

2021

ANNUAL REPORT

RIDGWAY, COLORADO



Image: Val Szwarc

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



Image: Kane Schetdeger



Image: Tanya Ishikawa



Image: Todd Muchow



Image: Nature's Finest Images

FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

RIDGWAY AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Ridgway Area Chamber of Commerce (RACC) Board of Directors is pleased to share this 2021 annual report. With the ongoing challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board continues to navigate, evolve and progress as a supportive entity for our Ridgway-area business community.

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 2021. 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, monthly meetings with the Colorado Creative Corridor, and co-leadership of the Ridgway Visitor Center and Heritage Park Advisory Group this past spring.

During 2021, the Chamber navigated many transitions in the RACC Board of Directors as well as the staff.

In September 2021, the Ridgway Area Chamber of Commerce welcomed Ashley Perkins, previous Board Secretary, as its Executive Director. This was a new position created as a necessary progression for our nonprofit organization. Ashley has proven to be a great asset to the RACC in this position, showing that she is organized, detail oriented and skilled at working with a diverse group of people. She continues to bring a passion for conservation and sustainable tourism to our community. The Board would like to thank Hilary Lewkowitz, previous Marketing Director, for her time and valuable guidance with the RACC over the past three years.

In December 2021, RIGS Fly Shop & Guide Service co-owner Tim Patterson and Balance Medical Integration co-owner Jason Bojar stepped down from their roles as the RACC Board President and Vice President, respectively. For the upcoming 2022 year, I as well as musician David Nunn are excited to step into the chamber leadership roles following our predecessors' professional and honorable examples. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Tim and Jason for their service with the RACC.

We are pleased to continue to work with Middleton Accounting for all our financial operations and reporting, Buffalo Trails Multimedia for communications, Peak Media Company for website design and management, and Sprout Design Studio for graphic design.

We look forward to continued progress and partnership in 2022, all in an effort to support our local businesses and the community as a whole.

- 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 last year. Adam is the managing partner of the Ridgway Lodge and Star Saloon and worked previously for the Telluride Ski Resort in diverse capacities over 10 years. He is president of the Ridgway Booster Club and the Ridgway High School basketball team coach.



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 19 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 Pulliam has been Board Treasurer since August 2020, providing quarterly financial reporting and a year-end report for review by the Board of Directors at the RACC annual budget retreat. Jane has lived in Ridgway for 23 years. She and her husband, Drake, owned Drakes Restaurant for 13 years. Jane has worked for Middleton Accounting for 16 years as a client accountant for a variety of businesses in the area. For the last five years, she has provided financial statements and daily bookkeeping for the RACC.



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.



PAST PRESIDENT TIM PATTERSON

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, Planning & Zoning Committee, as well as on prior tenures with the Ridgway Chamber. Tim was the RACC President from 2020 to 2021.



PAST VICE PRESIDENT JASON BOJAR

Dr. Jason Bojar has been a resident and business owner in Ridgway for the last 15 years. He and his wife, Dr. Jessica Balbo, own and operate Balance Medical Integration, an integrative medical clinic with offices in Ridgway and Telluride-Mountain Village. Jason has appreciated the opportunity to serve as the Vice President on the RACC Board and his role in supporting local business vitality. He was a Board member for just under five years and served as the RACC Vice President for the past three years.

Thank you to Daniel Richards of Colorado Boy Brewery for serving on the RACC Board from May 2018 to May 2021, and Ashley Perkins formerly of Alpine Bank for serving from 2019 to 2021 as RACC Board Secretary.

2021 RIDGWAY VISITOR CENTER VOLUNTEERS

Annabel Clarke, Diane Hooper, Tanya Ishikawa, Joni Jacobs, Mary Peck, Irene Stith, Carol Turner and Jeanne Robertson

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.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ASHLEY PERKINS

Ashley grew up in upstate New York and has lived in the Ridgway area for the past 10 years. 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 often enjoys getting outdoors with her dog, Reymi.



COMMUNICATIONS CONSULTANT TANYA ISHIKAWA

Tanya has spent her career writing and editing on various platforms, starting as a public relations professional in Tokyo, Japan. She has lived and worked in Ouray County since 2014. She is the part-time communications director for the Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership, writes and edits for magazines and websites, and produces videos for various clients. Her Chamber projects include the Annual Report, Visitor's Guide, website content, and news releases.



WEBSITE & TECHNOLOGY PARTNER JOSH GOWANS

Josh is founder of Peak Media Company, a marketing and technology consultancy based in Ridgway and specializing in open-source applications, website design, management and optimization, and CRM (Customer Relationship Management) solutions. Josh manages all aspects of the Chamber'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.



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.

ACCOUNTANT JANE PULLIAM

Please see bio in Board of Directors section, page 5.

Many thanks to the following former staff members who served the Chamber for several years. We appreciate their valuable contributions to our organization and the community.



MARKETING DIRECTOR HILARY LEWKOWITZ

Also owner of Mountain Roots Consulting, Hilary has provided two decades of work in conservation and sustainable tourism development. Hilary's focus throughout her work with the RACC was to increase low-impact travel and economic opportunities in the off-peak season. She left the RACC to become the Destination Development Manager with the Colorado Tourism Office.



VISITOR CENTER MANAGER JEANNE ROBERTSON

Jeanne lived in Boulder for many years and would often come to camp and hike in the beautiful San Juans. Moving here in 2005 with her husband, Frank, Jeanne worked at the Visitor Center for four seasons and welcomed many to our area.

RIDGWAYCOLORADO.COM

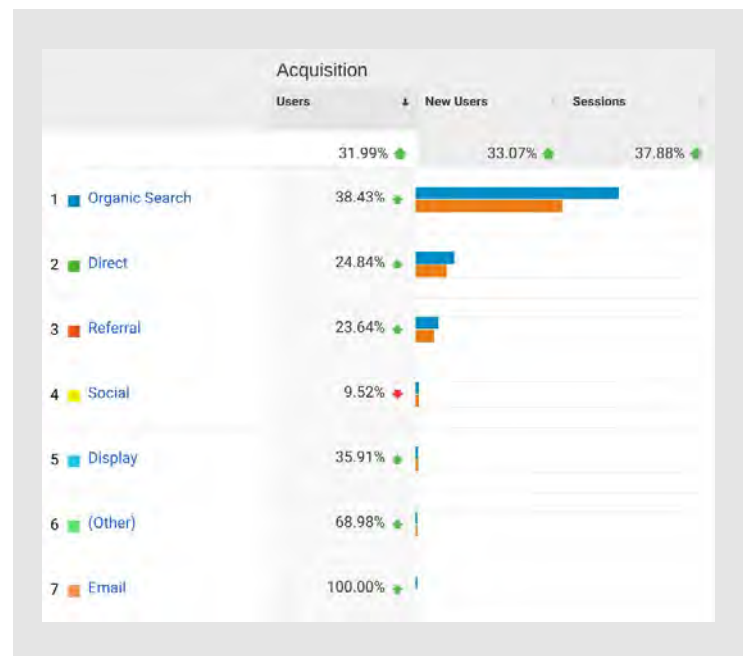


RidgwayColorado.com continues to be the #1 Google search result for keyword "Ridgway Colorado".

Similar to 2020, RACC staff in conjunction with website partner Peak Media Company focused heavily on site performance and content management during 2021. Work continues, however, we have been making incremental improvements to the site's design, reducing load times and generally improving pagespeed performance as it is increasingly a ranking factor for organic optimization.

From a content management perspective, most website work centered around revisions to current content with some new production in the areas of seasonal guides, itineraries, and ancillary content such as movie pages, trails, etc. Overall, the site saw significant growth in the number of keywords for which it ranks, climbing to just under 7,800 keywords (~ 140 rank in the first position, ~ 400 in positions 2 or 3, ~ 900 in positions 4 - 10). This resulted in 2.89 million impressions and 47,100 click throughs to the website in 2021.

Much of the keyword growth came in three primary areas: 1) around the new content produced (such as movies), 2) as variations to existing keywords, and 3) for local businesses. This last category is significant in that it means that the individual business pages on RidgwayColorado.com are, essentially, increasingly ranking for organic search. This is both positive for local businesses as well as the Chamber's website.



+ AUDIENCE METRICS

Overall site traffic climbed almost 32% over 2020, with new user growth climbing over 33%. As a source, organic search witnessed significant growth (consistent with overall trends) of 38% in total organic growth and 37% in organic growth for new years. In essence, more new users are finding the site via organic search and clicking through to it.

Total impressions

1.54M

7/1/21 - 12/31/21

1.36M

1/1/21 - 6/30/21

Users

31.99%

63,761 vs 48,307



New Users

33.07%

63,179 vs 47,479



Sessions

37.88%

77,580 vs 56,265



Pageviews

103.36%

301,971 vs 148,491



Pages / Session

47.49%

3.89 vs 2.64



Avg. Session Duration

-25.74%

00:01:20 vs 00:01:47



Overall impression share (the number of times a search result linking to the Chamber's website is viewed in search results pages) grew 13% in the last half of 2021 over the first half, demonstrating continued growth in organic search as the primary channel driver for website traffic.



RIDGWAYCOLORADO.COM

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

SUMMARY OF WEBSITE IMPROVEMENTS



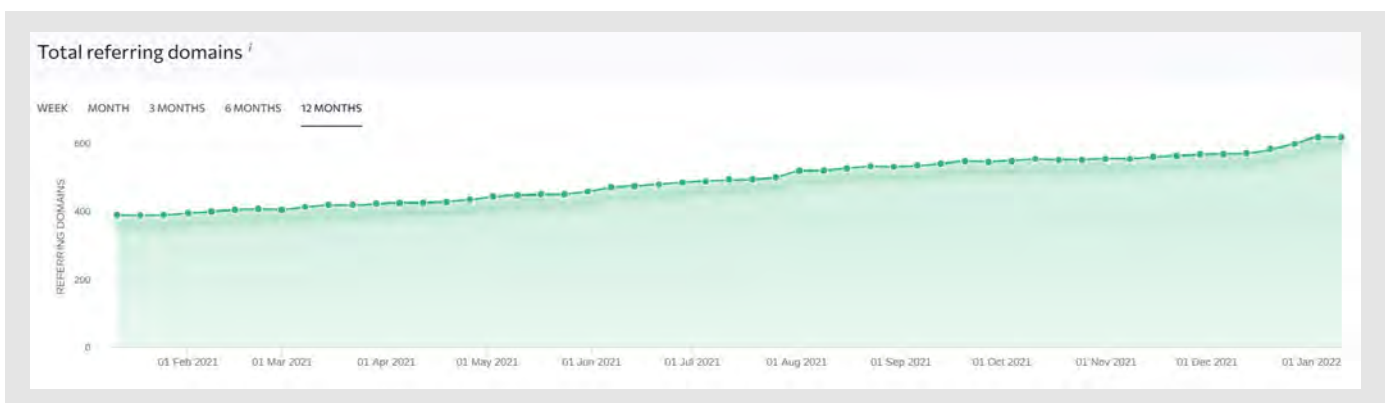
TOP PAGE PERFORMANCE

Excluding the homepage, top pages generating click throughs were focused on movie-related content, things to do, events, and accommodations. This is largely consistent with the recent past where the website has focused heavily on “things to do” as the primary interest driver for site visitors. Content revisions in 2021 focused on exposing local business pages more readily across other content as well as better cross linking related content. For example, exposing itineraries more clearly on key “things to do” pages.

Top pages	↓ Clicks	Impressions
https://ridgwaycolorado.com/movies/true-grit	13,317	750,847
https://ridgwaycolorado.com/	9,806	219,594
https://ridgwaycolorado.com/news-events/events	4,619	134,140
https://ridgwaycolorado.com/things-to-do	1,675	192,421
https://ridgwaycolorado.com/things-to-do/health-wellness/hot-springs	933	110,759
https://ridgwaycolorado.com/businesses/accommodations	743	91,047
https://www.ridgwaycolorado.com/movies/true-grit	736	23,141
https://ridgwaycolorado.com/things-to-do/outdoor-adventure/biking	631	9,673
https://ridgwaycolorado.com/plan-your-trip	563	234,622
https://ridgwaycolorado.com/movies/how-the-west-was-won	552	89,801

BACKLINK GROWTH

Overall backlinks (referring domains) witnessed a growth of 59%. While not the ranking factor they once were, backlinks are significant in that they convey overall site authority and are therefore ranking factors for organic searches. The continued growth of the website's backlink profile indicates that it, as a site, is continuing to be more widely distributed and accessible (via search, referral, etc.) across the internet. Geographically speaking, nearly all states (except for Missouri and New Jersey) witnessed growth in traffic to the chamber's site.



In sum, 2021 witnessed ongoing performance and content management efforts similar to 2020. Overall stats demonstrate that the strategy of focusing on organic optimization is working as the site continues to grow its impression share, its overall traffic and its geographic reach.

New and updated web pages on RidgwayColorado.com in 2021 included biking information with trail recommendations, hiking information with trail recommendations, dark sky tourism information with a stargazing itinerary, and many member directory pages.



SUSTAINABLE TOURISM



The RACC expanded its efforts to support the community by promoting 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. A page devoted to responsible travel recommendations was updated for both the 2022 Ridgway Visitor's Guide and the Chamber [website](#). From hiring knowledgeable, local guides to following Leave No Trace (LNT) principles, we provide several useful tips alongside information about our local businesses and attractions.



Image: Val Szwarc

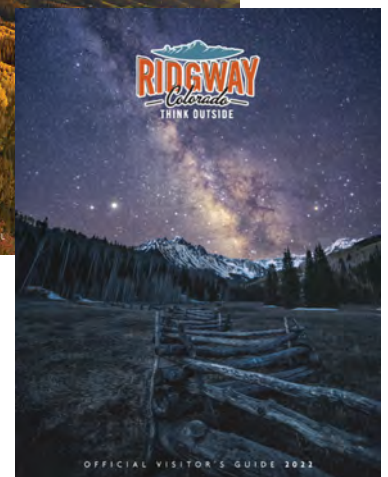
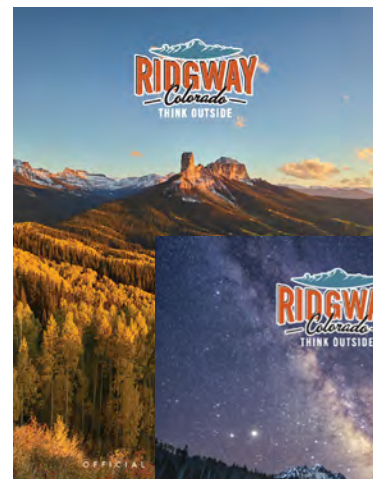
In July 2021, Visitor Center staff and Chamber members were offered a workshop by a LNT trainer, to better prepare participants to share LNT messaging with visitors.

Chamber staff also shared sustainable and responsible tourism marketing materials from the Care for Colorado campaign developed by the Colorado Tourism Office. Their consistent messaging is based on the idea that “Colorado’s public lands are cherished by our community and visitors alike. Help us keep it that way by following the seven Care for Colorado principles when adventuring outdoors.”

2021 & 2022 RIDGWAY VISITOR'S GUIDES

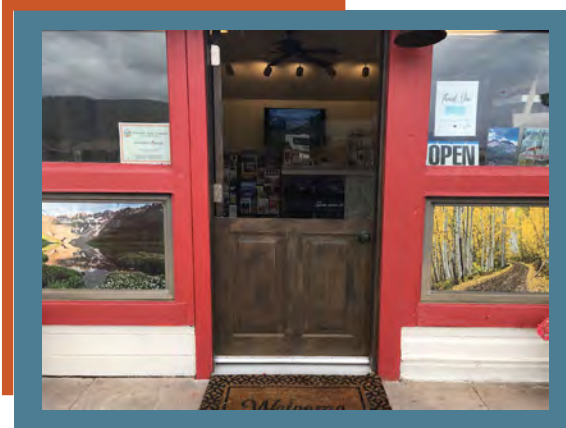
Distribution of the print and digital copies of the 2021 Ridgway Visitor's Guide began in January 2021, and an estimated 35,000 copies were distributed by the end of the year. The guide is organized by the five main marketing themes: Outdoor Adventure, Arts & Entertainment, Health & Wellness, History & Heritage, and Culinary Experiences, with the addition of four new themes developed in 2020: Shopping, Accommodations, Travel Services, and Professional Services. 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. The digital guide garners an estimated 100,000 views annually.

In autumn 2021, under the editorial leadership of Communications Consultant Tanya Ishikawa, the **2022 Guide** was created and designed for distribution starting January 2022. The 2022 welcome letter was written by dark-sky advocate Val Szwarc to highlight his efforts as a community member and a Top of the Pines (TOP) Board member in achieving recognition for local dark sky assets. In November 2021, TOP obtained designation as a Dark Sky Park from the International Dark-Sky Association, just a year and a half after the Town of Ridgway earned its designation. Photos in the guide again were outstanding with work from talented local photographers including Kane Scheidegger, Gary Ratcliff of Ouray Image, and Tony Litschewski of Nature's Finest Images.



VISITOR CENTER

AND HERITAGE PARK REDESIGN PROJECT



RIDGWAY VISITOR CENTER OPERATIONS

The Ridgway Visitor Center reopened in May 2021, with precautions for keeping volunteers and visitors safe during the continuing COVID-19 pandemic. The center is staffed mainly by volunteers, and many did not return in 2021 after the 2020 season closure and due to concerns over potential COVID-19 exposure from visitors. As a result, 2021 operating hours were limited to Thursday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The safety of volunteers and visitors to Ridgway continued to be the number-one priority of the RACC Board and staff. A Dutch door was installed as the main entrance to allow the top of the door to be opened for increased air circulation as well as provide service through the door instead of allowing visitors inside, for those volunteers with greatest concerns. A plastic guard was installed at the guest services desk for those volunteers who were comfortable with visitors coming inside. Additional disinfection of countertops and the bathroom took place throughout the season, and antibacterial hand sanitizer and masks were provided.

The number of visitors who stopped at the center was 860 for the season, a definite decrease from past years due to the limited hours as well as the lack of the Railroad Museum displays as an attraction. True Grit Tour Guides also led tours each Friday morning starting at the center, with 45 guests for the season. When the center closed for the off-season in October, the Chamber reprinted and posted large-scale, window signs at the center with helpful visitor information based on the nine marketing themes. These signs also provide a QR code to access RidgwayColorado.com and direct readers to visit the website for details and comprehensive listings.

REDESIGN PROJECT

In February 2021, the Heritage Park and Visitor Center Redesign subcommittee was formed with the direction of the Town of Ridgway. Subcommittee members included representatives from Town staff and Council, RACC staff and Board, businesses, nonprofits, and the community. In meetings led by a facilitator and held from February to April, the subcommittee prioritized next steps for the redevelopment of buildings, parking spaces and visitor amenities, along with providing budget recommendations.

Improvements to the Ridgway Visitors Center occurred throughout the spring and summer of 2021 as the RACC contracted work for upgrades to the building such as painting the interior and exterior and the installation of new framing, doors, and carpeting in a new meeting space.

The RACC hosted an Open House at the Visitor Center in September, and invited community members to see the park landscaping and the phase-one renovations inside the center. A new conference room and meeting space has been furnished, and the Chamber will offer free use for Chamber members and request a small fee for non-members. The conference room registration system will be available in early 2022.



ONLINE + PRINT MEDIA

ONLINE AND PRINT PROMOTION AND MARKETING



Ridgway's Instagram followers grew by more than a third for the second year.

The Chamber coordinated co-op ads with local businesses in the 2021 San Juan Skyway magazine, distributed throughout Colorado.

The weekly community e-blast is now being sent out to 2,100-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 6,229 contacts.

The Chamber is continuing to develop its online presence on Facebook and Instagram. Since January 2021, our Instagram followers increased by a record-breaking annual amount from 2,179 to 2,979 (up 37%). In 2021, our Facebook followers increased from 2,158 to 2,327 (up 8%).

RACC staff met with Visit Montrose on a quarterly basis to support a digital marketing campaign focusing on regional tourism and emphasizing responsible travel through social media posts and emails.

The Chamber joined a statewide Shop Local campaign, providing strong online exposure for local businesses and nonprofits from December 2020 through March 2021.

The Chamber and member businesses continued to garner online and print media coverage in 2021. The most covered topic was dark sky tourism including Top of the Pine's designation from the International Dark-Sky Association and stargazing tourism trends.

SPECIAL MARKING OPPORTUNITY: NOEL NIGHT

The RACC staff took over the organization and planning of Ridgway's Noel Night in 2021, when the Ridgway Creative District and the original business organizers decided they didn't have the capacity. The event on the first Friday of December was promoted through newspaper ads and articles, Facebook posts, flyers, special e-blasts, a news post on RidgwayColorado.com, and lots of business-to-business networking. The Ridgway Creative District donated \$500 towards the cost of advertising. Customers were treated to holiday food and drinks, 10% to 50% discounts, as well as drawings, giveaways, games, and other specials at 30 businesses and nonprofits. Plus, the annual holiday market happened along with free music and dance performances, plus a visit and photo opportunities with Santa!

SAMPLING OF MEDIA COVERAGE

CLICK ON HEADLINES TO VIEW ARTICLES



- + Montrose Mirror, Feb. 8, page 63:
Ridgway Chamber's Sustainable Tourism and Visitor Center Plans
- + Telluride Daily Planet, March 3:
Prime dark-sky territory
- + Montrose Press, March 26:
Ridgway Youth Volunteer & Career Fair Coming Up
- + Travel Awaits, May 10:
10 Charming Small Towns to Visit
- + Outside Online.com, May 31:
10 Great Hut-to-Hut Trips in the U.S.
- + Ouray County Plaindealer, Oct. 28:
Ridgway Chamber welcomes new director
- + Telluride Daily Planet, Nov. 19:
Experience the Night



STATEWIDE PROMOTION & OFF-SEASON MARKETING STRATEGY



Image: Kane Scheidegger

COLORADO STARGAZING AND CREATIVE CORRIDOR MARKETING

In 2021, the Chamber was directly involved with securing the \$20,000 match for the Colorado Stargazing Marketing Match Grant. As one of the newest members 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. The Colorado Tourism Office (CTO) Marketing Matching Grant is \$40,000 with a \$20,000 match for a total of \$60,000 for the project and was an extremely competitive process.

The RACC continues to team with the Town of Ridgway and members of the Colorado Creative Corridor group for further promotion and grant collaboration opportunities for creative art communities around Colorado. We continue to value this initiative as part of our off-peak season promotion strategy.

2020-2021 COLORADO TOURISM OFFICE WINTER MARKETING

The RACC participated in the CTO Winter Co-Op Paid Media program. The program was funded by a \$1,500 investment from the RACC, and the CTO matched with \$2,000. Marketing efforts were focused during the winter season, from December 2020 through March 2021. Marketing deliverables included targeted email campaigns and targeted online banner advertisements. The campaigns received over 1 million impressions. Media drove 268 visits to RidgwayColorado.com. Ridgway was also featured in one direct email campaign sent to 640,000 subscribers with 144,000 opens, 12,000 clicks, and a 22.6% open rate.

COLORADO TOURISM OFFICE PROMOTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

The RACC continues to seek out state grant-funded opportunities to help promote Ridgway as a year-round destination. CTO funding was used to support our off-peak season marketing strategy, with the goal of driving more economic opportunities during our slower seasons of October to May. Our partnership with the CTO allows the RACC to market Ridgway and our businesses on CTO-owned platforms, and vastly increase our digital marketing efforts. Online marketing garnered through this cooperation in 2021 included:

- Trip Ideas on Colorado.com: [Ridgway Trip Ideas](#)
- CTO Dec. 15 news release: [15 Ways to Explore the Magic of Winter](#)

COLORADO CREATIVE CORRIDOR

ITINERARY DEVELOPMENT & STATEWIDE PROMOTION



Once again the Ridgway Chamber teamed up with the Town of Ridgway and Ridgway Creative District to support the Colorado Creative Corridor project. The collaboration has been an ongoing initiative for the past five years. The majority of this work has been funded through a grant offered by the Colorado Tourism Office in previous years. The Colorado Creative Corridor 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 through event programming and activities, and leaders meet once a month to discuss.

In January 2021, the Chamber provided \$1,250 in matching funds to continue with Ridgway's involvement in this project. We reduced our matching funds from the previous year due to the unknown impacts of COVID-19 on winter LOT (lodging occupancy tax) funds, while the Town continued to support at a \$2,500 match. One of the primary goals for marketing the Creative Corridor is to leverage this platform to market 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 look forward to this continuing to be an important example of the positive impact of Chamber/Town collaboration.

NEW WEBSITE

June 2021-December 2021
official launch of:

COLORADOCREATIVECORRIDOR.COM

2021 MARKETING SUCCESSES FROM PROMOTING RIDGWAY THROUGH THE COLORADO CREATIVE CORRIDOR

Web traffic:

- 4,245 user sessions
- 3,245 users
- 6,452 total pageviews
- average pages per session: 1.52
- average time per page: 2 minutes

Email marketing:

- The creation of our Corridor website allowed us to capture email addresses from visitors who opt into our email database.
- 386 email addresses captured (over first seven months)
 - Email open rate: 58% (much higher than industry average)
 - Click rate on Ridgway content: 30% (also exceeds industry average)

Social media:

- Facebook: 520 likes; 5,763 viewer reach
- Instagram: 1,183 followers
- Google Ads: 274k impressions, 1,884 clicks

Major media coverage:

- Spoke + Blossom magazine article: [Sustainable Stays on the Colorado Creative Corridor](#)





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 Chamber is dedicated to providing value to our local business and nonprofit community 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, social media, Ridgway Visitor Center, print/digital advertising, and media relations, along with key partners that amplify our marketing efforts.

We continue to strive to bring additional visibility and credibility to our community's businesses and nonprofits. We believe that being a Chamber member increases positive perceptions about businesses and organizations among consumers and other business and nonprofit 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 member promotions and events through our digital assets and local print media.

WEEKLY E-BLAST AND VISITOR E-NEWSLETTER

The Chamber continues to send out weekly community e-blasts every Monday, now to a list of targeted recipients that has grown to nearly 2,200. Email content includes the following sections: Member of the Month, Business Specials, Upcoming Events, Ridgway in the Media, and Save the Date. Job Board, winter Shop Local and RACC News and Updates sections are also included at times. The visitor e-newsletter was suspended for most of 2021 due to continued uncertainty about events related to COVID-19 conditions and a focus on other visitor-related activities. In late November, the Noel Night announcement featuring participating businesses and nonprofits was sent to the 6,229 visitor e-newsletter contacts.

MEMBER OF THE MONTH

The Member of the Month program continued to highlight chamber members across several marketing channels in 2021. 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. Afterwards, we provide members with a report of statistics on audience reach and links or attachments with all the coverage. Over the past year, the Member of the Month program was viewed in Chamber e-blasts more than 30,000 times, reached roughly 9,429 Facebook users, was picked up monthly by local news publications, and had 2,204 page views on RidgwayColorado.com.

YOUTH VOLUNTEER & CAREER FAIR

As local businesses struggled to find enough staff in 2021, 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 eight nonprofits including members of the RACC and 10 companies, as well as the Ouray County Sheriff's Office, Ouray Police Department, Ouray County Emergency Medical Service, Ridgway Volunteer Fire Department, and National Guard. 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.

SHOP LOCAL!

From November 2020 to March 2021, the Chamber developed and promoted a winter Shop Local campaign, providing information about member business hours, specials and other timely promotions on a dedicated web page on RidgwayColorado.com as well as the Small Business Development Center website. The same member information was also promoted in Facebook posts and a new section in the community e-blast. At the end of November 2021, the 2021-22 Shop Local campaign was kicked off with Noel Night promotions. Though the statewide campaign was not relaunched, the RACC brought back related social media posts, the special e-blast section, and the web page accessible from the News & Events tab on the Chamber's website. For both winter campaigns, a Shop Local banner was hung on the Sherman Street signs at Hartwell Park, encouraging commuters and travelers to stop and spend money.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS



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. 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).			✓
VISITORS GUIDE			
Business listing within the annual Ridgway Visitor Guide, with 35,000 print copies distributed and 100,000 print/online readers expected.	✓	✓	✓
Ability to list your business or organization in up to two categories in business grid, when applicable			✓
Discounted pricing on print ads in the annual Ridgway Visitor Guide, and digital targeted advertisement — a value of between \$185-\$1,200		✓	✓
VISITORS 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-BLASTS			
Priority in business promotion in the Chamber's quarterly visitor e-newsletter to 6,000+ inboxes	✓	✓	✓
Two weekly newsletter ads per year	✓		
Unlimited newsletter ads per year		✓	✓
FACEBOOK			
Two ad requests per year on RACC page with 2,100+ followers (non-boosted)	✓	✓	✓
One boosted ad request per year on RACC page with 2,100+ followers (\$10 Value)		✓	
Two boosted ad requests per year on RACC and One Ridgway pages with 1,900+ followers (\$20 Value)			✓
Special promotions such as Member of the Month		✓	✓
MARKETING			
Discounted co-op advertising opportunities in publications such as Colorado Life, San Juan Skyways, The Montrose Press (as available)	✓	✓	✓
Priority in business promotion on Visit Colorado social media campaigns (150K followers) and Colorado.com (1.5 million unique visits per year), the #1 google search listing for "Colorado Vacations".	✓	✓	✓

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 Visitors Center and the Ridgway Youth Apprenticeship program.

NOTES:

* A Bronze level 501(c)3 nonprofit receives Silver level benefits and Silver level nonprofits receive Gold level benefits.

Thank you for your support!

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Also, find Member Benefits at <https://ridgwaycolorado.com/about/member-benefits> and online, easy-and-secure enrollment at <https://ridgwaycolorado.com/about/become-a-member>

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

HOW WE MANAGE OUR RESOURCES



Healthy reserves will remain important for responding to unpredictable events in the future.

For 2021, the RACC managed a Town-approved budget of \$74,400. This budget request was based on projections following the unpredictable year of 2020, and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in association with Lodging Occupancy Tax (LOT) receipts for Ridgway.

With the net income of \$10,722 in 2021, we will be carrying over \$15,419 in total reserves from 2021 to 2022, which will be reflected in the 2022 budget request to the Town of Ridgway at our annual review in February. Managing a reserve and a steady increase in LOT funds continues to be both a challenge and an opportunity for the chamber. Responsibly carrying over a reserve remains important to the RACC in the event of unpredictable and potential impacts on our community such as pandemics and wildfires.

Additionally, we look to use our reserve in efforts to continue to evolve the organization with caution for 2022. Goals include, but are not limited to, planning to use this budget to support the full-time employment of the Executive Director, as well as content optimization opportunities for our website, RidgwayColorado.com. The RACC also hopes to be involved in a number of CTO grant funding opportunities for the upcoming year, and continue to play a part in furthering responsible economic growth and development.

As a reminder, the vast majority of lodging tax receipts are not received until the latter half of each year, thus making reserve funding necessary for operations during the January-June period.

Lodging tax receipts are used exclusively for Ridgway marketing and promotion activities.

Since 2018, we have outsourced all of our accounting and financial reporting to Ridgway-based Middleton Accounting & Consulting. We have received exceptional service from Middleton Accounting, and their partnership continues to support the organization's financial management and reporting structures.

The accompanying financial report comes directly from QuickBooks, and reflects a detailed P&L statement for the LOT (i.e. marketing) budget for 2022.

Ridgway Area Chamber of Commerce Profit & Loss for Lodging Tax Class January through December 2021	
	Jan - Dec 21
4:59 PM	
02/02/22	
Accrual Basis	
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
Lodging Tax Income	93,704.83
Total Income	93,704.83
Gross Profit	93,704.83
Expense	
Advertising and Promotion	
Creative District Corridor	1,270.00
Online Media and Advertising	5,024.00
Print Media and Advertising	4,514.07
Visitor's Guide Fulfillment	5,862.50
Website Upgrades and Operations	5,868.75
Total Advertising and Promotion	22,539.32
Board of Directors Expenses	
Board of Directors Insurance	1,048.00
Total Board of Directors Expenses	1,048.00
Dues and Subscriptions	880.50
Open House for VC Remodel	502.34
Payroll Expenses	
Directors Wages	10,400.00
Hourly Wages	2,562.24
Payroll Taxes	1,322.09
Payroll Expenses - Other	83.29
Total Payroll Expenses	14,367.62
Postage	179.06
Professional Fees	
Tax	205.50
Accounting Fees	4,271.76
Total Professional Fees	4,477.26
Rent Expense	10.00
Subcontractors	22,168.00
Sustainable Tourism	729.78
Visitor Center Operations	
Electric	591.41
Licenses & Permits	25.00
Natural Gas	265.13
Office Supplies	922.55
Property & Liability Insurance	857.00
Repairs and Maintenance	1,953.21
Sales Tax License	16.00
Telephone and Internet	1,235.89
Trash	121.99
Volunteer Expense	514.54
Water & Sewer	957.00
Total Visitor Center Operations	7,459.72
Visitor Center Redesign	8,550.56
Total Expense	82,932.16
Net Ordinary Income	10,772.67
Net Income	10,772.67



2022 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.

The Ridgway Area Chamber of Commerce will keep building upon the successes of the past five years. Goals in 2022 include, but are not limited to, continuing to manage and increase Chamber membership, focus communication strategies on promoting responsible and sustainable tourism, and emphasize off-peak season promotional marketing. We will continue to engage with the Colorado Tourism Office (CTO) and regional partners to further amplify and support these efforts.

Staff will collaborate with CTO and VistaWorks on the Colorado Stargazing: Experience the Night grant project. The list of priorities include updating the webpage, updating the media guide, managing social media, bringing in journalists and influencers, promoting workshops and events, and creating stargazing resources for all participating locations.

Chamber plans for 2022 also include collaboration with Peak Media Company to streamline RidgwayColorado.com with the end goal being to further increase traffic to our website as well as making it more accessible for the Ridgway business community to share information. This will help local organizations as well as visitors to our area.

The annual Visitor's Guide will be updated at the end of the year, keeping a similar layout, activity themes and Ridgway-centric focus, while adding new business and event information. Responsible travel messaging will be further developed and weaved into the narrative including Ridgway's stargazing opportunities and Leave No Trace principles.

We thank all of our members, the Town of Ridgway, our staff, contractors, volunteers, partners, and the local business community at large for your continued support and partnership. We look forward to a safe and productive 2022.

