

2022 Annual Report



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Dear Northern Colorado Prospers Investor,

Thank you for your investment in Northern Colorado Prospers 2.0. You are the key partner for this work. Without your investment, we wouldn't be able to accomplish the work necessary to move forward with our goals.

- **Reigniting our Economy**
- **Talent**
- **Fixing North I-25**
- **Business-Friendly Environment**

This annual report lifts-up and highlights our efforts that are ongoing or have been completed in 2022. I hope as you peruse the pages of this report, you will celebrate with us the notable work of the past year.

We look forward to your continued partnership as we continue this work into 2023. I am always available to further discuss any and all items in this report.

Your dedication to business-forward work in Northern Colorado is appreciated and valued.

Sincerely,
Ann Hutchison
President & CEO
ahutchison@fcchamber.org
(970) 218-2268

Thank You

Northern Colorado
Prosperes 2.0
 2022-2026

In this new Initiative, we continue to pursue our existing goals, but we shift resources to accelerate / REIGNITE businesses and our total economy, take talent attraction and retention to the next level, expand the scope of our transportation goal, and implement a better-resourced, more-proactive effort to ensure a business-friendly operating environment.



Reignite and Rebuild Our Economy

WHAT WE'VE DONE THIS YEAR

- We are in the implementation stage of the **Reignite and Rebuild Our Economy Plan** with key partners in government, chambers and private industry. This two-county recovery plan provides a roadmap for economic success for the region. The plan focuses on Talent, Innovation, Small Business and Economic Marketing as key areas that can serve as foundations for regional economic growth.
- **Economic Tracker Platform:** Continue to track the economic recovery in Northern Colorado. This valuable resource is a set of indicators that represent critical aspects of Larimer and Weld County economies, is based on data that is accessible in a usable format and is updated frequently with little lag time. Check out the Tracker at NoCoRecovers.com.
- **Making CSU a Key Partner:** We met with over **90 NoCo companies** regarding business opportunities with Colorado State University. Other outreach and connections include:
 - Connections with University Economic Development Association, Association of Public Land Grant Universities - Innovation & Economic Prosperity
 - Halo, Intelligent Growth Systems and Women's Football Huddle
 - Site location discussion with STRATA
 - Neenan Archistruction
 - RamLife with student athletes and industry
 - CSU One Health Institute
 - Grid Forward, "Ensuring a Resilient 21st Century Energy System" event
 - CSU mechanical engineering student projects at the NoCo Manufacturing All-Partnership meeting
- The Chamber, City and County continue to lead a regional Business, Retention and Expansion partnership to share information, and accelerate business expansion and recruitment efforts.

What's Next

- Our plans for 2023 include the following:
 - Continue to engage and interact with businesses to understand business pain points and possible solutions
 - Work with Northern Colorado Regional Economic Development Initiative (REDI) to continue the goal of aligning the regional economic development efforts around a shared set of industry clusters
 - Research and share economy-related data with the region: employment growth, per capita income, poverty rates and median home values

Attract, Retain and Align Talent

WHAT WE'VE DONE THIS YEAR

- We led the creation of job opportunities for K-12 by receiving a 2-year **\$150,00 Workforce Innovation Grant** from the Larimer County Economic and Workforce Center. This grant allowed us to hire a **Work-Based Learning Business Navigator** in partnership with:
 - Colorado Early Colleges
 - Estes Park School District
 - Thompson School District
 - Poudre School District

The navigator works with businesses to learn about Work-Based Learning. This includes opportunities to learn about work through industry speakers, informational interviews, or worksite tours. Learn through work which occurs through internships, pre-apprenticeships, or clinical experiences. Apprenticeships, on-the-job training, and employment complete learn at work.
- We intensified our support and expansion of **Sector Partnerships** in Northern Colorado. Sector Partnerships are industry-led partnerships, in Larimer and Weld counties, which strengthen regional economies and align education and training systems with the needs of industry. Sector partnerships also focus on other issues related to an industry's competitiveness.
 - By receiving a 3-year **\$217,000 Regional Sector Partnership Expansion Grant** from the Colorado Workforce Development Council, we expanded work within the current sector partnerships and added more partnerships. The following has occurred:
 - o In partnership with the **The Place Setting Company**, sector partnerships convener in NoCo, a grant writer was hired to support partnerships for application and management of grants.
 - o For the **NoCo Health Sector Partnership**:
 - As the platinum sponsor, we partnered for the annual **Health Care in Your Future Summit** with 200 people in attendance.
 - Committed to supporting the **Nursing Consortium Event** for February 2023.
 - o Supported inaugural **Construction CON** event with the **NoCo Construction Sector Partnership**. **500 high school students** from Larimer and Weld counties and over **220 industry and education representatives** from different sectors, companies, universities, associations, and apprenticeship programs participated by providing either an **activity booth, a job booth, or volunteering** to encourage these students to **consider a career in construction**.
 - o Planned and hosted **NoCo Celebration of Sector Partnerships** with a keynote speaker on leadership, sharing of events and best practices, celebrating wins, and networking.
 - Launched the **NoCo Hospitality Sector Partnership** supporting hotels, food and beverage, and retail businesses in our region. We received a **\$25,000 Walmart Hospitality Grant** from the Colorado Workforce Development Council for start-up costs. They formed their leadership team and have identified these goals: **workforce, regulations, and customer experience**.
 - Participated as a facilitator for the **NoCo Manufacturing Sector Partnership Regional Advisory Meeting**.
- We completed the fall **Talent Series** offering 30-60 minute sessions on current workforce and talent topics. We placed recordings and PowerPoint presentations on our website for continuous resources. Sessions included:
 - *Tapping into Talent: Hiring Young Multilingual, Multicultural, and Multitalented Adults from Our Community*
 - *Jobs You've Never Heard Of!*
 - *Building Talent in Today's World*
 - *How to Radically Define and Reinforce Your Culture*
 - *ESG and Your Business*
 - *Keeping Up with Change: How Businesses Can Accept and Maintain the New Generation of Workers*
 - *Micro-Internships at CSU for the Fort Collins Community*

- We, along with the **Community Foundation of Northern Colorado** and **The Weld Trust**, contracted with **Colorado Succeeds** to conduct a **landscape analysis and asset map** outlining the programs, partnerships, and opportunities available to young people in NoCo **aligned to college and career pathway** development. The **K20 Pathways to Employment Report** includes:
 - Asset map for 15 school districts in Northern Colorado
 - Key insights from stakeholder interviews
 - Landscape analysis of key opportunities for the region
 - Labor market data for the region
 - Key recommendations for collaboration
- We proudly partnered with **Poudre School District** to complete **11 Educator Externships**. Designed to provide a paid opportunity for **educators to work with local businesses to gain additional expertise** in their content area, **academic pathways into these sectors/industries, updated practices, trends**, and bring **knowledge into practice in ways to tangibly impact students**. Business partners provide 40 hours of experience which may include **job shadowing, interviews, project support, facility tours**, etc.
 - We funded a PSD high school student to create an Educator Externship video.
View here <https://youtu.be/H2Ly1HuO3mE>
- To ensure the **success of Regional Talent Events** we provided our **planning, sponsorship, and marketing support** of the following:
 - **Actionable Ways to Create a Family-Friendly Workplace** - Child Care breakfast
 - **NoCo Inspire Apprenticeships Pathways to Employment Event**
 - **NoCo Workforce Symposium** - planned and presented sector partnership and Work-Based Learning sessions
 - **NoCo Inspire Apprentice Celebration: Leading the Way**
- We are a **key leader** in the transition from Talent 2.0 to **NoCo Works**. **Regional alignment** and **collaboration** are the top priorities for NoCo Works. The proposed work and committee design for NoCo Works is as follows:
 - **Economic Inclusion** - all community members have equal access and opportunity to utilize all workforce and talent services
 - **External Barriers** - transportation, childcare, and housing
 - **Business Resources** - providing a one-stop shop of workforce and talent resources for businesses
 - **Training and Development** - create regional access for businesses to provide trainings and development opportunities for incumbent employees in reskilling, upskilling, or new skilling
 - **Talent Pipeline** - holistic strategy for attracting and retaining the future workforce to increase the labor pool and contribute positively to the local economy
 - **Work-Based Learning** - efforts, initiatives, and commitment to enhancing and expanding apprenticeships, internships, on-site career learning opportunities, etc.

What's Next

- Our plans for 2023 include the following:
 - Launch new sector partnerships: **Non-Profit, Financial/Business Services and IT/Cybersecurity**
 - Continue and enhance **Talent Series - Talent Tuesday** at 11 a.m. for winter, spring, and fall
 - Provide leadership and marketing for **NoCo Works**
 - Publish and disseminate **K20 Pathways to Employment Report** to the larger community at events for **visioning** and **strategic conversations** with **Community Foundation of Northern Colorado, The Weld Trust, and Colorado Succeeds**
 - Increase **educator externs** with **30 businesses** by increasing funding for first-time businesses; the **City of Fort Collins Economic Health Office** has already provided **\$7,500** to the Chamber for use in 2023

Finish Widening North I-25 and Improve Key Regional Feeder Roads

WE DID IT!

We served as a champion for the full funding and widening of North Interstate 25 to three lanes from Fort Collins to Longmont by 2025.



We did it!

In September, the **Colorado Transportation Commission (CTC)** moved to expand a bottleneck area of I-25 north of Denver, identified as **Segment 5** in the North I-25 expansion plan. This widening will ensure that **trucks** can get through on the key western arterial road and that **individuals** can commute in a reasonable time between Denver and the fast-growing Fort Collins region.

Segment 5 – which carries more than **80,000 vehicles per day, more than 10% of them freight trucks** – a focus for business leaders – without expansion will create a pinch point on the highway.

Our advocacy, over the past six years, has resulted in **\$937 million** committed to fund the widening of North I-25 with construction well underway. **Segment 5 remained the final section** of the roadway without funding or construction plans.

With the inclusion of Segment 5 in the 10-year plan, funding will come from various sources including CDOT and a federal loan opportunity.

- Colorado State Patrol and CDOT celebrated the Grand Opening of **New I-25 Port of Entry Facilities** from Johnstown to Fort Collins as part of the I-25 North Express Lanes Project, which started in the Fall of 2018. Opening the new weigh station checkpoints is not only a **major milestone** for Colorado's **freight industry**, but for construction progress of the I-25 North Express Lanes Project.

“ Northern Front Range leaders have pushed for six years to widen the highway connection between Denver and Fort Collins in order to improve the movement of freight and passenger vehicles between the cities. ”

– Ed Sealoover,
Denver Business Journal

What's Next

- Our plans for 2023 include the following:
 - Work with partners to advocate for feeder road support and funding, including US Highways 34 and 85
 - Continue to foster alternative solutions to the funding challenges for transportation in Colorado

Advance a Business-Friendly Environment

As the bold voice of business, we have been very engaged in local, regional, and statewide issues.

WHAT WE'VE DONE THIS YEAR

- Created a **dedicated internal team** to complement the long-standing efforts of the Local Legislative Affairs Committee (LLAC), which tracks and develops official Chamber policy on local and county issues. The Northern Colorado Legislative Alliance (NCLA), which focuses on state and federal issues, continues to receive outstanding support from Capitol Solutions and a highly engaged board of directors.
- Completed a refresh of the **Business Advocacy webpage** on the Chamber website to provide background on the most important local issues and a resource library to provide additional background, insights and positions.
- Continue a **monthly Advocacy Newsletter** to call attention to and provide analysis of legislation and rulemaking that impacts business. We've also made it easier for our members to engage directly with elected officials through a tool embedded on the website that is available in both English and Spanish.
- Assembled a working group to inform and evaluate a **rewrite of the City's land use code**. That effort resulted in the recently adopted Land Development Code, which allows for greater housing density, more varied product types, and practical incentives for achieving greater housing affordability.
- Stopping the Northern Integrated Supply Project (NISP) has been a recurring theme for certain members of Council for several years. To effectuate that desire, local adoption of 1041 Powers was pursued. Through its LLAC and advocacy team, we became the lone voice calling attention to this discrepancy. Responding to our continued engagement on the issue, leadership reshuffled the staff working on the regulations while Council reinforced intended limitations and **postponed adoption of the policies to February 7, 2023**. This additional time allows staff to revise the scope and seek additional feedback from affected parties.
- Establishing a **local minimum wage of \$19 per hour** was another high-priority item for Council. With a steady stream of pushback from small business owners and the Chamber, **Council elected to postpone further consideration of the item until its Work Session on April 11, 2023**.
- **NoCo Housing NOW** and **One Voice for Housing** continue to **lead and encourage housing options** and relative affordability.
- Continue monthly **CIVIC Conversation Series** with over 300 attendees participating in timely and action-oriented topics where **businesses** shared their **experiences** and **expertise** to guide Chamber action.

What's Next

- Our plans for 2023 include the following:
 - The adopted Land Use Code has spurred a citizen initiative repeal. We will be on the front line, correcting the record and building a deeper understanding of the benefits planning for continued prosperity.
 - Continue to push forward additional data to show how a local minimum wage will severely disrupt employer-employee relations, reduce employment opportunities for unseasoned workers, and threaten the financial well-being of employees dependent upon supplemental public assistance.
 - Through a consistent messaging campaign, attention to detail, and demonstration of our shared commitment to a more diverse, inclusive and equitable community, City staff and leadership have come to view the Chamber as a valuable partner and trusted resource. Though we hold little expectation that our job will be any easier in 2023, we are confident the business community has secured its place at the table.

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The Affordable Connectivity Program could cover their costs.

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Internet Essentials from Xfinity is the nation's largest and most comprehensive broadband adoption program, providing reliable, high-speed home internet to qualifying households for a low monthly price.

New and existing customers may be eligible to get Internet Essentials FREE, when they qualify for and enroll in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). ACP is a government program that provides eligible households a credit of up to \$30/month towards internet service.

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ALWAYS IMAGINING FOR A BETTER FUTURE

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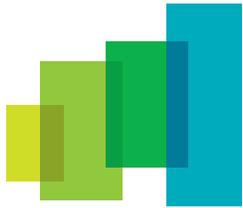
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