Reflecting on her achievement, Bryanne emphasized the importance of ongoing professional development, saying, “I am very excited to continue to grow in my Qualified Elevator Inspector education. The continual education of our team has created an impressive wealth of knowledge; this benefits us as a team and the jurisdiction we serve.”

Bryanne’s accomplishment highlights not only her dedication but the strength and momentum within the EIP team as a whole.

Upcoming Board Meetings

**Thursday, December 4, 2025 – Gypsum Conference Room Energy Program Warehouse
Full Council, EDD Board & Foundation Board Meeting**

Time: Foundation 9:00 a.m., Council 10:15 a.m.–12:00 p.m., EDD Board 12:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Primary Agenda Items: Review Executive Director’s Annual Review results, 2025 budget revisions, approve 2026 budget; annual NWCCOG Foundation Board meeting; EDD Board meeting.

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