



**To:** Honorable Mayor Clark and Ridgway Town Council  
**From:** Preston Neill, Town Manager  
**Date:** December 9, 2024  
**RE:** **Town Manager's Report**



### **INTRODUCTION**

This monthly report serves as an update to the Town Council and community members on key projects, activities, and community issues.

### **GRANULAR ACTIVATED CARBON PROJECT UPDATE**

We are in the final stages of installing the plumbing and getting the media in place for the new Granular Activated Carbon system! An electrician is slated to complete all the required electrical work over the next two weeks and Filter Tech Systems is scheduled to send representatives to the Water Treatment Plant the week of December 16<sup>th</sup> to get the system started up. Once the system comes online, the chlorine dioxide machine (color, taste, and odor pretreatment) will be removed from our water treatment process.



### **CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION FOR TOWN OF RIDGWAY WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY**

From Rachel Herlihy, MD, MPH, Colorado State Epidemiologist:

Thank you for your current participation as an emergency site in the Colorado Wastewater Surveillance Program. During your tenure as a utility submitting samples twice weekly through July of 2024, your dedication was instrumental in the expansion of our statewide wastewater surveillance system. Governor Jared Polis has declared December 2-6, 2024 as Wastewater Utility Appreciation Week. This declaration stands as a testament to the invaluable contribution your team has made to our wastewater surveillance network.

Your utility is an integral part of our program's evolution and sustainability. Our program transitioned from a larger sampling model to a smaller, more efficient model to prioritize new targets. Thank you for piloting our emergency model!



The data generated from the samples you provided adds value to our existing surveillance systems. It enhances our understanding of the disease burden within the communities you serve, allowing for identification of emerging pathogens and new strains of viruses. When integrated with other public health data, wastewater surveillance data can provide a comprehensive picture of disease trends to help allocate resources and enable citizens to assess their risk of disease. As an emergency surveillance site, your utility will continue to contribute invaluable information during public health emergency responses.



On behalf of all Coloradoans, thank you for your dedication to safeguarding public health. We recognize that the Colorado Wastewater Surveillance System would not be possible without your contribution.


**\* A HUGE SHOUTOUT GOES OUT TO CHRIS BOLANE AND RODNEY PAULSON FOR ALL THEIR SAMPLING EFFORTS! \***

Below is an image showing an impact report detailing the contributions made by the Ridgway Wastewater Treatment Plant, along with the essential data derived from these efforts.


Thank you, Town of Ridgway Wastewater Treatment Facility!

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment greatly appreciates your participation in the Colorado Wastewater Surveillance Program. Your dedication as an emergency surveillance site for infectious disease testing has been a vital part of creating a more efficient statewide wastewater surveillance system.

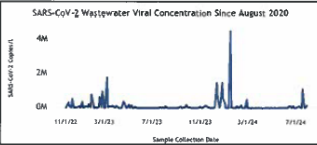
Town of Ridgway Wastewater Treatment Facility is an integral part of our program's evolution and sustainability. As an emergency surveillance site, your utility will continue to contribute invaluable information during public health emergency responses. Thank you for aiding in the development of our program.



Your commitment to wastewater surveillance will allow us to continue to expand what is possible with wastewater epidemiology.



Your team has contributed **163** samples to our program over **88** weeks!



Since we have been testing for SARS-CoV-2, we have seen it all. Through the highs and the lows ranging from **4,460,000** to **2,000** gene copies per liter, your team helped CDPHE and local public health agencies identify SARS-CoV-2 trends in wastewater allowing community members to assess their disease risk.

Town of Ridgway Wastewater Treatment Facility is 1 of 52 sites selected to participate in Colorado's Wastewater Emergency Surveillance System.

Together we've collected and tested **11,910** samples since the start of the program in August 2020.

At CDPHE, we partner with our local public health agencies. The local partner for Town of Ridgway Wastewater Treatment Facility is Ouray County. To contact the LPHA, please reach out to Kriste Kelley ([kkelley@ourayco.gov](mailto:kkelley@ourayco.gov)) or Rebecca Doll-Tyler ([rdolltyler@ourayco.gov](mailto:rdolltyler@ourayco.gov)).

When activated, the Emergency Surveillance System encompasses roughly 64% of Coloradans.



### **RIDGWAY LIGHT INDUSTRIAL PROJECT STATUS**

From Joyce Huang, Contracted Engineer for Development Review Services:

This project has completed a large portion of their public improvements however work will need to pause for the winter and re-continue in the 2025 construction season. To date the water main and all water services have been installed, tested, and confirmed to be within Town standards. The new section of Laura Street has been paved from the intersection of Railroad to Roundhouse and curb, gutter, and sidewalk has been installed for a large majority of the development. The tasks scheduled for completion in 2025 include installing a small section of sewer along with the proposed sewer services. Additionally, the narrow portion of Laura Street between Roundhouse and Otto still requires sidewalk installation and paving. Several ADA ramps remain unfinished, and the stormwater crossing on Railroad has been delayed due to utility conflicts that must be addressed prior to installation. Final inspections and record drawing reviews will be performed after all public improvements are completed and have passed the required compliance testing requirements.

### **OURAY COUNTY ALERTS**

Ouray County Alerts is used to communicate critical public safety topics including evacuations, wildfire, flooding, and other emergency notifications. All residents, visitors, and family members living in Ouray County are encouraged to sign up for alerts. You can register through the [registration portal](#).

During the registration process, you can choose the types of alerts you receive and how to receive them, including landline phone, cell phone, text/SMS message, and email. Please be sure to enter your physical address so that you will receive geo-targeted (location based) messages. If you do not enter a physical address, you risk missing critical messages.



### **OURAY COUNTY MASTER PLAN UPDATE**

The Ouray County Planning Commission is working hard to complete the final stages of their review and update of the 1999 Master Plan. The Planning Commission met for a final work session on November 19<sup>th</sup> and a final public hearing is scheduled for January 8<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. at the 4-H Event Center to approve and ratify the document. Public participation is encouraged, and the Planning Commission will accept public comment during the entire process including during the final public hearing. For more information, go to <https://ouraycountyco.gov/147/Land-Use-Planning>.



## **ECOACTION PARTNERS RECEIVES COLORADO ENERGY OFFICE ENERGY CODE ADOPTION & ENFORCEMENT GRANT TO SUPPORT GOVERNMENTS ACROSS SAN MIGUEL, SAN JUAN AND OURAY COUNTIES WITH UPDATING BUILDING ENERGY CODES**

EcoAction (EAP) is coordinating a cohort to discuss, adopt and implement Colorado's new building energy code requirements. Our region is mostly enforcing 2018 IECC and is required to update by July 1, 2026, if other building code updates are implemented. San Miguel, Ouray, San Juan Counties, Mountain Village, Ridgway, Silverton, and Telluride plan to adopt new codes.

The Colorado Energy Office's Energy Code Adoption & Enforcement Grant Program, authorized by House Bill 22-1362, supports adoption, implementation, and enforcement of codes equivalent or beyond the state's model electric and solar ready, and model low energy and carbon codes based on the 2024 IECC.

The grant covers technical consultants, staff time, public outreach, workforce development, implementation, enforcement, compliance and workshops. Workshops will cover residential & commercial building energy codes, cold climate building science, mechanical systems, heat pumps and system testing, and more.

Lotus Engineering & Sustainability provides expertise in cohort facilitation and supporting code adoption. Lotus leads other regional cohorts and facilitates the State Energy Code Board in developing model energy codes. NORESO will provide code training and technical expertise.

The Telluride Foundation, San Miguel Power Association and EAP provide an Energy Workforce Development Program supporting renewable energy, beneficial electrification (heat pumps, EVs, etc.), building science (BPI), RESNET HERS rater certifications and more. The program, supported by grant funds, aims to add skilled labor to the energy sector through reimbursement for certification costs and training time.

The Regional Climate Action Plan identifies buildings as key to meeting the emissions reduction goal of 50% by 2030. 2023 Building Energy Use was 42% of emissions, with 25.4% from residential and 16.8% from commercial buildings. To "improve building energy codes for new construction, remodels, and additions" partners must:

- Strengthen efficiency standards and codes to require 10% better than basic code construction, update building energy codes at least every 6 years, and move towards net zero energy buildings.
- Incentivize 'beyond code' construction practices.
- Coordinate regional alignment of energy codes and 'beyond code' preferences.
- Facilitate education for contractors, architects and building trades.



**COLORADO TOURISM OFFICE AWARDS TOURISM MARKETING GRANT TO RIDGWAY AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

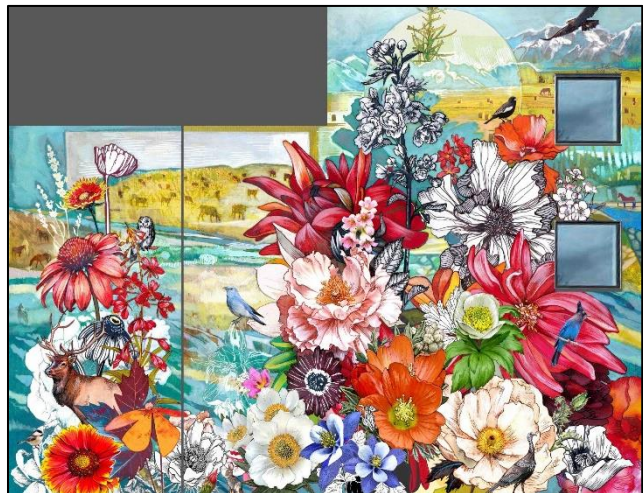
The Colorado Tourism Office (CTO), a division of the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT), recently announced new recipients of the Tourism Marketing Grant to enhance tourism marketing initiatives across the state. These grants are designed to support local and regional tourism economies by providing resources to promote Colorado as a premier travel destination while fostering sustainable and responsible travel practices that benefit both residents and visitors. The Ridgway Area Chamber Of Commerce was awarded \$20,000 to support a targeted marketing initiative aimed at revitalizing the Ridgway business district, home to both a historic and creative sector.

**COMMUNITY INITIATIVES UPDATE**

From Tera Wick, Community Initiatives Facilitator:

1. Tera Wick has been gradually transitioning back into her role as Community Initiatives Facilitator, after being on leave for family medical reasons since mid-July. Town appreciates Arielle Bielak for stepping in to cover CIF duties in Tera’s absence.
2. FUSE has new co-chairs, Donna Jaffee and Alison Ethridge. Thank you to these committed volunteers!
3. Donna and Alison played a key role in helping to convene the Business Revitalization Committee, which met for 13 consecutive weeks over the summer to discuss items of interest to downtown businesses, such as needs for signage and promotion. The committee plans to reconvene in January.

4. Space to Create Public Art Component
  - a. A final design was agreed upon with mural artist Yulia Avgustinovich, after an additional round of feedback from the mural selection ad-hoc committee. At the committee’s request, Ms. Avgustinovich included/added native flora and fauna as well as horses. White Crested Prickly poppy, Cowboy’s delight, Globe flower, Cutleaf



Anemone, Echinocereus, Spreading Dogbane, Blanket flower, Blue Columbine



flowers. Added birds: Stellar's Jay, Lark Bunting, Black capped chickadee, Mountain bluebird.

- b. The project is slated for installation during a three-week period in the spring, finishing by June 30, 2025.
5. Main Street Managers Summit was hosted in Ridgway- October 24/25. Organized by Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) Main Street Colorado program, about twenty-five Main Street managers from across the State of Colorado met in the Decker Community Room for two days where they shared their successes and best practices, and received training from Ayers and Associates about “how to think like a developer”. One of the most relevant projects we learned about was at the summit was an over the banner highway sign implemented in Meeker.

Key takeaways from Meeker highway banner project:

- CDOT said they do not have jurisdiction over the banner because the poles are outside the R.O.W. and the banner had a clearance of 22'.
- Design: Meeker did not have access to a bucket truck, and a traditional system was over our budget, so they designed a system that they could raise and lower themselves. The cable system is fairly simple and any welder can recreate it. Meeker created a concept drawing and SGM engineers reviewed it. After installation we added guy wires to reinforce the poles.
- Hanging process: Banners are clipped in through the grommets to the cable, so we can change them out whenever we want. We just have to notify the police so they can stop traffic. It takes about 10 mins. Event planners can submit their banner design for review by our board if they want to hang one.
- Budget: The whole project was under \$10,000 for us. Our local Electric Company supplied and installed the poles, and also gave us a deal. Their total was \$3283. Engineering cost \$3547, and the cable system with the local welder cost \$1065 to install. Small 2' x 20' was \$340 each, large 3' x 40' was \$772.





- Specs for the banner. The largest banner on top is 3' x 40' and the two smaller banners are 2' x 20'. 18oz Double Sided banner. full color digital print, standard hem with webbing, grommet every 18" all sides, wind slits, Width: 240 Inches, Height: 24 Inches
6. Ridgway Independent Film Festival (RIFF) November 14-17 The most ambitious and well attended RIFF yet! A more complete report coming in February for discussion.

a. Key takeaways:

- i. Festival included sixteen film blocks, art exhibit, block party, lectures, workshops, dance, social events Full program here [RIFF 2024 Program](#)
- ii. The festival was well received and well supported by the community with volunteers, donations and sponsorships.
- iii. Volunteers contributed thousands of hours selecting films, recruiting and coordinating with film makers, driving, planning and coordinating programming, seeking donations and putting on the event.
- iv. Volunteer Festival



Director, Arielle Bielak, championed the event, bringing substantial vision and leadership, donating countless hours. Mayor Clark wrote a letter of commendation for Arielle, recognizing all of her contributions to the Film Festival, and the cultural and economic vitality of Ridgway.

7. RIFF Budget Summary

- a. Ticket sales far exceeded expectations. Budget \$700. Actual sales \$11,323
- b. In kind donations over \$10,000 in printing, advertising, lodging, food
- c. \$6,000 in Total sponsorships, grants and film submission fees.
- d. Projected expenses: \$16,000. Actual expenses: Approx \$11,000



8. RIFF Next Steps
  - a. In January, CIF will work with RIFF volunteers to debrief the event and begin strategic planning for future sustainability.
9. First Fridays Gallery Walks took place June - December 2024 - Thanks to Vanessa Backer for coordinating this event! Galleries were offered \$100 each to offset cost of refreshments and entertainment.
10. FUSE retreat - Nov 23rd FUSE volunteers gathered to reflect on accomplishments for the year and set priorities for 2025. This reflection process and planning process will continue for December and January. FUSE will bring priorities for discussion with Council in February.

#### **UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS**

- **Sustainability Advisory Board Meeting** – December 10, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. at Town Hall and virtually via Zoom
- **Town Council Regular Meeting** – December 11, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. in-person at Town Hall and virtually via Zoom
- **Town of Ridgway Holiday Party** – December 14, 2024 at 5:30 p.m.
- **Youth Advisory Council Meeting** – December 16, 2024 at 3:30 p.m. at Town Hall
- **FUSE Creative Main Street Committee Meeting** – December 17, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. in the Decker Community Room and virtually via Zoom
- **All Staff Meeting and Lunch** – December 18, 2024 at 11:30 p.m. at Town Hall
- **Planning Commission Meeting** – January 7, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. in-person at Town Hall and virtually via Zoom
- **Town Council Regular Meeting** – January 8, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. in-person at Town Hall and virtually via Zoom
- **Sustainability Advisory Board Meeting** – TBD at 5:00 p.m. in-person at Town Hall and virtually via Zoom





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**JOKE OF THE DAY**

What do you call a poor Santa Claus?

St. Nickel-less