

2021 | ANNUAL REPORT

Promoting avalanche safety throughout Colorado since 1972.





MISSION



The mission of the CAIC is to provide avalanche information, education, and promote research for the protection of life, property, and the enhancement of the state's economy.



The mission of the Friends of CAIC is to support avalanche forecasting and education throughout Colorado.

LETTER FROM FRIENDS OF CAIC

Dear Friends,

The 2020/2021 season was full of challenges including skyrocketing backcountry use, an anticipated decrease in revenue due to the ongoing COVID 19 pandemic, and an incredibly dangerous snowpack. Thanks to the dedication of our staff and Board of Directors, Friends of CAIC were able to navigate these challenges. This annual report highlights our investments in avalanche safety throughout Colorado, as well as our efforts to lean into these challenges and continue to do our part to keep people safe in the backcountry.

In the fall of 2020, Friends of CAIC successfully launched a new membership program and prepared the organization to fully focus on our programming. This enabled us to create new initiatives including “The Forecast Pledge,” “Low Angle For The Win,” and a trailhead program that brought signage to over 200 trailheads statewide. We also moved our education based events online, which allowed us to reach a larger audience and bring in presenters from around the globe.

Thanks to an outpouring of financial support from our members, donors, and partners, the Friends of CAIC were able to invest \$365,760 in avalanche forecasting and education. This money supported CAIC’s forecasting operations, weather station improvements, technology development, and our educational programming.

While we did have tremendous success as an organization, the 2020/2021 season was still a difficult one for our organization and the entire backcountry community. We lost 12 people to avalanches in Colorado last season, and

37 people nationwide. Each of these accidents sent a ripple through the backcountry community like I have not seen before. My heart goes out to everyone that was impacted by these tragic events.

While the world has changed dramatically in the last 18 months, our commitment to our mission has not. Our overarching goal from 2021 to 2024 will be to increase our impact on avalanche public safety in alignment with the CAIC through three distinct strategies: build upon our proven track record, advocacy, and scaling the organization to meet the increasing needs of the backcountry community.

We are grateful to those of you who have supported our work for many years and are equally thankful for the thousands of new members who joined the Friends of CAIC community this year. Thank you for believing in our vision to help build the most robust avalanche forecasting operation in the United States and helping to make avalanche awareness an essential part of the winter backcountry community’s daily plan.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Aaron Carlson'.

Aaron Carlson
Executive Director
Friends of CAIC

LETTER FROM CAIC

The Colorado Avalanche Information Center (CAIC) is a program of the Colorado Department of Natural Resources (DNR). It is a partnership between the DNR, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), and the Friends of the CAIC (FoCAIC), a 501c3 group. The mission of the Center is to provide avalanche information, education, and promote research for the protection of life, property and the enhancement of the state's economy. This effort began as the Colorado Avalanche Warning Program in 1972 in the United States Forecast Service and moved into the State of Colorado in 1983.

The 2020-2021 avalanche season was a difficult and tragic period. It affected people in our community in different ways, but it had deep and lasting impacts on everyone that lives, works, and plays in avalanche country. Twelve people died in avalanches in Colorado, twice the 10-year average. The 2020-2021 season tied the 1992-1993 season, with 12 deaths, as the deadliest period for avalanche accidents in Colorado since 1950. To find a season with more avalanche deaths we have to look back to the early 20th century when fatal avalanche accidents involved industrial operations rather than people pursuing recreation. During the 1915-1916 season, 20 people lost their lives. The tragedies of last year were not confined by the boundaries of our state. Thirty-seven people were killed in avalanches across the United States making it the deadliest year in modern avalanche history (1950 - 2021).

Each death impacts the people that work at the CAIC. We visit the site of the accident and sometimes we are involved in the rescue or recovery. We talk to the people that survived, the search and rescue volunteers, and eventually the friends and families of the people killed. Twelve deaths in one year was a lot, but the impact was larger than the number. Most of the people killed during the 2020-2021 season were long-time residents of our mountain communities. Some

were friends and others friends of friends. These people were abruptly pulled out of our lives and the effects of the voids left behind were difficult for all of us to anticipate or understand.

Although I am still dismayed by the series of events and outcome of the 2021 avalanche year, I am proud of the work the Friends of the CAIC and CAIC staff did during this time period. We moved quickly in the fall and with the help of the USDA Forest Service, counties, clubs, and companies around the state we put up over 200 avalanche safety signs at trailheads. We reached out to people and got thousands to pledge to check the avalanche forecast before every day in the backcountry. As the number of human-triggered avalanches climbed and the winter holiday approached, we pushed videos on social media explaining the unusual year and warning people that the danger was not going away quickly. With heavy snow in February and more busy holidays on the horizon, we made a pointed and targeted plea to help people understand the problem we all faced. We produced ads for television and erected billboards around the state. In the face of adversity, we tried new ways to reach people and we kept trying as long as there was snow on the ground. My only regret is that our efforts did not produce a better outcome.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ethan Greene". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Ethan Greene
Director
Colorado Avalanche
Information Center

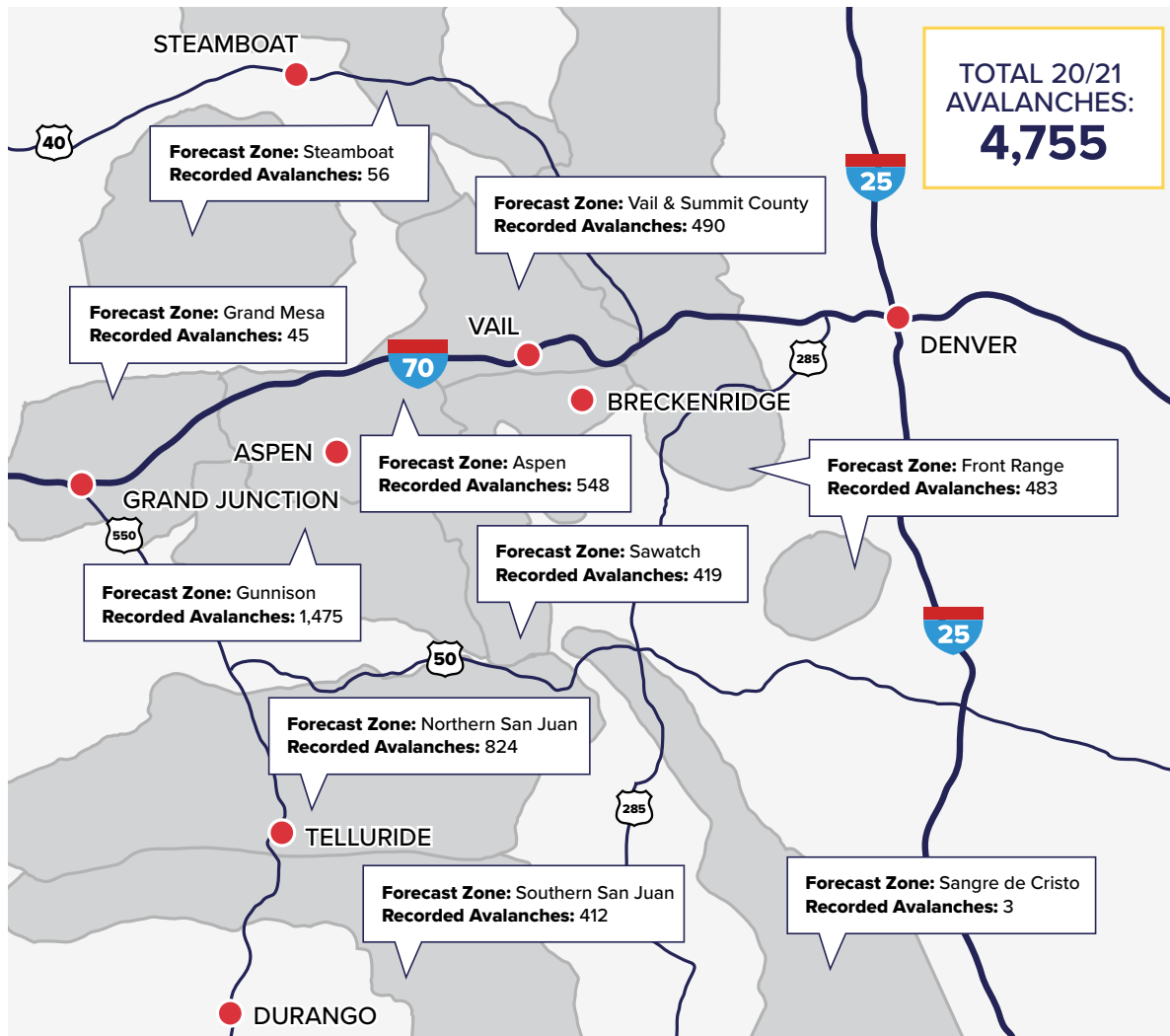
AVALANCHES & ACCIDENTS *by the numbers*

The CAIC recorded data on more than **4755** avalanches.

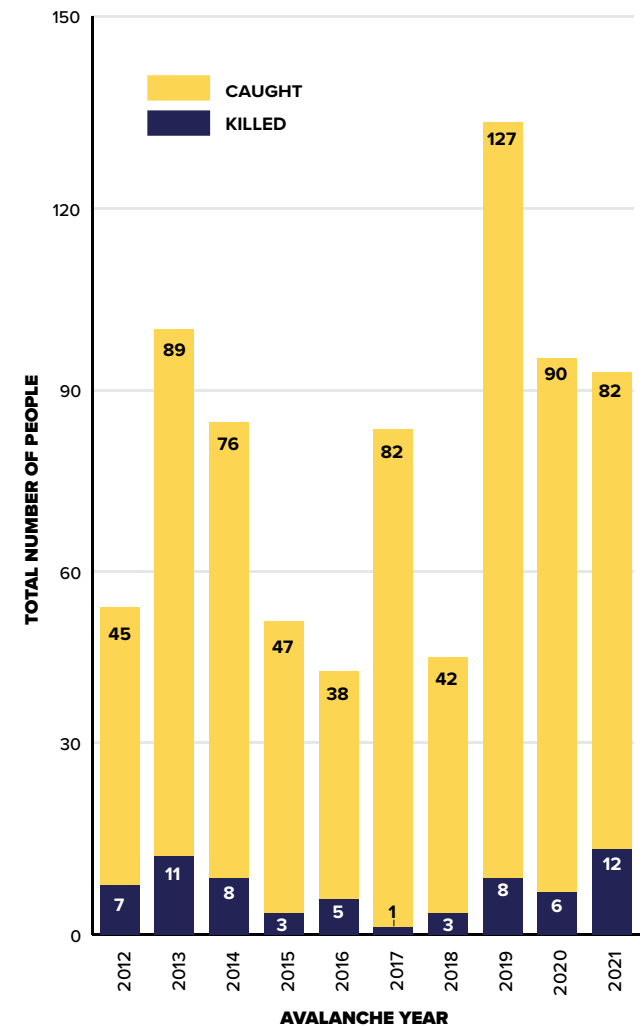
There were **94** people caught in **82** separate avalanches. Of those caught, **12** were killed.

The CAIC published **13** detailed accident reports.

AVALANCHES BY FORECAST ZONE



PEOPLE CAUGHT & KILLED

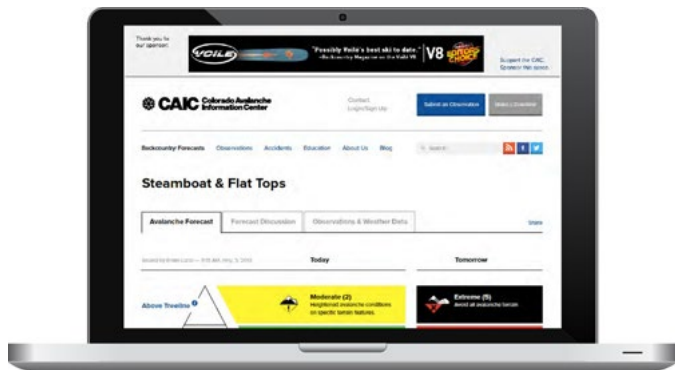


MEDIA REACH *website, app & social media*

MEDIA CONTACTS

CAIC staff gave **253 INTERVIEWS** to press and media contacts, including Colorado, national, and international news organizations.

WEBSITE & MOBILE APP



2,882,948 PAGE VIEWS

WEBSITE VISITS

416,936

UNIQUE USERS

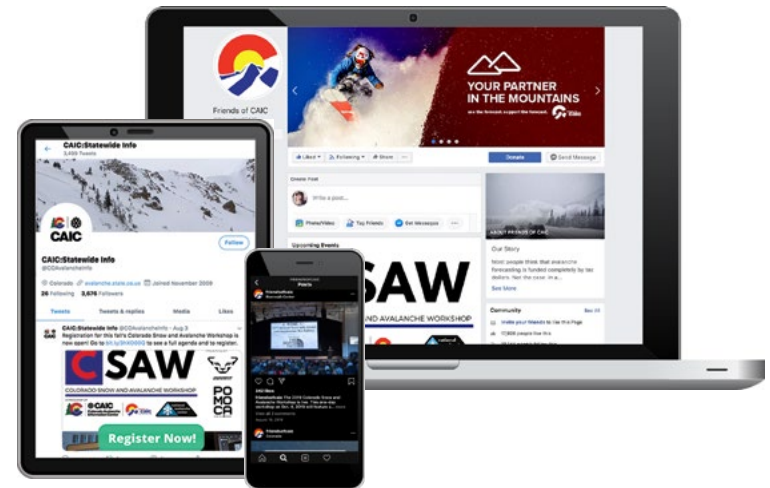


1.1 M






SCREEN VIEWS

22,000

CURRENT ACTIVE APP USERS



SOCIAL MEDIA

	 friends of CAIC	 CAIC
 Facebook	20,759 FOLLOWERS	26,848 FOLLOWERS
 Instagram	28,700 FOLLOWERS	45,700 FOLLOWERS
 YouTube	62,090 VIEWS	262,211 VIEWS

A LOOK BACK *accomplishments in unprecedented conditions*



AVALANCHE SAFETY SIGNAGE

Working with land manager and communities across the state, in partnership with Athletic Brewing, Friends of CAIC installed over 200 new signs at trailheads and access points across the state.

AVALANCHE SAFETY PSA'S

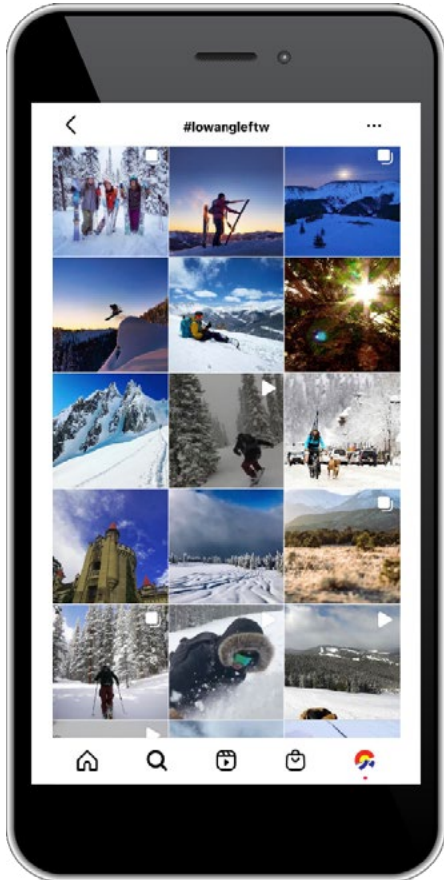
In response to alarming trends, the CAIC and Friends of CAIC teamed up to film and distribute a series of :30 PSA targeted at Colorado based viewers across broadcast TV and digital video platforms



IN THE PRESS

Over 253 interviews cited in over 1,018 articles generated hundreds of millions of estimated media impressions ranging from large nationwide publications to local newspapers

A LOOK BACK *accomplishments in unprecedented conditions*



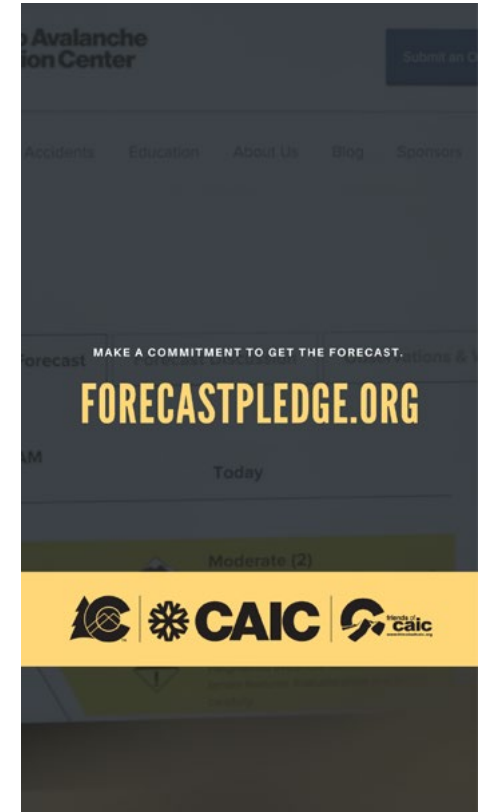
LOW ANGLE FTW

During a period of especially high danger, Friends launched an Instagram and Facebook contest prompting viewers to post photos of them enjoying low angle terrain for a chance to win various gear. 437 entries were tagged on Instagram alone, generating thousands of impressions with a goal of relieving social media “pressure” to post photos from extreme terrain.



FORECAST PLEDGE

Friends of CAIC launched a “Forecast Pledge” in fall of 2020, encouraging users to sign a pledge to check the forecast every time before heading into the backcountry. A series of emails containing safety information was then triggered over the next four weeks. Over 3,000 users signed the pledge in its first year!



VIRTUAL EVENTS

Key events CSAW, COBAW, and the Benefit Bash both pivoted to online versions, and we launched digital regional snowpack updates along with updated digital Know Before You Go awareness classes.



PARTNER HIGHLIGHT:

Town of Breckenridge

My name is Jeffrey Bergeron, and I serve on the Breckenridge town council and grants committee. Living at over 9000 feet, it would be difficult for me to find anyone who has not been touched by an avalanche-caused fatality, near miss, or injury. For that reason the Town of Breckenridge has been a supporter of CAIC for many years and urge other communities to do likewise.

As a long time columnist for Backcountry Magazine I've had a front row seat watching the growth of the 'earn your turns' popularity. Backcountry Mag lends insight for gear and clothing choices, group dynamics, and also touches on snow science. But no magazine, book or video can offer the real time, geographic specific, weather and avalanche hazard forecasts as does CAIC. For that reason I give props to the CAIC in my columns and urge skiers to support the cause and heed the advice.

The town of Breckenridge considers CAIC an integral part of our town's public safety efforts. Like safe streets, sidewalks and rec. paths, the information provided by CAIC is a means to keep our citizens safe. On a body of elected officials of which virtually everyone backcountry skis, it was an easy sell to convince the council that it was an important community benefit to allocate, tax provided funds, to support Friends of CAIC.

There are plenty of worthy causes that request and need the Town of Breckenridge's support. Few are more crucial to the lifeblood of a mountain community than the CAIC. Their mountain weather forecast is second to none and their avalanche hazard information can literally make a life or death difference.

I urge all communities, individuals and businesses to support Friends of CAIC.

Sincerely,
Jeffrey Bergeron/Biff America
Breckenridge Town Councilman
Backcountry Magazine Columnist



2020/2021 STAFF & BOARD

CAIC STAFF

Ethan Greene
Director

Brian Lazar
Deputy Director

Rebecca Hodgetts
Lead Avalanche Forecaster

Mike Cooperstein
Lead Avalanche Forecaster

Naomi Hodges
Program Assistant

John Snook
Numerical Weather
Prediction Specialist

Spencer Logan
Lead Avalanche Scientist

Jason Konigsberg
Weather and
Avalanche Forecaster

Ben Pritchett
Weather and
Avalanche Forecaster

Mike Floyd
Weather and
Avalanche Forecaster

Ryan Zarter
Avalanche Forecaster

Ron Simenhois
Avalanche Forecaster

Andrea Tupy
Avalanche Forecaster

Brandon Levy
Avalanche Forecaster

Ann Mellick
Avalanche Forecaster

Colin Mitchell
Avalanche Forecaster

Jeff Davis
Avalanche Forecaster

Matt Huber
Avalanche Forecaster

Kreston Rohrig
Avalanche Forecaster

Chris Bilbery
Avalanche Forecaster

Polly Layton
Avalanche Forecaster

Mike Barney
Avalanche Forecaster

Bo Torrey
Avalanche Forecaster

FRIENDS OF CAIC STAFF

Aaron Carlson
Executive Director

Laura Mack
Development Director

Brian Rodine
Marketing & Events Manager

FRIENDS OF CAIC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Markian Feduschak
Board Chair

Heidi Ruckriegle
Board Secretary

Brent Brown
Board Vice Chair

Rusty Perry
Board Member

Bill Mueller
Board Treasurer

Jonathan Lantz
Board Member

David Clark
Board Member

Samantha Killgore
Board Member

Ethan Greene
Non Voting CAIC Liaison

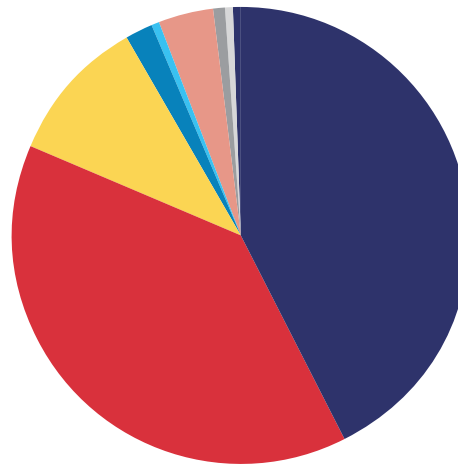
Aaron Carlson
Ex-Officio



FINANCIAL BREAKDOWN CAIC



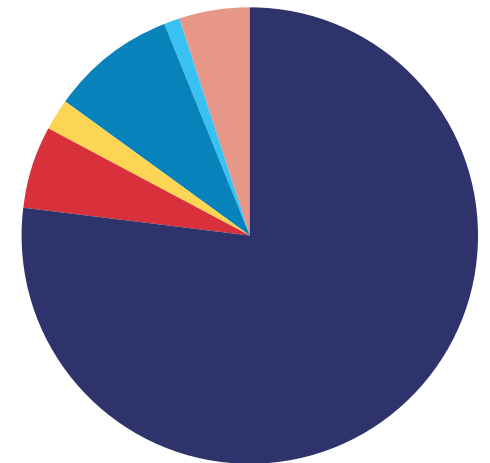
FY21 CAIC REVENUE



Severance Tax.....	\$987,332.00
CDOT Intergovernmental Agreement	\$894,997.53
Friends of the CAIC	\$230,100.00
USDA Forest Service.....	\$50,000.00
Colorado Ski Country USA	\$10,000.00
Interest Income	\$5,210.00
Snowmobile Fund	\$2,000.00
Misc.....	\$34.00
Total	\$2,180,173.53

FY21 CAIC EXPENDITURES

Personnel Services.....	\$1,522,226.06
Rentals.....	\$117,174.07
Utilities.....	\$34,603.78
Cost of Goods and Services.....	\$171,950.21
Travel Expenses.....	\$9,598.12
Total Admin Costs	\$101,638.39
Total Expenditures.....	\$1,957,190.63

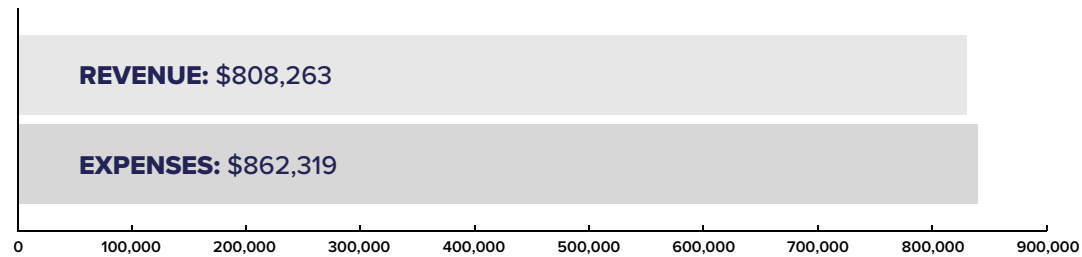


FINANCIAL BREAKDOWN *Friends of CAIC*

EXPENSE BREAKDOWN BY CLASS

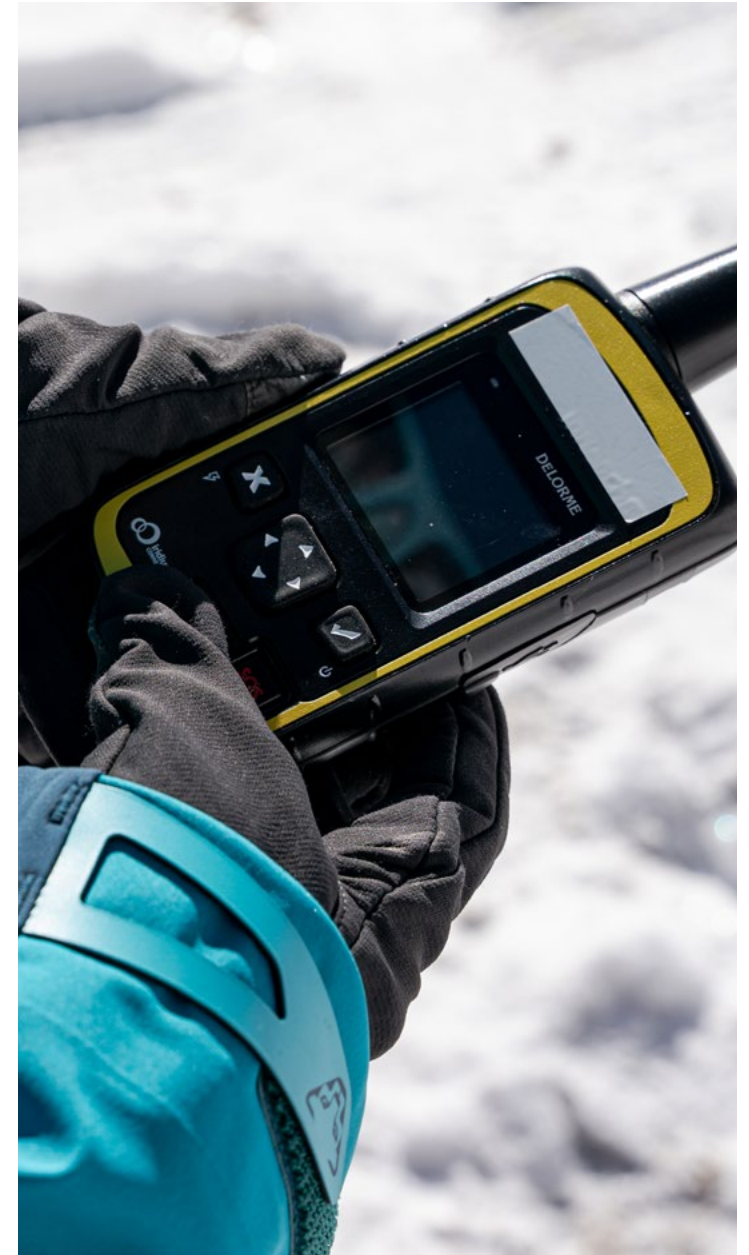
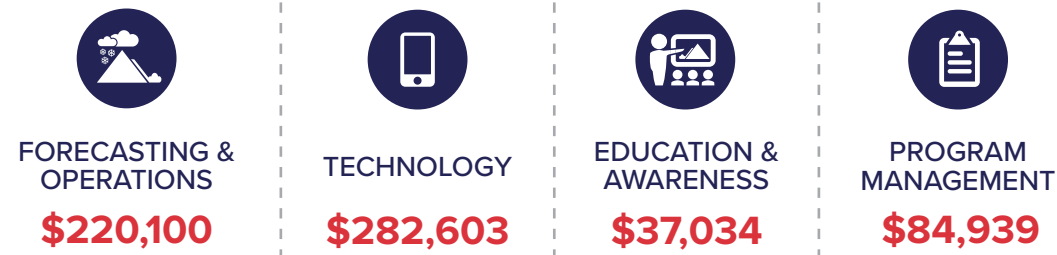


REVENUE & EXPENSES



COST BREAKDOWN

The Friends of CAIC invested **\$624,676** into avalanche forecasting and education in Colorado during the 2019/2020 season.





CAIC
325 Broadway WS1
Boulder, CO 80305

Friends of CAIC
PO Box 1117
Evergreen, CO 80437



 **Colorado Avalanche
Information Center**



colorado.gov/avalanche