



To: Town of Ridgway
From: Ridgway Area Chamber of Commerce
Subject: Q1 Interim Lodging Tax Report
Date: Friday, May 4, 2018

Dear Ridgway Town Council,

The RACC Board of Directors is happy to share our first quarter report with the Town of Ridgway. We are excited by the progress that continues to be made at the organization.

Included with this report is the Chamber's Lodging Tax P&L statement. As a reminder, RACC's QuickBooks reporting structures are organized around the Town-approved marketing plan and managed by Middleton Accounting. These actuals are a direct pull from QuickBooks. We continue to manage our project and staffing investments to ensure stable cash flow.

The last quarter has focused on continuing content development on the website to ensure value to both our visitors as well as the local businesses. We have also made critical progress on the staffing front by getting the new executive director, Peri Gore, involved in many aspects of the community, including but not limited to, the Creative Corridor project, Main Street America education, Ridgway online presence project, Ridgway Volunteer Fair, and Visitors Guide development for 2019. Special projects are now underway, including itinerary development for the website and Creative Corridor project, Visitor Center experience and training improvements and a photo contest to present Ridgway to the IPW conference this month, which has over 6,000 destination travel-buyer attendees.

I am very pleased to share that we have two excellent additions to our Board of Directors. This brings the Chamber to a full seven member board for the first time in several years. We are excited to see the foundation that was laid in 2017 beginning to advance the organization's work and new partnerships. We continue to focus on identifying opportunities to bring value to local business and select projects which will bring a positive, bottom-line impact to the local businesses community.

We look forward to any questions you may have regarding this interim report and continuing to partner with the town of Ridgway to advance the interest of local businesses and the community as a whole.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Colin Lacy".

Colin Lacy

President, Ridgway Area Chamber of Commerce

Ridgway Area Chamber of Commerce
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Staffing and Collaboration

Peri Gore joined the Chamber in November, 2017 and has embraced her role as executive director by becoming involved in the many aspects of business development in Ridgway.

Peri has made significant strides in developing an ongoing, positive relationship with the Town of Ridgway by working with Diedra Silbert on the Creative Corridor project as well as taking an interest in learning about the National Main Street initiative and how implementing some of the lessons learned can positively affect our community. Peri attended the National Main Street Conference with Diedra and we are grateful for the Town's financial support for her attendance.

The Ouray County Resort Association (soon to be renamed), led by Kat Papenbrock, has also been coordinating efforts with Peri and the Chamber to find synergies between the two towns' efforts at bringing in visitors especially during our non-peak times of the year. We are currently collaborating on some grant efforts to bring additional funding for specialized tourism development in the area.

Our exceptional group of local consulting partners and staff now includes:

- *Executive Director* – Peri Gore
- *Visitors Center and Volunteer Coordinator* – Judy King
- *Accounting* – Middleton Accounting (Jane Pulliam)
- *Website and Technology Partner* -- Peak Media (Josh Gowans)
- *Media and Design Partner* – Sprout Design Studio (Nicole Green)
- *Communications and Social Media Consultant* – Ashley King-Grambley
- *Online Content and Storytelling Consultant* – Tanya Ishikawa
- *Membership Coordinator*- Pamela Cannalte
- *Youth Ambassador* – Elizabeth Mueller

Board of Directors

We were very proud to welcome two new board members to the RACC board. Daniel Richards will be joining as the owner of Colorado Boy, one of our community's now iconic establishments. Daniel will bring the important and previously lacking perspective of a culinary business to the board. We will also be joined by Amanda Swain, owner of the soon-to-open Ridgway Adventure Sports. We are excited for Amanda to bring the perspective of a business owner just launching a new venture in Ridgway.

- *President* – Colin Lacy (US2020)
- *Vice President* – Jason Bojar (Balance Natural Medicine)
- *Secretary* – Tim Patterson (RIGS)
- *Treasurer* – Barb Latham (Citizens State Bank)
- *At Large*
 - Erin Stadelman (Ouray County Fairgrounds and Rodeo Association)
 - Daniel Richards (Colorado Boy)
 - Amanda Swain (Ridgway Adventure Sports)

Colorado Creative Corridor

RACC has teamed up with the Ridgway Creative District in gathering and presenting information and suggested itineraries to the Colorado Tourism Office for the Colorado Creative Corridor project, which is officially being kicked-off at the Creative Industries Summit in Greeley next week. The Chamber provided \$5,000 in matching funds in order for Ridgway to be included in this important project, which will bring additional visitors to the area during all times of the year. Not only will they come to the area but with the help of the suggested itineraries, they will visit a variety of businesses and “creatives” in the area, bringing income to the area in times that have historically been slower economically. We are excited for this project to continue to bring value to the business and creative economy for years to come, and look forward to this continuing to be an important example of the positive impact of Chamber/Town collaboration.

Website

RidgwayColorado.com remains the #1 Google search result for keyword “Ridgway Colorado” as well as other high value keywords. Site optimization is an ongoing effort, however we're continuing to make strides both technically as well as in content development. We know this strengthened online presence will produce positive outcomes for local businesses and the community in 2018 and beyond, and we are thankful for your partnership in realizing these outcomes.

Visitors Guide

The 2018 guides have been released and are distributed locally, across the state and region. 100,000 copies will be distributed this year as a result of the collaboration with Ouray. In 2017, we invested in improving and aligning the content of the Ridgway guide, in partnership with Tanya Ishikawa. We are very pleased with this significantly improved narrative and the alignment of the guide with the five marketing themes of Culinary Experiences, History & Heritage, Arts & Entertainment, Outdoor Adventure and Health & Wellness. We encourage you to review a copy of the 2018 guide. RACC covered the listing expense for all Ridgway area businesses in 2017.

Ridgway Online Presence Project

We held the first of several sessions as part of the Ridgway Online Presence Project on May 2nd, sponsored by San Miguel Power and co-hosted with the Creative District. The Technology Forum was focused on getting your business online and led by John Clark and Josh Gowans. It was held at the 4-H Center with a half-dozen participants. We are very pleased with this turnout on just the first session and have heard very positive feedback on the value of the session from local businesses and professionals. We are excited to continue to build upon this effort as we work in partnership with the Town to advance the overall online presence of the Ridgway business community.

Five Themes

With the support of our design partner, Nicole Green of Sprout Design Studio, we have developed a visual representation of the five marketing themes. As we have shared in previous reports, these themes are designed to capture the unique attractions of the Ridgway area and our goal has been to develop these themes and inline with marketing best practices, use them consistently across our media, including website, visitors guide, print ads, social media and visitor center. These visuals will begin to be used across these various platforms in conjunction with the themes:



Identification of special interests will be easily located in print and online content and a concerted effort for inclusion of all five elements in promotions of Ridgway will ensure full representation for all categories of businesses.

Print Media

The Chamber coordinated co-op ads with local businesses in the 2018 San Juan Skyways publication as well as in three quarterly publications of the Colorado Life magazine. Ridgway and the five themes will be part of the next three Colorado Life publications, which offers a major distribution channel not previously accessed by the Chamber.

Itineraries

Itinerary development is a project that we continue to work on and the itineraries are now included on the RidgwayColorado.com website as well as the Colorado Tourism Office's Colorado.com website in their Field Guide/Creative Corridor section of the website. These itineraries are important assets for the Visitors Center as well. The Chamber is committed to giving exposure to all five categories of business mentioned above and ultimately develop itineraries to include a wide range of activities, themes and times of the year. We will continue to send fresh itinerary content to Colorado.com, which will incite interest in Ridgway as a whole and provide inclusion of a cross-section of local businesses.

Itinerary development is an important way to collaborate with local partners and create strong, action-oriented content for both visitors and locals, which ultimately leads to more customers for local businesses and nonprofits.

Other Items of Note

Other projects that have been in the works for RACC include:

- We continue to receive weekly leads from the Go-Colorado website and the Visitors Guide requests are up 20% over last year! We process these leads by sending each one a digital copy of our Visitors Guide and add them to our weekly “Specials & Events” e-blast, which now goes out to more than 2,000 targeted recipients.
- The Chamber is continuing to develop its online presence on Facebook and now on Instagram and Twitter too. We post local business specials and events on Facebook and are just starting to develop content for our Instagram and Twitter pages. With the support of *Communications and Social Media Consultant*, Ashley King-Grambley, we will continue to grow a strong online presence, promoting local business and Ridgway as a whole.
- We now have a RACC Youth Ambassador, Miss Elizabeth Mueller, who is helping us with our online presence, providing coverage at local events and acting as an advocate for local businesses within the school system. Supported by Tanya Ishikawa, Elizabeth will help us launch our new Instagram account. This new “position” within the Chamber network is one that we plan to continue developing for years to come. A scholarship will be provided to the Youth Ambassador at the end of their term. We started the Youth Ambassador program with the vision and support of the Chamber's communications partner Tanya Ishikawa. This is an effort to amplify the youth voice and better connect local commerce with local education. This is a small first step for the Chamber to better connect local business with education.
- The Ridgway Visitor Center opened this week on schedule on May 1st.
- RACC has been working in collaboration with OCRA to provide training for the Visitors Center staff of both communities in June of this year so that we may provide consistent messaging within the county.
- On May 8th, the Chamber is acting as primary sponsor to a Volunteer Fair at the Ridgway High School. Tanya Ishikawa identified a need last fall to bring together local non-profits and high school students wanting to provide volunteer hours. She is again coordinating this effort for next week's fair and the Chamber is sponsoring all booths of members and providing some door prizes for the non-profits in attendance.

In summary, the Chamber is very pleased with the progress being made in 2018 and we sincerely thank the Council and all of the Town staff for their support and partnership.



Ridgway Area Chamber of Commerce
Profit & Loss for Lodging Tax Class
January through April 2018

Jan - Apr 18

Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
Lodging Tax Income	10,374.60
Total Income	10,374.60
Gross Profit	10,374.60
Expense	
Creative District Corridor	5,000.00
Advertising and Promotion	
Online Media and Advertising,	2,252.41
Print Media and Advertising	1,227.00
Visitor's Guide Fullfillment, P	297.50
Website Upgrades and Operations	1,090.20
Total Advertising and Promotion	4,867.11
Payroll Expenses	
Staff	4,865.97
Total Payroll Expenses	4,865.97
Visitor Center Operations	
Electric	76.73
Natural Gas	172.13
Property & Liability Insurance	506.00
Telephone Expense	604.82
Total Visitor Center Operations	1,359.68
Total Expense	16,092.76
Net Ordinary Income	-5,718.16
Net Income	<u>-5,718.16</u>