



To: Honorable Mayor Clark and Ridgway Town Council
From: Preston Neill, Town Manager
Date: September 9, 2025
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.

BEAVER CREEK DIVERSION RESTORATION PROJECT WEBPAGE

<https://townofridgway.colorado.gov/beaver-creek-diversion-restoration-project>

APPLICATION MATERIALS AVAILABLE FOR 2026 TOWN OF RIDGWAY GRANT PROGRAM

The Town of Ridgway is now accepting applications for the 2026 Town of Ridgway Community Grant Program. The Town welcomes applications from non-profit organizations seeking funding for programs, projects, services or activities that support the Town's community values and goals found within the Town of Ridgway Master Plan.

The application materials, which include application submission requirements, review criteria and the application schedule, are available at

<https://townofridgway.colorado.gov/town-of-ridgway-community-grant-program>. Applications must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. on Monday, September 22nd.

For more information, contact Preston Neill, Town Manager, at 970-626-5308, ext. 212 or pneill@town.ridgway.co.us.

TED TALK: WHAT IF EARTH HAD A FLAG?

What if earth had a flag? What would it take for us to finally see ourselves as one species, sharing one planet? Designer and flag enthusiast Oskar Pernefeldt makes a compelling case for the International Flag of Planet Earth, a simple yet powerful symbol meant to unite humanity in the face of climate crisis, global conflict, and interplanetary exploration. From the moon landing to Mars missions, he unpacks why visual identity shapes global solidarity and how one flag could become a unifying symbol for Earth. In a talk that challenges borders and belonging, he asks: What if we all flew the same flag?



Oskar Pernefeldt is a Swedish designer and creative director known for creating The International Flag of Planet Earth, a shared symbol of unity for all humankind. Oskar's work explores how design can spark shifts in mindset, shape culture, and inspire a sense of global citizenship.



This talk was given at a TEDx event using the TED conference format but independently organized by a local community.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zGfcyv2m8tM&t=32s>

UPDATE ON MTN LODGE RIDGWAY

With all the rumblings about the upcoming Four Seasons development in Mountain Village and its impacts on the West End, it came to Town staff's attention that MTN Lodge Ridgway intends to participate by supplying rooms to accommodate construction workers. Town staff initiated conversations with the MTN Lodge Ridgway team about this initiative and had a meeting with them on August 21st to learn about what they're looking to do and potential impacts. The MTN Lodge Ridgway team plans to send staff more information in the coming days so that staff can 1) check the proposal against Town standards and regulations, 2) evaluate potential impacts based on what's being proposed, and 3) determine the proper process for consideration of any change in use.

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT POSITION

I'm excited to report that Leigh Robertson has been hired to serve as Executive Assistant for the Town of Ridgway! Her first day on the job will be Thursday, September 11th. Leigh has been serving as the Partnership & Collaboration Director with the West Region Wildfire Council since August 2022.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL – MARKETING AND TOURISM PROMOTION

Notice is hereby given that the Town of Ridgway, Colorado will receive proposals from qualified and professional consultants for advertising and marketing services.

Two paper copies and one electronic copy of the proposal in a sealed envelope clearly marked "Marketing and Tourism Promotion" and the name, address and phone number of the proposer must be received by the Town Clerk's Office at Ridgway Town Hall, 201 N. Railroad Street, or PO Box 10, Ridgway, CO 81432 by 4:00 p.m. MST on Friday, September 26, 2025. Any proposals received after said date/time will be returned unopened.

The Town reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, to waive any and all informalities and to negotiate contract terms with the successful proposer, or to accept the proposal for the contract, which in the Town's judgement best serves the interest of the Town of Ridgway. The Town reserves the right to disregard all non-conforming, non-responsive, or conditional proposals.

The full Request for Proposals (RFP) can be viewed [HERE](#).



BLUE LAKES AREA CLOSURE CONTINUES

From USDA Forest Service:

The Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison (GMUG) National Forests' Ouray Ranger District will continue Blue Lakes area restoration efforts and site improvements into the month of August and beyond. The closure order will remain in effect until all 2025 project work is successfully completed for the Blue Lakes Visitor Use Management Plan.

The work includes reconstruction of the trailhead parking area and the installation of a new two vault restroom. The Forest Service is also focused on establishing designated campsites, mitigating hazard trees, improving stream crossings, and restoring webs of social trails and over 200 impacted sites near the lakes. Current projects are possible through partnerships and funding from the Great American Outdoors Act, San Juan Mountain Association, the National Forest Foundation and Southwest Conservation Corps, a program of Conservation Legacy.

These efforts are part of the first phase of implementing the Blue Lakes Visitor Use Management Plan, aimed at improving visitor experience and ensuring long-term sustainability of the site's natural resources.

The Blue Lakes Trailhead is accessed from County Road 7, approximately 12 miles southwest of Ridgway. The closure area includes the road starting at the Forest Service boundary at the end of County Road 7 and extends to the Mount Sneffels Wilderness boundary on the Blue Lakes Trail. Portions of the Dallas and Wilson Creek trails, adjacent to the trailhead, remain closed. This closure is necessary to ensure the safety of visitors and workers during the closure period.

For more information on the Blue Lakes Visitor Use Management Plan, visit the project webpage: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/r02/gmug/projects/61979>

DUCTILE IRON PIPE REPLACEMENT PROJECT ONGOING

On Monday, July 28th, Ridgway Valley Enterprises, on behalf of the Town of Ridgway, began construction on the Ductile Iron Pipe Replacement Project.

The work will consist of the replacement of approximately 4,000 feet of 40-year-old ductile iron pipe with plastic pipe designed to serve the pressures and corrosivity of soils. The pipe replacement will start about 400 feet below the Ridgway Water Treatment Plant and extend about 4,000 feet to the pressure reducing station located at Moffat St. and S Amelia St.

Areas affected will include S Amelia St. from its intersection with Moffat St. to beyond its intersection with Sabeta Dr. The project work will begin on the south end of the project area near the Ridgway Water Treatment Plant and will proceed north from there.



Work will be performed Monday through Friday between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. The project will take approximately 10 weeks to complete.

Traffic restrictions will evolve with the project, but all efforts will be made to ensure that traffic is able to continuously flow along the north/south corridor of S Amelia Street through a controlled single lane through the duration of the project.

Property owners and tenants will be individually notified prior to any work beginning in front of their property that may temporarily inhibit access by vehicle. Similarly, notice will be provided at least 24 hours in advance of any halts in water service during changeover stages when the temporary water line is brought online.

Further updates will be provided as the project progresses. Please contact Steven Schroeder with the Ridgway Public Works Department at 970-729-0535 or sschroeder@town.ridgway.co.us with questions regarding this work. Alternatively, please call Ridgway Town Hall at 970-626-5308.

We greatly appreciate your patience and understanding as we complete this important community project!

LEAD ACTION LEVEL EXCEEDANCE NOTICE

As required by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's Water Quality Control Division (WQCD), in June 2025 we collected 20 samples and analyzed them for lead. The Town relies on various property owners, as required by WQCD, to assist with sampling efforts. The results of more than 10 percent of our samples exceeded the action level for lead. Our 90th percentile compliance value was 15.8 parts per billion (ppb), just above the 15 ppb lead action level.

Staff is confident that the exceedance is not due to a system-wide issue. It's worth noting that lead from service lines and lead plumbing and fixtures are potential sources of lead in drinking water. Lead from service lines and lead plumbing and fixtures can dissolve or break off into water and end up at the faucet. This does not mean that every property that receives drinking water from us has lead in the drinking water. It does mean that you should understand how to reduce your exposure to lead through water.

The Town followed up with additional public education to all our customers on August 27, 2025, as required by WQCD. To check out the full Lead Action Level Exceedance Notice, please click [HERE](#). To check out the Lead Public Education Notice, please click [HERE](#).



UPDATE ON TOWN OF RIDGWAY V. DAVID C. SNEED, ET AL.

On July 28, 2025, District Court Judge D. Cory Jackson issued an Order granting the Motion for Immediate Possession of the 10' recreational trail easement at 539 Marion Overlook. In accordance with the Order, staff deposited a check for \$45,000 into the Registry of the Court. The Clerk of the Court accepted that amount and will retain it until further order. A valuation hearing will be set in the coming weeks and that will be where the final award of compensation or settlement amount will be determined. Please note that the deposited sum will constitute partial satisfaction of and offset the final award for compensation or settlement amount.

The recreational trail easement was surveyed and staked by Buckhorn Engineering and Public Works staff completed the build out the trail before school began last month. Public trail signs will be installed in the coming days.

UPCOMING COLORADO MUNICIPAL LEAGUE EVENTS

The Colorado Municipal League (CML) is bringing its popular Effective Governance workshop on the road to its members along the western slope by holding the workshop in the Decker Community Room on November 20th. This interactive workshop focuses on practical governance skills from staff/council relationships, ethics, liability, open meetings, leadership, grass roots advocacy and more. Don't miss out on the opportunity to engage with experts, exchange ideas, and empower your community. For more information, click [HERE](#).

CML is holding a CML Fall District Meeting for District 10 in Ouray on September 29th. These gatherings are a chance to see familiar faces, talk about what's happening in our communities, share updates from the recent special legislative session and explore upcoming training opportunities. The City of Ouray is hosting the meeting at the Twin Peaks Lodge & Hot Springs, 125 3rd Ave., and the meeting is being sponsored by Bruin Waste Management.

If you'd like to be registered for either of these events, please let me know ASAP. Thanks!





PLASTIC FILM RECYCLING

From Tyler Simmons with EcoAction Partners:

I am waiting to hear back on a C3 Mini Grant to land a used 40 ft container at the Ouray County Transfer Station (OCTS). This would serve as the plastic film hub collection location for three counties, once the program is scaled up. When the container is in place, interested community collection locations can pursue education through EcoAction Partners on the accepted materials, and start collecting plastic film. Those community collection locations can then haul their plastic film to the container at the OCTS, and I will coordinate with the Circular Transportation Network for a pick up. I will have a scale at the container for participants to weigh their plastic film, so we can pull some numbers. The plastic film will be transported to the Front Range and then to Driven Plastics. Some links if you are interested:

<https://coloradocedc.org/projects/>

<https://www.drivenplastics.com>

BUILDING ENERGY CODE UPDATE

From Angie Kemp, Sr. Planner, and Jordan Batchelder, Building Official:

EcoAction Partners, in partnership with Lotus Engineering & Sustainability, is working with the Town of Ridgway and other regional jurisdictions as the Energy Code Cohort (ECC) to create a building energy code package for adoption in early 2026. EcoAction Partners has facilitated multiple ECC meetings, trainings, surveys, and targeted discussions. The amendment package for Ridgway has been drafted. A timeline for outreach and adoption of the code and amendment package is below. Additional learning opportunities will be available for the construction community: builders, contractors, architects, etc.

Timeline

- October 2nd: Building Energy Codes 101 (Hybrid regional participation)
Join town staff and a representatives from EcoAction Partners in-person at the Ridgway Town Hall Community Center, 201 N. Railroad St. at 5pm (in-person only) OR via Zoom 5:30pm-6:30pm for an online presentation and Q&A. This event is open to the public. Please join us!
- October 13th: Ridgway Code Amendment Package Open House
The Decker Community Room, 675 Clinton St. 5-7pm. This event is open to the public. Please join us!
- October 15th: Planning Commission Text amendment public hearing at Ridgway Town Hall Community Center, 201 N. Railroad St. or via Zoom. The meeting begins at 5:30pm



- November 12th: First reading and introduction of the Ordinance by Town Council at Ridgway Town Hall Community Center, 201 N. Railroad St. or via Zoom. The meeting begins at 5:30pm
- December 10th: Second reading of the Ordinance, a public hearing for adoption consideration by Town Council at Ridgway Town Hall Community Center, 201 N. Railroad St. or via Zoom. The meeting begins at 5:30pm

This work is funded by The Colorado Energy Office with the Energy Code Adoption & Enforcement Grant Program. For more information visit <https://www.ecoactionpartners.org/> and <https://energyoffice.colorado.gov/building-energy-codes-toolkit#energy-code-board>.

For more information, please contact Jordan Batchelder, Building Official, at jbachelder@town.ridgway.co.us or 970-626-5308, ext. 216

MARSHAL'S OFFICE UPDATE

From Shane Schmalz, Town Marshal:

As part of concerns over traffic safety on Highway 550 and the number of fatal, and serious injury crashes over the last several years, Colorado State Patrol Captain James Saunders and myself started planning last year for a sobriety checkpoint in Ridgway. Sobriety checkpoints were common from 1998 through 2006 but due to legal challenges and loss of convictions, agencies stopped using the checkpoints. Colorado State Patrol, as part of their impaired driving campaign, have started using checkpoints again. The checkpoints are strictly following the court's guidance and legal precedents. During the August 22nd checkpoint in Ridgway, we had signage notifying drivers well in advance starting at SH 62 and County Road 24A, leaving drivers an option for bypassing the checkpoint. 785 drivers were contacted during the 4-hour event, with one arrest for DUI, and 6 sets of roadsides administered. All of the drivers when contacted were asked a series of specific questions, and no identification was asked for unless they were asked out of their vehicle for further testing. Each driver was given a flyer and a business card of the officer who contacted them. Overall reviews from people contacted were favorable, with one person coming back through the checkpoint to thank us for being there. Colorado State Patrol felt that the checkpoint was a success and plan to hold more of them in other communities.

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

- **Town Council Regular Meeting** – September 10, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. in-person at Town Hall and virtually via Zoom
- **Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for Cimarron Athletic Field** – September 15, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. at the Ridgway Secondary School



- **FUSE Creative Main Street Committee Meeting** – September 16, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. at the Decker Room
- **Planning Commission Meeting** – September 17, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. at Town Hall and virtually via Zoom
- **Town Council Regular Meeting** – October 1, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. in-person at Town Hall and virtually via Zoom
- **Town Council Budget Retreat** – October 4, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. in-person at Town Hall and virtually via Zoom
- **Sustainability Advisory Board Meeting** – October 7, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. at Town Hall and virtually via Zoom

JOKE OF THE DAY

What's the difference between a lawyer and a herd of buffalo?

The lawyer charges more.