

THE MAIN THING

—
Celebrating
Main Streets:
Our Historic
Downtowns



COLORADO
Department of Local Affairs
Division of Local Government



May is Historic Preservation Month. To celebrate, we asked people statewide to let us know what they love about Colorado's Main Street communities.

Undertaking this project was no small feat, but our Main Streets came together to share their unique places, buildings, landmarks, and businesses that embody the character of economic vitality and vibrant downtowns. Within these pages, get a glimpse at the treasures each of our 21 communities holds. Then, at the end of this special issue, hear from our very own managers and follow a step-by-step guide on how to garner engagement and perform similar surveys in your own community.

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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.



CELEBRATING MAIN STREETS

Colorado Main Streets boast vibrant businesses, inspiring public spaces, and engaging historical landmarks.

To celebrate our state's downtowns during Historic Preservation Month (May), the Colorado Department of Local Affairs Main Street Program launched a campaign to hear from both residents and visitors about the spaces that matter most in our state's Main Street communities – Brush, Central City, Elizabeth, Granby, Hugo, La Junta, Lake City, Lamar, Leadville, Lyons, Meeker, Montrose, Rangely, Ridgway, Rifle, Steamboat Springs, Trinidad, Victor, Wellington, Windsor, and Woodland Park.

While Historic Preservation Month celebrates historic places and the benefits of historic preservation, this Colorado Main Streets campaign expanded that vision to underscore the economic vitality of historic downtowns and encourage the exploration

of our distinct businesses, public spaces, and landmarks.

This campaign was a physically distanced, multi-community event that gathered the places important to locals and impressive to visitors through an online questionnaire. The project celebrates the places and spaces that are authentically Colorado. The information will ultimately be used to create an interactive online map that supports heritage tourists and Colorado stay-cation enthusiasts with self-identified businesses, public spaces, and historical landmarks to experience in our 21 official Main Street destinations.

Main Street residents and visitors were able to participate in the campaign for the entire month of May and could even upload photos.

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Featured Community: **RANGELY**

“This Colorado Main Street matters because it is the nicest town with the nicest people!”

— Rangely Survey Response

The Town of Rangely garnered an overwhelming amount of participation from residents and visitors alike! Here are the top favorites in Rangely:



Business:

SWEETBRIAR

Sweetbriar is a local flower, home décor, and gift shop that has been around since 1996. Customers love shopping for unique gifts and praise the wonderful customer service.



Landmark:

RANGELY OUTDOOR MUSEUM

The Rangely Outdoor Museum is a place visitors (and locals) can learn more about Rangely’s history, archeology, zoology, and ethnology. The historical buildings are home to artifacts from various time periods: Native Peoples, Pioneers and Ranching, and Energy Industries.



Gathering Place:

ELKS PARK

Elks Park is the place to be! With a newly upgraded playground, horseshoe pits, a volleyball court, fire pits, and gazebos available for event reservation, what more could you need?

UNEXPECTED TREASURES

Ready to see what we discovered during this campaign? (Hint: SO many unique and special places!) In the following pages, you'll catch just a glimpse of what Colorado's locals and visitors consider to be the best places in our Main Street communities.

Brush: Welcoming



Central City: Old-fashioned



Elizabeth: Charming



Granby: Authentic



Hugo: Friendly



La Junta: Historical



Lake City: Beautiful



Lamar: Family-oriented



UNEXPECTED TREASURES

Leadville: Grit



Lyons: Nature



Meeker: Fun!



Montrose: Quaint



Rangely: Rustic



Ridgway: Eclectic



Rifle: Alive



Steamboat Springs: Western



Trinidad: Funtastical



Victor: Magical



Wellington: Home



Windsor: Roots



Woodland Park: Distinctive



By the NUMBERS



1816

FACEBOOK VIDEO VIEWS



500

TOTAL RESPONSES



207

UNIQUE BUSINESSES IDENTIFIED



816%

INCREASE IN TOTAL PEOPLE REACHED
AND 2257% IN POST ENGAGEMENTS
ON FACEBOOK PAGE



149

LANDMARK BUILDINGS
MENTIONED



21

COMMUNITIES REPRESENTED



113

FAVORITE PUBLIC SPACES

Hear it from the **MANAGERS**



With 500 total responses to this campaign, our Main Street managers worked hard to get submissions. Here is what a few of them had to say about encouraging engagement and strategies they found to be successful!

“Word of mouth can do wonderful things! I have personally told several people about it. I also emailed my Board and asked that they share in the love.

— Jeannie Caldwell, **Rangely Main Street**

“I handed out the flyers, shared the partner flyer, spoke about it with City Council, and sent out an email through Constant Contact.

— Gail Wingerd, **Woodland Park**

“We visited businesses to encourage them to take the survey and sent it to the Board and all City staff.

— Kendall Cramer, **Montrose**

“We weren’t getting responses at the beginning with a passive approach, so I partnered with the hospitality business owners to get visitor responses. I also sent the link via text message and Facebook Messenger to people who care about Hugo’s revitalization (including our Main Street business owners). We all have so many pictures saved on our phones, and I figured that would be an easy way for someone to have no excuse not to do it. I sent it via text to members of various boards that I sit on, with a Hugo and Lincoln County focus.

— Gillian Laycock, **Hugo**

HOW TO:

Put Together Your Own Survey with Engagement



If you have ever attempted to gather information from large groups of people, you know that it can be easier said than done. So, what is the trick to getting a response? Here are the steps Colorado Main Street used to ensure a successful campaign for Celebrating Main Streets!

1 WORK WITH A TEAM

Even if you have experience in public engagement and community surveys, working with others can help ensure you are asking good questions and reaching more people. If your town has a public information officer or your board a marketing professional, loop that person in!

- » If it is within your timeframe and budget, consider working with a consulting agency that can offer extra tips, tricks, and tools along the way. Colorado Main Streets collaborated with Pinyon Environmental consultants to make this campaign a success!



2 IDENTIFY A SURVEY TOOL

Find a survey tool that is customizable for your needs. There are lots of options out there but look for something easy to access for respondents, is user-friendly for the people setting up the survey, and fits within your budget. Don't forget about analytics and results! You'll want a tool that makes it easy to compile your submissions and organize information. You may also consider having paper surveys available for broader reach.

- » Celebrating Main Streets used JotForm, as users are able to access the survey online. A QR code provides one click access with a mobile device, and photos could be uploaded from saved files or by taking a new picture. Information is easily downloadable to a spreadsheet format.



3 ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION

Promote your survey to the people you want to hear from where they are – flyers in the area, local media, through partners, on social media. Social media is a great way to gain traction through tagging of partners and locations of popular responses.

- » Colorado Main Street provided communities with a suggested press release, social media posts with images and captions, pre-made videos, FAQs for partners, and flyers in both English and Spanish to place around the downtown.



4 SHARE RESULTS

Once you've gathered your data, put it on display! Show your partners why this data is valuable in a unique way that makes sense for your survey. In the case of the Celebrating Main Streets campaign, we will compile the data submitted on businesses, historical places, and public spaces into an interactive map. It will show recommended places to visit and could inform local landmarking goals.

