

THE MAIN THING

—
Looking Past
the Pandemic



COLORADO
Department of Local Affairs
Division of Local Government



*There is a light at the end of the COVID tunnel!
It has been a long, hard year, but many of our
communities are beginning to look past the
pandemic and to the future.*

For months, we've told the stories of communities that learned to pivot and adapt. They applied for grants, restructured events, waived fees, built new infrastructure, and changed laws to help their local businesses and community members. Soon, many of these adaptations won't be necessary anymore. Yet some of our communities have found that the changes they implemented in the past year were so beneficial that they will continue them into the future.

In this month's issue of *The Main Thing*, we are highlighting a few of the COVID-induced adaptations that were so successful, they'll be sticking around, even after the pandemic is just a distant memory.

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ABOUT THE MAIN THING

During these times, focus can be tough to come by. *The Main Thing* is a collection of resources compiled by **Colorado Main Street** to highlight innovations, give a thumbs-up to local practitioners, and encourage the spread of positive news.

Past the Pandemic: EVENTS

MEEKER MAIN STREET

COORDINATOR: STEPHANIE KOBALD



PROBLEM



Offering events during a pandemic wasn't easy, when large, dense gatherings of people was not an option.

Who was involved:

- Meeker Main Street
- Town of Meeker
- Meeker Chamber of Commerce

SOLUTIONS



■ Meekerpalooza Farmers Market

- Booths were pulled away from the sidewalk to separate those who were walking from those who were standing
- 10' between booths
- Each booth received health and mask notices and floor stickers
- Less crowds from 4-5 p.m. meant it was safer for seniors and those with health concerns

■ July 4th Parade

- Parade route went through town, not just on Main Street so spectators could spread out
- Parade was livestreamed for people to watch at home



“We are continuing most of these changes. Live broadcasting the parade was a definite hit and will continue!”

— Stephanie Kobald, **Executive Director, Meeker Chamber of Commerce**

PAST THE PANDEMIC



Many of these adaptations increased the organization and improved the flow of the events, which people loved! Meeker plans to continue most of the adaptations except for the spacing of booths and social distancing requirements.

Past the Pandemic: LIQUOR CODE

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS MAIN STREET

COORDINATOR: LISA POPOVICH



PROBLEM



When indoor dining closed, open container laws prevented restaurants from serving liquor to go or to patrons who were outside, waiting for a table in the newly limited-capacity indoor dining areas.

Who was involved:

- Steamboat Springs Main Street
- Town of Steamboat Springs
- Local restaurants

SOLUTION



- New open container laws for downtown were adapted in the mountain area.
- Allows restaurants to serve drinks to go and allows the public to consume them on the street.
- Lifts restrictions on alcohol in downtown parks, allowing people to take their meals with drinks to picnic in the park.



“The businesses and community members like these changes and would like to see them more permanent.”

— Lisa Popovich, **Executive Director,**
Steamboat Springs Main Street

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Steamboat Springs currently plans to keep these loosened restrictions in place until December 1, but some of these guidelines are dependent on state legislation. The community members and businesses have expressed interest in seeing the additional outdoor seating become more of a permanent part of the streetscape.

Past the Pandemic: TELEWORKING

HUGO MAIN STREET

COORDINATOR: GILLIAN LAYCOCK



PROBLEM



Residents were forced to quickly pivot into a teleworking lifestyle out of necessity when kids had to attend school from home. While Hugo has a great internet service provider, not everyone has access. With no home computer or internet, some people struggled to work or to learn new video platforms (such as Zoom), on their own.

Who was involved:

- Hugo Main Street
- Town of Hugo
- CDOT

SOLUTION



- Hugo Main Street received two CDOT Teleworking Grants.
 - This allowed the group to purchase a Zoom subscription along with easy-to-use teleconferencing equipment. These resources are shared with all local community organizations.
 - Hugo Main Street also purchased a social media content management subscription to better communicate local news and information.



“With the sudden switch of kids being home full-time, parents had to be home, too.”

— Gillian Laycock, Hugo Main Street

PAST THE PANDEMIC



Teleworking has highlighted the need for broadband access for all community members – a shift that will also affect housing needs. People are seeking to move from more densely populated areas to places like Hugo. This can affect infrastructure needs in the Town, but for now Hugo is focusing on supporting local organizations with teleconferencing hardware in order to build community capacity in ways beyond what local government can do.

Past the Pandemic: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

RIDGWAY CREATIVE MAIN STREET

COORDINATOR: DIEDRA SILBERT



PROBLEM



The Ridgway Creative District Creative Advocacy Team (CAT) felt the impact of the pandemic and the challenges of not being able to do many of the activities they had committed to doing. The group felt unmotivated and discouraged.

Who was involved:

- Ridgway Creative Main Street
- Town of Ridgway
- Colorado Creative Industries
- Colorado Main Street
- RCD Creative Advocacy Team

SOLUTION



- Combine community engagement aspects of the Creative District and Main Street.
 - New volunteer committee to work on downtown vibrancy
 - Attract new energy and spark citizen-based efforts to assist with recovering from the pandemic
 - Include business owners, nonprofit representatives, a Town Councilor, a Chamber representative, creative individuals, citizens

“Even though these programs are in different state departments, from the beginning, Ridgway has benefitted from their willingness to work together with us on joint efforts to customize their programs for our town.

—Diedra Silbert, **Ridgway Creative Main Street**



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This new group will be able to assist local businesses and organizations to thrive post-pandemic. By helping the community to better understand the breadth and depth of work that has taken place so far through the RDC and Main Street, Ridgway hopes to inspire further activities.