

2017 - The Year in Review

2017 was another productive year for the Corporation and the County.

The Corporation continued to pursue the affordable housing tax credit project, also known as Collegiate Commons. Following the award, the Town of Buena Vista and Buena Vista School District applied and were not successful in obtaining additional funding to accomplish the “land swap” of the baseball field for construction of Collegiate Commons. Through a series of meetings and tremendous support from the County, Town of Buena Vista, Paul Moltz and ACA Products and John Diesslin and Diesslin Structures, over \$300,000 in labor and materials was donated to begin construction of the baseball field within the Town’s recreation park. The County and Town Public Works crews performed considerable work clearing field. The field is becoming a “field of dreams” and funding from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) is pending.

Work continues in Salida on the Spartan Heights project. This partnership between the Salida School District and the Corporation helped launch a career and technical education program for construction trades with the support of Colorado Mountain College. The project is being supported by a grant from the Daniels Fund, and is receiving State and national recognition. The District and Corporation have authored the “Colorado Rural Communities Playbook for Work Based Learning and Career and Technical Education”. These efforts as well as the relationship we have with the Buena Vista School District move us forward in developing the workforce of tomorrow. Our schools continue to be a source of pride and key institutions for growth and development of the community.

Members of the Corporation led by Commissioner Greg Felt, who serves as the Intergovernmental Liaison Corporation Board member, helped to launch the Envision Project in partnership with the County and the Central Colorado Conservancy. The challenge is described in part in the initial report as “community members remain able to live locally and benefit from and increasingly diversified economy” will become an area of interest for the Corporation to continue to add input. Several members of the Corporation are also involved in ensuring the farming and ranching community interests are represented.

The Corporation worked with Representative Jim Wilson, who sponsored legislation to create a pilot program for integration of unmanned aerial systems (UAS) into public safety functions such as firefighting and accident reconstruction. Mt. Princeton Hot Springs Resort hosted a conference in March of 2017 that was co-sponsored with the Center of Excellence for Advanced Technology Aerial Firefighting; Colorado Department of Public Safety; the CCEDC; and the Chaffee County Unmanned Aerial Systems Advisory Board. The event was attended by over 125 public safety representatives primarily from Colorado as well as from other parts of the country. The CCEDC is in conversation with Western State Colorado University regarding a joint project with the Center of Excellence to conduct research to integrate drones into the WSCU Search and Rescue operation, the only collegiate certified program in the nation. Salida School District offered a UAS course as an elective to students for the second year, and the CCEDC is sponsoring an intern from Salida High School for 2017-18 academic year.

Colorado was successful in securing the Outdoor Retailer Trade Show, and the Corporation is working with members to attract light manufacturing, sales and marketing, and high tech companies that represent the Outdoor Recreation industry. The Corporation is also committed to work with existing employers to improve the business environment and ensure the County remains “Open for Business” with the cooperation and support of local government.

Finally, the Corporation is electing new Board members who will bring energy and ideas to support a growing economy. The Corporation and local businesses including Mt. Princeton Hot Springs Resort and Heart of the Rockies Regional Medical Center, and several local businesses in the Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Industry are among the initiatives that create a way forward to address the growing interest in Chaffee County as a destination for tourists, and young families and those looking forward to or seeking retirement and a lifestyle with a unique sense of place.

Current Board Members:

Jeff Post, Owner/Broker, First Colorado Land Office
CCEDC Chair

Tom Warren, General Manager, Princeton Holdings, LLC
CCEDC Vice-Chair

Charles Abel, CPA, Abel & Eggleston, CPAS, LLC
CCEDC Treasurer

Randy Crane, President, Comfort Gas, Inc.

Paul Erickson, CEO, Sangre de Cristo Electric Association, Inc.

Greg Felt, Chaffee County Commissioner (District 2)

Charles Forster, President, Collegiate Peaks Bank

Paul Moltz, Founder, ACA Products

Bob Morasko, CEO, Heart of the Rockies Regional Medical Center

Board Members Elect:

Gwen Allen, Owner, Central Colorado Title & Escrow

Charlie Chupp, Owner, Fading West Development

Joe Smith, Vice President, High Country Bank

Carlin Walsh, Founder/CEO, Elevation Beer Company