



Image: Lone Cone Photography

MISSION: PROMOTE BUSINESS, COMMUNITY GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE TOWN OF RIDGWAY AND THE SURROUNDING AREA.



Image: Ryan Turek



Image: Jake Niece



Image: Tanya Ishikawa





Image: Lone Cone Photography

## FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

### RIDGWAY AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Ridgway Area Chamber of Commerce (RACC) Board of Directors is pleased to share this 2022 annual report. This year, the board continued to navigate, evolve and progress as a supportive entity for our Ridgway-area business community with many new board members and staff. The RACC was proud to support the Volunteer and Career Fair, reopen the Visitors Center with slightly longer hours post pandemic and champion the return of the Golf Open in September.

The RACC continued to actively participate in a variety of regional and local partnerships to ensure alignment with the greater community throughout the course of 2022. Groups and initiatives included: participation in the Stargazing Marketing Matching grant through the CTO i.e. Colorado Tourism Office, collaboration with the Ridgway Creative Main Street Group now referred to as Ridgway FUSE, monthly meetings with the Colorado Creative Corridor, and continued to manage the Ridgway Visitor's Center. We supported two business after hours events this year: one at Ridgway Lodge and Suites and the other at The Joinery.

During 2021, the Chamber went through many transitions and changes in regards to the RACC board of directors as well as its staff members. In 2022, Ashley Perkins completed her first year as the RACC Executive Director as well as David Nunn and myself in our roles as Vice President and President respectively. We are proud to have welcomed Jon Elliot with Aspen-SavaTree company and Frank Gouder of Double G Ranch as members at large for 2022.

The chamber is pleased to continue to work with Middleton Accounting for all our financial operations and reporting, Peak Media Company for website design and management, and Sprout Design Studio for graphic design. We are also happy to welcome aboard Catherine Johnson with Captivate Consulting as our new PR and marketing contractor, and Traci Schalow of Kindred Collective as additional graphic design support.

We are grateful for our relationships and partnerships the RACC has continued to garner for 2022 and look forward to continuing to support our local businesses and community in this upcoming year.

- Adam Dubroff



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS



### PRESIDENT ADAM DUBROFF

Adam Dubroff and his wife, Karen, have lived in Ridgway since 2000. Their son, Jacob, grew up here and graduated from Ridgway High School in 2020. Adam is the owner of Alpha Inn Management, a hotel consulting company. He currently works part time at Telluride Ski Resort and also coaches the Ridgway High School boy's varsity basketball team.



### VICE PRESIDENT DAVID NUNN

David and his wife, Michelle, followed their lifelong dream to live in the Colorado mountains and moved to Ridgway with their two young boys 20 years ago. A career marketer having worked with the nation's largest direct marketing firm for decades, David now pursues his passion for playing guitar and performing, having played over 500 local gigs in the last few years.



### TREASURER JANE PULLIAM

Jane has been board treasurer since August 2020. She provides quarterly financial reporting and a year-end report to the RACC board at the annual budget retreat. She has worked for Middleton Accounting for 17 years as a client accountant for diverse businesses in the Ridgway/Montrose area. She has worked for the RACC for seven years, providing financial statements and bookkeeping.



### AT-LARGE MEMBER KANE SCHEIDEGGER

Born and raised in Ridgway, Kane Scheidegger graduated from art school in 2005. He shoots large-format, panoramic images of the San Juan Mountains and ski descents in the winter. He loves the outdoors and everything that comes with it, and he hopes to bring nature into homes through his larger-than-life prints. Kane previously sat on Ridgway's streetscape planning committee and feels he can offer some great creativity to the Chamber to help it reach its goals.



### AT-LARGE MEMBER JON ELLIOT

Jon Elliot was born and raised in Denver and moved to the area 4 years ago to become the branch manager for Aspen-Savatree in Ridgway. His desire to move to the community was for a new opportunity and he was drawn to the unbelievable beauty of the area. Jon spends most of his time outdoors mountain biking, skiing, and enjoying the outdoors. He has been a Certified Arborist for over 35 years and still enjoys working with people and trees every day.



### AT-LARGE MEMBER FRANK GOUDER

Frank and Sandra Gouder moved from Germany to Ridgway in 2018 and made their dream reality by running a bed and breakfast, Double G Ranch & Guest Lodge. Frank was CEO and co-owner of a big company in Germany for more than 25 years specializing in sales, marketing and customer relations. Describing Ridgway as the best place in the world to live, and he loves the people and the outdoors here. He sees Ridgway as a "hidden gem" and wants to help Ridgway to become even more popular and well known as the "perfect place to be."



### OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ASHLEY PERKINS

Ashley grew up in upstate New York and has lived in the Ridgway area since 2011. She transitioned into the role of Executive Director for the RACC in September 2021, after leaving her position as a customer service representative for Alpine Bank that she held for almost seven years. Ashley also served as Secretary of the Board since 2019. She truly loves the lifestyle of Southwest Colorado and when not at work she enjoys getting outdoors with her dog, Reymi.

# STAFF & CONSULTANT TEAM

The Chamber has developed an exceptional team of staff and contract partners to lead program implementation. This group of Ridgway-based professionals consists of individuals with strong connections throughout the community.



## COMMUNICATIONS CONSULTANT TANYA ISHIKAWA

Tanya worked for the chamber from 2018 to the end of 2022. Her Chamber projects included the Annual Report, Visitor’s Guide, website content, Member of the Month program, Youth Career & Volunteer Fair, Facebook posts, and news releases. She has also been the part-time communications director for the Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership, where she was promoted to executive director, effective Jan. 1, 2023.



## WEBSITE & TECHNOLOGY PARTNER JOSH GOWANS

Josh is founder of Peak Media Company (PMC), a marketing and technology consultancy with staff in Ridgway, Durango and Lisbon. PMC specializes in open-source applications, website design, management and optimization, and CRM (Customer Relationship Management) solutions. The PMC team manages the Chamber’s website including design, system administration and CRM development.



## MEMBERSHIP & CRM PARTNER STEPHANIE LAUERMAN

Stephanie left the corporate world on the Front Range in 2001 for Ridgway where she loves engaging in this amazing community. Her consulting firm, Next Chapter Development, LLC, assists clients to reach their full potential by utilizing CRM systems and community outreach. Working within nonprofits for 15 years, she enjoys helping clients succeed, especially RACC where she leads membership and CRM systems. Stephanie loves teaching at the Ridgway Yoga Shala, and getting outdoors with her beautiful daughters in the San Juans.



## DESIGN PARTNER TRACI KINDRED SCHALOW

Traci of Kindred Collective is a thoughtful and inventive graphic designer who blends over 35 years of design experience with her passion for the outdoors and local community. As a creative professional she is dedicated to bringing brand stories to life through breakthrough multimedia communications. She continues to partner with small business and non-profit organizations locally, throughout western Colorado and nationally. Decompression time is spent in the backcountry either on foot, skis, horseback or mountain bike with her dogs in tow.



## MEDIA & DESIGN PARTNER NICOLE GREENE

Nicole 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.



## ONLINE MARKETING & PROMOTION CATHERINE JOHNSON

Catherine is the owner of Captivate Consulting, and has years of experience in marketing, public relations and website development. She graduated from Georgia State University with two bachelor degrees in business administration and started her career by doing freelance marketing for real estate firms in Telluride. When she’s not behind the computer, Catherine is either teaching yoga, crafting, or spending quality time with her family.

## ACCOUNTANT JANE PULLIAM

Please see bio in Board of Directors section, page 3.

### 2022 RIDGWAY VISITOR CENTER STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Dale Frank- staff weekend warrior

Canyon Ishikawa, Tanya Ishikawa, Nancy Lazenga, Karen Mendel, Sydney Mendel, David Nunn, and Ely Patterson

# RIDGWAYCOLORADO.COM



RidgwayColorado.com continues to be the #1 Google search result for keyword "Ridgway Colorado".

Josh Gowans of Peak Media Company (PMC) and his team work with the RACC staff and contractors to ensure the RidgwayColorado.com website is an accessible, top-search result for online information about the Ridgway area.

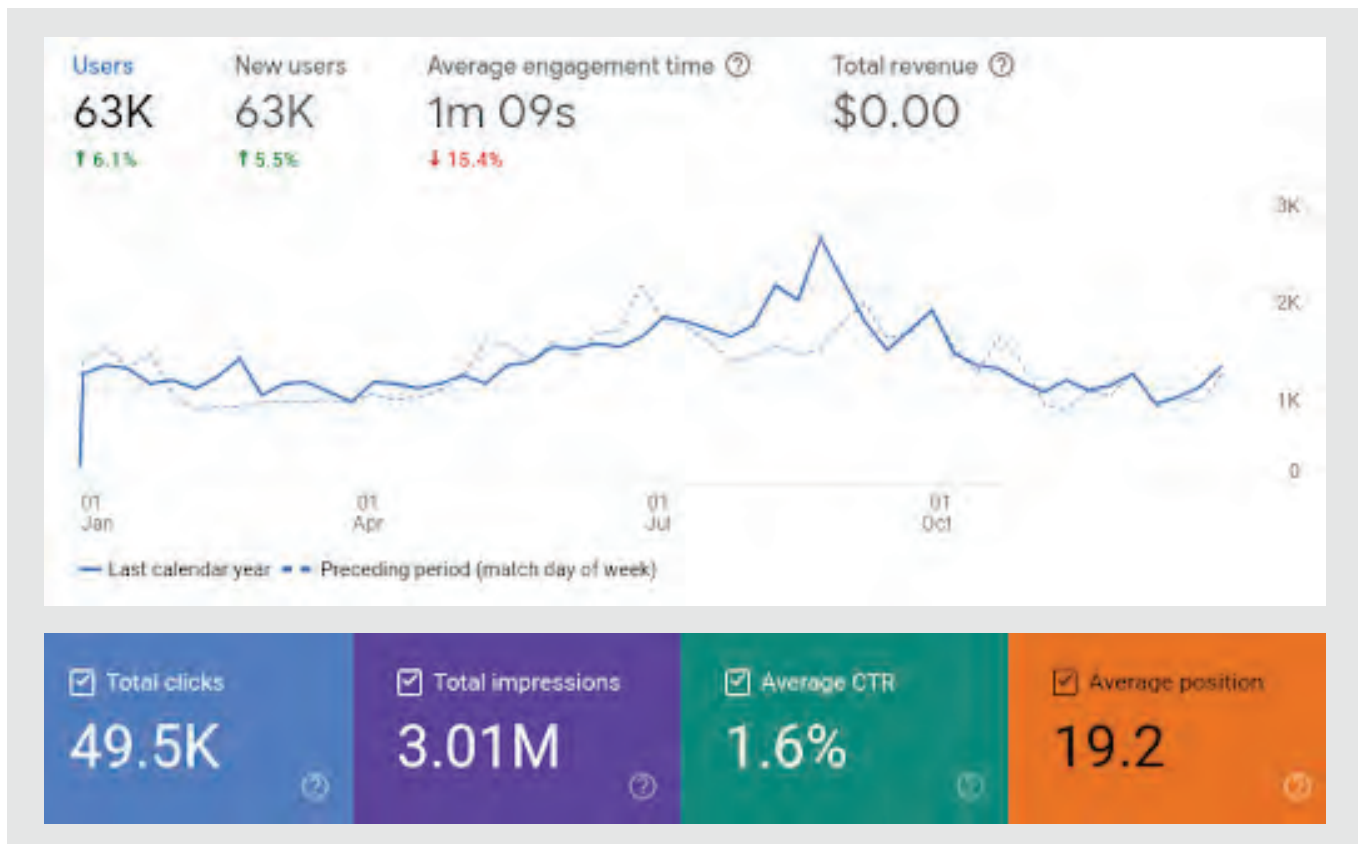
The RACC Board and staff contracted with PMC in 2022 to build the infrastructure for members to update their own page content, and the plan is to release this website functionality in 2023.

## PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

The Ridgway Area Chamber of Commerce website continues to be a central resource for visitors and for community members, ranking for over 5,000 keywords specific to local activities, businesses, events and more. In 2022, the overall website traffic grew modestly though at an overall slower rate than previous years.

The slower growth was likely due to a shift in 2022 toward more technical improvements and away from content development.

Not all improvements have been realized; however, the end result is intended to be a more "community generated" website where members can add and update content directly.



As a result, overall traffic and organic traffic grew by 6% and 12% respectively. Overall impression share from organic search grew 4% to over three million impressions.

While organic search witnessed growth in 2022, other channels saw declines, resulting in slower overall growth.



# RIDGWAYCOLORADO.COM

RidgwayColorado.com remains a critical and powerful asset to promote our business and nonprofit community.

## TOP PAGE PERFORMANCE

The top 10 pages on the site by page view are:

- Homepage
- True Grit (movie page)
- Upcoming Events
- Things to do
- Accommodations (business listing)
- Orvis Hot Springs
- Eternal Hot Springs (thing to do)
- Ouray Hot Springs
- Restaurants (business listing)
- Outdoor adventure (thing to do)

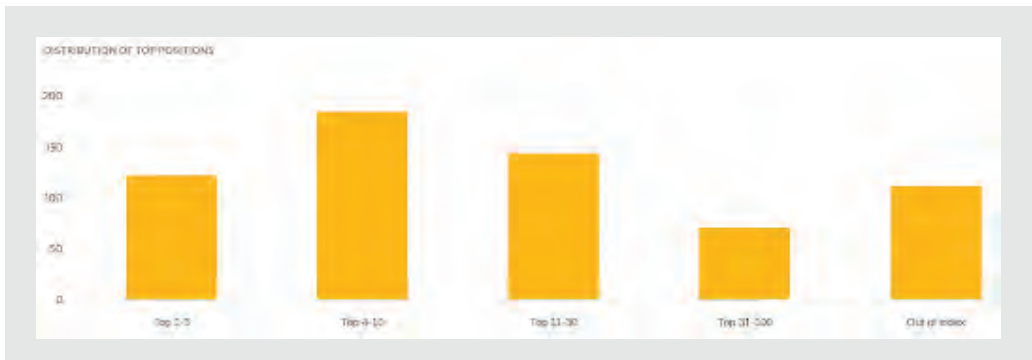
New users by First user default channel group

FIRST USER DEFAULT CH...	NEW USERS	
Organic Search	51K	↑ 12.4%
Direct	9K	↓ 4.1%
Referral	2.4K	↓ 31.7%
Organic Social	489	↓ 23.2%
Display	1	↓ 99.9%
Unassigned	0	↓ 100.0%
Organic Video	4	↑ 300.0%



The site continues to add keywords and backlinks, witnessing significant acceleration in growth in late 2020 and continuing through early 2022, where keyword acquisition leveled off by and large. As we shift back to a content focus, we expect additional growth as well as redistribution of keyword rankings.

In summary, the site grew in significance though at a slower rate than previous years. Much of the year was spent on underlying technical support as well as upgrades, laying the groundwork for future growth and optimization.







## SUSTAINABLE TOURISM



The Chamber continued its efforts to promote awareness of responsible, sustainable tourism practices. Our communications and marketing strategies incorporate messages about ways to visit the Ridgway area that reinforce low-impact travel. The pages devoted to responsible travel recommendations continue to be included in both the 2023 Ridgway Visitor's Guide and the Chamber website: <https://ridgwaycolorado.com/plan-your-trip/responsible-travel>.

Chamber staff also consistently share sustainable and responsible tourism marketing materials from the Care for Colorado campaign developed by the Colorado Tourism Office, through Facebook posts and Weekly E-blasts.



Image: Lone Cone Photography

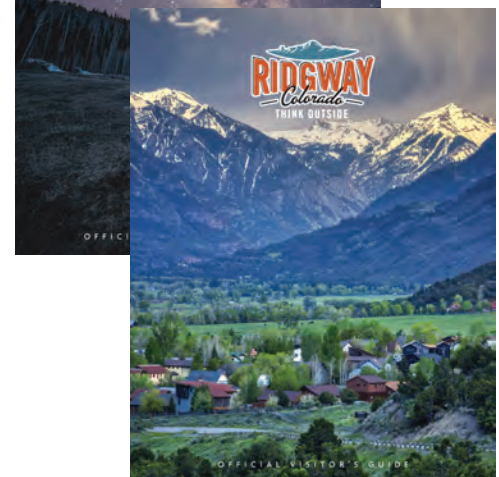
The Chamber continues to collaborate on Dark Sky tourism messaging with Top of the Pines (TOP), the Town of Ridgway, Colorado Tourism Office (CTO), and Black Canyon Astronomical Society. Not only is TOP designated as a Dark Sky Park and Ridgway designated a Dark Sky Community by the International Dark-Sky Association, but Ridgway State Park was awarded a Dark Sky certification mentoring program by CTO in 2022. RACC's direct marketing efforts support the inclusion of Dark Sky destinations and activities in the Visitors Guide, itineraries and information on RidgwayColorado.com, and Facebook posts highlighting dates of meteor showers and other celestial events, recommending visiting during those year-round occurrences.

## 2022 & 2023 RIDGWAY VISITOR'S GUIDES

Distribution of the print and digital copies of the 2022 Ridgway Visitor's Guide began in January 2022, and an estimated 35,000 copies were distributed by the end of the year. Plus, the digital version was again a gateway on RidgwayColorado.com for website visitors to sign up for visitor e-newsletters, increasing the RACC's direct marketing opportunities for members and the business community at large.

In autumn 2022, under the editorial leadership of Communications Consultant Tanya Ishikawa, the **2023 Guide** was created and designed for distribution starting January 2023. A major change in the guide is a new downtown map in the centerfold accompanied by a directory of businesses in the walking core of Ridgway. This multipurpose map is patterned after the Ridgway FUSE **online map**, and will be handed out as a one-page walking guide at events and local businesses.

The 2023 welcome letter was written by San Juan Huts General Manager Kelly Ryan as a way of highlighting a long-time, low-impact business operated by a strong, passionate woman. Ryan shared valuable messaging about Ridgway's character and tips for visitors to enjoy our special pace of life. Photos in the guide again were outstanding with work from talented local photographers including Gary Ratcliff of Ouray Image, Natalie Heller of Lone Cone Photography, Kane Scheidegger, and Tony Litschewski of Nature's Finest Images.



## VISITOR CENTER

### AND HERITAGE PARK REDESIGN PROJECT



Image: Ouray Image

## RIDGWAY VISITOR CENTER OPERATIONS

The Ridgway Visitor Center reopened in May 2022 with continued precautions for keeping volunteers and visitors safe with plexiglass and masks available throughout the pandemic. The center was primarily staffed with volunteers, the executive director and a weekend employee, Dale Frank. With additional staff for 2022, the center was open for operation Wednesday through Sunday following Memorial Day weekend through October from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The number of visitors who stopped by the center was just under 1,000 for the season, continuing a downward trend, due to the departure of the Railroad Museum displays and no new amenities. On the other hand, visitor comments continued to be positive, expressing appreciation for the information provided at the center and the opportunity to talk with locals.

The Visitors Center helped provide information on the True Grit Tours, which are now starting at the gazebo in front of Town Hall. The tours were held consistently on Fridays beginning at 3 p.m., with private tours available by appointment.

## VISITOR CENTER & HERITAGE PARK REDESIGN PROJECT

In spring 2022, members from the community were invited to review plans by DHM Design with new restroom building options and Visitor Center design options in the Heritage Park Redesign Project. Heritage Park, which is located at the entrance to town off Highway 550 and next to the Ouray County Fairgrounds, is being renovated with short-term and long-term upgrades over the course of the next several years.

The RACC Executive Director sat in the virtual meetings held throughout February and March, and provided input for these meetings. Initial ideas were based on the advisory stakeholder group recommendations in 2021.



In October 2022, Colorado's DOLA (Department of Local Affairs) representatives visited Ridgway to view the progress at Heritage Park. DOLA is funding some of the redesign and renovation efforts, which are a collaborative effort of the RACC, Town of Ridgway and the Colorado Main Street program.

## FIND YOURSELF IN RIDGWAY YEAR ROUND PHOTO & VIDEO CONTEST

The Chamber organized a photo and video contest in the autumn with a theme of people feeding their souls and spirits in the Ridgway area, in the quieter times of the year from October to April. The contest was not only a promotional opportunity for non-peak season tourism, but also a way to gather more images to promote the community and meet new photographers and videographers.

The video winner was Katrina Toucke, who was awarded \$300 for her 25-second video montage titled "Find Yourself in Ridgway Year Round." The photo winner was Natalie Heller, who was awarded \$200 for her photograph titled "Summer Sunset over the Cimarrons." Heller also won honorable mention and a Ridgway, Colorado hat for her photograph, "Fishing the Uncompahgre River." Also receiving an honorable mention and a Ridgway, Colorado hat was Trisha Oakland for a photo of the March Fourth performance at the Sherbino Theater.



## ONLINE + PRINT MEDIA

### ONLINE AND PRINT PROMOTION AND MARKETING



Ridgway's Instagram followers grew by 21% in 2022.

The weekly community e-blast is now being sent out to 2,150-plus contacts. The visitor e-newsletter targets contacts across Colorado and the U.S., who subscribed when they requested a digital Visitors Guide link, and its audience has grown to 6,333 contacts.

The Chamber is continuing to develop its online presence on social media. Since January 2022, our Instagram followers increased from 2,979 to 3,600 (up 21%).

In 2022, our Facebook reach varied greatly from month to month, ranging from 1,249 up to 4,189 people viewing RACC posts. The posts in the last three months of 2022 saw the most year-over-year increases in reach, averaging a 76% increase.

RACC staff met with tourism collaborative partners from Ridgway, Montrose and Ouray on a quarterly basis to support regional tourism and share marketing successes and event information.

The Chamber and member businesses continued to garner online and print media coverage in 2022. Popular topics are dark sky tourism (again), Chamber events, and news about businesses and nonprofits featured as Members of the Month.

### SPECIAL MARKETING OPPORTUNITY: NOEL NIGHT

Led by Executive Director Ashley Perkins, the RACC took charge to organize and plan Ridgway's Noel Night for the second year in a row in collaboration with the Ridgway FUSE formally known as the Ridgway Creative District. The event was held on the first Friday of December and was promoted through newspaper ads, Facebook posts, Instagram, flyers, special e-blasts, a news post on RidgwayColorado.com, and many in-person communications and chamber-to-business networking. Rocky Mountain Cannabis donated \$500 towards the event and Alpine Bank sponsored a raffle that included a prize drawing of Ridgway Local Bucks totaling \$150 to spend in the community. Noel Night customers were treated to holiday food and drinks, 10% to 50% discounts, giveaways, games, and other specials at more than 30 businesses including nonprofits and artists in the first-ever event in the new Space to Create Community Room.



Image: Jake Niece

Santa also visited local businesses throughout the evening with a final stop at Voyager Youth Program for photo opportunities.

## SAMPLING OF MEDIA COVERAGE

CLICK ON HEADLINES TO VIEW ARTICLES



- + Feb. 7, Montrose Mirror, page 51:  
Ridgway State Park is RACC Member of the Month
- + April 19, Telluride Daily Planet:  
'Go for the Green' Ridgway Chamber Open golf tournament 9/8
- + June 2, KKCO 11 News:  
ROCC recognized as Member of the Month
- + Oct. 6, Telluride Daily Planet:  
Farmers markets wind down for the season
- + Nov. 30, Ouray County Plaindealer:  
Get in the holiday spirit with Noel Night, Yule Celebration



## STATEWIDE PROMOTION & OFF-SEASON MARKETING STRATEGY

### COLORADO STARGAZING MARKETING MATCH GRANT 2022

In 2022, the Chamber continued its involvement with the Colorado Stargazing Marketing Match Grant. As a member of **Colorado Stargazing: Experience the Night**, we help to promote Leave No Trace messaging that supports environmental awareness and responsible travel and provide a unique way to market local businesses and nonprofits. The RACC, on behalf of the Town of Ridgway, approved a \$2,571 commitment for this grant this past year. According to the International Dark-Sky Association, there are 201 certified dark sky places in the world, Ridgway one of six designations in Colorado.

### 2022 SAN JUAN RURAL PHILANTHROPY DAYS, HOSTED BY RIDGWAY

RACC Executive Director Ashley Perkins supported San Juan Rural Philanthropy Days that took place in Ridgway from June 7 to June 9 this past year. The annual event provides an opportunity for nonprofit and grant providers to network in rural communities. She, along with Ridgway Community Initiative Facilitator Tera Wick, participated on the events hospitality subcommittee in half-day and full-day collaborations leading up to the event. Three days of workshops and networking events brought in 246 attendees from across the five counties of Gunnison, Hinsdale, Montrose, Ouray and San Miguel, supporting 109 grant-seeking organizations and showcasing 35 grantmaker organizations.



Image: Ouray Image

### 2022 COLORADO TOURISM ORGANIZATION'S GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE

Executive Director Ashley Perkins attended this year's **Governor's Conference** organized by the Colorado Tourism Office in Snowmass, Colorado held September 21 to 23. The conference is held annually for three days when tourism professionals and industry leaders learn and network. Participants assess current activities and find new approaches to market the state, local communities, and businesses. Speakers from throughout the country challenge and inspire attendees. Since this was Perkins' first year at the conference she received the Governor's Tourism Conference Professional Scholarship to attend the conference.

### GRAVEL ADVENTURE FIELD GUIDE PARTNERSHIP

The RACC staff brought together a group of local biking advocates to determine whether to pursue the production of a gravel grinding guide, supported by state grants and a CTO-recommended **business partner** with specialized experience. As a result, the RACC collaborated with partners in Montrose and San Miguel counties to apply for a \$40,000 Colorado Outdoor Recreation Grant to fund the creation of the Uncompahgre Plateau/Western San Juans Gravel Adventure Field Guide. The pocket-sized, field guidebook will be designed to attract, connect, and inspire cycling enthusiasts by providing route recommendations with maps and culturally relevant content such as history and imagery. It is intended to capture the in, and out-of-state tourism and elevate Southwest Colorado's reputation as a gravel bike destination, while also enhancing its quality of life. The state will inform the Chamber about whether the grant was awarded in the first half of 2023.





# COLORADO CREATIVE CORRIDOR

## ITINERARY DEVELOPMENT & STATEWIDE PROMOTION



For the fifth 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 continuing to support synergy between tourism and creative district entities. Since 2018, the majority of this work has been funded through four consecutive tourism grants up until 2021 \$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.

There have been conversations in the works throughout the course of 2022 to add more communities to the corridor including Gunnison and Telluride helping, amongst other things, further grant funding to build upon the success of previous years and search engine optimization opportunities. The Colorado Creative Corridor continues to provide a positive networking opportunity for the Ridgway Community helping to connect other rural mountain communities and support chamber efforts for responsible and sustainable visitors to our area.

One of the primary goals for the RACC is to continue to support the marketing efforts through partnering with the Creative Corridor by engaging in a platform to promote all Ridgway area businesses and nonprofits especially during the off-peak season. We are excited for this project to keep bringing value to the business and creative economy for years to come and provides an important example of the positive impact of Chamber/Town collaboration.

### 2022 MARKETING SUCCESSES FROM PROMOTING RIDGWAY THROUGH THE COLORADO CREATIVE CORRIDOR

2022 was the first full year following the launch of the [coloradocreativecorridor.com](https://coloradocreativecorridor.com) website.

#### 2022 Marketing & Paid Opportunity Summary [coloradocreativecorridor.com](https://coloradocreativecorridor.com) website:

7,659 sessions

Top pages:

homepage

locations/carbondale

itinerary

Total pageviews: 11,391

Average pages per session: 1.49

#### FACEBOOK

1.89k total page likes; 1.3k new Facebook likes in 2022 (5.1k% increase in 2022 compared to 2021), and 55.3k reach (4.3k% increase in 2022 compared to 2021). Top cities: Carbondale, Paonia, Glenwood Springs.

#### Colorado Tourism Office paid opportunity: In-state emails

February custom: Sends: 21,284, Open: 11,762, Clicks: 512

April eNewsletter: Sends: 21,359, Opens: 15,336, Clicks: 105

September eNewsletter: Sends: 22,806, Opens: 15,788, Clicks: 317

November eNewsletter: Sends: 22,731, Opens: 10,979, Clicks 68

Colorado.com Display Banner ads, Feb-July, 2022: 100k impressions, 145 clicks

Colorado.com Native Banner ads, Feb-July 2022: 100k impressions, 234 clicks

#### INSTAGRAM

1.29k total followers; 107 new Instagram followers in 2022; and 2.7k reach (8.9% increase in 2022 compared to 2021). Top cities: Colorado Springs, Carbondale, Denver.



## MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

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

### CHAMBER MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

The RACC Board and staff are excited to serve our paid members, whose financial contributions support a wide breadth of services and multiply each organization's and the town's marketing presence. While the Chamber's activities support the promotion of the Ridgway business and nonprofit community at large including both chamber members and non-members, paid members are offered premium placement to boost their visibility and increase potential customer referrals.

The Chamber is dedicated to providing value by continuing to invest in marketing assets, as well as state and regional partnerships. Our core marketing assets include: the **RidgwayColorado.com** website, **Ridgway Visitor's Guide**, **Facebook** and **Instagram**, **Ridgway Visitor Center**, print/digital advertising, and media relations, along with key partners that amplify our marketing efforts. We also assist in connecting local organizations to **Colorado Tourism Office** promotions, collaborating on networking opportunities through **member promotions and events**, and **having a voice in local government**.

### WEEKLY E-BLAST AND VISITOR E-NEWSLETTER

The Chamber continues to send out weekly community e-blasts typically on Mondays, to a list of nearly 2,200 targeted recipients. **Email content includes the following sections: Member of the Month, Business Specials, Upcoming Events, Job Openings, Ridgway in the Media, RACC News, Save the Date, and Responsible Travel Tips.** The visitor e-newsletter was suspended for most of 2022 due to the Chamber's focus on developing the FUSE collaboration, Rural Philanthropy Days, and the Golf Open. The plan is to strategize the visitor e-newsletter in 2023 to take advantage of promotion to the list of 6343 subscribers.

### MEMBER OF THE MONTH

The Member of the Month program continued to highlight Chamber members across several marketing channels in 2022. Each month, one business or nonprofit is selected and promoted through: a news post on the Chamber's website featured on the homepage for the month; a news release sent to the Chamber's media list; announcements in four weekly e-blasts; and two Facebook posts. **Over the past year, the Member of the Month program was viewed in Chamber e-blasts nearly 42,000 times, reached roughly 8,612 Facebook users, was picked up monthly by local news publications, and had nearly 2,000 page views on RidgwayColorado.com.**

### YOUTH VOLUNTEER & CAREER FAIR

As the struggle to find sufficient local employees continued in 2022, the Volunteer & Career Fair at Ridgway Secondary School demonstrated a real benefit, introducing middle and high schoolers to jobs and providing employers and nonprofits with the opportunity to meet potential employees and volunteers. Information tables were staffed by representatives from five nonprofits including members of the RACC and eight companies, as well as six government offices. **The fair is not only a valuable way to connect youth to professional and community service experiences that boost resumes and college applications but also allows students to practice important job-seeking skills.**

### BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

In an effort to bring back Business After Hours, the RACC was able to successfully support two events in 2022. The first was held at Ridgway Lodge and Star Saloon on June 16 with live music by local musician David Nunn. The second was hosted on July 27 by The Joinery with Jill and Scott Ridders welcoming community members to their new business including providing a charcuterie spread and a warm fire outdoors.

### SHOP LOCAL!

The Chamber's Shop Local efforts in 2022 centered around Noel Night and hanging the Noel Night banner at Hartwell Park, facing Highway 62. The new Downtown Walking Map, developed for the Visitor's Guide, was also printed as a stand-alone map to be distributed to visitors at San Juan Skijoring and at local businesses throughout the winter.

### 2022 CHAMBER GOLF OPEN

The RACC brought back the Golf Open after a two-year, pandemic-related hiatus. In addition to promoting the community and providing fun business networking, **the event resulted in the award of \$2,728 for Voyager Youth Program and \$1,000 for Ouray County Baseball.** Tournament sponsors included Colorado Boy Pub & Brewery, Aspen Tree Service, RIGS Fly Shop & Guide Service, Dickerson Construction Inc., Shamrock Foods, Alpine Bank, Hazel's Housekeeping, Montrose Ford Nissan, Flower Motor Group, Becky and Charles Mueller, and Full Tilt Saloon.



# FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

## HOW WE MANAGE OUR RESOURCES



Responsibly building reserves remains important to the RACC organization.

In 2022, the RACC managed a budget consisting of \$101,671 in Lodging Occupancy Tax (LOT) funds from the Town of Ridgway and Chamber memberships of approximately \$11,500. LOT funds were higher than the 2021 amount of \$93,705, while membership payments were approximately the same as in 2021.

The RACC Board made the decision to hire a full-time Executive Director at the end of 2021, as an important step in improving member relations and addressing economic development requests from the Town of Ridgway. However, this salaried position increased expenses considerably, compared to the cost of the past part-time marketing consultant. The Chamber also increased website expenses to improve functionality. These two budget impacts, along with the cost of maintaining the same level of marketing and promotions as in past years resulted in a net loss in the budget that was covered by the Chamber's reserve funds.

While the reserves helped the organization with important new expenses in 2022, the RACC is making plans in the 2023 budget to cut expenses back to previous levels. Responsibly building reserves remains important to the Chamber Board and staff. In addition to cutting expenses, the RACC plans to increase revenues by applying for grants from the Colorado Tourism Office, state agencies and other funders in 2023.

The accompanying financial report was prepared by Middleton Accounting & Consulting, which has provided all the RACC's accounting and financial reporting since 2018. This report comes directly from QuickBooks, and reflects a detailed P&L statement for the LOT budget for 2022.

<b>Ridgway Area Chamber of Commerce</b>	
<b>Profit &amp; Loss for Lodging Tax Class</b>	
<b>January through December 2022</b>	
	<b>Jan - Dec 22</b>
<b>Ordinary Income/Expense</b>	
Income	
Lodging Tax Income	101,671.05
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>101,671.05</b>
<b>Gross Profit</b>	<b>101,671.05</b>
Expense	
<b>Advertising and Promotion</b>	
Creative District Corridor	2,500.00
CTO Marketing Grant Payment	2,591.43
Online Media and Advertising	8,073.00
Print Media and Advertising	8,064.46
Visitor's Guide Fulfillment, P	7,700.00
Website Upgrades and Operations	12,593.59
<b>Total Advertising and Promotion</b>	<b>41,522.48</b>
<b>Board of Directors Expenses</b>	
Board of Directors Insurance	1,048.00
<b>Total Board of Directors Expenses</b>	<b>1,048.00</b>
<b>Dues and Subscriptions</b>	891.45
<b>Networking &amp; Meeting Meals</b>	2,002.34
<b>Payroll Expenses</b>	
Directors Wages	53,574.60
Hourly Wages	2,345.40
Payroll Taxes	4,277.88
Workers Comp Insurance	148.00
Payroll Expenses - Other	56.07
<b>Total Payroll Expenses</b>	<b>60,401.95</b>
<b>Postage</b>	169.93
<b>Professional Fees</b>	
Accounting Fees	5,731.76
<b>Total Professional Fees</b>	<b>5,731.76</b>
<b>Professional Services</b>	
Subcontractors	360.00
<b>Total Professional Services</b>	<b>360.00</b>
<b>Visitor Center Operations</b>	
Electric	646.54
Licenses & Permits	16.00
Natural Gas	793.44
Office Supplies	1,311.62
Property & Liability Insurance	973.00
Repairs and Maintenance	1,695.22
Sales Tax License	25.00
Telephone and Internet	1,394.96
Trash	217.00
Volunteer Expense	300.60
Visitor Center Contract Labor	240.00
Water & Sewer	1,044.00
<b>Total Visitor Center Operations</b>	<b>8,657.38</b>
<b>Visitor Center Marketing/Merch</b>	110.00
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>120,895.29</b>
<b>Net Ordinary Income</b>	<b>-19,224.24</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>-19,224.24</b>



## 2023 PLANS

In 2022, the Ridgway Area Chamber of Commerce will continue to manage and increase Chamber membership, and focus communication strategies on responsible and sustainable tourism and promotion of the off-peak season.

Continuing to build upon the successes of previous RACC contractors and board members is the Chamber's primary focus. The current board is looking to Executive Director Ashley Perkins to spearhead and prioritize grant application opportunities as well as organizing a fundraising campaign and donation initiatives. Meanwhile, the Chamber Board hopes to champion community engagement by focusing on networking with a personal focus and sharing the values and benefits of joining the RACC through paid membership.

In 2023, the Lodging Occupancy Tax (LOT) budget request to the town will be \$105,000. However, with inflation and the higher cost of service expenses such as contractor fees, insurance, and printing costs, the Chamber will need to find ways to increase revenue. In addition to fundraising and membership drives, the RACC board will be engaging the community and town government in discussions about increasing the LOT from a 3.5% to potentially a 5% tax through a 2023 ballot measure.

To expand the Chamber's promotion of the whole business community, the Board and staff are working on a free, basic membership that will be made available to all Ridgway businesses and organizations. The RACC will also develop new marketing materials including videos on social media platforms such as TikTok. Other 2023 plans include providing opportunities for more members to host business networking events, continuing the Youth Volunteer and Career Fair, reopening the Visitors Center with longer hours and more volunteer support, organizing the Golf Open, and supporting our Shop Local! Campaign by championing Small Business Saturday and Noel Night.

The RACC would like to thank all of our members, the Town of Ridgway, our staff, contractors, volunteers, partners, and the local business community at large for your genuine support and continued engagement. We look forward to 2023 with our new focus and building on our experience from this previous year.



Image: San Juan Huts