

ANNUAL REPORT

2018



RIDGWAY, COLORADO

Image: Lisa Kral

The Ridgway Area Chamber of Commerce is organized to achieve the objectives of promoting business and community growth and development in the Town of Ridgway and the surrounding area.



This photo won the Chamber's "Think Outside – Welcome to Ridgway" Contest.



The Chamber helps organize member grand openings.



Youth are invited to participate in many Chamber activities.



FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

RIDGWAY AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Ridgway Chamber Board of Directors is pleased to share this 2018 annual report. We are proud of the progress that continues to be made in support of our local business community.

We have continued the investments that we began in 2017 into RidgwayColorado.com. The site is now the #1 Google search result for “Ridgway, Colorado” and the #1 resource for travel and business information for the Ridgway area. We continue to invest in dynamic and up-to-date content, including visitor itineraries and social media integration.

For the first time, the Chamber was the lead applicant on a successful grant application to the Colorado Tourism Office (CTO). We applied in partnership with the Ouray Tourism Office and secured a \$10,000 grant to support a new, off-season marketing strategy. We see this as just the beginning of a wider marketing strategy that will focus our limited resources on off-season promotion – the time in which our local businesses struggle the most.

In 2018, the Chamber invested \$5,000 for Ridgway to become one of the featured communities of the new Colorado Creative Corridor. In 2019, we will be partnering with the Town of Ridgway and jointly investing into the continuation of the initiative. This state-sponsored tourism route is providing unique visibility to Ridgway through state-promoted itineraries, featured articles on Colorado.com and inclusion on marketing materials distributed across the state. We are not only promoting the creative side of Ridgway's economy, but all five of our recently established marketing themes: Outdoor Adventure, History & Heritage, Health & Wellness, Culinary Experiences, and Arts & Entertainment.

We began a process to support the Town of Ridgway on the reimagining of the Ridgway Visitor Center and surrounding “gateway” area at the intersection of Highways 550 and 62. We are applying for a CTO grant that would support the redesign process, which will include business and resident input.

We are taking another step forward with the Visitor's Guide. Starting with the 2017 guide, we partnered with Ouray on the publication of a joint, “flip-book” guide. This dramatically expanded our reach from 15,000 copies of the Ridgway guide in 2016, to more than 100,000 copies distributed in 2017 and 2018. In 2019, we are taking the additional step of creating a combined Ridgway/Ouray narrative. This will significantly improve the presentation to readers and boost visibility for our businesses.

The Chamber is now staffed by an exceptional group of local professionals and leaders. Meanwhile, all financial operations and reporting are managed locally by Middleton Accounting and our financial reporting is aligned to the town-approved lodging tax budget.

Outside of our lodging tax-funded projects, we have launched new initiatives designed to better connect our youth community with our business community, including our Youth Ambassador program and Youth Apprenticeship initiative. We recognize that local business success is predicated on local talent, and our first priority talent pipeline should be our local students.

We look forward to continued progress and partnership in 2019, all in an effort to support our local businesses and the community as a whole.

Colin Lacy

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



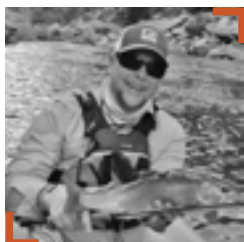
COLIN LACY, PRESIDENT

Colin is the managing director of US2020, a national leader in addressing the education opportunity gap. Colin oversees a network of regional coalitions and Fortune 500 companies that serves over 100,000 underrepresented youth with STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) mentoring experiences. Colin has a master's in Public Policy from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, and has called Ridgway "home" since the age of 10. He has served in the Chamber's board leadership role for the past two years.



JASON BOJAR, VICE PRESIDENT

Dr. Jason Bojar has been a resident and business owner in Ridgway for the last 11 years. He and his wife, Dr. Jessica Balbo, own and operate Balance Natural Medicine, an integrative medical clinic with offices in both Ridgway and Telluride. Jason appreciates the opportunity to serve as the Vice President on the Ridgway Area Chamber of Commerce board and his role in supporting local business vitality.



TIM PATTERSON, SECRETARY

Tim Patterson has made Ridgway home since 1998. Owner and founder of RIGS Fly Shop & Guide Service, a Ridgway-based business since 2001, Tim has a firsthand perspective on the town's evolving business community. He holds a degree in recreation management from Prescott College, and previously served on Ridgway Town Council and Planning & Zoning Committee, as well as prior tenures with the Ridgway Chamber.



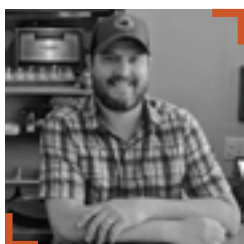
BARB LATHAM, TREASURER

Barb Latham, loan officer and Ridgway branch manager for Citizens State Bank, has been with the bank for five and a half years, and served as the Chamber's Treasurer since January 2017. Citizens State Bank is a hometown community bank in the valley for over 105 years. Barb, who graduated from Southwestern Graduate School of Banking at Southern Methodist University in June 2018, enjoys having a chance to help local businesses and consumers achieve their financial goals.



ERIN STADELMAN, AT-LARGE MEMBER

Erin Stadelman is a rancher's wife and devoted caretaker of children, grandchildren, horses, goats, cats, dogs and chickens. She is employed as the director of the Ouray County Fairgrounds and Event Center. She and her husband own Cowgirl Creations Flowers & Gift Shop (formerly known as Willowcreek). Erin loves living in Ouray County and is fully enjoying the new adventure of being a member of this wonderful small business community.



DANIEL RICHARDS, AT-LARGE MEMBER

Daniel Richards is the owner of Colorado Boy Pub & Brewery and has lived in Ridgway for four years with his wife, Tracey, and kids, Tyler and Ashleigh. A graduate of the University of Colorado, Daniel's initial career was with IBM running the company's perimeter IT infrastructure. In 2012, he started Echo Brewing Company in Frederick, Colo. with his twin brother, Dennis, and continues to run that company along with the Colorado Boy.



AMANDA SWAIN, AT-LARGE MEMBER

Amanda F. Swain is co-owner of Ridgway Adventure Sports (RAS). Before opening RAS, Amanda lived in San Francisco where she started and managed a real estate brokerage and development company. She loves to combine her passion for the outdoors with her sales and business management experience. When not at RAS, Amanda is with her fiancée, Andy, and dog, Oliver, hiking, biking, skiing and traveling.



TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK

Over the past two years, the Chamber has developed an exceptional team of staff and contract partners. This group of Ridgway-based professionals are now leading the Chamber's program implementation.

Image: Jeremy Riehle

STAFF & CONSULTANT TEAM



PAMELA CANNALTE, PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Pamela Cannalte is focused on the operational/program management of Chamber activities. She provides management support to the Visitor Center, membership relations, and implements select special projects, including the golf tournament and Visitor's Guide. Pamela's career has included work both in the technical and creative aspects of the corporate world. She is an assistant coordinator for the local Ridgway RiverFest, an author of four children's books, and a substitute teacher in the Ouray and Ridgway School Districts. She is a Public Relations Society of America member.



HILARY LEWKOWITZ, MARKETING DIRECTOR

Hilary Lewkowitz brings nearly two decades of work in conservation and sustainable tourism development throughout Colorado, the western U.S. and around the world. She is the owner of Mountain Roots Consulting, which focuses on supporting sustainable communities through development strategy, marketing and program management. Hilary now leads the implementation of the Chamber's marketing strategy and activities, which includes new grant initiatives to boost economic activity in the off-peak tourism season.



TANYA ISHIKAWA, CONTENT & STORYTELLING CONSULTANT

Tanya Ishikawa has spent her career writing and editing through various platforms, starting as a public relations professional in Tokyo, Japan. For the past four years, she has been living and working in Ouray County, where she is enjoying a wide range of freelance assignments for magazines, specialty publications, books, websites, videos and other media based in the area and across Colorado. Her Chamber projects include editorial projects such as the Annual Report, Visitor's Guide, website content, and news releases.



JOSH GOWANS, WEBSITE & TECHNOLOGY PARTNER

Josh Gowans is founder of Peak Media Company, a marketing and technology consultancy based in Ridgway specializing in open source applications, website design, management and optimization, and CRM solutions. Josh manages all aspects of the Ridgway Area Chamber of Commerce's website, from design to system administration and CRM development. He's particularly focused on optimizing the site's content and deploying a CRM for membership, event and contribution management.



NICOLE GREENE, MEDIA & DESIGN PARTNER

Nicole Greene is a graphic and web designer who loves to work with clients in a collective and creative process to help them to grow and thrive. Her boutique design firm is Sprout Design Studio, founded in 2006 and working with entities in the San Juan Mountains, throughout the United States, as well as internationally. Sprout grows ideas into successful brand identities with brilliant strategies and stunning results by giving businesses an integrated look and feel as well as building platforms that connect brands to their target audiences.



ASHLEY KING-GRAMBLEY, COMMUNICATIONS CONSULTANT

Ashley King-Grambley has worked in the nonprofit field for over 20 years, specializing in arts nonprofit management. She has been the executive director of Weehawken Creative Arts since 2008, and the executive director of the Ridgway Chautauqua Society/Sherbino Theater since 2014. She leads the Alpenglow Arts Alliance, a group of nine regional arts organizations with the aim of collaborative arts promotion and planning, and volunteered on the Ridgway Creative District Committee and Space to Create Ridgway Advisory Board. In her Chamber role, she manages the Facebook page and publishes the weekly e-blasts.



JANE PULLIAM, ACCOUNTING

Jane Pulliam has worked for Middleton Accounting for 13 years as a client accountant for a variety of businesses in the Ridgway/Montrose area. She has been working for the Ridgway Area Chamber of Commerce for the last two years, helping provide financial statements and daily book-keeping. Jane has lived in Ridgway for 20 years and owned Drakes Restaurant with her husband, Drake, for 13 years, which helps her understand the workings of a business and taking care of the



JEANNE ROBERTSON, VISITOR CENTER COORDINATOR

Jeanne Robertson and her husband lived in Boulder in the '70s and '80s, when they would come to the San Juans to camp and hike. They fell in love with the area and decided someday they would live here. In 2001, they bought land on Log Hill Mesa, and in 2005, built their house. Before agreeing to become coordinator this fall, she worked at the Ridgway Visitor Center for three seasons, and just loves talking to guests and turning them on to our beautiful paradise.



JUDY KING, RETIRED VISITOR CENTER COORDINATOR

Judy King held the position for 11 and a half years! Her many seasons of hard work and dedication to the Ridgway community are deeply appreciated by the Visitor Center volunteers and Chamber board and staff. **Thank you, Judy!**

2018 RACC VOLUNTEERS

Eve Becker-Doyle
Annabel Clarke
Rick Gregory
Diane Hooper
Ninah Hunter
Tanya Ishikawa
Judy King
Sally Kornberg
Vonnie Kuijvenhoven
Lois Love

Mary Peck
Jim Pettingill
Jeanne Robertson
Karl Schaeffer
Irene Stith
Bonnie Tasch
Carole Turner
Jim Waltz
Karla Waltz
Christine Wilson-McGrady



2018 Ridgway Chamber
Youth Ambassador

ELIZABETH MUELLER



2019 Ridgway Chamber
Youth Ambassador

EMMA WALLIN

See page 15 for profiles of our ambassadors.



FIVE MARKETING THEMES

Arts & Entertainment
Culinary Experiences
Health & Wellness

History & Heritage
Outdoor Adventure



With the redesigned website and Visitor’s Guide in 2017, the Chamber launched five activity themes to better communicate and market our area’s assets to visitors. The organization of our promotional and informational content by these themes simplifies finding businesses, amenities and activities. These themes are in line with marketing best practices, and used consistently across our media, including print ads, social media and Visitor Center materials.

In 2018, Nicole Greene of Sprout Design Studio collaborated on the development of visual representations of the five themes. The result is a set of icons that represent all themes and provide quick visual cues identifying content as related to the corresponding activity, such as the mic stand and curtains for Arts & Entertainment and a train engine for History & Heritage. These icons are being used across marketing tools, including the Visitor’s Guide and itineraries.



Arts & Entertainment



Culinary Experiences



Health & Wellness



History & Heritage



Outdoor Adventure



Last year the Chamber made significant investments into the RidgwayColorado.com website, and we have continued those investments in 2018.

In partnership with Josh Gowans of Peak Media supported by Online Content Editor Tanya Ishikawa, we have significantly improved the site navigation, search engine optimization, and site content, including social media integration.

Features developed in the last 18 months include:

- + Creation of the now very popular "Things To Do" section as well as new online itineraries
- + Cross-referenced business listings on articles, resulting in more exposure for our members
- + More frequent tagging of member businesses and nonprofits in related articles
- + Regardless of membership level, all members have their own unique listing page, allowing for more text, links, image control, and page traffic (including a boost to our members' own website search engine optimization)
- + Membership sign-up and content submission can now be done, securely directly through the website

As a result of these improvements, RidgwayColorado.com is the #1 Google search result for keyword “Ridgway Colorado” as well as other high-value keywords. Site optimization is an ongoing effort; however, we're continuing to invest in additional content and our consultant team continues to monitor the site and keep membership content fresh and up to date.

We have now completed with the development of a CRM (customer relationship management) for the website. With leadership from Peak Media, we will be using CiviCRM technology to better manage Chamber membership and online content. The technology will enable various functionality options, including improved membership content management on the site. One benefit will also be our ability to automate the membership renewal process, which will ultimately save the Chamber significant time on membership drives. Ultimately we believe this will be an important tool for us to leverage in a variety of ways, and allow us to better serve our members and function at a higher level, even with our relatively limited staffing capacity.

We are seeing the direct results of our investments through the site’s analytics and visitation reporting. These improvements have significant implications and opportunities for our local business community.

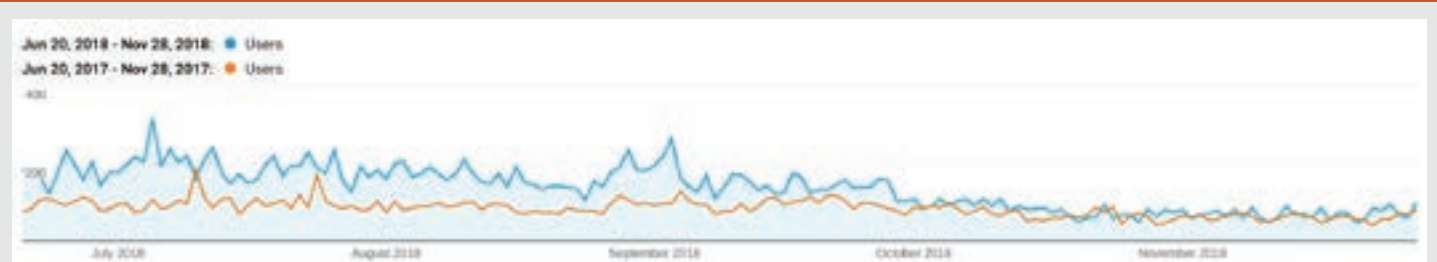
From mid-June 2017 to November 2018, visitors to RidgwayColorado.com increased by 67.49 percent, new visitors increased by 62.95 percent, and sessions (website visits) increased by 60.03 percent.

* The reporting period begins in mid-June 2017, and goes through the end of November 2018, because tracking began in mid-June and data prior to that is currently unavailable. Also, December 2018 data was not available at the time of this report's creation.

+

AUDIENCE METRICS

The year-over-year* audience statistics demonstrate significant growth in total number of website visits (sessions) and unique visitors.



Year-over-year comparison of the total number of website visitors

RIDGWAYCOLORADO.COM

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE METRICS



We view RidgwayColorado.com as our most powerful asset to support the Ridgway business community and we are excited by the continued progress.



CHANNELS - WHERE WEBSITE VISITORS COME FROM

We have seen significant growth in website visitors across all channels from 2017 through 2018.

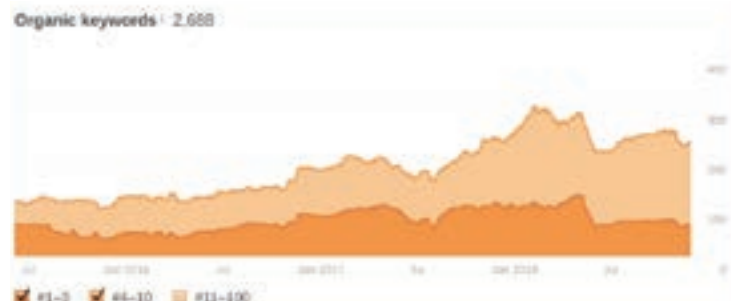
- The strongest growth across channels was from organic searches (i.e. visitors who come to the website through search engines) and direct access (i.e. visitors who arrive by typing RidgwayColorado.com directly in their internet browsers).
- Referral and social traffic, where visitors come to the site from other websites and social media, both showed growth, but represent the least significant channels. It's likely that referral traffic represents an opportunity in that local businesses and Chamber members, as well as regional tourism, are best positioned to backlink to RidgwayColorado.com to drive traffic to it.

The Chamber will continue to share and learn from this data to improve outcomes for our business community. *Note that the Chamber was not tracking site analytics prior to 2017, and so this reporting only looks at these two years.*



KEYWORD GROWTH

This keyword growth chart highlights the number of keywords for which RidgwayColorado.com ranks, specifically those in the 1 to 3 positions, and 4 to 10 positions on search engine results pages (SERPs). These are generally considered the “front page” of search results. In general, trends are strong and the site is gaining keyword positions on the front page.



RIDGWAY VISITOR'S GUIDE

AND COLLABORATION WITH THE OURAY TOURISM OFFICE

The 2019 Visitor's Guide is on its way to the printers. With the editorial leadership of our Content and Storytelling Consultant Tanya Ishikawa, the Ridgway Chamber made additional improvements on the guide content, including the creation of a more countywide narrative on select themes. In 2019, for the first time, the guide contains both Ridgway and Ouray under a single, shared cover, which will significantly improve the user friendliness of the guide. Plus, the combined guide content is another step in the right direction with our Ridgway/Ouray collaboration.

OFF-SEASON PROMOTION & MARKETING STRATEGY

We are very excited to share that the Ridgway Chamber, together with the Ouray Tourism Office, received a Small Marketing Match Grant for \$10,000 from the Colorado Tourism Office (CTO), which is based on a 25 percent match (\$2,500) from our organization. Led by the efforts of Marketing Director Hilary Lewkowitz, the Chamber and OTO are collaborating on the grant in an effort to increase countywide off-peak season visitation and visitor-driven economic opportunities. Both organizations recognize that summer tourism visitation is close to maximum capacity, while businesses struggle to keep a consistent cash flow during the off-peak seasons of October through April. We are creating a series of itineraries and narratives that highlight our local businesses and off-peak season attractions to key target markets. Based on the grant requirements, these 2019 marketing efforts will begin in February and end by October. We see this grant as only the beginning of a new and ongoing strategy to focus marketing efforts specifically on the off-peak season. This is the first successful application to the CTO with the Ridgway Chamber as the lead applicant.

As a result of our growing cooperation with the Ouray Tourism Office, 100,000 copies of the Visitor's Guide were distributed in 2018, and will be again in 2019. The recent content improvements built upon a foundation of updated, reorganized content of the Ridgway guide, made through Chamber investments in 2017. As a result, the overall guide has developed into a cohesive narrative aligned well with the five marketing themes.



Another positive change to the guide with multiple benefits for the community has been the addition of a welcome message from the Ridgway Chamber Youth Ambassador. Our 2018 Youth Ambassador Elizabeth Mueller introduced last year's guide, and 2019 Youth Ambassador Emma Wallin is featured in the introduction of this year's guide. Their young voices and perspectives provide fresh ideas about the Ridgway community, highlighting how great our area is for young visitors and families. (You can learn more about the ambassador program and both high school students on page 15 of this report.)

COLORADO CREATIVE CORRIDOR

ITINERARY DEVELOPMENT & STATEWIDE PROMOTION



The Ridgway Chamber has teamed up with the Ridgway Creative District in gathering and presenting marketing content and local itineraries to the Colorado Tourism Office (CTO) for the Colorado Creative Corridor project, which was kicked off at the Creative Industries Summit in Greeley in May 2018. The Chamber provided \$5,000 in matching funds in order for Ridgway to be included in this important project, which will bring additional visitors to the area during all times of the year. Not only will they come to the area but with the help of the itineraries, they will visit a variety of businesses and “creatives” in the area, bringing income during months that have historically been slower economically. 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.

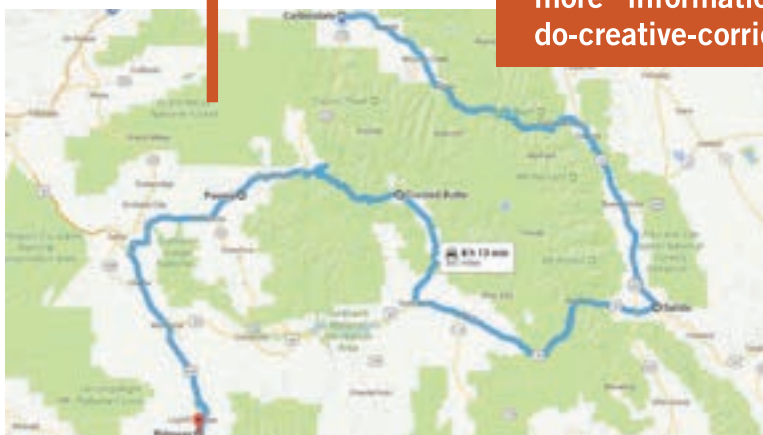
Itinerary Development and Statewide Promotion

Itinerary development is a project that we continue to work on and the itineraries are now included on RidgwayColorado.com as well as Colorado.com in the CTO’s Field Guide/Creative Corridor web pages. Marketing Director Hilary Lewkowitz and Storytelling Consultant Tanya Ishikawa have been collaborating on creation of these itineraries, which are important assets for the Visitor Center as well.

Itinerary development is an important way to collaborate with local partners and create strong, action-oriented content for both visitors and locals, which ultimately leads to more customers for local businesses and nonprofits. The Chamber is committed to giving exposure to all five categories of businesses, and ultimately develop itineraries to include a wide range of activities, themes and times of the year, especially during the off-season months.

CTO GRANT

We are very excited to confirm the award of a \$25,000 CTO grant to support the Corridor initiative again in 2019. This year, the \$5,000 community match requirement will be reached by splitting the expense with the Town of Ridgway. We believe it is important for this to continue to be a joint effort between the Chamber and the Town’s Creative District, and that its benefits have not been truly achieved yet. You can find more information at: colorado.com/fieldguide/colorado-creative-corridor



Through both the Creative Corridor project and increased engagement with the CTO staff, Ridgway has been taking advantage of additional online promotion opportunities. Web ads that were placed on Colorado.com this year targeted travelers with specific interests and highlighted how Ridgway delivers on those interests. Taglines for the ads include: “Arts & Entertainment – Ridgway Style”, “A Haven for Foodies”, and “Beyond Adventure: Hot Springs, Saunas, Yoga, Massage, & More”. As other promotional collaborations come up, Chamber consultants will be evaluating them and submitting when the return on investment is considered high.

ONLINE + PRINT ADVERTISING

PROMOTION THROUGH WEB AND MEDIA



Getting our
message out
to the world.

The Chamber coordinated co-op ads with local businesses in the 2018 San Juan Skyways publication as well as in three quarterly editions of the Colorado Life magazine. Ridgway and its five activity themes have been part of three Colorado Life publications this year, offering a major distribution channel not previously accessed by the Chamber.

We continue to receive weekly leads from Go-Colorado.com, and Visitor's Guide requests are up 20 percent from 2017 to 2018. We process these leads by sending each one a digital copy of the guide and adding them to our weekly "Specials & Events" e-blast, which now goes out to more than 2,000 targeted recipients.

The Chamber is continuing to develop its online presence on Facebook as well as Instagram and Twitter. We post local business specials and events on Facebook, and are starting to develop content for our Instagram and Twitter pages. We will continue to grow a strong online presence, promoting local businesses and Ridgway as a whole.

As a way of increasing our photo inventory for use in online and print advertising and promotions, Content Consultant Tanya Ishikawa organized the "Welcome to Ridgway – Think Outside Photo Contest" in April. The contest was timed to gather photos to submit to a Colorado Tourism Office promotion during an international travel professional event in Denver, plus many of the photos have now been used for social media posts and the Visitor's Guide.

ADVERTISING CHANNELS

- + **SAN JUAN SKYWAYS**
- + **COLORADO LIFE**
- + **GO-COLORADO.COM**
- + **CHAMBER E-BLAST**
- + **SOCIAL MEDIA**
Facebook, Instagram & Twitter
- + **TRAVEL ARTICLES**
Mentions in various local, state and national
magazines and newspapers

VISITOR CENTER

AND TOWN GATEWAY RE-DESIGN PROJECT



Retired Visitor Center and Volunteer Coordinator Judy King was recognized, together with all of the Chamber volunteers at a volunteer appreciation dinner in September.

Approximately 6,000 visitors come into the Ridgway Visitor Center every year. The center and its' volunteer staff remain a very high priority for 2019. We are deeply grateful to the wonderful volunteers who staff the center and make its operations possible. An information kiosk that sits on the Visitor Center grounds was donated to us in late 2018, and we intend to make it operational in 2019. Through many center upgrades, we are highlighting the diverse activities, history and assets of the community, and directing visitors to our member businesses.



The Chamber has recently initiated a conversation with the Town of Ridgway about redesigning the Visitor Center building and surrounding land. The relocation of the outdoor displays of the Railroad Museum to Railroad Street helped remind us of the important need to assess the long-term future and design of the Visitor Center building and lot. Visitor Center numbers are down since the Railroad Museum started its transition, and the exterior of the center is not attracting new visitors due to a desperate need of improvement and repair that do not reflect well on the community. This critical asset for the entire community is one that will ultimately require much more significant investment than the Chamber itself is capable of making to realize its potential.

As a first step, the Chamber is applying for a Colorado Tourism Office grant to create a strategic plan to redesign and reimagine the Visitor Center and surrounding land. The Town of Ridgway (the owner of the Visitor Center building and surrounding land) has endorsed this redesign project, and we are excited to partner with the Town as we think through, as a community, how best to welcome visitors to Ridgway. In particular, we would like to explore ways to better direct visitors to our local businesses and design new information tools, including ones that leverage modern technology, to ensure visitors can receive information at any time in the year (the Visitor Center is currently only open May-October).

If we successfully receive CTO funding, the process of creating a strategic plan will take place during the spring of 2019. Part of the strategic planning process will involve input from all stakeholders, which includes local businesses and community members at large. We look forward to partnering with the Town and others to make the necessary improvements, not only in support of visitors and the Visitor Center, but for Ridgway's overall image and the satisfaction of residents as well.



MEMBERSHIP

SERVICES & BENEFITS

The Chamber Board and staff are excited to serve the business and nonprofit members of the Ridgway Area Chamber of Commerce.



Image: Gary Ratcliff

Chamber Membership Services

Over the last two years the Chamber has focused on laying the foundation for a service organization that can bring bottom-line value to the local business community by investing in core assets like the RidgwayColorado.com website, Visitor Center, Visitor's Guide, and advertising.

For 2019, we will continue to invest in paid advertisements, both in print and online, to better market Ridgway and direct more visitors to our member businesses and our website, RidgwayColorado.com, which is now the #1 Google search result for "Ridgway Colorado." We look forward to leveraging this to the benefit of our membership by being the #1 resource for travel and business information for the Ridgway area.

We strive to bring additional visibility and credibility to our community's businesses. We believe that being a Chamber member increases positive perceptions about the business among consumers and other business owners. We also assist in boosting our members' visibility in the community, increasing their networking opportunities, acquiring more potential customer referrals, having a voice in local government, and providing a way to advertise their promotions and events through our website and e-blasts.



Weekly E-Blast Redesign and Email Marketing Updates

The Ridgway Chamber's weekly "Specials & Events" e-blast now goes out to more than 2,000 targeted recipients. The newsletter format was redesigned in 2018, to better highlight businesses, nonprofits and the happenings in our community. Chamber board and staff frequently receive feedback about the significance of this marketing tool to both advertisers and readers.

We plan to distribute our first-ever quarterly email newsletter to visitors in 2019, to further support our efforts of boosting tourism economic opportunities in the off season. In partnership with Go-Colorado.com, the Chamber has been building email leads since 2017. Additionally, we will be gaining leads through implementation of the CTO Small Marketing Match grant. With a good base of email addresses, we are now in a good position to launch this information source for visitors. The newsletter will mostly focus on off-peak season events, activities and other opportunities based on the five marketing themes.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Over the last two years, the Chamber has focused on laying the foundation for a service organization that can bring bottom-line value to the local business community by investing in valuable benefits like the RidgwayColorado.com website, Visitor Center, Visitor's Guide, and advertising. For 2019, we will continue to invest in additional member benefits including paid advertisements, both in print and online, to better market Ridgway and direct more visitors to our member businesses. We look forward to leveraging these investments for our membership and serving as the #1 resource for travel and business information for the Ridgway area.

 Membership Benefits		BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP INVESTMENT *		\$125	\$195	\$250
WEBSITE	Unique business listing page with custom images, unlimited hyperlinks, including to website, Facebook, as well as unlimited text and tagging to site content related to your business.	✓	✓	✓
	Priority order appearance in website articles in which your business is tagged. (Businesses are highlighted in articles under the section entitled "You may also be interested in..." May be listed in up to two business categories on website, when applicable.		✓	✓
	Featured business (large primary image) in your business category (Ex. Accommodations or Dining). Restaurants also featured on the homepage of the website within the "A Foodie Town" display. May be listed in up to three business categories on website, when applicable.			✓
VISITOR'S GUIDE	Optional grid listing within the annual Ridgway/Duray Visitors Guide, with 100,000+ distribution (\$75 value)†	✓	✓	✓
	Ability to list your business or organization in up to three categories in business grid, when applicable			✓
	Discounted pricing on ads within the annual Ridgway/Duray Visitors Guide, a value of between \$185-\$1,200 depending on ad purchase		✓	✓
VISITOR'S CENTER	Brochure rack space for business materials	✓	✓	✓
	Logo or image display during large screen TV video loop		✓	✓
	Video content displayed during large screen TV video loop			✓
E-MAILS	Receive both "Events & Specials" and Members-Only "Business News-editions" 2000+ local and visitor subscribers and growing	✓	✓	✓
	Two weekly newsletter ads per year	✓		
	Unlimited newsletter ads per year		✓	✓
FACEBOOK	Two ad requests per year on RACC and One Ridgway pages with 1,400+ followers (non-boosted)	✓	✓	✓
	One boosted ad request per year on RACC and One Ridgway pages with 1,400+ followers (\$10 Value)		✓	
	Two boosted ad requests per year on RACC and One Ridgway pages with 1,400+ followers (\$20 Value)			✓
MARKETING	Special event marketing including ribbon-cutting ceremonies		✓	✓
	Discounted co-op advertising opportunities in publications such as Colorado Life, San Juan Skyways, The Montrose Press (as available)	✓	✓	✓
FRIENDS OF THE CHAMBER MEMBERSHIP - \$75: A membership for our individual, non-business RACC backers. All funds from this level of membership go to projects such as beautification and gardening at the Ridgway Visitor Center and the Ridgway Youth Apprenticeship program.				
NOTES: * A Bronze level \$125/yr includes Website, Silver level benefits, and Silver level nonprofits receive Gold level benefits. † Grid listings are an optional benefit that requires the member contact the publisher during the ad procurement phase. RACC covers the expense for member listings, so long as the member is active by Nov 30th before the publishing date.				
				
150 RACECOURSE ROAD / PO BOX 544 RIDGWAY, CO 81432 • 970-626-5181 • RIDGWAYCOLORADO.COM				

We are excited to provide these benefits and encourage our members to share feedback and ideas on how the Chamber can bring more value to their businesses. Please reach out to Program Coordinator Pamela Cannalite at pamela@ridgwaycolorado.com. We are proud to partner and work in service of our business community.



RIDGWAY CHAMBER OPEN

A BENEFIT FOR THE YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM



**2018 Winning Teams
Best Score and Best Net Score**



GOLF OPEN

The Ridgway Chamber Golf Open was reinvigorated in 2018, with a new purpose: to raise funds for the new Ridgway Youth Apprenticeship Program.

The tournament on Sept. 15 at the Divide Ranch & Club raised more than \$3,500 in net proceeds, which will provide scholarships for at least three Ridgway students to participate in multi-week apprenticeships at local businesses in 2019. A special thank you to Peri Gore of Mayfly Events, who provided pro-bono event management for this year's golf tournament, in partnership with Chamber Program Coordinator Pamela Cannalite.

The program grew out of the chamber's philosophy that local business success is predicated on local talent, and that the town's first priority talent pool should be its existing residents and youth. The apprenticeships will include ongoing training and professional development above and beyond a traditional summer job, providing extra staffing capacity to local businesses at no cost during the busy summer months.

In other youth outreach, the Chamber actively sought the participation of middle and high school students at this year's Golf Open. Two student teams competed and the NuVista Credit Union Youth Team earned the Best Net Score, securing them a name plate on the Billings Artworks Trophies displayed at the Divide Ranch & Club and the Ridgway Visitor Center. Two adult teams tied for the Best Gross Score, Ridgway Lodge & Suites and J Bar M Ranch. A coin toss determined that the Lodge & Suites team will get their team member names on the trophies.

We were very proud of the results of this year's golf tournament and impact that success can have on the community in 2019 and beyond. To thrive in a rapidly changing economy, our young people need meaningful, workforce experiences. Similarly, businesses need fresh ideas and perspectives to compete. Apprenticeships can be effective strategies for local businesses to not only advance the future of our youth, but that of their business as well.

Lodging Tax dollars were not allocated to the golf tournament and all apprenticeship funding comes entirely from the profits of the tournament.



YOUTH AMBASSADOR PROGRAM & YOUTH VOLUNTEER FAIR



Last year, the Chamber launched its Youth Ambassador program to bring a youthful voice to the promotion of Ridgway and provide a local student with professional skills development. The ambassador's duties include writing the welcome message in the annual Visitor's Guide, posting on the RidgwayColorado Instagram account, and providing a link between the Chamber and the youth community.

The 2018 ambassador, Elizabeth Mueller, is active in various arts activities, including piano, trumpet, violin, ballet and pointe, visual art, acting, and singing. She plans to attend a college with a great theater program. Her school activities include Key Club, Student Council and National Honors Society, and she can also be seen volunteering around the area, especially for the Communities that Care Coalition. Elizabeth was recognized for her Chamber work in 2018, with an award of a \$500 college scholarship at the Ridgway Chamber Golf Open's luncheon. (Scholarship funding is derived from membership dues and other income, not Lodging Tax receipts)

In fall 2017, the Chamber sponsored a Youth Volunteer Fair at Ridgway Secondary School to introduce middle and high school students to local opportunities and organizations. A fair was held again in spring 2018, and the plan is to continue the fairs each spring to bring together our nonprofit and youth communities for mutual benefit.



In October 2018, we were excited to welcome Ridgway High School junior Emma Wallin as our 2019 Youth Ambassador, selected by a committee based on an interview and application process. Another extremely active student, Emma is involved in dance (jazz, ballet, hip hop), aerial silks, soccer, teaching, traveling, and organizational leadership through Weehawken Creative Arts, Sources of Strength, Student Council, Knowledge Bowl Team, and club and school soccer teams. She has also worked as a Ouray Hot Springs Pool lifeguard and swimming teacher, Montrose Memorial Hospital volunteer, Fortuna Tierra's Fun Run volunteer, and Pinhead Institute volunteer teacher. Her future plans include earning a bachelor's degree from University of Nebraska Lincoln and a medical degree from a graduate school, becoming a neonatologist, volunteering for Doctors without Borders, and continuing to travel on personal and work trips.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

HOW WE MANAGE OUR RESOURCES



We are happy to report an 11 percent increase in Lodging Tax receipts from 2017 to 2018: \$50,119 in 2017 and \$55,837 in 2018. We look forward to continued progress in 2019.

The Chamber managed a 2018 Lodging Tax budget of \$67,000. This Town-approved budget reflected a projection of \$50,000 in 2018 Lodging Tax receipts combined with a surplus fund balance of \$17,000 from 2017. Carrying over a healthy fund balance each calendar year is critical for the Chamber's financial sustainability. The vast majority of Lodging Tax receipts are not received until the latter half of each year and so this funding is necessary to make it through the January-June period. We will be carrying over \$13,523 in surplus funding to 2019, which will be reflected in the 2019 budget request to the Town of Ridgway in February.

Please note that not all of the activities reflected in this annual report are supported by Lodging Tax receipts, including the golf tournament, Youth Ambassador and Apprenticeship programs. Lodging Tax receipts are used exclusively for Ridgway marketing and promotion activities.

In 2017, the Chamber aligned its Quickbooks reporting structures with the Town-approved marketing plan. We also outsourced all of our accounting and financial reporting to Ridgway-based Middleton Accounting. We have received exceptional service from Middleton Accounting, and the partnership has led to dramatic improvements in the organization's financial management and reporting structures.

The accompanying financial report is a direct pull from QuickBooks, and reflects a detailed P&L statement for the Lodging Tax (i.e. marketing) budget for 2018.

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Accrual Basis

Ridgway Area Chamber of Commerce Profit & Loss for Lodging Tax Class January through December 2018

	Jan - Dec 18
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
Lodging Tax Income	55,836.59
Total Income	55,836.59
Gross Profit	55,836.59
Expense	
Advertising and Promotion	
Collaboration and Networking	95.17
Itineraries	131.25
Online Media and Advertising	8,972.38
Print Media and Advertising	4,325.52
Ridgway Online Presence Prj	168.20
Visitor's Guide Fulfillment, P	3,137.50
Website Upgrades and Operations	5,727.19
Total Advertising and Promotion	22,557.21
Creative District Corridor	5,105.00
Payroll Expenses	
Staff	23,927.60
Total Payroll Expenses	23,927.60
Visitor Center Operations	
Electric	289.68
Natural Gas	322.06
Property & Liability Insurance	1,018.00
Repairs and Maintenance	800.17
Telephone and Internet	1,291.01
Trash	60.36
Volunteer Expense	2,896.02
Water Cooler	43.74
Visitor Center Operations - Other	420.53
Total Visitor Center Operations	7,141.57
Visitor Center Upgrades/Merch	582.50
Total Expense	59,313.88
Net Ordinary Income	-3,477.29
Net Income	-3,477.29



2019 AND BEYOND...

In 2019, the priority activities of the Ridgway Area Chamber of Commerce will build upon the successes of the past two years. We will continue investments into RidgwayColorado.com as THE information portal about Ridgway activities and businesses, as well as a convenient way for members to access member benefits.

The Chamber will continue its valuable collaborations with the Ouray Tourism Office, developing a new off-season marketing strategy, ready for implementation by the fall. The Visitor's Guide will be updated at the end of the year, keeping the improved layout, activity themes and countywide focus, while adding new business and event information.

We expect to see more results from leveraging advertising and promotion opportunities through the Colorado Creative Corridor program. We plan to make progress together with the Town of Ridgway on developing a vision for the redesign of the Visitor Center and surrounding land. Plus, we will remain focused on finding more partners for our local business community, from statewide media and tourism contacts to local youth who will become key assets for our future economic success.

We thank all of our members, the Town of Ridgway, our staff, contractors, volunteers, the Ouray Tourism Office, and the local business community at large for your continued support and partnership. We look forward to a fruitful and productive 2019.



Image: Pamela Cannalte