



COLORADO MAIN★STREET

THE POINTY END OF THE PICKAXE

By Matt Ashby, Ayres Associates

A BLUEPRINT FOR COLORADO'S FUTURE

By Jamie Hackbarth and Danielle Lendriet, Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade

ADVISORY BOARD FEATURE: LAIA MITCHELL

By Laia Mitchell, Gates Family Foundation and the Main Street Team

SPOTLIGHT: ANNIE LINDGREN

By Annie Lindgren, Wellington Main Streets Manager and the Main Street Team



THE POINTY END OF THE PICKAXE

BY MATT ASHBY, AYRES ASSOCIATES

Sixteen communities, eight weeks, 4,130 road-miles, and unmatched enthusiasm; phenomenal momentum has built for telling great stories about Main Street thanks to an innovative project launched this Spring by Colorado Main Street. The Economic Impact & Value Toolkit’s aim is to help communities gain the support and partnerships necessary to increase their local impact by equipping them to tell compelling stories of the very best people, projects, and places their downtowns have to offer.

For many, conveying wins can be a daunting task that falls squarely on the “when I have time I really ought to” list. We understand the critical importance of the work that’s happening in Colorado Main Street communities, and want others to understand it too. Compiling some of the great stories on Main will assist programs across the state to communicate the benefits and value of grassroots downtown revitalization.

Digging into Colorado’s roots gave inspiration to brand this effort into something a bit more creative. Taking the term ‘toolkit’ to heart, the project moniker draws from tools historically used by Colorado pioneers to stake their claim and sink roots in the Centennial State. Chipping away at granite to expose a golden nugget, or cracking the hardpan to reveal the fertile soil below, the pickaxe was essential for prospecting miners and homesteading ranchers. Today, we’re using Project Pickaxe as a means to focus the spotlight on the efforts that are generating notable results on Main Street.

ELEMENTS OF THE PICKAXE PROCESS



**BRAND
SCORE**

Review of current marketing tactics and follow-up recommendations



PRIME 5

Discussion of five key audiences, their core values, and communication strategies



MAINChangers

Digging into the storylines that illustrate big wins



Targeted10

Tailored slide deck to help tell the story to key audiences



ROADMAP

Template for mapping out communication delivery

THE POINTY END OF THE PICKAXE CONT'D

BY MATT ASHBY, AYRES ASSOCIATES

What are a few of the key lessons learned to date from the Pickaxe tour? Here are three initial insights into effectively communicating your message:

Pick the Right Tool for the Job.

While a pickaxe can be helpful in some instances, sometimes a little finesse is needed to avoid damaging the gold nugget. Similarly, understanding your audience is key to tailoring the message to the unique values they treasure. If the City is an important funder, make sure to know when their budget cycle begins. Are volunteers the lifeblood of your Main Street? Structure volunteer opportunities to ensure a good match for folks who want to give an hour, or a lifetime, to the cause. Bottom line - be thinking about customizing the approach to match the needs of the folks upon which you rely.

Find Your Swiss Army Knife.

Efficiency is key, and we're all doing more with less these days. Finding stories that can be tailored to several different audiences is an effective way of minimizing effort and maximizing value. Most communities have several unique businesses or attractions that can be highlighted. But with a little fine-tuning, telling the story about these establishments can demonstrate value for other audiences as well:

FOR THE PUBLIC | Locals and tourists hear about new and interesting places to visit;

FOR A BUSINESS | Owners feel supported and appreciated;

FOR GOVERNMENT | Tax revenue is generated by strong businesses

One great story about a local business can result in three distinct audiences being provided with a clear message that results in increased positivity toward Main Street.

Be the Disco Ball.

Telling the story about someone else's success can sometimes feel a little strange. But taking a careful approach that results in shining the spotlight on successful businesses, projects and events in your downtown can make you a valued partner to the team effort that is revitalization. Take care that your stories don't make it appear that you're taking credit for others' successes, but rather serve as the "disco ball" to reflect the light of the successful endeavors in your district. Not only will it promote individual projects and businesses, you'll get to share in the glow as the caretaker of the great things that are happening on Main.

These highlights are just some ways that communication can be enhanced to improve the overall viability of local Main Street programs. Watch for additional newsletter articles for more tips on telling your story!

A BLUEPRINT FOR COLORADO'S FUTURE

BY JAMIE HACKBARTH AND DANIELLE LENDRIET, COLORADO OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

A program of the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT), Blueprint 2.0 is marking its third year of rural economic development support throughout Colorado. The program was designed to deploy expert level resources to rural communities after garnering feedback from thousands of individuals over the course of 2015. Launched in 2016, Blueprint 2.0 is a series of technical assistance initiatives designed to enhance rural economic development strategies across the state and has since deployed 42 initiatives in 27 communities, counties, or regions over the first (2016) and second (2017) rounds.

For the third round of Blueprint 2.0, announced in July, OEDIT plans on deploying an additional 22 initiatives to 17 rural communities, and Main Street communities are strongly represented among the recipients. For example, the Creativity Lab of Colorado Initiative, which promotes and organizes community creative sectors, was awarded to the City of La Junta. The Colorado Office of Film, Television, and Media's (COFTM) Film Festival Initiative, awarded to the City of Steamboat Springs, will offer support in inaugurating a home-grown film festival.

“ OEDIT IS PROUD THAT BLUEPRINT 2.0 INTERSECTS WITH THE MAIN STREET PROGRAM TO ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC DIVERSITY AND VITALITY IN COLORADO'S RURAL COMMUNITIES. ”



Lt. Governor Donna Lynne announced the recipients of Blueprint 2.0 at the Logan County Courthouse in Sterling on July 12, 2018.

The Community Placemaking initiative was awarded to the Town of Meeker and City of Woodland Park to catalyze community engagement in developing a cohesive vision and strategy around identifying a sense of place. OEDIT partners with Community Builders and the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) to offer awardees technical assistance and expertise around a placemaking strategy, which aligns strongly with Main Street efforts. OEDIT is proud that Blueprint 2.0 intersects with the Main Street program to encourage economic diversity and vitality in Colorado's rural communities.

For specific program or application process questions, visit choosecolorado.com or contact Danielle Lendriet at danielle.lendriet@state.co.us.

BOARD FEATURE: LAIA MITCHELL

BY LAIA MITCHELL, GATES FAMILY FOUNDATION AND THE MAIN STREET TEAM

Our newest Advisory Board member, Laia Mitchell, is a world traveler and scholar, experienced community development professional, wife and mother, and general adventurer who is “passionate about supporting resident-led initiatives to create vibrant, thriving communities.”

Before pursuing a Masters in Urban and Regional Planning, Laia worked for a number of community-serving nonprofits including a housing and shelter program serving Boulder County families. This experience led her to focus on housing, mobility, and general community planning during her Masters coursework.

Of her current role, she said, “I am honored to work at the Gates Family Foundation as the Senior Program Officer for Community Development. The program supports opportunities for economic and social advancement across the state and helps to foster livable communities that provide residents a safe, healthy, vibrant environment in which to live and work... Despite the diverse challenges our communities face, I am inspired everyday by the creative people I meet who are envisioning and building a better future.”



Laia with her “very energetic toddler” Paloma while traveling (one of her many passions) in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

The Colorado Main Street Advisory Board has nine members representing various arenas relevant to downtown revitalization. Their role is to advocate for and advise the program, as well as assist in service delivery. We’re thrilled to have Laia join this distinguished group, and she said it best: “There is a strong alignment with the goals of Main Street and I am so happy to be the newest Advisory Board member!”

“ I AM PASSIONATE ABOUT SUPPORTING RESIDENT-LED INITIATIVES TO CREATE VIBRANT, THRIVING COMMUNITIES. ”

SPOTLIGHT: ANNIE LINDGREN

BY ANNIE LINDGREN, WELLINGTON MAIN STREETS MANAGER AND THE MAIN STREET TEAM

On a recent visit to Wellington, we had the chance to sit down with Annie in her office, which was a bit like a bee-hive. The design committee was finishing a meeting, another volunteer dropped in to show off one of the donated saplings for a tree-planting event, and fresh flowers - a recent gift of appreciation from her Main Street board - sat on the corner of her desk.



Annie and her dog Maverick at the Wellington 4th of July parade, where she helped coordinate a combined float with several community organizations. Later that day, the pair set off to backpack the Four Pass loop trail in Maroon Bells.

What led you to Main Street?

“I knew that I wanted to lead a non-profit for some time. I earned a Master in Public Affairs while I was in my previous career in child welfare. When the job opening came up, it just felt right. I was hired as Wellington’s Main Streets Director in August 2017.”

What inspires you?

“I’m surrounded by passionate people that really care for Wellington by volunteering and making a difference. I also love outdoor adventures. Before starting with Main Street, I took a month off to journey to Nepal and hike to Mount Everest’s base camp. I have also summited 29 of Colorado’s 14ers, and love backpacking. While I have friends I adventure with, I also often hike alone with my dog Maverick. I was a teenage mom, and now that my son is grown and moved out on his own, I am embracing the freedom. Life is too short not to live every day to the fullest.”

Describe your leadership style.

“I am enthusiastic and give 110% to everything I do. Like Gandhi said, “*Be the change you wish to see in the world*”, I live it and I lead by example. When I started, there was only one Main Street committee and now we have eight! I serve as a coordinator by understanding each person’s unique agenda and talents and then getting the right groups of people together.”

What makes you excited about Wellington Main Street’s future?

“It’s exciting to work alongside amazing and talented individuals, guiding and improving the community’s perception of the historic Main Street district. I believe Main Street is the right organization to connect the community. There are several great new businesses and we are creating signature events, like the summer concert series and annual Brewfest. Never a dull moment downtown!”



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HISTORY *Colorado*

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