



To: Town of Ridgway
From: Ridgway Area Chamber of Commerce
Subject: Biannual Lodging Tax Report
Date: August 5th, 2022

Dear Ridgway Town Council,

The Ridgway Area Chamber of Commerce (RACC) is pleased to share our biannual report with the council and staff members of the Town of Ridgway.

Included with this report is the Chamber's Lodging Tax P&L statement. As a reminder, the RACC's QuickBooks structures are organized around the Town-approved marketing plan and managed by Middleton Accounting. These actuals are a direct pull from QuickBooks and reflect a continued diversification of investments designed to support our local business community.

We continue to advance a number of strategies to improve year-round economic opportunities for our local business community, while considering the sustainability of our town and surrounding natural resources. Much of our marketing and advertising is focused on the winter season when our visitor economy has room to grow. Over the years, the RACC has shifted visitor information to align with responsible travel best practices and strategies. We are actively participating in a number of regional and local partnerships to ensure alignment with the greater community and to be a voice for our business community. Committees, groups and other involvements include: quarterly meetings with Montrose and Ouray tourism group, the Ridgway Creative Main Street Committee, Colorado Creative Corridor partnership, support for Rural Philanthropy Days held in Ridgway this past June, and participation in the upcoming Colorado Tourism Office Governor's Conference.

We continue to see progress being made as a result of the organizational infrastructure investments made over the last several years, which includes RidgwayColorado.com as well as strategic visitor messaging and marketing that support a sustainable economic growth model.

We look forward to any questions or comments you have regarding this report and continuing to partner with the Town of Ridgway to advance the interests of local businesses and the community as a whole.

Sincerely,

A J Perkins

Ashley Perkins
Executive Director
Ridgway Area Chamber of Commerce

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Noel Night, Shop Local Campaign and Business After Hours

With summer nearing to an end the RACC prepares to work to promote our community's slower season with the return of [Noel Night](#), return of Ridgway's Shop Local campaign and looking to bring Business After Hours back to the community each month. The Shop Local campaign which began as a response to COVID-19 to help drive economic opportunities from December 2020 to April 2021 will return as a focus to continue to bring revenue to the Ridgway community this year. Campaign accomplishments include: a banner in Hartwell Park encouraging drive-thru traffic to stop and shop, weekly social media and e-blasts featuring member specials; [shop local landing page](#) on the Chamber's website.

Staffing

The Chamber continues to utilize local expertise to fill staffing needs, while the board stays actively involved with oversight and some organizational duties. Executive Director Ashley Perkins leads the organization on community events, visitor information representation and 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 grants, regional partnerships, administrative duties, as well as town and Chamber joint projects.

Tanya Ishikawa continues to play an integral role with the organization. Tanya supports several communications projects, including: lead editor on the annual Visitors Guide, managing the Chamber's Facebook account, website content, business promotion, annual career fair, and other special projects.

Our exceptional group of local consulting partners and staff includes:

- Executive Director– Ashley Perkins
- Communications Consultant – Tanya Ishikawa
- Accounting – Middleton Accounting (Jane Pulliam)
- Website and Technology Partner – Peak Media (Josh Gowans and Stephanie Lauerman)
- Media and Design Partner – Sprout Design Studio (Nicole Green)
- Graphic Design Partner – Kindred Spirits (Traci Schalow)

Board of Directors

All Board of Directors positions are currently filled. Newly elected board members include Jon Elliott with Aspen Tree Services and Frank Gouder with Double G Ranch. The board elected new officers during their annual retreat in January. The Board's structure is:

- President – Adam Dubroff (Ridgway Lodge and Suites)
- Vice President – David Nunn (David Nunn Music)
- Secretary – Ashley Perkins
- Treasurer – Jane Pulliam (Chamber Member, Middleton Accounting)
- At Large
 - Kane Scheidegger (Kane Scheidegger Gallery)
 - Jon Elliott (Aspen Tree Service)

- o Frank Gouder (Double G Ranch and Guest Lodge)

2022 CTO Colorado Tourism Governor's Conference

Executive Director Ashley Perkins will attend this year's Colorado Tourism Governor's Conference in Snowmass, Colorado held September 21st-23rd. 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. Since this is Perkins' first year attending the conference she has received the Governor's Tourism Conference Professional Scholarship awarded funding to attend the conference.

Colorado Creative Corridor

For the fourth consecutive year, the Ridgway Chamber teamed up with the Town of Ridgway and the Ridgway Creative District to support the Colorado Creative Corridor (CCC) project. Over the past four years, a majority of this work has been funded through three consecutive Colorado Tourism Office \$25,000 Marketing Matching grants. The CCC is a 331-mile route that links the mountain towns of Carbondale, Crested Butte, Paonia, Ridgway, and Salida. Ridgway works with the four partner communities to promote visitor experiences, which include event programming and activities.

2022 grant funding continues on the success built over the past four years. One of the primary deliverables for this year is the continued success of the Colorado Creative Corridor website. The RACC participated in the website subcommittee to provide feedback and content for the new website and meets once a month. We are happy to announce the website is online, as well as the grant-funded [promotional video](#) that was created in 2020. The website can be viewed at: <https://coloradocreativecorridor.com/>

We are excited for this project to continue to bring value to the business and creative economy for years to come, and look forward to this continuing to be an important example of the positive impact of Chamber/Town collaboration.

Online Media Assets: Website, Digital Newsletters & Social Media

RidgwayColorado.com remains the #1 Google search result for keyword "Ridgway Colorado" as well as other high value keywords. In general, average rankings continue to improve and overall keyword count is growing. We periodically review target keywords to establish content priorities and to track relevant topics. Improvements in general rankings have resulted in increased traffic to the site. We will continue to invest in additional content and our staff to monitor the site and keep content updated.

In addition to updating and expanding pages dedicated to biking and hiking, the Chamber added a Dark Sky tourism page and itinerary to the website with information on why, how and what to enjoy related to Ridgway's internationally designated Dark Skies. Val Szwarc cooperated to provide great photos and information for the pages.

A digital copy of the annual Visitor Guide is available as gated content on the website in various locations, including the homepage. Implemented in 2019, this strategy allows the RACC to continue to build out our lead database. All email leads are automatically added to our CRM system so they can be sent the visitor newsletters that are planned a few times a year.

The weekly community e-blast continues to be sent out to a steadily growing list of 2,150 contacts. Newsletter content includes: business promotion, winter shop local campaign, special events, job opportunities and Chamber news. The RACC is currently working on a new automated newsletter campaign to our visitor newsletter list (6,000 contacts). The new drip campaign will send an automated email when users sign-up for the visitor newsletter, then periodic visitor newsletters after sign-up. This new system will ensure consistent emails to the visitor newsletter list, while allowing staff to focus on other tasks.

The RACC Instagram account, @RidgwayColorado, continues to be presented as a visitor-facing platform to promote Ridgway tourism assets and local businesses to potential visitors. All outdoor recreation related images include text on responsible travel best practices, such as Leave No Trace and Care for Colorado. The RACC Instagram account has 3,298 followers. Facebook continues to be a platform that we communicate to our local community with 2,360 followers.

Visitors Guide

As of late July, we are starting the process of planning the 2023 Ridgway Visitor Guide. The plan is to continue our partnership with BCI Media, which has produced and distributed the annual Visitor Guide since 2017. We will use our staff and contractors on content design, led by contractor, Tanya Ishikawa. Since January, the 2022 Ridgway Visitor Guide has been distributed in Ouray County and across the Western Slope. The goal is to distribute 30,000 print copies this year. An [online version](#) is available through our website.

Sustainable Tourism

For several years, the Chamber has been on a path to educate visitors on how best to enjoy our local resources. The pandemic and related visitor trends reinforced the need for us to support the community by promoting awareness of responsible, sustainable tourism practices. Part of this strategy includes the continuation of strategically marketing Ridgway as a year-round destination. Since 2018, the Chamber has focused advertising dollars in the off-peak season of November through May.

Efforts for this year include banner text and link on the RidgwayColorado.com homepage that directs users to the Responsible Travel webpage. The Responsible Travel webpage includes best practices for outdoor recreation and COVID-19, as well as ways to enjoy Ridgway year-round and how to best support our local businesses and nonprofits. The Ridgway Visitor Center now has Leave No Trace brochures available for visitors. Volunteers are directed to hand out the brochures when visitors express interest in outdoor recreation experiences.

Print & Radio Media

The RACC's focus for print media is media relations and earned media where we distribute news releases and targeted emails and calls to specific media channels, especially newspapers and magazines. We also act as the media liaison for tourism inquiries about the Ridgway area from various state, regional, national and international media. These efforts have resulted in the sharing of the most accurate information about our town's assets, responsible tourism and photos and interview contacts from local businesses and nonprofits. Examples of media that have requested or responded to information provided by the RACC staff are Telluride Daily Planet, Ouray County Plaindealer, 5280 magazine, and John Wayne Journal.

Ridgway Visitor Center

The Ridgway Visitor Center opened its doors Memorial Day weekend for the year 2022. RACC staff spent the bulk of their time in May getting the space ready for the public, providing much needed maintenance and scheduling volunteers and staff. The Ridgway Visitor Center hours of operation for 2022 are Wednesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., more than a doubling of hours from 2021. Volunteers are cleaning the restrooms once per day, and the space receives a thorough weekly cleaning to help mitigate risk of infections.

In 2021, Chamber staff and board members participated in the Ridgway Visitor Center and Heritage Park Advisory Committee. The purpose of the advisory committee was to convene local stakeholders to provide recommendations to the Town Council on implementation priorities and next steps for the current building and surrounding park space. The Chamber continues to work with the Town of Ridgway to implement these plans in 2022.

Youth Volunteer and Career Fair

For the fifth time, the Ridgway Chamber helped organize the Ridgway Youth Volunteer & Career Fair at Ridgway Secondary School to introduce students to job and volunteer opportunities. On April 27, 2022 five nonprofits and nine companies, as well as the Ouray Police Department, Ridgway Volunteer Fire Department, and Ouray County Sheriff's Office, Emergency Medical Service, Public Health Office, Vegetation Department, and Public Information Office interacted with middle and high schoolers on the school's front lawn. Nine of the participating organizations were chamber members. Eleven organizations were from Ridgway, five organizations were from Ouray including the county departments, and one was from Telluride. Approximately 100 high school students circulated around the tables for the first half hour of the fair, and approximately 80 middle school students visited the tables for the second half hour.

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



Ridgway Area Chamber of Commerce

Profit & Loss

08/05/22

January through June 2022

Accrual Basis

	<u>Jan - Jun 22</u>
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
Lodging Tax Income	31,738.16
Membership Dues	4,225.00
Merchandise Sales	184.00
Youth Volunteer & Career Fair	120.00
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Total Income	36,267.16
Cost of Goods Sold	
Cost of Goods Sold	32.50
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Total COGS	32.50
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Gross Profit	36,234.66
Expense	
Advertising and Promotion	
Collaboration and Networking	493.30
Creative District Corridor	2,500.00
CTO Marketing Grant Payment	2,591.43
Online Media and Advertising,	4,022.50
Print Media and Advertising	6,280.37
Visitor's Guide Fulfillment, P	330.00
Website Upgrades and Operations	3,803.75
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Total Advertising and Promotion	20,021.35
Bank Service Charges	108.90
Credit Card Merchant Fee	37.91
Dues and Subscriptions	442.97
Events and Sponsorships	
Business After Hours Expense	640.00
Events & Sponsorship Exp other	500.00
Golf Tournament Expenses	20.00
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Total Events and Sponsorships	1,160.00
Meals and Hospitality	1,170.68
Membership Expense	
Membership Services	1,020.00
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Total Membership Expense	1,020.00
Over / short	39.69
Payroll Expenses	
Directors Wages	26,077.00
Payroll Taxes	1,994.89
Workers Comp Insurance	132.00
Payroll Expenses - Other	42.00
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Total Payroll Expenses	28,245.89
Postage	17.68
Professional Fees	
Accounting Fees	3,001.40
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Total Professional Fees	3,001.40
Rent Expense	10.00
Sales Tax Variance	0.01
Subcontractors	360.00
Technology Expenses	1,000.00

Ridgway Area Chamber of Commerce

Profit & Loss

08/05/22

January through June 2022

Accrual Basis

	<u>Jan - Jun 22</u>
Visitor Center Operations	
Electric	298.27
Licenses & Permits	16.00
Natural Gas	630.15
Office Supplies	910.18
Property & Liability Insurance	15.00
Repairs and Maintenance	1,079.64
Telephone and Internet	724.35
Trash	50.08
Volunteer Expense	30.41
Visitor Center Contract Labor	240.00
Water & Sewer	783.00
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Total Visitor Center Operations	4,777.08
Visitor Center Marketing/Merch	110.00
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Total Expense	61,523.56
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Net Ordinary Income	-25,288.90
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Net Income	<u><u>-25,288.90</u></u>