ANNUAL REPORT 2018

WE ARE THE DOERS

WE ARE THE PEOPLE COMMITTED TO BUILDING DOWNTOWNS THAT ARE PROSPEROUS, EQUITABLE, CREATIVE & WELCOMING.

UNITED IN CAUSE, WE ARE COLORADO'S DOWNTOWN CHAMPIONS.

downtowncoloradoinc.org
A Note from the Executive Director

Katherine Correll

In 2018, Downtown Colorado, Inc. (DCI) celebrated 36 years of helping revitalize Colorado’s downtowns and ensuring their continued vibrancy! DCI remains the premier organization in the state dedicated to building downtowns that are prosperous, equitable, creative, and welcoming.

We are the Doers.

DCI members know that when it is time to act, make change, evolve and engage, DCI is the resource to call.

In 2018, DCI worked with our partners to ask and answer tough questions: How do small communities shape their presence online? What are innovative means of engaging citizens? What can rural communities do to attract more visitors to their region?

These questions will remain with us in 2019 as DCI continues to look at the bigger picture with all of you.

Rural Digital Marketing

DCI was pleased to receive a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) to support our project, Digital Marketing for Creative Entrepreneurs. The project included two phases: First, Planning for Regional Attraction and second, Digital Marketing for Creative Entrepreneurs. Through the grant, we have been able to work closely with six rural communities throughout Colorado: Eads, Center, Gunnison, Limon, Paonia, and Saguache. Throughout the fall and winter, DCI hosted stakeholder meetings in each community to learn more about their individual needs, audited their digital presence, and created action plans for each town to help strengthen and unify their online community identity.

The second phase of the project will work with select businesses from each community to audit and upgrade their website. Each entrepreneur selected will partner with DCI to develop a strategic digital marketing plan for their business.

Americorps Vista

Serving Where Needed

Established in 2016, DCI’s AmeriCorps “Downtown Capacity Builder” VISTA program, in partnership with the Corporation for National Community Service (CNCS), has placed Volunteers in Service to America (VISTAs) with public and non-profit organizations including Downtown Development Authorities, municipalities, Main Street Programs, and economic development organizations throughout the state. AmeriCorps VISTA volunteers work full-time building organizational capacity and the foundations of much needed programs within their assigned community. In 2018 nine VISTAs were placed in communities including Steamboat Springs, Montrose, Longmont, and Manitou Springs with the possibility of growth in 2019. See “Impacts” on the second page of this brochure for VISTA program statistics.

Carl is a wonderful asset for us. It’s a mystery how someone that young can be so full of knowledge. His insight into the workings of government is remarkable. Carl stepped into the job like a native and has elevated the names of Walsenburg and Huerfano County in circles we didn’t even know existed.

DCI’S Vibrant Downtowns Conference

April 10-13 | Boulder

The 2018 IN THE GAME Vibrant Downtown Event in Boulder, CO engaged 311 participants, featured 36+ speakers, 12 Colorado Brief lightning presentations, 12 mobile tours in Boulder and neighboring downtown areas, and much more.

IN THE GAME brought together community stakeholders, private and public sector development professionals, and local governments to engage with current issues facing local communities to spark creative problem-solving in an educational and collaborative setting. IN THE GAME provided a platform for the Colorado Challenge Accelerator Program focused on turning nine Colorado community challenges into opportunities. Community challenges included a diversity of participants and challenge topic from building civic engagement in Monument, street design in Red Cliff, forming an urban renewal authority in Idaho Springs, housing in Leadville, to historic preservation in La Junta, and Civic Pride in Lamar.

The conference featured four keynote speakers: Elizabeth Garner of the Colorado State Demographer’s office; Brad Segal, founder and president of P.U.M.A.; Michelle Kobayashi of the National Research Center; and Vanessa German, founder of Love Front Porch and ARTHouse. These speakers touched on a variety of issues from community arts initiatives to aging populations that impact towns across Colorado. The 2019 conference will take place in Aspen, CO on April 9-12.
Colorado Challenge Accelerator Program

The Colorado Challenge Accelerator Program transforms a community’s challenge into an opportunity with a written proposal and action plan, financing approach, and team of community partners ready to implement. DCI Colorado Challenge started in 2017, and with nine communities added in 2018, has now worked with 19 communities, mostly low-income and rural. Each year DCI has seen greater momentum in the communities’ ability to use the plan and partnerships developed to move the needle on housing, civic pride, and blight removal. While the program is in the beginning stages of development, the concept is based on the idea that “the two factors that effectively help people achieve the behavior change they desire are incentives and accountability.” (Thomas Oppong, Featured at Inc. Magazine, Business Insider, Forbes, and Entrepreneur.) The Colorado Challenge offers a network of peer communities and team members interested in seeing the proposals succeed, and eventually DCI hopes to secure incentives to support implementation efforts.

Case Study
Monument, Colorado

DCI was pleased to follow up on Monument’s Challenge Program next steps: to hold a fun event looking how to continue engagement with “Pop-Up Projects and Tactical Urbanism in Monument” that grew out of a challenge studio at the 2018 IN THE GAME conference. Monument served as a challenge studio hoping to address the challenge of engaging a community divided by I-25. Monument was seeking to build stronger awareness and engagement with the historic downtown in advance of the 140th Anniversary of Downtown Monument.

DCI partnered with Monument to host a Downtown Institute to continue the ideas and energy created during the 2018 Colorado Challenge Program.

The Monument Downtown Institute featured examples of low-cost ways to implement temporary pop-up projects and hands-on activities. Participants engaged with the ideas and created their own pop-up bike lanes, creative temporary signage, and painted crosswalks. DCI partnered with facilitators from C-B Design, Radian, Inc., and Yes Plan Do! to make this event engaging and educational. Participants also spent time in “mini challenge studios” to brainstorm best approaches for implementation: demonstration and experimentation, avoiding “fuzzy visioning,” and the value of incrementalism.

2018 Successes by the Numbers

9 Colorado communities selected to participate in our Colorado Challenge Program

21 Events including 10 educational sessions, 4 downtown improvement district meetings, 3 URA trainings, 2 downtown district bus tours, and 2 downtown institutes

50+ Educational opportunities offered at our IN THE GAME conference

120+ New DCI members

700 Participants at DCI events representing 82 different communities across Colorado
What DCI Membership Means for All of Colorado

People who invest in Downtown Colorado, Inc. memberships — whether individual business owners, local agencies, or entire town governments — are plugged in to an active statewide network of advocates and experts who have one unified goal: strengthening and sustaining business districts throughout Colorado.

The solutions DCI offers are driven directly by the unique challenges voiced by our communities. In 2019, DCI will be revising and restructuring membership levels and benefits to provide DCI members with a more personalized way to utilize DCI’s advisory services, educational programs, and informational resources.

Whether you’re new to DCI or a current member wanting to maximize your benefits, contact us at membership@downtowncoloradoinc.org or 303.282.0625 for more information.

What’s Next in 2019

In 2019, we’re focused on building awareness of DCI membership benefits for the local government and quasi-governmental members and all of Colorado. DCI is also restructuring membership levels and benefits to better service the needs of Colorado’s communities.

In 2019, DCI is expanding its Colorado Challenge Accelerator Program based on the success of this program in the first two years. The Challenge Program will help our Colorado communities establish a plan for community-wide initiatives to foster sustainable community and economic development including public, private, and non-profit partners moving forward as a business-friendly destination for entrepreneurs and community initiatives.

DCI will expand its work with Business Improvement Districts, Downtown Development Authorities, and Urban Renewal Authorities. Local government members can expect more opportunities to host and attend workshops, engage skilled consultants to structure solution-based action plans with DCI’s Advisory Panels, and tap into resources and training remotely with enhanced communications.

What do you want to see more of?

Let us know at marketing@downtowncoloradoinc.org

Executive Committee
Steve Art (President), Economic Development Manager for the City & URA of Wheat Ridge
Wyatt Jones (Vice-President), Colorado Housing & Finance Authority
Tara Marshall (Treasurer), City of Trinidad
Elaine Brett (Secretary), North Fork Valley Liaison/Regional Representative
DiAnn Butler (Immediate-Past President), Grand County Economic Development
Katherine Correll, Executive Director, Downtown Colorado, Inc.

Voting Members
Karen Current, Principal/Marketing Director, DHM Design
Rick Kron, Spencer Fane & Grishaw
Erin Lyng, Senior Associate, Progressive Urban Management
Brandy Reitter, Town of Eagle
Terri Takata-Smith, Downtown Boulder Partnership
Jariah Waller, Executive Director, Colorado Springs Urban Renewal
Carolynne White, Brownstein, Hyatt, Farber, and Schreck

Program Partners
Jennifer Henninger, Planning Manager RG and Associates
Sunny Song, Crowe Horwath LLP

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