

News & Success Stories from Around the Region

October 2019



Support the Workforce: How are we doing?

One of the goals of NWCCOG's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) is support our region's workforce, our most valuable economic development asset. This includes supporting the efforts of our communities in their quest to provide affordable housing, healthcare, childcare, and mental health services for our workforce. So....how are we doing? Read these stories below to learn more about the progress we have made.

Many workforce housing projects, programs, and initiatives in the works in our region

Workforce housing continues to be the number one challenge in our region in terms of economic development. Businesses need employees, employees need affordable places to live. NWCCOG published the [Regional Workforce Housing Report](#) in January, which highlights innovative programs and tools being used by NWCCOG members as well as members of the Colorado Association of Ski Towns. There are many new success stories and innovative programs to report on since that report. Here are a few updates: (visit the [NWCCOG website / workforce housing page](#) for a link to the report as well as more information on each listed here:



Wellington Neighborhood in Breckenridge

- Breckenridge rolls out Housing Helps Program, a deed restriction acquisition program
- Aspen Skiing Company / Willits Workforce Housing Project moves forward
- Eagle Vail Office building renovated into shared living facility with 30 single-occupancy units
- Telluride voters to decide short-term rental tax
- Dillon looks to partner with USFS on workforce housing project
- Aspen looks to partner with Feds with a provision in the 2018 Farm Bill that allows the Forest Service to lease administrative land to local communities which could be used for workforce housing
- Frisco Housing Helps Program pays homeowners to add deed restrictions to homes
- Breckenridge Grand Vacations, one of the largest employers in Summit County, takes the lead on a solution to workforce housing crisis with development of Moose Landing
- Aspen has three new affordable housing developments underway to add more than 100 units
- Durango's Policy on ADUs is one tool to help mitigate affordable housing issues
- Steamboat Springs' Milner Tiny Home proposal gets Routt County OK
- Summit County Housing Works initiative helps nearly 100 people find long term housing
- Avon considers "Empty Home Tax" implemented in Vancouver, Canada

NWCCOG will continue to keep this page and the report updated with new information. For more information contact Rachel Lunney, rachel@nwccog.org.

Grand County joins Peak Health Alliance

[Peak Health Alliance](#), a nonprofit health insurance purchasing cooperative, has expanded its health insurance purchasing cooperative to six more Colorado counties and one of them is Grand County.

With the recent approval by Grand County Commissioners, county government employees will receive Peak Health Alliance plans beginning on Jan. 1. Additionally, Peak's plans will be offered to businesses and individuals in Grand County starting in 2021.



"We are the first members of the alliance outside of Summit," Grand County Commissioner Richard Cimino said in a Monday news release announcing the expansion. "We are looking forward to lowering costs for our employees in January and expanding to all of Grand in 2021." Peak Health was formed as a response to rising health costs across the High Country, where premiums have ballooned since the introduction of the state's health care exchange marketplace in 2013.

Originally funded by The Summit Foundation as a special initiative, Peak Health started in Summit County before looking to grow outward. In addition to Grand, other counties that have since joined the cooperative include Archuleta, Dolores, La Plata, Montezuma and San Juan. [Read full story from the Ski Hi News here.](#)

Summit County passes 1A to Fund Childcare and Mental Health Services

One year ago on election day, Summit County ballot initiative 1A passed, adding a mill levy that will raise \$8.8 million per year for the next ten years for a variety of issues including early childhood care and behavioral health programs. The \$8.8 million would be divided



annually, with a guaranteed \$2 million for mental health services and \$2.5 million for affordable early childhood care and learning. There also will be \$1 million per year for wildfire mitigation, \$1.7 million for recycling and waste diversion, and \$1.6 million for county infrastructure maintenance and improvements. This bucket of money is called the "Strong Future Fund".

The ballot question won handily with nearly 60% of the vote. "We are so grateful to Summit County voters for doing the right thing here," said Tamara Drangstveit, who at that time was the Executive Director of the [Family and Intercultural Resource Center](#) (FIRC), a non-profit whose mission is to help families make healthy choices and provide an environment for children to thrive, and believes that by strengthening families, we are strengthening the community. This fund aims to make real progress towards building an early childcare center for working families in Summit County. It also aims to fund behavioral health programs and services, including [Building Hope](#), a community-wide initiative designed to create a more coordinated, effective and responsive mental health system that promotes emotional health, reduces stigma and improves access to care and support for everyone in Summit County. The decisive win of this ballot initiative is evidence that the people in our community recognize that supporting our workforce with affordable and accessible childcare and mental health services strengthens our families, and by doing so strengthens our community and economy.

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