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THE CHAMBER Impact

SEP/OCT 2024

A New Era for The Chamber!



It was an joyous celebration on July 17 for The Aurora Chamber of Commerce's Grand Opening at the new location - 610 S Abilene St, Ste B, Aurora, CO 80012 - in the Aurora Federal Credit Union building! Thanks to all those who were able to attend, and to our food sponsors, Aurora Federal Credit Union and Ent Credit Union. Come visit us! (Photo by Katie Creative)

Arapahoe County Commissioners ask voters to invest in essential services

Arapahoe County Commissioners on August 20 referred a measure to the 2024 November Ballot asking voters to release the County from revenue and spending limits on essential services imposed by the Taxpayers Bill of Rights (TABOR). The decision comes after months of educating and engaging residents about the County's fiscal challenges.

While the County maintains a balanced budget, it's been at the expense of capital projects and ongoing maintenance, which have reached a critical point. Today, more than \$316 million in deferred maintenance and transportation needs remain unaddressed at a time of increased demand from residents.

The average residential property owner in Arapahoe County pays \$32 per month for essential services in the state's third largest county serving more than 655,800 residents. Without additional revenue, the County is facing cuts to services beginning in 2025.

"Arapahoe County has a long tradition of

financial responsibility, but increased population growth and inflationary costs have squeezed the county budget too far," said Board Chair Carrie Warren-Gully. "We've spent this year engaging residents to help them better understand our challenges and sought their input on various solutions."

Elected officials hosted more than 130 events for residents and stakeholders and created a [dedicated website](#) to engage and educate the community. In addition, the county surveyed more than 4,800 residents and found most are supportive of removing the TABOR cap.

"With careful budgeting and with help from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), we've been able to make things work at a baseline level, but our community members want and need more and more services to keep the high



quality of life we have in Arapahoe County," said Commissioner Bill Holen.

Citizens have recently formed a campaign, which includes a website launching in September — www.voteyes1A.com — to help educate voters. The County also maintains an educational website at www.acbudget.com. ■

To see upcoming Chamber meetings
as well as Chamber member events –
[go to the calendar!](#)

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President's Letter

Embracing the Positive Changes Ahead

Welcome to a New Era at The Chamber!

The environment is electric with all the changes and transformations in the last year. There's a sense of excitement about all the possibilities we are considering – including new directions, enhanced programs, and of course, which traditions to hang on to and make even better! Do you feel it?

I admit some ideas are a bit ambitious, but I also feel like we can make it happen – especially if it fits with The Chamber's mission of "serving and representing our members so their businesses and our community will prosper."

As we navigate through this exciting phase, I want to take a moment to share how - with direction from membership - we are



Naomi Colwell
President & CEO

moving forward with a clear focus to strengthen the business community by:

- Advancing workforce development
- Supporting our military community
- Empowering and increasing membership

These priorities are not just goals but commitments to our shared vision of progress and unity.

Advancing Workforce Development

The future of our region's economy hinges on a skilled and prepared workforce. To address this critical need, we are intensifying our efforts in workforce development. We are collaborating with local educational institutions, businesses, and industry leaders to create programs that bridge the gap between education and employment.

Our new initiatives include education opportunities, enhanced job training programs, apprenticeships, and partnerships aimed at equipping our workforce with the skills needed for today's dynamic job market. By investing in our talent pool, we are not only securing the future of our businesses but also contributing to the overall economic vitality of our community.

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ChamberBoard

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Kristi Kleinholz | Mesa Moving and Storage

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ASSOCIATES

Colorado Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTAC)
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DON'T FORGET: "Every employee of a Chamber member is a member of The Chamber"
Please route this issue to your sales reps, account managers, marketing directors, HR and PR departments. You can also access each month's newsletter online at our website, www.aurorachamber.org, so you can forward it to every employee in your company!

**THE CHAMBER'S
MISSION**



*Our Mission is to serve and represent
our members so their businesses
and our community will prosper.*

▶ ChamberCommittees

An Inside Look

ARTS + BUSINESS CONNECTION

Global Fest and Mosaic of Cultures

Tuesday, July 9, 2024

By Mark Smith, PhotoSmith Colorado and ABC Chair



Minsoo Song

Guest speakers for the July ABC meeting were Binisha Shrestha, program director for the Colorado Nepalese Community, and Minsoo Song, International Community Outreach Coordinator in the Office of International and Immigrant Affairs with the City of Aurora.



Binisha Shrestha

Shrestha talked Aurora's Nepali Community exhibit, currently at the Aurora History Museum (where this meeting was held), which delves into the unique aspects of this community. The exhibit runs through April 6, 2025.

The Office of International and Immigrant Affairs helps to integrate newcomers into the mainstream community. Song is also a key member of the team that coordinates Aurora's annual Global Fest held in August, which includes entertainment, art, activities, food, and community.

The Art of Low Resource Landscaping

Tuesday, August 6, 2024

By Mark Smith, PhotoSmith Colorado and ABC Chair

On August 6, the Arts + Business Connection Committee ventured to the Denver Botanic Gardens to learn more about



Marissa Sterrett

low-resource-use landscape from Marissa Sterrett, ASLA, Manager of Sustainable Landscape Services. "Success of a garden is understanding its variables," said Sterrett.

Sterrett shared that the creative process in landscaping entails having a knowledge of the plants being considered. This includes plant size, height, and placement in the yard. Furthermore, knowing when any plant blooms as well as color changes over the year can increase the beauty of the area. She talked about a wide variety of plants that are native to Colorado, including when they are most colorful, blooming times, if they attract birds and pollinators, and – of course – their water needs.

Following Sterrett's informational presentation, attendees were able to able wanted the Gardens as part of their morning.

TRANSPORTATION

The Transportation committee did not meet in July 2024

Bus Rapid Transit in the Metro Area

Wednesday, August 7, 2024

By Tim Harris, Horrocks Engineers, and Transportation Vice-chair



COLORADO
Department of Transportation

The Transportation committee met on August 7 to hear from representatives of the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and Denver Regional Council of Government (DRCOG). The meeting provided updates and a broad overview of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) in the Metropolitan Area. BRT is an improved bus service incorporating a variety of features such as designated lanes, less frequent stops, signal priority for buses, level boarding stations and other enhancements meant to attract ridership and help meet regional air quality goals.

Speakers were Deputy Director of Traffic and Safety Angie Drumm, and Transportation Planner and BRT Program Manager Ryan Noles with CDOT, and Multimodal Transportation Planning Manager, Jacob Riger with DRCOG.



GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS, EDUCATION, AND ENERGY (PUBLIC ISSUES)

Public Issues did not meet in July 2024



Meghan Dollar

Addressing Previous and Upcoming Legislative Sessions

Thursday, August 1, 2024

Sr Vice President of the Colorado Chamber of Commerce Meghan Dollar, presented about what the Colorado Chamber accomplished in the 2024 Legislative Session, and what they will be paying attention to in the 2025 session. The Colorado Chamber is following their Vision 2033, which is to help business owners understand key policy areas – and to find solutions to business issues. She said that the biggest issue they have heard about from their meetings with businesses across the state is finding workers.

Rep. Mike Weissman, Sen. Rhonda Fields for Colorado, and Arapahoe County Government Commissioner Jeff Baker were in attendance and provided updates about their respective priorities.

WOMEN IN BUSINESS

Wednesday, June 25, 2024

In June, the Women in Business committee went to the Denver Botanic Gardens.



[continued on page 4]



Young Professionals at the Wings Over the Rockies Air & Space Museum's Exploration of Flight.

Attendees learned about the art exhibition process from Associate Director of Exhibitions & Art Collections Jen Tobias. The group then split up to learn about the colorful outdoor exhibit, Spirit Guides by Jacobo and María Ángeles. The exhibition is open through September 8, 2024.

Women in Business did not meet in July 2024

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

The Young Professionals did not meet in July 2024

Wings Over the Rockies Exploration of Flight

Wednesday, August 14, 2024

Wings Over the Rockies Air & Space Museum's Exploration of Flight in Centennial

hosted the Young Professionals on August 14, 2024. Attendees were given a tour of the museum by the museum's knowledgeable volunteers, then Wings Over the Rockies CEO John Barry talked about the museum's offerings, programming, and Colorado Skies Academy.

The group also had the opportunity to try flight simulator machines, to see if they have what it takes to take flight.

DEFENSE COUNCIL

Thursday, June 27, 2024

The June Defense Council was hosted and held at the Navy Reserve Center Denver and Combat Logistics Battalion 453 (USMC) at Buckley Space Force Base. Attendees were able to view and ask questions about some

of the equipment used by the Battalion. The breakfast sponsor was Community Table Kitchen.

The Defense Council did not meet in July 2024 ■



PRESIDENT'S LETTER [continued from page 2]

Supporting Our Military Community

Our commitment to supporting our military community extends beyond gratitude; it involves tangible actions and dedicated resources. We recognize the sacrifices made by our service members and their families, and we are determined to provide meaningful support to these people who are an important part of the overall community.

This support includes creating programs that facilitate civilian job placements for veterans, offering networking opportunities that connect military families with local businesses, welcoming military personnel into the community, and advocating for policies that benefit our military community.

Empowering Membership

At the heart of the Chambers' success is our diverse and vibrant membership. We recognize that each of you brings

unique strengths and opportunities to the community. So, as we embark on this new era, our commitment is to enhance the value of the membership experience.

Join us for interactive engagement through specialized committees, networking events, and member-exclusive programs.

Moving Forward Together

As we embrace these initiatives, we are guided by a vision of collaboration and shared success. Your involvement and feedback are crucial as we navigate this new era. We encourage you to stay engaged, share your insights, and actively participate in Chamber programs. Together, we will build a stronger Chamber.

Thank you for your continued partnership and dedication. I look forward to working with each of you as we advance towards these exciting goals. ■

Ribbon Cuttings & Open Houses

Ribbon cuttings
mean business: **50 Jobs**



Shamrock Food Service Warehouse - 2802 S. Havana Street, Aurora, CO 80014

Grand opening activities at the Shamrock Foodservice Warehouse on Friday, June 14, 2024, included vendor demonstrations, exclusive giveaways for the first 100 customers, food trucks, a live broadcast by Alice 105.9, product sampling for numerous items – and of course, a ribbon cutting. The opening also served as the kick-off to a month-long food drive supporting Food Bank of the Rockies for Aurora. Shamrock Foodservice Warehouse donated an initial \$5,000 to jumpstart the drive. Attendees at the event included Shamrock Food Service Warehouse CEO Kent Mclelland, Aurora Mayor Mike Coffman, City Council members Steve Sundberg and Stephanie Hancock, Aurora Chamber President Naomi Colwell, Havana BID Executive Director Chance Horiuchi, and community leaders and residents. (6/14/24) <https://www.shamrockfsw.com/>



Bellco Credit Union – Buckley Branch

499 S Airport Blvd, Aurora, CO 80017

The Ribbon Cutting for the Bellco Credit Union Buckley Branch was held the first day of July 2024. Bellco Credit Union VP/Retail Delivery Stacie Zidan cut the ribbon. The event included the presentation of a \$7,500 check donated to the Boys and Girls Clubs of Denver, received by Director of Philanthropy Alex D'Addio. In attendance, along with Bellco executives, staff, and partners, were Chamber Director of Membership Steve Phillips and Chamber Ambassadors Sanjay Tyagi, Schooley Mitchell of Denver; Katie Anthony, ADP; Chartashia Miller, TT Coaching With Results; Oma Mohamed; Farouk Mohammed; and BK Martin, Ent Credit Union. (7/1/24) <https://www.bellco.org/> (800) 235-5261



MemberNews

Visit Aurora's Bruce Dalton Appointed to Colorado Tourism Board



Bruce Dalton

Congratulations to Visit Aurora President and CEO Bruce Dalton for his appointment to the Colorado Tourism Office Board, a division of the Governor's Office of Economic Development and International Trade. Dalton has been successfully leading Visit Aurora since 2017, and this prestigious appointment speaks to his leadership as well as his connections. The mission of the Tourism Office is to empower the tourism industry by inspiring the world to explore Colorado

responsibly and respectfully, and the addition of Dalton to the Board is a win for Colorado and for Aurora.

CCA's Lynne Winchell Nominated for CFO Award

VP of Operations and CFO of the Community College of Aurora Lynne Winchell has been nominated for the Denver Business Journal's CFO Awards, in the non-profit category.

This first-of-its kind recognition honors those who oversee 'all things dollar signs' for top companies. These executives provide the financial guidance needed to make a business model work, recognize and



Lynne Winchell

manage risk, and find and implement creative ways to boost revenue while diminishing debt.

Painted Prairie Wins Multiple Awards

Painted Prairie was the top winner in three categories at the 61st annual PCBC Gold Nugget awards ceremony in June. The community received Grand Awards for Masterplan Community of the Year, Best Landscape Architecture, and Best Community Land Plan. It also secured an Award of Merit for Best-On-The-Boards Site Plan for its future Town Center development.

The Gold Nugget Awards are the oldest and most prestigious residential design awards in the nation, representing the best of the best in innovative architecture, planning, and construction.

Painted Prairie is a master-planned one square mile community, bordered by Piccadilly, Himalaya, 56th, and 64th avenues, and sits directly across from the Gaylord Rockies Resort. ■



PAINTED PRAIRIE

Fitzsimons Credit Union Awards Scholarships to Local Students

Fitzsimons Credit Union believes that education has the power to transform communities and is pleased to announce the 2024 recipients of the Sandra B. Neves Scholarship. The scholarship is named in honor of former CEO, Sandra Neves, and was founded after her retirement in 2017. Neves is passionate about higher education, asserting that "lifelong learning is essential to success and happiness, combined with integrity, upstanding character and continuous personal and spiritual development, education is your key to a joyful life."

"We are incredibly proud to support the educational journey of tomorrow's leaders in the community through these annual scholarships," said Fitzsimons' current President & CEO, Robert M. Fryberger Jr.

This year's scholarship recipients were chosen based upon academic achievement, career aspirations, community service, extracurricular participation, and financial need. They received equal amounts, totaling \$5,000 in awarded scholarships. The awardees are Jessica Hawkins, LeAnn Anderson, Ciara Andrew, Holly Schwiem, and Stephen Asante. ■



Fitzsimons
A PARTNERING CREDIT UNION

▶ MemberContributions

What is a Preventative Care Management Program?

A Preventative Care Management Program (PCMP) is a tax compliant program that offers employees 24/7 Health and Wellness Benefits & Supplemental Insurance that is added to their current healthcare insurance with no out-of-pocket expense for employee or employer.

A PCMP enables the employer a potential tax-savings of between \$650-680 per employee/per year. It can also lead to healthier, more productive employees, and improved hiring and employee retention.

The PCMP combines a Section 125 Cafeteria Plan and a Self-Insured Medical Expense Reimbursement Plan (SIMERP) which ensures compliance with all IRS regulations. By participating in a PCMP program, employees can receive reimbursements for eligible medical expenses on an after-tax basis. The program is structured to align with tax guidelines and maximize tax savings for both employer and employees for this program and has undergone thorough review by CPAs and ERISA attorneys. ■

Information provided by the Gutin Team of the TE Group silverfoxpcmpbenefits.com



Are you a Proud Leadership Aurora Graduate?

The 40th Anniversary celebration of the Leadership Aurora program is Tuesday, October 8, 2024, at the Arapahoe County Fairgrounds and Park, 25690 E Quincy Ave, Aurora, CO 80016, 5-9 pm.

- Reconnect with your classmates
- Compete with other classes for the "most talented class ever" award
- Enjoy great entertainment, food, and drinks
- Visit exhibit area of organizations that have been impacted by Leadership Aurora class projects

The theme is 1984 – and in keeping with the theme, individual tickets are \$84, and sponsorships are available. Proceeds from tickets and sponsorships support the Leadership Aurora program by providing scholarships and keeping tuition low and affordable. ■



AmbassadorSpotlight

Rob Mathes, owner of The Mathes Insurance Agency, joined The Chamber in December 2017, and immediately applied for and was accepted into the Lead by Example Tips and Leads group in January 2018. He says that from the beginning, he felt a strong connection with Chamber staff and experienced many meaningful conversations with other members at events. According to Mathes, since he was already recommending The Chamber to other businesses outside The Chamber membership, he decided to become a (very active) Ambassador – to make it official.

Mathes credits his Chamber membership and involvement for the knowledge he has gained from other entrepreneurs during presentations, and

through networking groups and social events. He has also engaged with several referral partners through membership. He says that The Chamber's "community first, business always" motto has resonated with him since he joined.

Mathes found his niche in insurance when he was working in the financial services industry and traveling a lot. He wanted to spend more time with his family and be in Colorado – and found that an insurance agency was a great fit to stay local and make an impact in the community. He is proud that after 16 years in the corporate world, he let his entrepreneurial spirit take over, and it has been a successful journey. ■



Rob Mathes –
Mathes Insurance Agency

*The Mathes Insurance Agency is at
2373 Central Park Blvd, Unit 105,
Denver, CO 80238.*

NewMembers

Ameristar Casino, Resort & Spa
ASL Dumpsters LLC
At Home with Reese
Aurora Economic Opportunity Coalition
Comparion Insurance Agency
ConnectPay USA
Del Mar Family Eye Care
Dream Painting
Gameday Men's Health Aurora /
Second Act Management Services LLC
Grease Monkey
Home Front Military Network
Journey Christian Church - Aurora
Katherine Moskal Health Plans
Kona Ice of Hampden
Ladder of Success ABA
LegalShield Business Solutions
LendingQuarters LLC
MOTÉ-Maneuvering Obstacles
Thru Engaging, Inc
MyEyeDr
Navy Federal Credit Union
Pay Power Solutions Colorado
Philip Morris International
PureVida Water Technologies, LLC
Sparto Communications
Synergy CPA Group
Telecom Tech School
Upskilling U Consulting and Training
Wreck Room Escape Game

MemberRenewals

HomeSmith Real Estate
iPlace Seniors
Jeff The Loan Guy
Jes Jansen Retirement Solutions
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Jordan Road CARSTAR Collision
Ka-Ko Jo's
La Cueva Restaurant
Law Office of Anna L. Burr
Leidos
Les Schwab Tire Centers- Tower Rd
McBride Engineering, LLC
McGrath, Jane (Civic Member)
Mesa Moving and Storage
Metropolitan Building Maintenance, Inc
Michael Baker Corporation
Minuteman Press - Aurora
NAACP - Aurora Branch
National Charter Bus Aurora
Navy Federal Credit Union

New-Ride Enterprises
(dba New-Ride Design)
Olsson
Peck, George & Barbara (Civic Members)
Pinnacol Assurance
Priority Properties
Regional Transportation District (RTD)
River Valley Architects
Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center
Rocky Mountain Sound Light & Video
Ronald McDonald House Charities of Denver
Senior Benefit Services
Staybridge Suites
Denver International Airport Hotel
The Learning Experience
University of Colorado Medicine
Unlikely Gift Productions, LLC
Veritas Funding
Wagner Equipment Co
WaveMAX Laundry Aurora

Advertisers: Chamber members can use the IMPACT to advertise products and services to other members. Advertising space only available to members. The IMPACT also accepts preprinted inserts. Contact The Chamber for details.

610 S. Abilene Street, Ste. #B
Aurora, CO 80012
303-344-1500 • Fax 303-344-1564
website: www.aurorachamber.org

COMING UP AT THE AURORA FOX:

40th
ANNIVERSARY

Season
Announcement
Celebration

SATURDAY, SEPT. 7, 2024
6 – 9 P.M.

SCAN TO
PURCHASE
TICKETS
TO BOTH
EVENTS!



Food from fantastic local vendors,
delicious drinks at the Fox Bar,
complimentary desserts -- and, a
special performance revealing the
titles of our 40th season!

The Aurora Fox Arts Center
9900 E. Colfax Ave.
Aurora, CO 80010

Around the World
IN 80 DAYS

Adapted by Mark Brown
From the novel by Jules Verne
Directed by Richard R. Cowden

Oct. 5 – 27, 2024

TICKETS: \$17-42

TICKETS:
\$10



AURORA
FOX



We Fund
Culture.
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FRIENDS OF THE
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AMPLIFY
STRATEGY

Ray & Sue
Bodis

Judy Jasso

The historic Aurora Fox Arts Center is located in the center of Aurora's Cultural Arts District.

For tickets and to learn more about our programming, visit AuroraFoxArtsCenter.org or call our box office at 303-739-1970.

Presented by  COMCAST

**SATURDAY,
SEPT. 21**

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Aurora Municipal Campus
15151 E. Alameda Parkway



AuroraGov.org/Mini-Con



Tuesday, Dec. 3

4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Aurora Central Library
14949 E. Alameda Parkway

.....

Call for vendors! Promote
your crafts and services at
the second annual one-stop
shopping event



Learn more about being a
vendor by scanning the QR code.

AuroraGov.org/MerryMakersMarket