

*SIMPLE STEPS. BETTER AIR. 2020 YEAR-END REPORT*



**SIMPLE STEPS BETTER AIR**



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# RAQC 2020 YEAR-END REPORT



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Simple Steps. Better Air.* (SSBA), an outreach and education program of the Regional Air Quality Council (RAQC), targets audiences on air quality issues in the Denver metropolitan area and completed its fifth year in 2020. Annually, the scope of activities laid out in the strategic communications plan are analyzed to determine results. Those outcomes are reviewed and detailed in this report, and they include applied metrics in each strategic area of focus.



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## PLANNING

The SSBA strategic plan was completed and approved in February 2020. As the campaign entered its fifth year, objectives began to evolve from the original plan in 2016 to better reach audiences. The effort in 2020 was therefore focused on these primary objectives:

- *Increasing the belief that SSBA audiences' personal actions related to ground-level ozone have a positive impact*
- *Building a greater awareness of current behaviors that lead to ground-level ozone*
- *Driving our audiences to engage in desired behaviors*

To achieve these objectives, the campaign identified a suite of strategies and corresponding tactics.

### STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

#### RAQC TV Meteorologist Advisory Group

To plan for the 2020 summer ozone season, a meeting with the RAQC TV Meteorologist Advisory Group was held in late-February. This involved individuals from each of the network TV affiliates in the Denver market as well as meteorologists from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE). The discussion focused on both the change in ozone nonattainment status to serious for the Denver metro area, and results of audience research in late-Summer 2019, which would inform greater emphasis on message strategies and partner communication in 2020. The planning session also discussed the campaign content most helpful to meteorologists to use on-air and digitally on poor air quality days.

#### CDPHE

Additional planning focused on working with CDPHE to improve information for consecutive days in summer when air quality was poor. These discussions with meteorologists at the health department concentrated on creating a three-day outlook for air quality. The goal was to provide greater awareness of ozone action alerts and prevention of poor air quality. Should audiences have more understanding of air quality for 48 or 72 hour periods, they can make more informed choices on their own personal transportation behaviors and avoid creating unnecessary pollution.



# RAQC 2020 YEAR-END REPORT

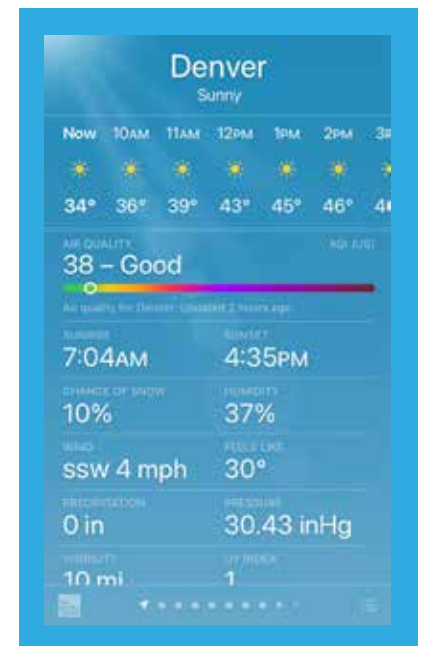


## SSBA Community Collaboration Group

The campaign also shifted its approach with the SSBA Community Collaboration Group, which consists of community stakeholders primarily from local governments, state and county health departments, and advocacy organizations. The group had previously met multiple times throughout the year for briefings from the campaign. In 2020, a single, larger event structured as more of a conversational conference on local air quality was planned. The event would be hosted at the offices of SSBA partner Colorado Municipal League, and it was to include various experts and influencers from local/municipal governments who could share their knowledge of air quality programs with others.

## Weather Apps

Another partner tactic in 2020 centered on working with inserting SSBA messaging on air quality apps that are used on smartphones. The team would work with The Weather Channel and other air quality information providers to post specific solutions-oriented messaging on the app.



*\* Strategic partnership is defined as an arrangement between two organizations or entities that help each other or work together for a common purpose; forming these alliances makes it easier for each to achieve their individual or shared goals.*

## MESSAGING ENHANCEMENT

### "Keep The Good Going"

The creative for the campaign's digital materials was established in 2016, so to freshen things up, the SSBA Team devised a plan to design a new look and call-to-action that would continue to align existing messaging. The creative team that crafted the SSBA brand was engaged in the spring to consider the look, tone, colors and main message points to feature in the creative. In early-May, the team delivered a creative concept called "Keep the Good Going," which would aim to encourage audiences to continue to take action to reduce emissions year-round, rather than solely in ozone season. The slogan also spoke to maintaining newly adopted behaviors as a result of the COVID-19 global pandemic - walking and riding a bike or scooter, and teleworking - without celebrating the unfortunate and historic situation Coloradans were facing.

*\* Messaging Enhancement is defined as a process in which communication and messages that exist and relate to a subject or program are refined and further improved to create more value and meaning to intended audiences.*

## PAID MEDIA

### Strategy Expansion

Leveraging refreshed creative factored into an expansion of the campaign's paid media strategy to include social media ads in 2020, along with out-of-home and programmatic digital display ads (which were used in previous years). To enhance optimization of digital ads, the SSBA Team worked with media buying partners to layer psychographic targeting into its paid media approach. Psychographic segmentation is when you break audiences down into subgroups based on their lifestyle, social status, opinions, and activities. This targeting focused on reaching those who are more likely to change behaviors; individuals who showed interest in or experiences with biking, sustainability, and outdoor recreation. Finally, the paid campaign strategy was designed so that geo-targeting events or locations in the nonattainment area would ensure better reach of content.

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## TV Sponsorships

A core component of paid media for the 2020 campaign was once again media sponsorships placed with Denver's TV news stations. The objective was to work with affiliates to produce customized content, including public service announcements (PSAs), digital display banners and other types of digital content that would promote SSBA messaging and the brand. Discussions with sales representatives at the affiliates began early in the year and the sponsorships were by and large secured by May 2020, before the season began.

*\* Paid media is defined as marketing that is purchased, including branded TV advertisements, public service announcements or appearances, online/digital ads, including paid social media posts, and print advertising. In most situations, organizations pay for an agreed upon number of placements or impressions (how many times a brand or message was delivered).*

## EARNED MEDIA

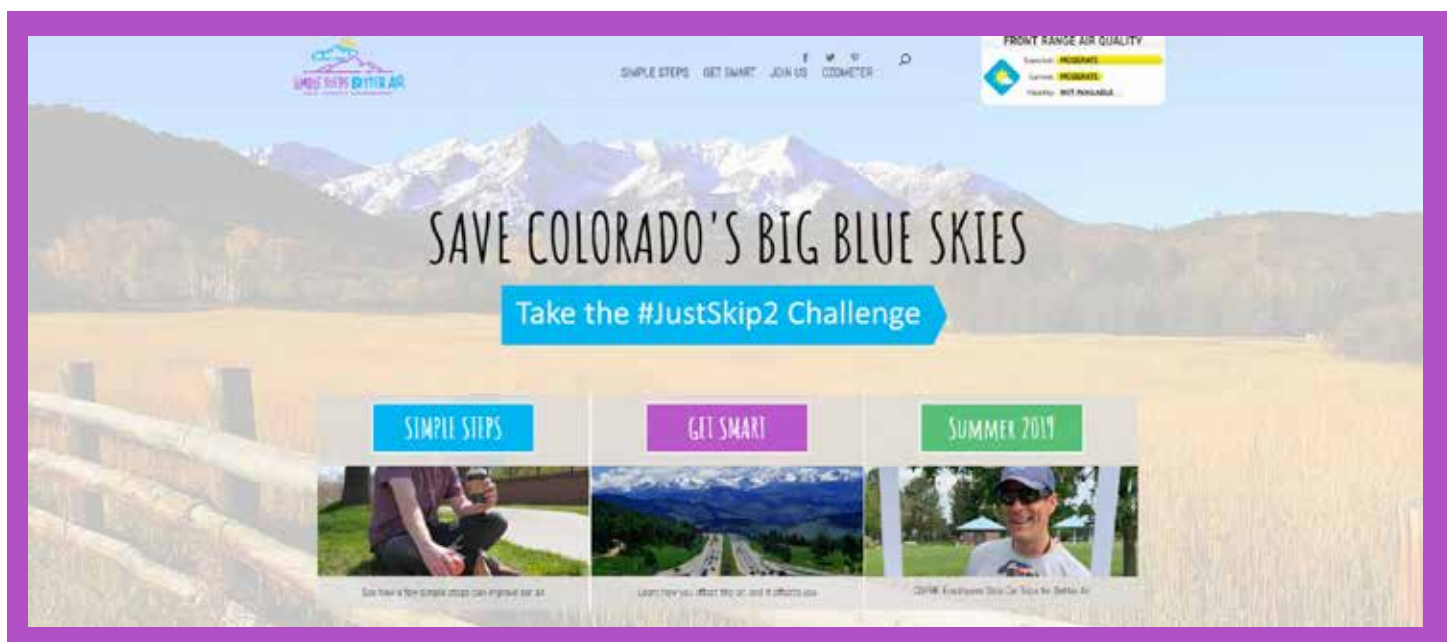
Planning for news media coverage on ground-level ozone issues was initially focused on two primary tactics: engaging TV meteorologists to communicate ozone action alerts and identifying opportunities for expanded messaging on topics relevant to 2020. This included the downgrade to serious nonattainment status, as well as trending health impacts from poor air quality. The second tactic would rely on another SSBA partner to create a compelling story that highlights the actions needed to combat ground-level ozone. This was planned to be a story on the efforts of the non-profit group, Suffer Better.

*\* Earned media is defined as publicity and attention given to an organization, product or program that is not paid for or purchased. This media is not created by an organization, but instead by journalists or bloggers who are paid to provide information and storytelling about relevant subject matter. An example of earned media is having your branded program, its core mission, or the experts affiliated with the program appear in a story during the six o'clock newscast of a local TV station.*

## DIGITAL/OWNED MEDIA

### Website

A priority tactic for the 2020 SSBA digital strategy involved a refresh of SimpleStepsBetterAir.org to improve functionality and inject new content that is interesting to users. It was determined that the Ozometer, an



SimpleStepsBetterAir.org home page prior to refresh in 2020

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emissions-reduction calculator, should be removed due to a lack of use and the complications its functionality created for the rest of the site. As an alternative, SSBA messaging was incorporated into the Denver Regional Council of Government's (DRCOG) Way to Go platform. Understanding that this integration would take some time to optimize and see results, the 2020 plan focused on the initial step of integrating emissions calculations for various transportation alternatives in the DRCOG tool. Once the sites were connected through messaging and links, the SSBA Team would continue to make necessary modifications in future campaign years to increase usage of the Way to Go platform.

## **Social Media**

As the campaign has built momentum over time, one of the primary strategies has been content generation and deployment on social media. With research showing more SSBA audiences were using personal devices, such as smartphones, to access information about local air quality, the team set out to add resources for social media tactics to capture that audience. The plan was not only to add additional staff to monitor, track, and engage with audiences via social media, but also to utilize more tools that support that engagement. HootSuite would be used to track social media metrics on the campaigns multiple platforms: Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. As mentioned earlier, paid social media tactics were planned to ensure greater reach of new creative.

Additionally, organic reach on social was an objective for the summer campaign and in a large way the SSBA unique hashtag #JustSkip2 would be used to capture the attention of audiences, offer real-time solutions to prevent poor air quality, and to track engagement.

*\* Owned media is defined as any online content created, controlled and used by a branded program or organization to reach audiences. This includes a website, social media channels, blogs, email marketing, or videos, white papers and essays that can be used online to provide insight and information.*

## CAMPAIGN ADJUSTMENTS FOR COVID-19

The campaign was well underway in developing tactics when the global pandemic began to spread across Colorado. The SSBA Team quickly understood that the summer campaign was going to be unlike any other. The team started by assessing likely impacts (less face-to-face interaction, fewer opportunities to forge new partnerships) that would occur prior to the campaign launch in June.

The event with the SSBA Community Collaboration Group at Colorado Municipal League was postponed. By mid-April, it was clear that by late-May and early-June, quarantined Coloradans would need to be reached via broadcast and digital mediums. Audiences were not driving as much, which was advantageous to air quality conditions, yet other issues emerged. Much of the behavior-related messaging of the campaign applied to daily and weekly alternatives—such as use of public transit—that were disrupted or perceived as unsafe during a pandemic.

*“Keep the Good Going” - The creative created for the 2020 campaign benefits immediate messaging needs in that it tells audiences that the extra time spent during quarantine biking, walking and being outside rather than in their vehicle, is helpful to air quality in the nonattainment area. Additionally, it can be used beyond the summer campaign to encourage year-round behaviors that limit pollution.*

The SSBA Team worked closely with paid media partners and vendors to discuss the creative messaging and visual modifications to ensure the campaign felt authentic to current social and work situations.

There was more emphasis on the website refresh to make the experience as enjoyable for new users as possible, and create clear paths to DRCOG’s [mywaytogo.org](http://mywaytogo.org) website.

Additionally, there was an obvious reason to eschew any in-person events, including the planned Bike to Work Day as well as planned activities at state agencies such as the Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA), which aimed to start an employee-based trip reduction program in summertime.





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## KICKOFF TO THE 2020 OZONE SEASON

With high temperatures and multiple Ozone Action Alerts, the campaign made sure that SSBA content was positioned to reach audiences in June. Paid media tactics that included digital display banners, social media posts, and TV PSAs were launched to reach audiences where they were spending the most time - on their devices.

COVID-19 continued to dominate the daily news cycle at the beginning of summer ozone season. The campaign worked with news media on stories related to improvements in air quality from reduced driving and the added layer of complication an airborne virus presented to summer air pollution. In addition, the SSBA Team developed a media strategy for a RAQC-led op-ed (an article printed on the page opposite the editorial page in a newspaper, devoted to commentary, feature articles, etc.) that would implore the public to continue to take action to prevent worsening summer air quality by going back to typical driving behaviors. The op-ed had a health focus to educate readers about the consequences of pollution on those with sensitive respiratory systems.

Ultimately, on-going protests and social unrest became the dominant focus of editorial attention throughout June, and the op-ed was not published. However, the effort resulted in a strong asset that can be revised and used again prior to the 2021 season.



2020 digital ad featuring slogan, "Keep the Good Going"

## OVERALL OUTCOMES OF SSBA CAMPAIGN STRATEGIES

**Strategic Partnerships** were crucial to continue expanding the reach of the SSBA brand and messaging in the summer of 2020. Partnerships allowed the campaign to reach and surpass its objectives, despite challenges brought on by a significant and late wildfire season, multiple weeks of ozone-creating conditions, and of course, the COVID-19 pandemic. The following key outcomes occurred:

- **More frequent summer air quality alert messaging** with support from the RAQC TV Meteorologist Advisory Group and CDPHE (see Earned Media section).
- **Expanded awareness through additional highway sign locations** - there were 35 signs in 2020 vs. 20 signs in 2019. SSBA partner CDOT responded to the campaign's request to spread existing messaging over a larger geographic area with its network of electronic signage.



Branded Simple Steps. Better Air. air quality alert along E-470 corridor

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- Additionally, a new partnership with E-470 allowed SSBA messages to appear on five electronic message boards along the highly used corridor.
- Broadened reach of messaging through a partnership with DRCOG, which agreed to utilize SSBA messaging on its mywaytogo.org website, and in turn, simplestepsbetterair.org promoted the personal trip calculator and planning tool and directly linked to the mywaytogo.org site.
- Grew partner relationship with Bicycle Colorado by collaborating to appear together on the Colorado's Best TV program in late-August; additional sharing of each other's content on social media over the summer.
- Maintained communication with SSBA Community Collaboration stakeholders through two virtual webinars on air quality in late-June. A total of 125 partners were invited and nearly 60 took part in the online sessions hosted by SSBA.



Public service announcement from Fox 31



The SSBA Team continues to forge new relationships with partners in four primary sectors, including Advocacy Organizations, Local and State Government/Public Health & Education, Industry, and News Media.

There are currently 108 partners of the SSBA campaign, listed below, including 11 new partnerships and five expanded partnerships in 2020.

## New 2020 Partnerships

- Can Do Colorado
- Colorado Dept. of Local Affairs
- Colorado Municipal League
- Express Toll/E-470
- Gates Corporation
- Larimer Co. Public Health
- Metro Mayors Caucus
- Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments
- Spin E-Scooters
- Tri-State Generation & Transmission Association
- Xcel Energy

## Expanded 2020 Partnerships

- American Lung Association
- Bicycle Colorado
- Colorado Dept. of Public Health and Environment
- Denver Regional Council of Governments
- Metro Denver TV news partners
- North Front Range MPO

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## PARTNER LIST

The Regional Air Quality Council and its program, Simple Steps. Better Air. thank our partners for their ongoing support in our clean air initiatives.

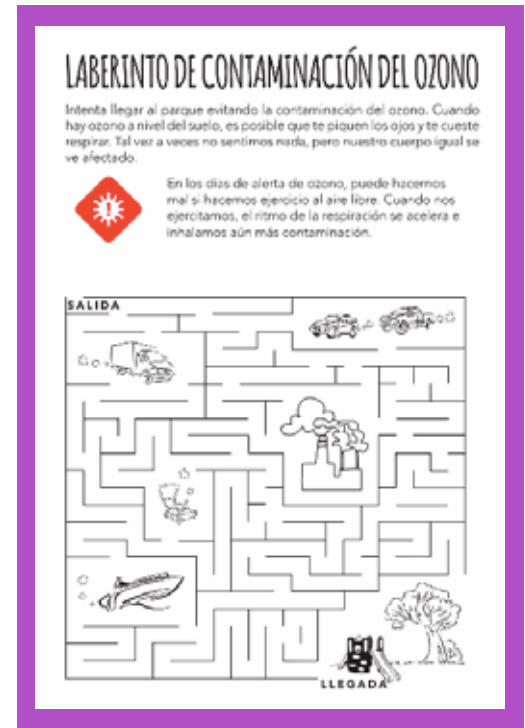
Advocacy Organizations	Local and State Governments & Education	
<p>American Lung Association of Colorado                      Bicycle Colorado                      Can Do Colorado                      Colorado Classic                      Colorado Clean Cities Coalition                      Colorado Municipal League                      Colorado Oil &amp; Gas Association                      Commuting Solutions                      Denver Metro Clean Cities Coalition                      Denver Museum of Nature &amp; Science                      Denver Regional Council of Governments – Way To Go Program                      Denver South EDP                      Downtown Denver Partnership                      Envirotest Systems, Corp. (Air Care Colorado)                      Metro Denver Nature Alliance                      Modis IT Staffing Agency                      National Center for Atmospheric Research                      National Get Outdoors Day - Denver                      Noble Energy                      North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization                      Northeast Transportation Connections                      Northern Colorado Clean Cities                      Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments                      Smart Commute Metro North                      Southern Colorado Clean Cities                      Suffer Better                      Transportation Connections                      West Corridor TMA                      World Denver</p>	<p>Auraria Higher Education Campus                      Adams County                      Arapahoe County                      Boulder County Public Health                      City and County of Boulder                      City and County of Broomfield                      City and County of Denver                      City of Arvada                      City of Aurora                      City of Brighton                      City of Centennial                      City of Commerce City                      City of Englewood                      City of Federal Heights                      City of Fort Collins                      City of Golden                      City of Greeley                      City of Greenwood Village                      City of Lafayette                      City of Lakewood                      City of Littleton                      City of Lone Tree                      City of Longmont                      City of Louisville                      City of Loveland                      City of Northglenn                      City of Thornton                      City of Westminster                      City of Wheat Ridge                      Colorado Attorney General's Office/Department of Law                      Colorado Department of Local Affairs                      Colorado Department of Motor Vehicles</p>	<p>Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Air Pollution Control Division                      Colorado Department of Revenue                      Colorado Department of Transportation                      Colorado Outdoor Industry Recreation Office                      Denver Department of Public Health &amp; Environment                      Douglas County                      Governor Jared Polis' Office                      Highlands Ranch                      Jefferson County                      Larimer County Public Health                      Metro Mayors Caucus                      Town of Castle Rock                      Town of Erie                      Town of Jamestown                      Town of Morrison                      Town of Parker                      Town of Superior                      Tri-County Health Department</p>
Industry Partners		Media
<p>B-Cycle                      Black and Decker                      Boulder Transportation Connections                      Dick's Sporting Goods Park                      Express Toll/E-470                      Ford Smart Mobility                      Gates Corporation                      Gusto                      Home Depot                      Parker Adventist Hospital                      Patagonia</p>	<p>Pinnacle Assurance                      Regional Transportation District                      RPM Events Group                      Spin E-Scooters                      Suncor Energy Inc.                      TIAA                      Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, Inc                      Velowood Cyclery/Fuji Bikes                      VF Corporation                      Western Welcome Week                      Xcel Energy</p>	<p>CBS Denver 4                      Denver7 News                      Fox31 Denver/Channel 2 News                      9News                      KOAA News5                      iHeart Radio Network                      RAQC TV Meteorologists Advisory Group</p>

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*Messaging Enhancement* was necessary for SSBA to authentically speak to audiences about actions that reduce pollution during a global pandemic. Pre-COVID, planned messaging related to health impacts, efficacy of year-round simple steps, and emissions-reducing behaviors. Messages were adjusted to adapt to new behaviors as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Messaging on lung damage/respiratory effects of ground-level ozone shifted to address potential effects of COVID-19 AND air pollution
- Messaging collaboration with the RAQC TV Meteorologist Advisory Group spoke to health complications for those sensitive to exposure to wildfire smoke and ground-level ozone. Collaborations with DRCOG addressed how teleworking, as part of public health and safety, also benefited air quality
- Messaging became customized for the change from the annual Bike To Work Day event to Bike to Wherever Week to champion those riding their bikes rather than driving
- Additional message development for a Spanish-speaking audience involved NFRMPO, Larimer County Public Health, and CDPHE; both a Spanish-language SSBA-branded children's activity book and an informational card were created



2020 Spanish language SSBA children's activity book

*Paid Media* in 2020 incorporated multiple digital advertising tactics to better reach audiences. The campaign achieved a total of 17,495,904 impressions, which was a 27% increase from 2019. More than 8 million impressions resulted from sponsorships with local TV affiliates, a 627% increase from 2019. TV stations were both flexible and creative with the resources the SSBA campaign provided, allowing the team to adjust tactics over the course of the summer months and offering multiple new ideas on how to better reach their viewing audience.

**17,495,904 impressions**  
[27% increase from 2019]

**More than 8 million impressions**  
resulted from sponsorships with local TV affiliates  
[627% increase from 2019]

The components of the 2020 media buy were:

- Targeted digital display (image/video ads delivered to target audience)
- Targeted social media content (images, graphics, and video)
- Customized TV public service announcements (PSA)
- Customized video pre-roll (promotional video which appears before the video that the user has selected to play)
- Digital in-banner display video (video plays in banner on screen)
- TV news website "homepage takeover" (multiple ads display on homepage)
- Electronic billboards around Metro Denver
- RTD transit ads (bus sides)

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## Highlights of 2020 Paid Media Strategy

The new creative slogan and visuals, “Keep the Good Going”, allowed paid social media to better connect with our audiences during a challenging air quality season due to COVID-19 and wildfires. The creative was embraced by SSBA’s young, working adult audiences.

- There was a **57% increase in total in-kind value** (or bonus media) for all paid media from 2019. The \$92,281 of total added value came from TV stations and from Lamar, which operates RTD advertising, and agreed to provide all transit ads as in-kind.
- More than 400 PSAs aired** on the Denver metro area TV news affiliates, each customized with a SSBA message and delivered by members of the RAQC TV Meteorologist Advisory Group.
- Fox 31 created an “in-banner display video ad” that featured a customized 15-second message from Chief Meteorologist Dave Fraser about actions to prevent summer ozone, and they did a **“homepage takeover”** ad that together resulted in 792,634 impressions and 284 clicks to the campaign website.
- Denver 7’s **“homepage takeover”** ad featuring SSBA achieved nearly 400k impressions (station average for a single day is 230k) and led to a significant spike in web traffic at **simplestepsbetterair.org**. Denver 7 also expanded the reach of campaign PSAs to its streaming, on-demand news viewers in 2020.

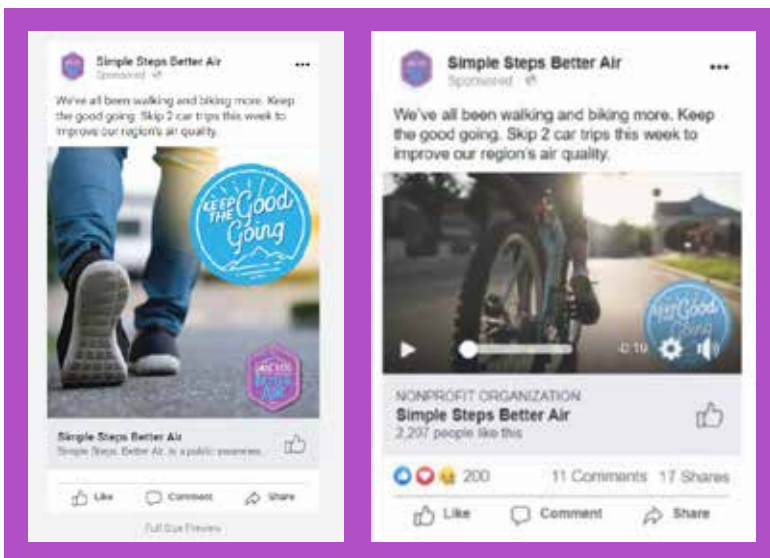


KDVR Homepage with Ads

Paid social content was a new tactic in 2020, a decision based on how strategies have begun to shift for the campaign over the past several years. More of our audience spends time on social thanks to the portability of devices and the desire to connect with others online. As described in the planning section of this report, the SSBA Team knew fresh and engaging content for social media was necessary to achieve the desired results.

“Keep the Good Going” met the needs of audiences. As a call to action it reinforced the positive behaviors (bike riding, walking, teleworking) the campaign has asked for, and it highlights the ease of those actions.

Over the course of the summer campaign, paid social featuring “Keep the Good Going” netted 976,892 impressions, garnered 556 new social media page likes, and was especially a hit with users identified as “environmentalists” and “young professionals.” Individuals in these audience segments were most likely to engage with the content. This provides valuable feedback for the campaign now and into the future.



Facebook Ads

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*Earned Media* in 2020 proved to be the most challenging strategy. A global pandemic, social unrest, a presidential election year, and the worst wildfire season in state history meant the competitive nature of news was at an all time high. While much of the campaign's effort in the past two years aimed to connect with media who talk about air quality, meteorologists in particular, this year required a much different strategy. Although the campaign had successful planning conversations with local meteorologists prior to COVID-19, it was not a given that these stakeholders would respond to us in the summer, when many were setting up studios in their homes and broadcasting live from their bedrooms, basements, and living room couches. However, compounding summertime air quality issues presented the campaign an opportunity to be a trusted source of information for the media.

Ultimately, the RAQC and SSBA saw huge gains in mentions. During the 2020 ozone season, 808 TV & radio mentions were tracked. Keywords "ozone action alert," "simple steps," and "ozone alert" were used so extensively, there was a 655% increase in mentions from last season.

Additional news media coverage of SSBA and RAQC appeared during a Fox 31 newscast on 5/9, the Colorado Sun on 6/15, and on KDVR and KWGN's *Colorado's Best* program on 8/27 and 9/1. The *Colorado's Best* segment was a collaboration with partner Bicycle Colorado, which offered chaperoned bike rides around Downtown Denver to educate residents about its Neighborhood Navigator program. Both RAQC Communications Director Sara Goodwin and James Waddell, Mobility Program Director for Bicycle Colorado, were interviewed for the segment.



Summer 2020 appearance on KDVR and KWGN program, "Colorado's Best" with SSBA and Bicycle Colorado

**A member of the RAQC TV Meteorologist Advisory Group, CBS4 Meteorologist Ashton Altieri, described the working relationship with the RAQC's Simple Steps. Better Air. team in 2020:**

"The RAQC/Simple Steps have certainly made it easier for us to communicate various ways our viewers can actually take action on Action Days. Previously, we would share it's an Action Day, but never defined what actionable steps should be taken. "Simple Steps" makes that easier to do in the precious short amount of time we have to do it. Furthermore, having a variety of different steps to share also makes a tremendous difference – reminding our viewers to walk when possible instead of driving becomes stale day after day in the ozone season."



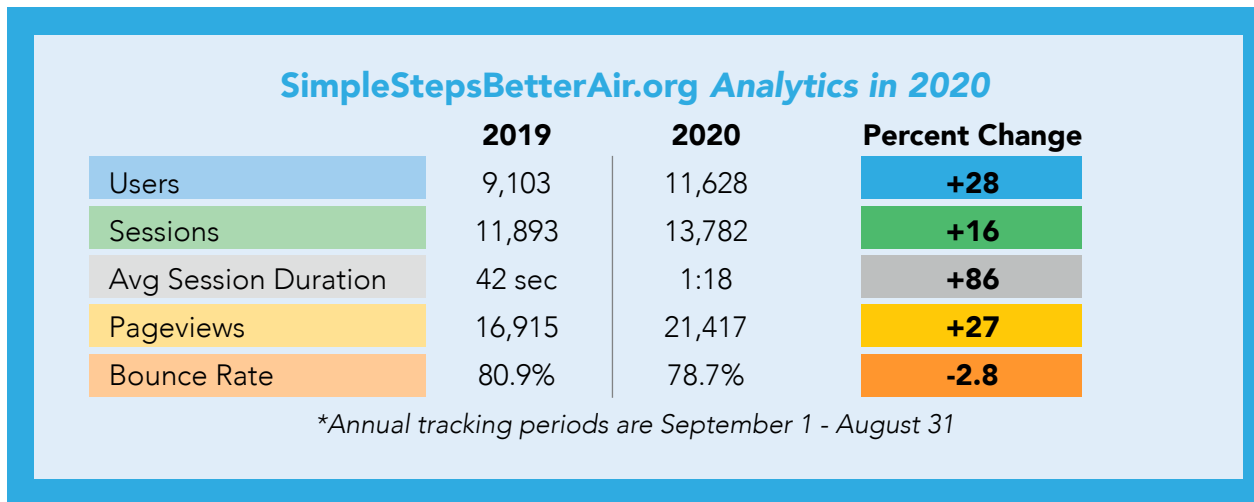
Ashton Altieri, CBS4 Meteorologist

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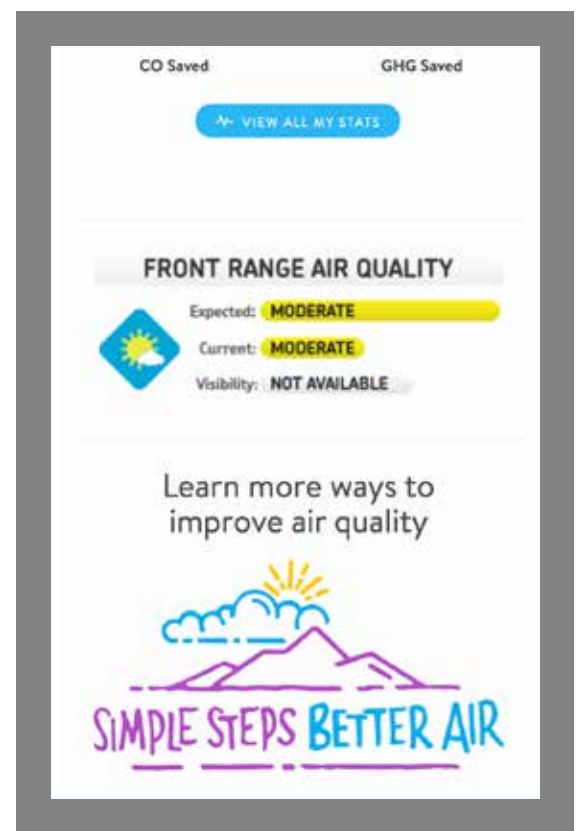


*Digital Media* was an essential strategy for SSBA in 2020. A website refresh proved helpful to overall measurements of success for the campaign. The new website design made information easy to access with improved navigation, held the attention of users, and integrated more information about RAQC to add credibility.

## Website



- Integration of messaging about DRCOG's mywaytogo.org trip planning tool and navigation to the site; mywaytogo.org added links back to SSBA and messaging
- August was the busiest month for the site during the campaign year, which points to a high level of awareness during the time when wildfire smoke and ozone alerts were a daily occurrence
- Along with bounce rates for the site trending downward, there was a 28% increase in new users to the site in 2020 compared to 2019
- In the typical ozone season time period (May 27 - Sep 30), there was a 43% increase in new users to the website: 9,772 in 2020 vs. 6,833 in 2019 (this could be attributed to more people looking for air quality information due to wildfires, prolonged high temperatures and a high number of Ozone Action Alerts)
- The site was most commonly accessed via mobile device (53% of traffic). There was more than a 50% increase in visits from both desktop and mobile devices from the previous year. Visits via tablet decreased 43% from previous year.






This image appears on the MyWayToGo.org website to promote SSBA messaging

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## Social Media

SSBA's organic social media plan included the addition of a social media coordinator to manage content across Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. The following graph shows year-over-year changes in followers for the social media platforms as well as the engagement metrics for this year's campaign.

Simple Steps. Better Air. Social Media Metrics 2020			
	2019 Followers	2020 Followers	2020 Engagements*
	937	945	218
	1,616	2,156	1,200
	135	184	643

\*Additional metrics available in 2020 with new social media management platform, Hootsuite

The increased staffing paid off with 23% year-over-year growth in social media followers. On both Facebook and Instagram, the campaign saw followers increase by more than 35%, while SSBA's following on Twitter held steady from 2019.

In terms of engagement on social platforms, the campaign season ended with 2.2k fans/page likes and 1.2k engagements (post likes, shares and comments) on Facebook. On Instagram, there were 643 engagements (favorites, shares, comments), which included the use of SSBA's unique hashtag #JustSkip2, as well as use of #BikeToWhereverWeek.

**Top performing Tweet:** "Make sure to tune into Colorado's Best on @KDVR to hear about what @BicycleColo and the RAQC are doing for Bike To Wherever Week and the steps we can take to get cars off the road" - August 27, 2020 (12 Likes)

**Engagement highlight:** SSBA partners posted branded content 84 times on social in 2020.

**Spotlight tactic:** When DRCOG's Bike to Work Day event was postponed in June 2020, and later canceled, the SSBA Team considered how to promote alternate transportation and bring attention to efforts to reduce emissions. The result was a storytelling series for newly created *Bike To Wherever Week*, sponsored by DRCOG. The SSBA Team recruited a total of seven Coloradans to be profiled on social media. Each was interviewed and asked to submit photos to accompany the story. Denver City Councilwoman and RAQC Board Member Kendra A. Black was profiled for her efforts to create "No Drive Fridays" with her staff in order to reduce car emissions.



Denver City Councilwoman Kendra Black featured in SSBA social media profile for "Bike to Wherever Week"



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## QUALITATIVE TESTING

In late-2019, the SSBA Team was asked to create collateral materials for Spanish-speaking audiences. To ensure that anything the campaign produced was useful to the audience it was intended for, the SSBA Team engaged a group of five native Spanish-speaking individuals to inform the messaging. This was done through collaboration and coordination with longtime SSBA partner, North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization and the Larimer County Public Health Department.

- With support from the SSBA Team's Latino communication partner, a survey instrument was developed with questions regarding awareness of air quality issues in the Latinx community, opinions about pollution, and behaviors to prevent poor air quality. The instrument was approved and used in the field in May 2020.
- Five native Spanish speakers were incentivized to participate in qualitative research with the campaign.
- An interviewer completed one-on-one interviews, in Spanish, over the phone.
- Responses were compiled and summarized for use in SSBA-branded collateral material.
- Community stakeholders were provided the finalized digital file for the Spanish-language collateral material. *Please note that without any in-person events in summer 2020, collateral was not printed nor hard copies distributed.*
- Preferred communication methods:
  - Social media - Facebook
  - Word of mouth
  - TV News - Telemundo

**Preferred messages:**

**"Save gas. Save money. Don't idle."**

**"Enjoy the summer air.  
Bike or walk instead of driving."**

**"Our community is proud to do  
our part to take care of our air."**

**"When your car is full of passengers,  
you are doing your part to improve our air."**

**"Keep up the good work."**

OR

**"Driving with friends and family  
is a helpful way to improve our air."**



Spanish-language collateral created after 2020 research and message testing

**Conclusion:** Spanish-speakers need more information about the actions that both cause and prevent poor air quality. However, this community already does a lot to be good stewards of air quality, even if out of necessity - driving with multiple passengers, combining car trips, and riding public bus transit. Therefore, the good actions should be championed and additional solutions to challenges the community faces, such as a lack of sidewalks and safe bike paths, should be communicated to local governments that can support infrastructure.

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## CAMPAIGN-AT-A-GLANCE



## 2020 COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

### PARTNERED/SPONSORED CONTENT BOOSTS IMPRESSION OUTCOMES



**More than 8 Million** impressions from TV PSA/digital/social paid content (627% increase from 2019)

**400+** public service announcements

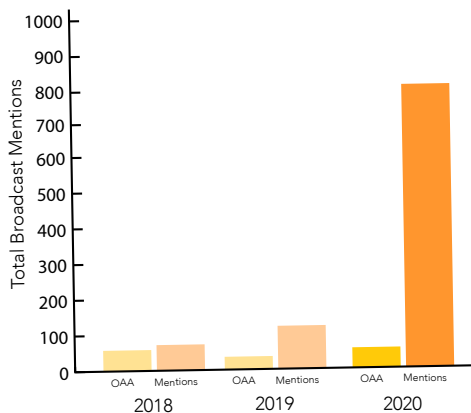
**Customized in-banner display and homepage takeover ads** added in 2020

**\$58,605** in-kind value

### EARNED MEDIA

Awareness of air quality issues due to summer pollution, heat and wildfires created a highly engaged SSBA audience. Diligence from our TV meteorologists to spread the message resulted in a 655% increase in mentions of Ozone Action Alerts and campaign keywords from Summer 2019 to 2020.

**Broadcast Mentions vs. OAA from 2018-2020**



### PARTNERSHIPS

Key partnerships were strengthened in 2020 despite challenges brought on by COVID-19. Meteorologists utilized SSBA messaging consistently while champions DRCOG and WaytoGo supported the campaign with integration of SSBA messaging on its program website and trip planning tool. SSBA in turn made these transportation programs high profile on its site. A new partnership with E-470 to use messaging on its highway signs increased awareness on alert days and added to the coverage that CDOT boards provide. Government agencies, including DOLA added to the list of partners in 2020 and the campaign worked with the NFRMPO and Larimer County Public Health to complete messaging research for Spanish speaking individuals.

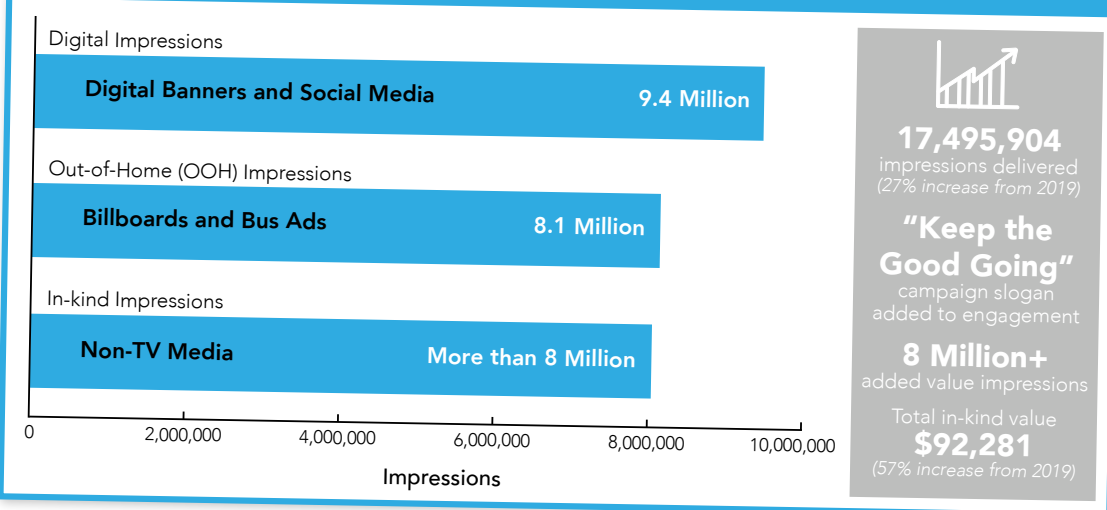


Enhanced partnership with Bicycle Colorado included "Colorado's Best".


# RAQC 2020 YEAR-END REPORT




## PAID MEDIA




## SOCIAL MEDIA




**>35% increase**  
in Facebook and Instagram followers



**23% Growth**  
in organic social followers




**84**  
Partner posts on all platforms



**Bike To Wherever Week**  
New social media storytelling series

## WEBSITE REFRESH



**The public comes to SSBA website when air quality is top of mind.**

- 11,628 users in 2020 was a **28% increase from last year**
- Avg session duration up **87% from 2019**
- **Reduction in bounce rate** from last year

# RAQC 2020 YEAR-END REPORT



## LOOKING FORWARD TO 2021

### Messaging

- Continued use of pandemic-influenced messages may be necessary
- If no message development for COVID-19 is necessary, revisit pre-pandemic messaging for campaign prior to kickoff of ozone season
- Collaboration with the CEVC on building additional messaging about charging at home and across the state so SSBA audiences understand improved accessibility and feasibility of EVs
- Additional Spanish-language messaging should maintain tone and direction discovered through audience feedback in 2020

### Research

- Take potential research findings from DRCOG to inform SSBA-sponsored ETRP program (Gates? DOLA)
- Data gathering (qualitative) through SSBA-sponsored ETRP partnerships
- Quantitative audience survey in late-summer 2021

### Creative and Digital

- Hire social media coordinator again
- Build a social media plan specific to 2021, create goals and objectives that social media coordinator can manage
- Additional optimization and tracking between mywaytogo.org and ssba.org

### Media Strategy

- **Paid**
  - + Consider shifting resources to new media sponsorships
  - + Continue to utilize paid social to reach new audiences and increase followers on SSBA platforms
  - + Optimize digital display buys for website conversions and focus on retargeting based on conversions
- **Earned**
  - + Create a plan to secure an op-ed on a focused air quality topic
  - + Consider Letter to the Editor campaign (create single message subject letter, targeted timeline, submitted by local government employees)
  - + Engage in constant monitoring to capture all key mentions throughout ozone season
  - + Work with RAQC staff to develop list of potential stories to pitch that highlight SSBA-related programs

### Partnerships

- Work with RAQC TV Meteorologist Advisory Group on new content and messaging on smoke/air quality
- Collaborate with E-470 to provide revised creative and additional messaging for sign boards
- Re-engage CML, Xcel, DOLA, Ford Smart Mobility and other partners that began discussions with the campaign in 2020

### Tactical Plan

- Continue to organize overarching strategies and priority tactics into a tactical plan
- Build a 2021 social media plan that is used and managed by a social media coordinator, with milestones reported to leadership team
- Create timeline that sets monthly review of tasks to ensure campaign is on track and builds in regular assessments of public health situations that may require campaign modifications