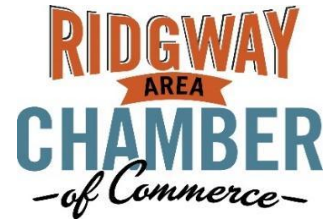


To: Town of Ridgway
From: Ridgway Area Chamber of Commerce
Subject: Biannual Report
Date: July 12, 2023



Dear Ridgway Town Council,

The Ridgway Area Chamber of Commerce (RACC) is pleased to share our biannual report for 2023 with the council and staff members of the Town of Ridgway. Also included in this report are the Chamber's Lodging Tax P and L statement from January to June this year. As a reminder, the RACC's Quickbooks structures are organized around the town-approved marketing and promotions agreement and managed by RACC Treasurer Jane Pulliam with Middleton Accounting. These actuals are a direct import from Quickbooks and reflect a continued diversification of investments and efforts designed to support Ridgway's local business community.

The RACC staff and board continue to advance a number of strategies to improve year-round economic opportunities for our local businesses while considering our town and surrounding natural resources. We have steered our marketing and advertising focus more towards the winter season in recent years where our visitor economy has room to grow such as Small Business Saturday promotions, Noel Night celebration and seeking to partner with Skijoring this upcoming year. In addition, the RACC has shifted visitor information to align with responsible travel best practices building upon conversions with Leave No Trace experts and the Colorado Tourism Office's Do Colorado Right marketing initiative.

We are actively participating in a number of regional and local partnerships to ensure complimentary opportunities with the greater community and strive to be a voice for the Ridgway business community as a whole and not just a particular sector. Committees, groups and other partnerships include but are not limited to are: Colorado Creative Corridor partnership, support of the Dark Sky initiative through annual grant contributions, quarterly tourism collaboration meetings, recent grant recipient for development of western slope Gravel Adventure Guide, teaming with Ridgway FUSE on a variety of town focused projects and partnership with the San Juan Scenic Byway committee. Our executive director also seeks to again participate in the informative upcoming Colorado Tourism Office's Governor's Conference held in Fort Collins in September.

We continue to see steady progress in our areas of engagement with the community and are providing new offerings to support our local businesses including our basic membership option, collaborative walking map and events poster, QR code stickers directing to ridgwaycolorado.com, and providing a PDF version of the visitors guide on our website. We have advanced our events page and included a year-round Shop Local! Business landing page as well. Our PR Marketing consultant Catherine Johnson has helped us to increase social media engagement, created our member supported educational series benefit and helped organize our first annual Earth Day over the past months.

We look forward to any questions or comments you may have regarding this report and hope to engage in open conversation regarding our potential contract renewal and opportunities for marketing and advertising for 2024.

Best regards,

A. J. Perkins

Ashley Perkins

Executive Director

Ridgway Area Chamber of Commerce

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The RACC is currently seeking additional directors for our board. We recently welcomed new board of directors member Clay Frost who is the General Manager for Chipeta Lodge. Members who have resigned from the Chamber in the past six months include Vice President David Nunn, members at large Kane Scheidegger and Frank Gouder. The RACC's current Board structure includes:

- President: Adam Dubroff
- Vice President: *vacant*
- Secretary: Tanya Ishikawa (chamber member, Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership)
- Treasurer: Jane Pulliam (chamber member, Middleton Accounting)
- At Large: Jon Elliott (chamber member, Aspen Tree Service), Clay Frost (chamber member, Chipeta Lodge and Spa)

STAFF

The Chamber continues to utilize local expertise to fill staffing needs, while the board stays involved with oversight and some organizational duties. Executive Director Ashley Perkins leads the organization on community events, visitor information representation, local and regional partnerships and oversight for marketing-related initiatives. Duties include: staff delegation, Visitor Center management and volunteer coordination, working with the board to identify marketing goals, guiding the direction for all marketing-related projects, state grant opportunities, administrative duties, as well as town and Chamber joint projects.

Captivate Consulting owner Catherine Johnson was hired in January and plays a vital role in the progression efforts of the chamber. Johnson manages our social media platforms and is our lead communications coordinator for e-blasts, visitor news and Member of the Month representation. She also helps to provide support and advancement of website content, spearheads our educational series and adds a vital networking component for social engagement with our community.

Our exceptional group of local consulting partners and staff includes:

- Executive Director– Ashley Perkins
- PR and Marketing Consultant– Catherine Johnson (Captive Consulting)
- Accounting – Jane Pulliam (Middleton Accounting)
- Website and Technology Partner – Josh Gowans (Peak Media)
- Media and Design Partner – Nicole Green (Sprout Design Studio)
- Special Events Coordinator- Candace Anderson

RACC's ONLINE ASSETS: WEBSITE, DIGITAL NEWSLETTERS, SHOP LOCAL! AND EVENTS LANDING PAGES AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Our website www.ridgwaycolorado.com remains the #1 search result on Google, Bing and Yahoo for keyword "Ridgway Colorado", which had an increase of 259% search clicks since last year's biannual report. Additionally, we've incurred over 63,000 new web users (5.4% increase) reflecting an improvement in our overall rankings and keyword count. Every quarter, we generate an Analytics Report to review current trends, track relevant topics and come up with an objective for the upcoming quarter to achieve.

We continue to send our eblasts (2,250 contacts) and visitor newsletters (6,370 contacts) to those who have signed up to receive this material and information. Johnson has been diligent in creating our new Shop Local! webpage found [here](#). She has also taken on the initiative to continue to improve and update our events page [located here](#) on our website. This year RACC created a new Facebook account to better streamline our marketing ability and save cost on cross promoting efforts by establishing our new Ridgway Colorado site (640+ followers) to complement our Instagram page [@ridgwaycolorado](#) (3,900+ followers).

MEMBERSHIP AND LOCAL BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT

Since the last biannual presentation the RACC has increased membership by 22 new businesses and has 58 renewed membership bringing current membership level to 80. This is a 12% increase from last year at this time. Breakdown of membership includes 29 Gold members, 13 Silver members, 32 Bronze and 6 Basic members. Income from membership is currently \$4,460. In the past six months the RACC has worked hard to meet the request to offer a basic membership at no cost so that we may be able to provide an increase in exposure for businesses and help to build an up to date business directory with the Community Initiatives Facilitator Tera Wick. To read more about this new enhancement please [follow this link](#) to our press release regarding our new membership tier.

The RACC sent out a business feedback survey at the end of May through email communications, social media and the staff did in person meet and greet with current chamber members. Although Perkins and Johnson have only received official feedback regarding the survey with a total of 5 responses, one key creation that came out of the business outreach was the development of the [Shop Local! Page](#) that lists key business information on one landing

page also mentioned above. If interested in filing out this business feedback survey please [follow this link](#).

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

- **2023 Youth Career and Volunteer Fair**
 - This year the RACC organized and spearheaded the Youth Career and Volunteer Fair in April for its 6th time. About 23 organizations attended to represent post graduate career information, job opportunities and nonprofit organizations to gain interest in volunteerism.
- **1st Annual Earth Day and E Waste event co-sponsor**
 - This year the RACC organized its first annual Earth Day Cleanup on April 22nd that coincided with the Town of Ridgway's Annual Dumpster Day. About 15 adults and children showed up in support of the event at Cottonwood Park and participated in cleaning trash throughout the community. Perkins also partnered with Alpine Bank and 3R Technologies to represent the RACC for the annual E Waste event on June 3rd.
- **Educational Series**
 - PR and Marketing Consultant Catherine Johnson with Captivate Consulting spearheaded the RACC's new membership benefit that includes quarterly educational classes focused on promotional and marketing strategies and support of our local business community. These classes include Social Media Marketing 101, UX Behavior and Business Strategy. Classes are held in May, August and November.
- **Business After Hours**
 - The RACC hosted its first Business After Hours event on June 20th for the year 2023 at The Ridgway (Chipeta Lodge) providing a networking opportunity for the local community as well as an introduction to our newest board of director member Clay Frost, General Manager for Chipeta. Last year the chamber hosted three Business After Hour events.
- **Upcoming: 2023 Golf Open Tournament**
 - This year the Annual Golf Open will be held at Divide Ranch and Club on Monday, September 18th. Executive Director Ashley Perkins, PR consultant Catherine Johnson and Events Coordinator Candace Anderson are in the beginning stages of organizing this successful event. Proceeds from the tournament this year will go to benefit the local business community.
- **Upcoming: Noel Night**
 - For its 3rd year in taking on the popular celebration event, the RACC has set the date for Noel Night for the first Friday in December again. Planning for this event will begin promptly following the Golf Open.

RIDGWAY VISITORS CENTER AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM INFORMATION HUB

With the departure of our previous Visitor Center Coordinator Jeanne Robinson in 2022, Executive Director Ashley Perkins has taken on the role and responsibility of running and

managing the Ridgway Visitor Center for the previous two years. This year Perkins was able to gather two paid staff members for the weekend shifts, six volunteers and covers were needed for summer 2023. This year she organized a volunteer training with Leave No Trace expert Robin Lewis, US Forest Service man Eric Sumner and Ouray Mountain Rescue/Eco Action Partners representative Sean Hart. The Ridgway Visitor Center opened Memorial Day weekend and will run until October this year. Hours are Wednesday through Sunday 10am-4pm.

As preparation for next year, the RACC plans to coordinate with the Do Colorado Right Program through the Colorado Tourism Office to enhance efforts for sustainable visitation and responsible travel practices and messaging for a Do Ridgway Right! focus and Respect Ridgway Campaign initiative.

VISITORS GUIDE

Since 2019, the RACC has organized a Ridgway centric Visitors Guide along with Ballantine Communications to produce the annual catalog. This year the RACC is considering doing a visitor information print bi-annually as print and distribution costs continue to rise. The cost for the chamber to develop the local Visitor Guide has been around \$6,000 per year. New this year is the ability to locate the PDF version of the guide through our website. You can find the link for the [online guide here](#). The chamber currently has 74 new subscribers to our online Visitors Guide and will distribute 30k+ by the end of this year in print.

COLORADO CREATIVE CORRIDOR

For the fifth consecutive year, the RACC and Ridgway FUSE (Ridgway Creative District) have collaborated to provide marketing support for the creative community through the Colorado Creative Corridor (CCC). The CCC is a 331-mile route that links the mountain towns of Carbondale, Crested Butte, Paonia, Ridgway, Salida and now Gunnison. Ridgway works with these partnering communities to promote visitor experiences including event programming and activities through the CCC website, social media, newsletters, networking events and more. RACC meets with representatives monthly.

Each year the RACC and Ridgway FUSE help to fund this project through joint grant revenue by contributing \$2500 per organization totalling the \$5000 suggested contribution for each community. Ridgway was featured through the Colorado Creative Corridor in Colorado Life magazine in May/June 2023. You can learn more about the CCC through the promotional video created in 2020 found here, visit their website at <http://coloradocreaticorridor.com>, or follow them on social media at @coloradocreaticorridor on Instagram.

SAN JUAN SKYWAY BYWAY COMMITTEE

In efforts to collaborate more with other rural communities RACC Executive Director Perkins has joined the San Juan Skyway Byway Committee for 2023. As this group relates to tourism and marketing, priorities include shared responsible travel messaging throughout each community, inspirational messaging to drive visitation and educational messaging that enhances visitor management and engagement. From a peer alignment perspective, the San Juan Skyway

Byway committee offers next level networking opportunities, alignment with priority projects for rural southwest grant potential, enhanced funding revenue streams and shared experiences between leaders in similar rural communities.

GRAVEL ADVENTURE GUIDE

At the end of June 2023, Governor Polis announced that the RACC received a Colorado State Outdoor Recreational Grant to develop a Gravel Adventure Guide for the Uncompahgre Plateau and West San Juans region. The Adventure Field Guide series has been successfully deployed in multiple Colorado communities and includes local history, attractions and cultural heritage elements alongside its gravel trail summary. This guide will spotlight trails in Ouray, San Miguel and Montrose Counties including the West End. Grant deliverables will include the planning, design, publication and distribution of a Gravel Adventure Guide on or before March 31, 2024. This project was a collaborative effort spearheaded by Board Secretary Tanya Ishikawa and carried forth through the teamwork of RACC and members of the West End, Montrose and Ridgway community bike leaders and members.

2023 COLORADO TOURISM OFFICE'S GOVCON

Executive Director Perkins plans to again attend this year's Colorado Tourism Governor's Conference in Fort Collins, Colorado held September 27th-29th. The Colorado Governor's Tourism Conference is an annual three-day event for tourism professionals and industry leaders to learn and network. Participants assess current activities and find new approaches to market the state, locales, and businesses. Speakers from throughout the country will challenge and inspire attendees. This conference is essential to the advancement for marketing and promotional efforts including networking, engagement and professional development for the Chamber's Executive Director.

We sincerely thank the Town Council and staff for their support and partnership.

Ridgway Area Chamber of Commerce

Profit & Loss

07/03/23

January through June 2023

Accrual Basis

	<u>Jan - Jun 23</u>
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
4500 · Lodging Tax Income	27,145.28
4125 · Membership Dues	4,460.00
4400 · Merchandise Sales	226.95
Youth Volunteer & Career Fair	150.00
Total Income	<u>31,982.23</u>
Gross Profit	31,982.23
Expense	
8010 · Advertising and Promotion	
8017 · Collaboration and Networking	210.00
Creative District Corridor	2,500.00
CTO Marketing Grant Payment	2,500.00
Online Media and Advertising,	5,035.00
Print Media and Advertising	957.04
8019 · Visitor's Guide Fulfillment, P	685.00
8012 · Website Upgrades and Operations	6,613.51
Total 8010 · Advertising and Promotion	<u>18,500.55</u>
8020 · Bank Service Charges	134.01
8030 · Board of Directors Expenses	
8030.1 · Board Meeting Expense	213.69
Total 8030 · Board of Directors Expenses	<u>213.69</u>
8035 · Credit Card Merchant Fee	26.15
8050 · Dues and Subscriptions	493.61
Networking & Meeting Meals	513.98
7100 · Membership Expense	
Membership Services	1,490.00
Total 7100 · Membership Expense	<u>1,490.00</u>
Over / short	-4.35
66000 · Payroll Expenses	
7020 · Directors Wages	26,797.90
7030 · Payroll Taxes	2,148.26
7070 · Workers Comp Insurance	280.00
66000 · Payroll Expenses - Other	0.00
Total 66000 · Payroll Expenses	<u>29,226.16</u>
8170 · Postage	114.50
8160 · Professional Fees	
Tax	201.00
8161 · Accounting Fees	4,094.00
Total 8160 · Professional Fees	<u>4,295.00</u>
Rent Expense	10.00
Sales Tax Variance	-0.01
8000 · Visitor Center Operations	
8133.1 · Electric	2,648.78
8133.2 · Natural Gas	277.48
8140 · Office Supplies	717.02
8132 · Repairs and Maintenance	1,068.82
8133.3 · Telephone and Internet	379.08
8133.4 · Trash	147.66
8190 · Volunteer Expense	85.99
8133.5 · Water & Sewer	3,629.50
Total 8000 · Visitor Center Operations	<u>8,954.33</u>

10:15 AM

Ridgway Area Chamber of Commerce

07/03/23

Profit & Loss

Accrual Basis

January through June 2023

	<u>Jan - Jun 23</u>
Visitor Center Redesign	<u>-240.00</u>
Total Expense	<u>63,727.62</u>
Net Ordinary Income	<u>-31,745.39</u>
Net Income	<u><u>-31,745.39</u></u>