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Spotlight Chas. Steele Weatherization Installer

Chas. (yep, it's Chas., not Chaz) grew up in southern Michigan and attended Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo. In 1991 he took a year off to travel and ski powder in Colorado where he fell in love with the mountains. He returned to school at WMU, graduating in 1993, with a degree in Environmental Resources Management with a minor in Journalism. He continued to live in Michigan until 2006, when he finally made the move back to Summit County.

He found a job as a carpenter which is what he was doing when he was offered the position of Weatherization Installer with the NWCCOG in 2009. As an installer Chas. is responsible for performing energy efficiency upgrades on homes that qualify for the program. The modifications can include such things as installing storm windows, sealing duct work, replacing furnaces, replacing high-energy refrigerators, and other efficiency measures.

When asked what he liked best about working with the NWCCOG, he replied, "A lot! First, it's a great job that provides a sustainable livelihood, along with consistent learning opportunities." He noted that this position requires that the installers be trained and certified with new methods all the time. The training is provided to each team member, and he likes the opportunity it gives him for personal growth.

He also said, "This isn't a glamorous job by any means. In fact, sometimes it can get really dirty, but at the end of the day, I come home and feel like I accomplished something good for other people. I appreciate that about this work."

When Chas. isn't working, he's riding mountain bikes or hiking. He's "wrecked" his knee so no more snowboarding. He's currently living on a ranch and has plenty of opportunities to stay in shape. He also does a little painting on the side to bring in extra cash.



Looking for a way to be involved with Mountain Ride Transportation Resource Center?

Your donation can help keep the rides going....



Again this year, Mountain Ride is participating in the Colorado Gives Campaign on December 6, 2016. Your deductible donation will be made to the Northwest Colorado Council of Governments Foundation on behalf of Mountain Ride. There is a vital need for travel assistance to medical appointments for seniors, veterans, persons with disabilities and people of lower income. Those seeking assistance often do not qualify for state programs. The cost of providing regional medical trips averages \$150 per trip, and for many the cost of such travel can become overwhelming.

The effort of the Mountain Ride program through NWCCOG Foundation is to assist such individuals with travel. Your contribution will go toward Buying-A-Ride. Taking advantage of this program is a great way to show your support and help your neighbors get to those critical appointments. Don't wait -- donate now.

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40th Anniversary and Weatherization Day 2016

Each year, those of us at the NWCCOG recognize national Weatherization Day with a sense of pride and accomplishment. It is even more exciting this year as we celebrate October 30th as the 40th Anniversary of the Weatherization Assistance Plan being signed into law at the federal level.

The Weatherization Assistance Program reduces energy costs for low-income families including older adults, people with disabilities, and children. Through the installation of energy efficient measures, we ensure their health and safety, while lowering their energy bills. Low-income families typically spend 14.4% of their total income on energy vs. 3.3% for other households. Weatherization saves each family an average of \$437 in heating and cooling costs every year. Weatherizing these homes reduces the energy costs for families who are often forced to choose between heat and other necessities. We work in all types of homes: single family, multi-family, and mobile homes.



NWCCOG Weatherization Team

Some of the measures we take are: installing storm windows, fixing broken windows, increasing insulation in walls and attics, fixing furnaces, and replacing high energy refrigerators with more energy efficient models.

Most importantly, the team performs health and safety checks on all homes at the initial audit and again at the conclusion of the job. Most issues found were fairly benign and could be fixed through properly venting a clothes dryer or putting a vapor barrier in a crawlspace. But some homes had gas leaks, or flues needing repair, or appliances producing unsafe levels of carbon monoxide. These potentially life-threatening conditions were found and fixed by our crew. In addition, all homes were left with a working carbon monoxide detector. It's no wonder our team gets great satisfaction from the work they do.

Weatherization requires skilled workers with specialized certifications to carry out the program, and these are "green jobs" - jobs that reduce total energy use and environmental impact on the planet. Nationwide since 1976, men and women have been making Weatherization Work. So far, over 7 million homes have been served by the Weatherization Program.

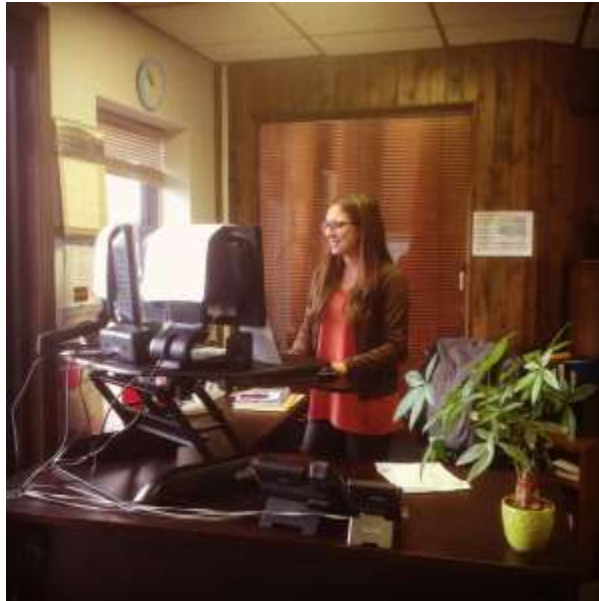
Combat the Perils of Sitting

Everyone is talking about the new research concerning the effects of sitting too long. The primary

health concerns include higher blood pressure, increased levels of cholesterol, excess body fat leading to obesity, and increased risk of death from cardiovascular disease. If you'd like to be further frightened you can read the complete article [at Mayo Clinic's website](#).

Several NWCCOG employees have opted to take control of their sitting time through the use of adjustable desks. There are many options on the market from which to choose and they range in prices from a couple of hundred dollars to well over \$1000. It seems the most popular choice in our office is the Veridesk which enables the users to raise or lower the desktop and computer monitor in a matter of seconds to infinite heights.

Now, people can sit for a while, stand for a while, and move around with ease. We take workplace wellness seriously, and it shows.



Elaina Wiegand, office manager, taking a stand-up break.

Collaboration - A Win/Win

The NWCCOG Weatherization team has been working with other Colorado organizations to fully



Weatherization Field Supervisor, Doug Jones

utilize the specialized skill-sets of the Weatherization Installers. Colorado's Affordable Residential Energy (CARE) Program is an income-qualified home improvement service that will make free upgrades on low-income homes to help save energy and improve the home comfort. Qualified participants may receive one or more of the following improvements: LED lightbulbs, Energy-Star refrigerator, attic insulation, air sealing, furnace replacement, and more. The CARE Program through Energy Outreach Colorado was having difficulty finding subcontractors with proper certifications to work on houses that qualified for energy upgrades through CARE. The NWCCOG Weatherization Program with our highly skilled and certified employees can fill this need.

The NWCCOG Weatherization team is also partnering with Energy Outreach Colorado to be a service contractor for the Low-income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) based Crisis Intervention Program (CIP). When a LEAP client has no heat they are eligible to call CIP. Energy Outreach Colorado will then send out a registered

contractor to troubleshoot the problem with the heat source. The NWCCOG Weatherization team has signed up to be one of these contractors.

Doug Jones, NWCCOG Weatherization Field Supervisor, remarked, "We're working together synergistically to provide better efficiencies and to increase the positive impacts on our communities."

These programs are a win/win collaboration effort. Jones went on to say, "We anticipate that these three programs will work efficiently together under one roof and the recipients of these programs will receive a better quality service. In return the NWCCOG Weatherization Program will receive additional funding to stabilize the workforce numbers needed to service the base Weatherization Program over twenty four thousand square miles of Colorado."

Participating CARE agencies in our area are the Yampa Valley Sustainability Council for Routt and Moffat Counties, Walking Mountains Science Center in Avon, Cloud City Conservation Center in Leadville, CORE in Pitkin County, High Country Conservation Center in Summit County, and CLEER in Garfield County.

2016 NWCCOG COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE

Thursday, October 27, 2016

Full Council Meeting

Location: NWCCOG Office/Conference Call

Time: 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Primary Agenda Items: Review of draft 2017 budget

Thursday, December 8, 2016

Full Council & Foundation Board Meeting

Location: NWCCOG Office/Conference Call

Time: 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Primary Agenda Items: 2016 budget revisions; approve 2017 budget; adopt 2017 meeting schedule; annual NWCCOG Foundation Board meeting.

Northwest Colorado Council of Governments

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