

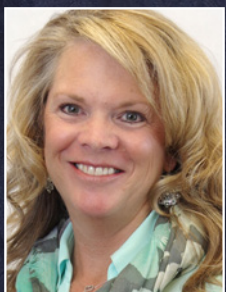
Women of Distinction

THE PREMIER CELEBRATION RECOGNIZING WOMEN LEADERS IN NORTHERN COLORADO

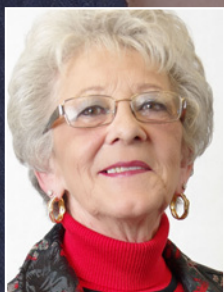


2016 Leading Lady
Denny Moyer

Presented by
BizWest UNIVERSITY
of COLORADO HEALTH



KRISTI BENNINGSDORF



SHIRLEY BRUNELLI



SANDI ELDER



JODI HARTMANN



CAROL ANN HIXON



MITZI MORAN



CARA NETH



RANDY RATLIFF



TRISH SANDAU



LINDA WINTER



KATHI WRIGHT



TRACY YOUNG

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* "Meetings in America," Verizon white paper, 2013.



Meet 2016 Women of Distinction

Now in its eighth year, the Northern Colorado Women of Distinction program remains a wellspring of inspiring stories. Our impressive list of honorees represents some of the best business people of either gender in our region, as well as the most energetic volunteers and mentors. A willingness to give of oneself for the greater good always is an important component of our award criteria.

This year's Women of Distinction award winners are profiled in the following pages, demonstrating how our selection committee — comprised of past winners and representatives from BizWest — again chose wisely and well. As always, it was a tough job. The pool of nominees numbered more than seven dozen, and all were more than worthy of inclusion. We are grateful to the selection committee for its dedication and hard work, including Yvonne Myers, Mary McCambridge, Jean Schober Morrell, Annette Geiselman and Becky Safarik — the same quintet who made last year's selections.

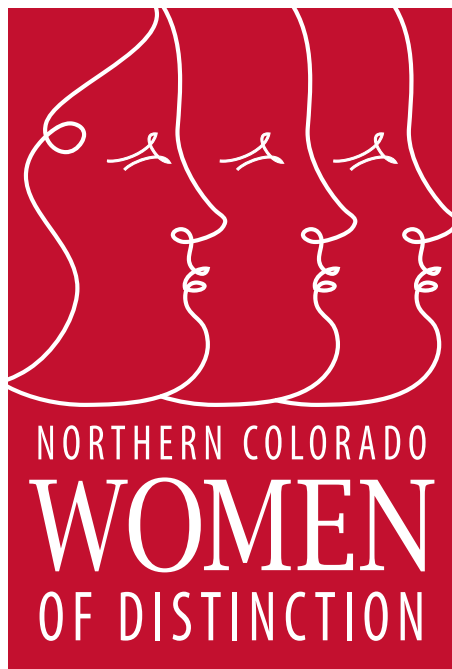
We also would like to thank the sponsors whose generosity makes it possible for BizWest to bring the accomplishments of these impressive women to our attention. This year, our charter member, University of Colorado Health, is joined by EKS&H, the Embassy Suites hotel, The Women's Clinic, Clear View Behavioral Health, Columbine Health Systems, Orthopedic and Spine Center of the Rockies, Community Foundation of Northern Colorado, Miramont Lifestyle Fitness, Good Samaritan Society of Northern Colorado, Home State Bank, Palmer Flowers, DaVinci Sign Systems Inc. and Survey Gizmo.

Photographs were taken by Chad Collins. Dallas Heltzell edited this special section.

On behalf of Christopher Wood and the entire staff of BizWest Media LLC, I extend our congratulations to this year's winners. May you continue to inspire us — and all of Northern Colorado.



Cheers,
Jeff Nuttall, publisher
BizWest



LEADERS • MENTORS • DOERS

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Banking and Finance Kristi Benningsdorf First Western Trust Bank



It all started with a cardboard grocery store and play money.

“I knew I wanted to work with money then,” said Kristi Benningsdorf. “I liked being the person behind the counter asking people if they found everything they needed. Plus, who wouldn’t like handling money every day?”

A few decades later, it’s more than that, she said, but the initial joy of helping people and managing money still makes her happy. As president of First Western Trust, Northern Colorado, Benningsdorf knows she holds a position that few women achieve.

“I really don’t know why there aren’t more women presidents in this field,” she said. “Back in the day, men probably didn’t appreciate women or respect them so much in this kind of a role, so maybe then it had something to do with intimidation.”

What Benningsdorf does know, however, is what she did to get where she is. Her focus has been on patience, courage and confidence. Her advice for others is to keep these intentions at the forefront if they want to move up the ladder.

“You need to have the ability to stick up for yourself,” she said. “If you believe in what you’re doing, you have to be heard and you have to have a voice.”

Surrounding herself with strong people and maintaining an attitude of mutual respect has helped Benningsdorf keep her confidence strong and made it easier to deal with difficult situations whenever they have arisen.

“It’s taken me 34 years to get where I am today,” she said. “What’s worked for me is starting at the bottom and working my way up. Get people to believe in you and be patient and good at what you’re doing.”

The bottom line is having a willingness to work hard to get where you want to go.

“As a lender, Kristi has forged a path in one of the most male-dominated areas of banking,” said Jenn Denfield, First Western Trust senior marketing specialist. “It hasn’t always been easy but Kristi has built a successful career in this industry, and now pays it forward by helping other women become leaders in financial services.”


Denfield said Benningsdorf has mentored many women and established a diverse office with women vice presidents, bankers and trust officers “ensuring all team members have the opportunity to succeed on merit.”

Benningsdorf described mentoring as her job as a leader. “I focus on character building, basic fundamentals in day-to-day activities, how to handle yourself in front of clients, how to listen and be a good communicator and how to build relationships. Mentoring builds personal and professional development and is critical to building a team that is fundamentally sound.”

In her professional role, Benningsdorf distinguishes herself as a leader, according to Wes Sargent, senior vice president of Guaranty Bank and Trust.

“She has provided counsel and direction to large and small businesses, farms and land-acquisition, developments and nonprofits, structuring their financial situation to thrive, be profitable and sustaining,” he said. “No matter who or in what position the individuals are financially, she treats them with respect and dignity and diligently works to satisfy their requests.”

By Elizabeth Gold



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Linda Winter

Accessories with a Flair!...and Hair



I've always been interested in doing hair and looking nice. I like to dress up. That's important to me now, as much as when I was a kid," said Linda Winter, owner and chief shopping officer of Accessories with a Flair! ... and Hair in downtown Greeley.

A Longmont native, Winter moved to Greeley to attend cosmetology school three days after graduating from high school. She received her state cosmetology license in 1971 and has been styling hair ever since.

Winter and her husband own a farm a few miles outside Greeley. Along with helping him on the farm, doing the books and raising two children, she started a hair salon out of her home in 1978.

At a convention in Phoenix, she learned about the accessories business. She started out small, with just a few pieces. The first woman to whom she showed the accessories bought them all. So Winter bought more. She sells wigs and hairpieces, jewelry and scarves. Winter traveled to conventions and trade shows with her traveling boutique, conducting programs for ladies' groups, teaching them how to accessorize. She also began offering a few pieces of clothing, and when those also proved popular she joined the Greeley Chamber of Commerce.

A woman at one of the chamber meetings said she had just bought the building across from the chamber. Winter and her husband, Richard, took a tour of the building. That's when she decided she was going to open a store.

It started out as Accessories with a Flair! until she merged her hair salon into it in 1997. She believes she chose a great and stable career for herself because "you can't get your hair done on the Internet."

Winter doesn't order too much of one product because she wants her customers to have unique pieces. "The key is if you can find what your niche market is and what people are looking for and treat them with great respect and appreciation of them coming in," she said. "You make them feel good about themselves. If you don't feel better when you leave my store, I haven't done my job."

Jan Rossi, chief executive of Lodovran Inc., calls Winter a "generous spirit in downtown Greeley. Running her multi-faceted business ... has fine-tuned Winter's business savvy to not only keep her business thriving and profitable, but she provides valuable business skills and insight to local groups and non-profits."

Two years ago Winter bought a building at 801 Eighth Ave. in downtown Greeley and started her own "Star Natural Skin Care" line, which she uses in her salon and sells across the country.

She volunteers with the American Cancer Society, is vice president of the Greeley Philharmonic Orchestra, chairs the Greeley Downtown Alliance and is a member of the Colorado Women of Influence Advisory Council.

"Everybody thinks they can be their own business owner," she said. "They can't. You have to do what it takes from scrubbing toilets to taking cash home. You have to be dedicated. You have to live your business because people buy you first and then they buy what you've got. I learned that a long time ago."

By Paula Aven Gladych



Congratulations

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Education Cara Neth

Colorado State University - Director
Presidential & Administrative Communications



Finding herself in a dynamic leadership position at Colorado State University, Cara Neth admits her career path was not planned.

"I always think of the Molly Ivins quote that she never made a shrewd career move," Neth said. "I relate to that."

Her career just evolved, she said. "I've never had a master plan and haven't tried to negotiate positions. What I've tried to do is find interesting work and learn and offer something worthwhile. I've been fortunate that's been recognized and people have given me new opportunities."

Neth graduated from CSU with a bachelor's in technical journalism in 1987. As a student, she said, she interned at CSU and "became very excited about the world of higher education and public relations." After two years as a reporter at the Fort Collins Coloradoan, Neth was drawn back to the university in 1989. "I told myself this would be for five years and then I'd go off and see the world."

Five years came and went. "There was always another opportunity I wanted to explore. I told myself if I ever get to the point I'm not learning or having fun or I become that cranky old lady in the corner making people's lives miserable, I'd leave. But work is fun for me every day. I'm still learning and I'm surrounded by smart people with great ideas. It's hard for me to imagine a better job. I'm very lucky and very grateful."

Far from that "cranky old lady" image, Neth has impressed those around her with her positive energy and outlook. As director of presidential and administrative communications in CSU's Office of the President, she is credited with continually positioning the university in a positive light throughout her years of work. Neth has been tagged as the pulse and voice of CSU and praised for leading by professional example, offering a beacon of strength and mentorship both within the school and the community.

It's probably not a stretch to say that Neth faces more challenges every day than most people do in a year. Her current challenges involve keeping up with the changing times.

"Communication is dramatically different than it was in the '80s," she said. "We have the capacity to be much more strategic and thoughtful in how we communicate. And just managing the volume of issues that affect the university this size is only one challenge. At the same time, we need to invest in the next generation and build the knowledge, history and skills of people starting their careers so they can take on effective leadership roles."

Neth said her greatest achievement is in being able to bring in her own personality to the job. "By being kind and looking out for and helping others," she said, "I can add value to leadership."

Neth also brings that talent into the community through volunteering with a number of nonprofits, serving on boards and writing grants and public-relations pieces. She also is an accomplished writer who has won awards and accolades for her efforts.

Even with a more than full-time job, an active life in the community and a "fun, goofy, marriage" with Torger Hougen, she finds ways to relax. "I like puzzles, my nieces and nephews, my friends, cooking, cleaning, reading, writing and selling old flea-market crap on eBay," she said. "It's all good."

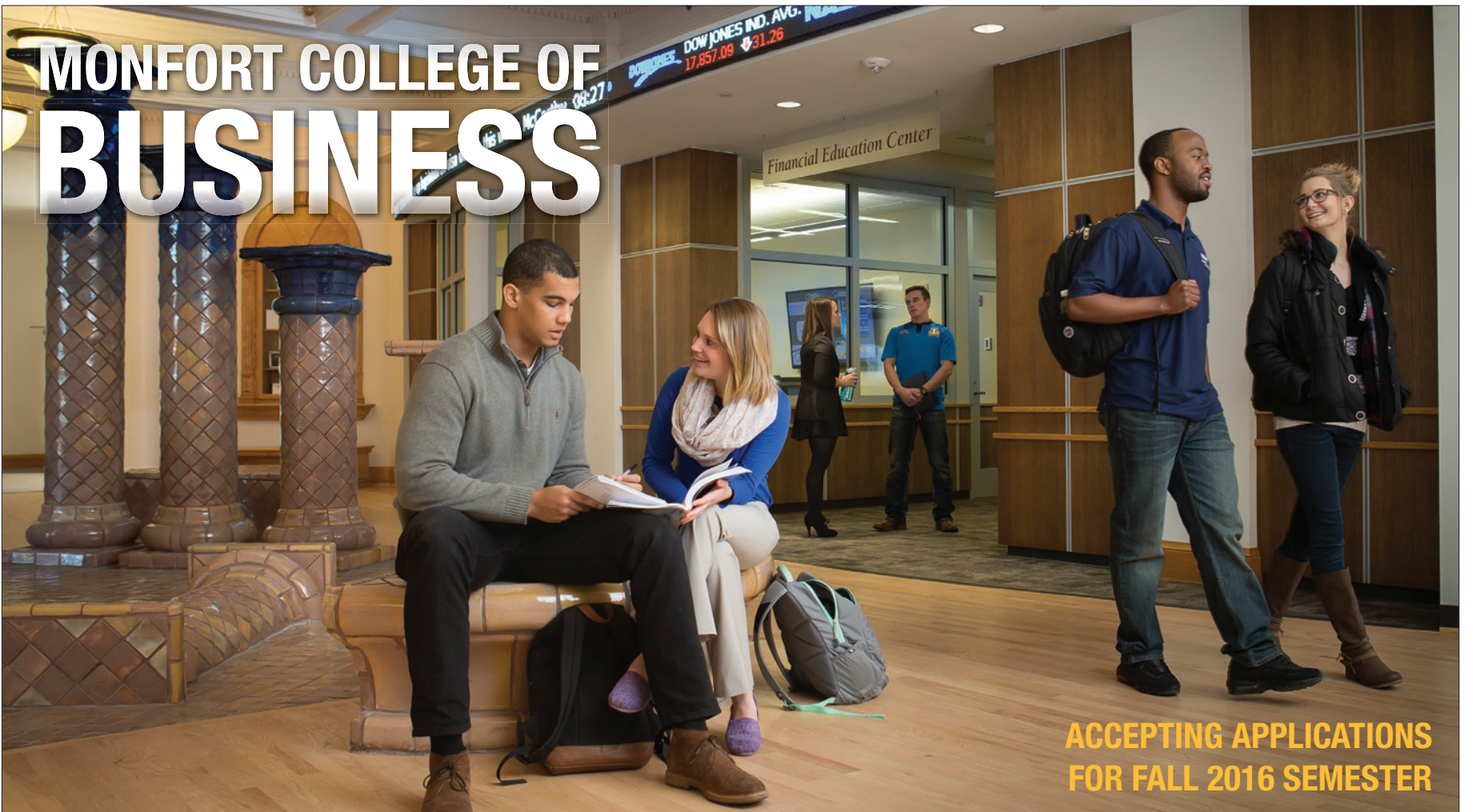
By Kay Rios



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Exceptional Volunteer **Shirley Brunelli** Loveland Elks Lodge 1051



As the second woman ever to achieve the position of exalted ruler of the Loveland Elks Lodge, Shirley Brunelli has put a lot of time into paving the way for women to be recognized.

Referring to the national fraternal organization as “historically a ‘men’s only’ club for over 100 years,” Debbie Davis, who is a member of the lodge, credits Brunelli with working hard to achieve the respect and acceptance she now has.

“She was able to break through many barriers and paved the way for other female members to become more involved with leadership,” Davis said. “This has been a huge accomplishment over the past several years, as changing the culture of such a longstanding organization is not an easy task.”

Brunelli’s method has been simple: perseverance and respect.

“It’s important to keep driving, but also important to not step on anyone’s toes,” she said. “Just show people what you have to offer.”

Remembering a greater goal also rates high on Brunelli’s list of things to do to be recognized as a leader.

“When you have lots of members — 600, in this case — and you’re trying to make everyone happy, it’s important to remember to forge ahead, do the best for the betterment of the lodge and accept the criticism that will come with it,” she said. “When someone is unhappy with me, I try to sit down and explain why I’ve done something so they don’t think my motives are selfish.”

Davis described Brunelli as an advocate for gratitude and team building.

“She has a special way to make other members feel like family,” Davis said. “She was able to get them involved in many tasks at the lodge and with committees serving the community such as the annual children’s Christmas party, drug-awareness programs, active-duty troop support and veteran needs.”

Brunelli relies on her ability to make tasks personal as part of her success.

“I make a point of finding out what people are interested in and asking them if they could help even if it’s just for 30 minutes,” she said. “Basically, you have to ask rather than wait for people to come to you, then you need to tell them what you’re doing, why you’re doing it and what it’s for.”

According to Davis, one way Brunelli has risen to the top is by rolling up her sleeves and pitching in where needed.

“Shirley was determined to be a significant part of the lodge, and she worked very hard on the local, district and state levels by volunteering for several committees and events to prove her worth to her male counterparts,” Davis said. “It was not beyond her to scrub floors, cook, bus and wait dinner tables, ask for donations, sell raffle tickets, skin hides to make gloves for veterans, bartend, organize events, lead meetings or do absolutely anything that needed to be done to facilitate a charitable organization.”

Davis referred to the title of exalted ruler as being synonymous with the title of chief executive.

“Shirley proved herself to be hardworking, ethical and trustworthy to assume the responsibility and honor of this esteemed position — and won the votes to achieve it.”

By Elizabeth Gold

Tracy Young knows the devastation of domestic violence all too well. Ten years ago, Tracy's daughter, Michelle, was murdered by her estranged husband who then took his own life. That tragedy changed the course of Tracy Young's and her husband, Ron's, lives forever.

The staff at Crossroads Safehouse reached out to the Youngs to offer their services and comfort in the wake of the crushing loss. Tracy Young responded by embracing the organization's mission and turning her energy toward volunteering in order to promote awareness about domestic violence and the safehouse. She is determined to make sure others' daughters know about the shelter and the safety it provides to victims of domestic violence in Northern Colorado.

In addition to her work with the safehouse, Young is a commercial real estate broker with Re/Max Alliance in Fort Collins and was involved in the development of Longview Commercial Center, Miramont Office Park, several office/warehouse properties and single-family subdivisions in Fort Collins and Loveland. She has served on various boards for St. John's Lutheran Church and participated in the church's music programs since 1993.

In between all of that, she finds time to perform administrative duties for Crossroads two to three times a week, as well as playing a key role in organizing and coordinating the annual gala, Crossroads' signature fundraising event. She and Ron worked tirelessly during Crossroads' capital campaign, which she co-chaired, raising money for an improved and expanded facility on Parker Street in Fort Collins.

Crossroads' annual gala is huge. Thousands of hours are poured into making the agency's largest fundraising event a success, and Tracy can log many of those hours herself.

"This is one of the most important events we host," she said. "It brings in a lot of funding."

For the two weeks prior to each gala, she's at Crossroads every day, working to ensure every single detail is addressed. "It's hard work, but it's fun," she said. This year, the gala, which attracts up to 300 Crossroads Safehouse supporters, is scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 15.

Before the high-profile volunteer positions at Crossroads, Young worked with its administration, helping with day-to-day operational activities. She created and implemented processes to increase the organization's effectiveness. When it came time to build a new database system, the staff looked to Young for her expertise and insights in making the right selections that would make information processing and reporting systems more efficient, allowing the agency to better service its clients.

For Young, working directly with the women and children is still too painful after her loss, even a decade later. But she still encounters them.

"I've seen people with bruises and knocked-out teeth," she said. "I see the compassion and dedication of the staff. The love and care and guidance that they give does make a difference. I've seen people come in a mess and leave a completely different person, full of hope and dignity."

For Young, knowing that her hard work could make a difference for just one woman is what keeps her coming back. She comes back for Michelle and for other women who have been victims of domestic violence. She comes back out of love.

Exceptional Volunteer **Tracy Young** Crossroads Safehouse



By Michelle Venus

Government, Energy and Utilities

Sandi Elder

Greeley City Council



One description of Sandi Elder's character keeps coming up: She knows how to listen.

As a Greeley City Council member for a population that's flirting with 100,000, listening is a big part of the job — so the skill gets put to the test often.

Elder described her role with the city of Greeley as one that calls for a lot of multi-tasking. "You'd like to say that a successful day is measured by completion of tasks," she said, "but really, if I can finish the day and have listened and understood someone's plight or concern or what's important to them, that's really what it is."

Being able to listen and keep the conversation moving forward sometimes can be a challenge, but Elder is known for keeping the two actions in balance.

"One of Sandi's greatest skills is her ability to work through issues and differences that cause organization to come to a standstill," said Greeley Chamber of Commerce president Sarah MacQuiddy, who refers to Elder as a builder who listens. "The relationships with area governmental agencies has improved due much to Sandi's ability to work through issues."

Two years ago, the city took a delegation to Kalamazoo, Mich., with the goal of idea generation around developing a community excellence program. Takeaways included a decision that a hotel in downtown Greeley would, among other things, spur economic development, according to MacQuiddy.

"Sandi embraced that and wanted to take it further," she said, adding that Elder never backs away from something once she's sunk her teeth into it.

"When leaders state why they're doing what they're doing, you listen, even if it's controversial," MacQuiddy said. "Sandi will reach out to any group or individual to get the information that's needed rather than making a decision hers alone."

On April 5, the decision to build the hotel passed city council, and ground officially was to be broken this month.

MacQuiddy said another of Elder's strong points is that "she is accessible to the citizens of Greeley — an important trait that sometimes can be forgotten."

Elder sees the trait as mandatory in her role. "One of the biggest issues on the table right now is around oil and gas," she said. "I work as a liaison for residents who are concerned about rigs going up as well as to help people understand the issues."

What helps her is to remember the importance of not having a personal agenda so she can hear all sides.

Greeley City Manager Roy Otto recalled his first observation of Elder when she was a member of the Human Relations Commission and giving a presentation during a city council work session. He described the scene as covering "a particularly testy issue" and Elder as the recipient of harsh reactions.

"She responded with such grace," he said, "that I found myself praying, 'I sure hope she becomes a councilwoman someday.'"

Jerry Garner, Greeley's chief of police, described Elder's devotion to her duties with the city council as "unsurpassed by anyone I have witnessed in my nearly 47 years in public service."

"I have noted that her peers often defer to her well-reasoned and thoughtful positions," he said. "I believe that this support is strengthened by her demonstrated courtesy and openness to the opinions and feelings of others."

By Elizabeth Gold

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Health Care Mitzi Moran Sunrise Community Health



When Mitzi Moran earned her degree in Spanish from the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley, she fully expected to teach English as a second language to people in Argentina after graduation, but then met and married a Greeley native.

While attending school, she worked at Northern Colorado Medical Center, which sparked her love of the health-care industry and helping those in need. She continued to work there in a variety of roles for the next 14 years, including as project manager, outreach coordinator, patient service representative and information-systems operator. She also made use of her Spanish skills, serving as an interpreter and assistant instructor for the Spanish Interpreting Team.

In 1998 she was hired as clinical manager for Sunrise Community Health in Greeley. At the time, the clinic was housed in a 1917 schoolhouse with exam rooms ranging in size from a walk-in closet to a living room. Moran believed in the organization's mission, which is to provide health-care services to people at or below the poverty line.

"At a not-for-profit, you wear a ton of hats," Moran said. "On any given day I might change somebody's password because they got locked out and have a meeting with community leaders about where Sunrise will be in five years."

She has been with Sunrise since that time, ascending to chief executive in 2006. Under her administration, the clinic has expanded from the old schoolhouse to 10 medical and dental clinics helping people across Northern Colorado.

Moran said she loves being on a team that helps people in need. "There are so many people out there struggling with low-wage jobs and living in poverty," she said. "Nobody should have to determine if they can afford it before taking their sick child to the doctor."

In 2000, Sunrise served 11,000 patients a year. In 2015, the not-for-profit served 35,000. With that increase has come an increase in clinics and clinicians. Sunrise now employs 370 people.

It is a challenge because the need is so great, she said. In Greeley, one in two people lives at an economic level that would "indicate they may struggle with access to health care," she said. In Loveland, that number is one in three.

Even though she never made it to Argentina, "I love this path. I love this mission," she said. "People who work at Sunrise are there for heart. They are there to care for those in need. The length they will go to to help patients access care and learn how to care for themselves, it is inspirational."

Lesley Brooks, chief medical officer at Sunrise Community Health, called Moran powerful, impactful and courageous.

"Mitzi has worked tirelessly," she said, "to establish at Sunrise a vision and attendant culture that seeks to: remove the shame that so frequently accompanies poverty in our communities, level a playing field made uneven by lack of access to primary health care, offer opportunities for employment and career paths inside the communities we serve, and actively and enthusiastically partner with other community organizations to ensure widespread access to our services."

By Paula Aven Gladych

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Leading Lady Denny Moyer Ensign Skills Center



Vision has nothing to do with eyesight. Just ask Denny Moyer, founder, president and chief executive of Ensign Skills Center.

The Fort Collins-based nonprofit organization provides visual rehabilitation services to individuals struggling with vision loss, helping them optimize the use of their remaining vision through training and adaptive aids.

At 19, Denny was diagnosed with Stargardt's disease, a form of inherited juvenile macular degeneration. The news was devastating for a someone just emerging as a young adult.

"I was told I was going to be blind and I needed to go home and learn how to live with (blindness)," said Moyer.

With no way to research her disease in an era that predated personal computers, she wondered how the rest of her life would be affected. Would she be able to go to school and work? Get married? Would she see her children's faces as they went through life?

In addition to services offered to patients, one of Moyer's priorities is to educate physicians and health-care professionals who treat degenerative eye diseases about how to deliver heartbreaking news with more compassion and empathy.

"The doctors can seem very — oh, I don't know — offhand about it," Moyer said, recalling a recent conversation with a man whose daughter was diagnosed with Stargardt's. She, too, was told about her condition in a manner that lacked compassion and left her feeling bereft.

"It's not necessary and it has to change," Moyer said.

Once she went through the stages of grief over her disease, Moyer realized it provided her with her life's purpose: to serve others learning to adapt to vision loss. After earning her degree in occupational therapy and moving to Colorado in 1993, she started working at Life Care Center in Longmont. While there, she received a mailer advertising courses geared to helping patients with low vision. Her employers agreed to send her as long as she agreed to utilize her new knowledge.

She agreed, and the seed for Ensign Skills Center was planted.

Fast forward four years, and Moyer found herself meeting with the Lions Club in Fort Collins, having discussions about the issues she faced living with low vision, which services to bring to the community and how to get the Lions involved. They granted her \$5,000 to get Ensign started. For two years, Moyer and a partner volunteered their time from donated space at Elderhaus while working full-time jobs. Soon other occupational therapists and doctors came on board to conduct exams and provide services.

Across Colorado, more than 3000,000 people struggle with low vision. Ensign has offices in Fort Collins, Greeley, Lafayette, Denver, Parker, Littleton and Lakewood, with a staff of 19, meeting the needs of more than 2,100 people. Ensign's van travels to the Western Slope to serve individuals in communities there. The programs offered are not one-size-fits-all classes, but individualized to meet the needs of each patient and help them achieve independence. Ensign's model has proved successful and is being adopted by organizations across the nation.

Today, Moyer is recognized nationally for her innovations and sits on the board of directors for the National Accreditation Council for Blind and Low Vision Services. She is sought after as a speaker and makes presentations throughout the state.

By Michelle Venus

Randy Ratliff believes behavior changes that were spurred by World War II began to turn the tide in how women were viewed.

“While the men were off fighting the battles, the women worked on production lines and on construction projects that the men traditionally did,” he said. “It showed that women can stand equal to and sometimes even better than men.”

To Ratliff, chief executive of SummitStone Health Partners, it’s his job to mentor.

“My job,” he said, “is to remove barriers, whether they’re about equivalency or about system issues, so people can do their jobs.”

SummitStone provides behavioral health intervention, prevention and treatment services. Ratliff has been earning his recognition as an outstanding mentor to women there since 2000.

“Randy empowered me as a professional by always encouraging me personally,” said Emily Dawson-Petersen, center director at Innovage and former marketing director with SummitStone. “One of the greatest gifts he gave me was to show me that building a strong employee culture started with knowing about and caring for the personal lives of employees. This helps build trust but also gives employees the freedom to give their all at work.”

Ratliff said he sees culture as a delicate balance that requires constant diligence. “It involves keeping people’s heads up toward the future by problem solving in the present and saying, ‘This is a problem and how are we going to pull together and solve it with a lasting solution.’ When people are looking to the future for a solution, they’re seeing hope and having a vision about making things better.”

With about 320 employees and 20 locations around the county, SummitStone reaches wide. Keeping everyone engaged and inspired is no small task.

“There’s no silver bullet but it’s important to be genuine and transparent, to have expectations and to be held accountable to expectations,” Ratliff said. He uses a management communication tool called “rounding” to keep in front of and in touch with employees.

“I compare it to fishing,” he said. “I ask basic questions like, ‘What’s going well?’ and that may lead to another question, like, ‘What can we do better in your opinion?’”

The interaction supports his intent to remove barriers for staff and give them a voice.

“I also ask, ‘Who’s doing a really good job and deserves to be recognized? Is it OK if I tell them I got this information from you so I can send them a note or an email?’”

SummitStone chief operating officer Cyndi Dodds cited Ratliff’s role-modeling mentoring style.

“Randy consistently models impeccable integrity and he strives to be a humble servant leader. He makes it safe to try out new and creative ways to doing things,” she said. “I really appreciated his willingness to trust me with activities that stretched my learning and skill development.”

Annie Brunzell, SummitStone director of development and marketing, credited Ratliff with her own personal and professional development. “He enables others to act,” she said, “fostering collaboration by promoting cooperative goals and building trust.”

Ratliff strives to show employees his transparency and accessibility in their initial session as a new hire. “I welcome them and talk about the value of partnerships,” he said, “and give them a snapshot that the CEO is a real person.”

By Elizabeth Gold

Outstanding Mentor **Randy Ratliff** SummitStone Health Partners



Nonprofit — Human Services
Jodi Hartmann
 Greeley Transitional House



For decades, Jodi Hartmann has focused on speaking up for people who rarely have their own audience. As executive director of Greeley Transitional House, she makes a point of being heard by anyone who can help her turn a hard situation into a healthy present and a promising future for those people.

At the Greeley Transitional House, making that difference means helping families who are homeless find safety and stability in the midst of crisis.

These families end up homeless for a variety of reasons — from a lost job or business foreclosure to domestic violence or unexpected medical bills. The conflict between lack of affordable housing and low wages plays into the mix as well.

“These are invisible people who need a voice or they won’t get the support they need to get back on their feet,” Hartmann said, adding that homeless children are particularly vulnerable and susceptible to lifelong problems.

To help fill a gap between moving from a homeless shelter into market-rate housing, Hartmann has created strategic partnerships with organizations that can help meet the mission. Using a housing complex owned by the Greeley Urban Renewal Authority, for example, has given families stability while they work to create foundations that will enable them to be independent.

“She researched and recommended the addition of Camfield Corner Apartments as another way that we could expand our mission and positively impact more homeless families,” said Travis Gillmore, ex-officio board member of Greeley Transitional House. “Today GTH, through Camfield Corner Apartments, provides 13 apartments that are a critical piece of our transitional housing and follow-up programs.”

Heading up an organization with a budget of \$400,000 requires good business sense as well as compassion. With 20 years of experience in financial management for the Greeley/Weld Economic Development Action Partnership, Hartmann knows how to best utilize a dollar and keep it moving in the right direction.

“Jodi is a woman who excels in undertaking the ongoing challenges of running a nonprofit with grace and strength,” said Bianca Fisher, associate director of the Greeley Downtown Development Authority. “She balances a heart to help with a strategic ability to run a sustainable organization that affects change in significant ways.”

Fisher, who also serves on the board of the Greeley Transitional House, pointed out an example of Hartmann’s skill at creating win-win partnerships.

“She recently developed a program in conjunction with the UNC School of Nursing to bring students in the public health education program to the Greeley Transitional House to provide one-on-one health education training with the residents as part of their clinical hours at no cost to the organization.”

In addition to emergency and transitional shelter, the Greeley Transitional House also offers case management and a variety of programs that include help with employment, nutrition and credit.

The average length of stay for families is about 55 days, and about 85 percent of them find housing and employment before they leave the program.

“Year round, we see about 80 families — about 300 individuals. About 175 of those are children,” Hartmann said. “People don’t realize that homeless families are pretty invisible. They could be the person standing next to you in a grocery store.”

By Elizabeth Gold

Is there a Fort Collins arts organization on which Carol Ann Hixon hasn't had an impact? Short answer: no.

Since retiring in 2009 from a career spanning close to four decades as a humanities teacher in the Poudre School District, Hixon has been anything but retiring. Even while teaching she was actively involved as a board member for several arts organizations. The Fort Collins Symphony Orchestra, the Cultural Resources Board for the city of Fort Collins and Arts Alive are just a few of the civic and nonprofit agencies she supported. Currently, she serves on the Art in Public Places board of directors and last year was a member of the Coloradoan's editorial board.

She and her jewelry designer husband, Gary, produce ArtWear, a weeklong exhibition, fashion show and sale featuring one-of-a-kind wearable art, benefitting the Lincoln Center visual arts program. This particular baby is now 17 years old.

Hixon works tirelessly on fundraising and arts education committees for the Fort Collins Museum of Art. She and Gary host many events in their southwest Fort Collins yard-cum-gallery to raise funds and awareness of various arts organizations. The Hixons are known throughout the Fort Collins arts community for their graciousness and hospitality, as well as their extensive art collection, much of which is a who's who of Northern Colorado artists.

"It simply fills my soul to see the art that people have created," she said of her collection. "The arts are a part of our very being, and it's important to honor that. They the arts make us different. Art makes me very happy."

As a humanities educator, Hixon taught her students about the value of the arts and culture on society. During her tenure at PSD, she influenced thousands of students, many of whom still speak glowingly about her. In addition to her work in the classroom, Hixon was a National Endowment for Humanities master teacher and grants panel member, as well as an assistant to the provost at Colorado State University for Humanities and the Arts. Education continues to be a passion, one which she shares with future educators as a student-teacher adviser at CSU. She and Gary founded the Hixon Family Scholarship, which is awarded to students majoring in liberal arts, English, dance or art who demonstrate a strong connection to the community. She also can be found in her granddaughter's second-grade classroom every Friday.

Hixon and her husband passed their love of the arts to their daughters, Lesli and Cori, and now to their two young granddaughters with whom they attend music and theater performances. The little girls are quick to point out that while their paternal grandparents take them to sporting events, Nana and Poppy take them to "music things."

As a child growing up in Pueblo, Hixon listened to her own mother singing while she played the piano. Today, that piano sits in her daughter's home, no doubt providing many musical memories and playing forward a love of the arts to generations yet to come.

By Michelle Venus

Nonprofit — Creative Industry

Carol Ann Hixon

Poudre School District, retired



Nonprofit — Human Services
Kathi Wright
 Boys & Girls Clubs of Larimer County



I am a pretty good foosball player,” laughed Kathi Wright, executive director of the Boys and Girls Club of Larimer County.

As a volunteer with Youth Empire, a teen center that merged with the club in 1996, Wright connected with the kids through her mean foosball skills. That initial volunteer work led to more and more involvement with Youth Empire, where she became a member of the board of directors with a stint as president before being hired as executive director of the Boys and Girls Club in 1999.

Since then, and under Wright’s direction, the club has grown from a single location to four permanent clubhouses — two in Loveland and one in Wellington, in addition to the Fort Collins Clubhouse — and a summer-only program in Estes Park. The permanent facilities offer after-school youth development programs from the arts to leadership and life skills, health and fitness and education, technology and career development. The permanent facilities are open during school breaks and all locations offer summer programming.

For parents whose budgets may not stretch far enough to cover the cost of child care, the club is a welcome and safe place for their youngsters to stay while they work. For teens, it’s a positive and encouraging environment that helps them reach their full potential.

Wright admitted that numbers and operations are not her strong suit. “But boy, can I forge relationships,” she added.

Understanding the benefit of partnerships, Wright and Amy Pezzani, her counterpart at the Food Bank for Larimer County, created joint programming to support and fulfill each organization’s missions. With 65 per cent of the club’s children in free and reduced-price lunch programs and more than half of them living in single-parent households, food insecurity is of great concern. Last year, the Kids Cafe program served free, nutritious meals to roughly 1,000 children each day, many of whom are members of the Boys and Girls Club.

One of her former club members, a young man named Richard, stopped by recently to tell Wright how important the club was in his life and the impact it made on him. As a boy, Richard shuttled between his mom’s house in Denver and his dad’s in Loveland. Dad took him to a clubhouse in Loveland, where Richard became so engaged in the activities that he was named Youth of the Year and was chosen to carry the Olympic Torch when it passed through Northern Colorado on its way to Utah. After graduation from high school, Richard went on to work for a road-construction company that he is in the process of purchasing. He’s also buying a house with his wife, who is expecting their first child.

Richard told Wright that he had choices about the direction his life would take, and that the Boys and Girls Club helped him to make the right choices — the choices that led to the life he is leading today.

“After he left, I was all choked up,” Wright said. “When we make this kind of impact on a young person, I know I made the right choice to be here at the club.”

By Michelle Venus

As founder of Northern Colorado Traffic Control in 1993, Trish Sandau has created a business that suppliers rate as one of the industry's top in Colorado.

"The challenges in business for me are more about our industry than about being a woman," she said, adding that her company isn't generally the lowest bidder for a job but is rated high because of performance, consistency and reliability.

"Thirty years ago, people thought that if they got a truck and some cones, they could be a traffic control company," she said, "but it's a complicated and highly liable company that has a lot of risks — more so than people would think. To get respect in the industry, you need to know all the regulations and the permanent and temporary traffic issues."

Even though Sandau stands out as a woman in a business that's considered traditionally male, she said she could count on one hand the number of times she felt disrespected by men.

Her advice for being treated equally is to just make sure you know your job.

As a business owner, Sandau credited her company's success to a focus on employees.

"The key to being a good company is to have long-term employees," she said. "Our employees are as much a part of this company as I am. They're what drives our reputation."

Sandau uses the word "partnership" a lot. She refers to NCTC's employees as well as its customers as partners.

One way she keeps employees engaged in their jobs and feeling like partners is to give them a voice, both formally and informally. For example, every year, company staff and their spouses attend a two-day retreat that includes entertainment as well as planning for the future.

"It's really paid off to get to know their families and for them to get to know each other," she said.

Retreat topics include focus on how they can improve things that directly affect everyone, such as safety. "They're a part of decisions rather than decisions coming from the top down," she said. "Our employees are hard workers who are loyal and humble. I believe in treating them with respect."

Keith Reichert, a former construction manager for an asphalt paving company, said, "We used her company at times when she wasn't the lowest priced, just because we knew the work would be done correctly and without any concerns on our part."

Sandau stresses the need for constant improvement. Current upgrades include a move toward paperless and having GPS devices added to all the trucks.

"When I started, we had beepers, but now we use iPads and other resources," she said. "We keep bringing things up a notch."

Upcoming projects include creating hiring and recruitment videos. "Of course, the large corporations are doing this already," she said. "We're just doing what we can to be on the cutting edge."

Sandau places knowledge of the job at the top of her list. She said her employees are trained well, and that's one reason they give first-class service. Business ethics rate high as well.

"We're the first on a job and the last to leave at the end of the day," she said, "and if someone overpays us, we call them."

By Elizabeth Gold

Real Estate, Construction and Development

Trish Sandau

Northern Colorado Traffic Control





Women-Owned Businesses - Northern Colorado

Ranked by revenue

Rank	Company	Revenue 2015 Revenue 2014	Percent woman- owned No. of employees	Products/Services	Phone Website	Owner, Title Year founded
1	Co's Auto Group Inc. 4150 Byrd Drive Loveland, CO 80538	\$67,242,453 \$64,810,400	100% 110	BMW and MINI Cooper automobiles, sales, parts, service, pre-owned cars and trucks.	970-292-5200 www.cosbmw.com, minioflovland.com	Christina Dawkins, president/general manager 1974
2	Advance Tank & Construction Co. 3700 E. County Road 64 Wellington, CO 80549	\$66,000,000 \$60,000,000	67% 60	Fabrication, erection and repair of large-diameter, steel plate storage structures such as above-ground storage tanks, stacks, silos, clarifiers, bins and hoppers and related concrete work.	970-568-3444 www.advancetank.com	Lisa K Clay, CEO 1981
3	Employment Solutions 3600 Mitchell Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525	\$33,526,000 \$32,977,000	51% 17	Industrial & manufacturing staffing services.	970-407-9675 www.employmentsolutions.com	Katherine J. Wagner, majority owner 1994
4	Good Day Pharmacy - Corporate Office 3780 E. 15th St., Suite 102 Loveland, CO 80538	\$29,814,000 \$28,000,000	60% 133	Independent pharmacy chain of 8 NoCo community pharmacies and 1 long-term care pharmacy serving assisted living, skilled nursing, and special populations.	970-461-1975 www.gooddaypharmacy.com	Vicki Einhellig, COO 1985
5	The Women's Clinic of Northern Colorado 2500 Rocky Mountain Ave., Suite 150 Loveland, CO 80538	\$18,570,000 \$18,300,000	62% 135	OBGYN care, mammography, DEXA bone density screening, ultrasounds.	970-493-7442 www.fcwc.com	Scott Kenyon, executive administrator 1970
6	Advanced Manufacturing Technology 3920 Patton Ave. Loveland, CO 80538	\$13,000,000 \$10,000,000	60% 100	Conveying systems for food, beverage, pharmaceutical, brewery, household products and more. Infinite automatic guiderail systems for packaging industry.	970-612-0315 www.amtcolorado.com	Luanne Mullen, president 1996
7	Colorado Precast Concrete Inc. 1820 E. Colorado Highway 402 Loveland, CO 80537	\$11,583,000 \$11,600,000	53% 90	Precast concrete underground utility structures, septic tanks, small buildings, architectural work, specialty products.	970-669-0535 www.coloprecast.com	Penny Hayward, CEO/ director of safety 1975
8	Motherlove Herbal Co. 1420 Riverside Ave. Suite 114 Fort Collins, CO 80524	\$6,016,137 \$5,250,000	100% 20	Manufacturers of natural and organic products specifically for pregnancy and breastfeeding.	970-493-2892 www.motherlove.com	Silencia Cox, CEO 1990
9	Vista Solutions Corp. 2619 Midpoint Drive, Suite F Fort Collins, CO 80525	\$5,935,469 \$7,487,478	51% 9	Focus on identifying and resolving computer application performance problems. Provide cloud computing migrations and business class networks, servers and storage.	970-212-2940 www.vistasolutions.net	Linda Vomaske, principal owner 1975
10	Supply Cache Inc. 1980 Caribou Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525	\$5,060,000 \$4,600,000	51% 12	Equipment for wildland firefighting, forest firefighting and crews, including fireline packs and clothing. Clothing for the oil/gas industry.	970-530-1893 www.supplycache.com	Diane Bauer, president/ CEO 1991
11	Summit Solutions of Colorado LLC 19750 Weld County Road 7 Berthoud, CO 80513	\$5,000,000 \$5,000,000	51% 25	Fabrication of metal structures, components; design and manufacture of specialty containers for commercial, aerospace and military applications; test and evaluation facilities; rapid-prototyping shop.	970-532-2268 www.summitsolutions.us.com	Kristen Carr, CEO 2010
12	Allura Skin, Laser & Wellness Clinic 2032 Lowe St., Suite 103 Fort Collins, CO 80525	\$4,696,753 \$4,084,486	100% 26	Skin care, facial lasers, botox, dermal fillers, hCG diet, spa, laser vein treatments, bio identical hormones.	970-223-0193 www.alluraclinic.com	Rebecca de la Torre, M.D.; Yvonne Hampson, owner/RN 2008
13	DS Constructors LLC 3780 N. Garfield Ave., Suite 101 Loveland, CO 80538	\$4,600,000 \$4,200,000	100% 11	Professional services ranging from estimating, design build, value engineering, CMGC, construction management and general contracting.	970-635-3534 www.dsconstructors.com	Melinda Denney, president 2008
14	Linden 223 S. Howes St. Fort Collins, CO 80521	\$2,400,000 \$2,800,000	100% 14	Marketing and communications company. Market research, branding, website design and programming, online marketing, social media, public relations.	970-221-3232 www.golinden.com	Susie Cannon, president 1996
15	A-Train Marketing Communications Inc. 125 S. Howes St., Suite 502 Fort Collins, CO 80521	\$2,250,000 \$1,743,000	51% 11	Branding; websites & digital marketing solutions; strategic planning; design & print materials; video & nonprofit marketing.	970-419-3218 www.etrainmarketing.com	Gretchen Gaede, president 1998
16	Diesel Services of Northern Colorado 1828 E. Mulberry St., Unit D Fort Collins, CO 80524	\$2,225,000 \$2,200,000	51% 22	Repair and service for all trucks, tractors, trailers, fleets, forklifts, earth movers, compressors, generators, cranes, booms and mobile repair service.	970-221-9280 www.dsnc.biz	Marybeth Snyder, owner/manager; John Novoselac, president 1998
17	Denali Roofing LLC 2310 E. 13th St. Loveland, CO 80537	\$2,100,000 \$2,200,000	60% 8	Roofing contractor, installation, repair and inspection. Serving commercial, residential, and multi-family properties with sloped and flat roofs. Serving Northern Colorado and Southern Wyoming.	970-660-4417 www.denaliroofs.com	Katrina Fenzi, CEO 2009
18	Chapel & Collins LLC 215 W. Oak St., Suite 901 Fort Collins, CO 80521	\$2,052,300 \$1,905,600	57% 9	Holistic financial planning services for families, including retirement, education, investments, estate planning and risk-management issues.	970-204-1376 www.chapelcollins.com	Donna Chapel; Dennis Collins; Stephen West, principals 1998
19	Claire's On the Park 225 Park Lane Estes Park, CO 80517	\$1,770,368 \$1,301,000	100% 34	Restaurant, banquets, breakfast, lunch, dinner, full bar, catering. Bacon bloody Mary's, eggs Benedict, locally sourced organic produce, natural beef, creative chef inspired dishes. Overlooking Rocky Mountain National Park.	970-586-9564 www.clairesonthepark.net	Ryan Banker, manager 1987
20	Mantooth Marketing Co. LLC 8334 Coeur D'Alene Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525	\$1,425,000 \$1,450,000	100% 12	Full-service marketing company.	970-663-1888 www.mantoothcompany.com	Connie Hanrahan, CEO/ president 1995
21	Rocky Mountain Waterjet LLC 2218 Fourth Ave. Greeley, CO 80631	\$1,305,663 \$1,367,881	51% 10	Waterjets, new 4000 watt fiber laser, powdercoating, sandblast, stroke sanding, brake, tap, countersink and deburr.	970-395-1010 www.rockymountainwaterjet.com	Gail Draper, owner 2002
22	Wilcoxson Manufacturing Inc. 14420 Mead Court Longmont, CO 80504	\$1,000,000 \$1,000,000	100% 8	Custom, precision, sheet metal products.	970-535-0505 www.wilcoxsonmfg.com	Clint Wilcoxson, general manager/shop foreman; Sandy Irby, business manager 1982
23	Express Employment Professionals 2711 W. 10th St. Greeley, CO 80634	\$933,811 \$1,465,119	99% 7,800	Full-time and temporary staffing and job placement, human-resource services and consulting.	970-353-8430 www.expresspros.com	Kathy Egan, president 1971
24	MouCo Cheese Co. 1401 Duff Drive, Suite 300 Fort Collins, CO 80524	\$902,000 \$613,000	51% 5	Artisan cheeses.	970-498-0107 www.mouco.com	Robert Poland, general manager 2000
25	Oglesby Design LLC 123 N. College Ave., No. 390 Fort Collins, CO 80524	\$769,853 \$836,221	100% 10	Commercial and residential architectural interior design with an emphasis on hospitality and corporate office design.	970-416-8829 www.oglesby-design.com	Dawn Oglesby, president 2004

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Kristi Benningsdorf
First Western Trust

Kari Coover
First Citizens

Christina Kraft
Bank of Colorado

Laura McFadden
Security Service Federal Credit Union

Suzanne Pullen
Home State Bank

Cathy Schott
First National Bank

Nicole Staudinger
FirstBank

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Bank of Colorado

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Silver Grill Café

Charisse Bowen
Galvanize

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Stratagy, LLC

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Robbie Emge
Garment Gal

Robin Fischer
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Tula Contemporary Women's Clothing

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Jennifer Lynn Peters
Otis Bedingfield & Peters LLC

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Tiffany Villavicencio
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Spirit Hospitality LLC

Linda Winter
Accessories With a Flair!...and Hair

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Monfort College of Business

Cara Neth
Colorado State University

Stacia Ryder
Colorado State University, City of Fort Collins Women's Commission

Melissa Schaefer
Poudre School District

Rhonda Solis
Greeley-Evans School District 6

Robbyn Wacker
University of Northern Colorado

EXCEPTIONAL VOLUNTEER

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Loveland Elks Lodge 1051

Michelle Kempema
Colorado Model Railroad Museum

Michele Marquitz
Book Trust, Rotary

Stacey McBride
New Century Software

Debbie McCubbin
PVH and MCR Foundation

Melissa McDonald
State Farm

Rosemarie Russo
PSD, FoCo, CSU, FRCC, CSAs

Ronna L. Sanchez
Love, Hope, Strength

Deanna Sloat
Guaranty Bank

Tracy Young
Crossroads Safehouse

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Weld County Government

Judy Dorsey
The Brendle Group

Sandi Elder
Greeley City Council

Susie Gordon
City of Fort Collins

Deb Harris
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Leah Johnson
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Rebecca Johnson
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Stephanie Doughty
University of Colorado Health

Karen Hayes
A Woman's Place and Spa 360

Diane Jackson
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Donna Lankford
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Children's Hospital

Lisa W. Myers
The Healthcare Clinic of Fort Collins

Emily Richardson, MD
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Helene Stout
Women's Clinic of Northern Colorado

Laurie Tuka
UCHealth

Carol Wittmer
Eye Center of Northern Colorado

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Nancy Clark
American Cancer Society

Anita Comer
Waste-Not Recycling

Mindy McCloughan
Loveland Chamber of Commerce

Denny Moyer
Enlight Skills Center, Inc.

Kimberly Tyson
The Embryo Adoption Awareness Center

NONPROFIT — CREATIVE INDUSTRY

Carol Ann Hixon
Retired

Sheri McKelfresh
Centennial Children's Chorus

Rhonda Welch
City of Greeley

NONPROFIT — HUMAN SERVICES

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Heart-J Center for Experiential Learning at Sylvan Dale Ranch

Gail Bishop
Argus Institute, CSU

Kristin Candella
Fort Collins Habitat for Humanity

Judy Chapman
Crossroads Safehouse

Ann Cross
Colorado Corn Growers

Jodi Hartmann
Greeley Transitional House

Julie Johnson Haffner
McKee Medical Center Foundation

Jennifer Markiewicz
SAVA

Julie Mavis
Adopt Colorado Kids

Kristin Orphan
Finally Home Foundation

Amy Pezzani
Food Bank for Larimer County

Jan Pollema
Hearts & Horses

Debbie Smith
American Cancer Society

Janet Werst
UCHealth Northern Colorado

Kathi Wright
Boys & Girls Clubs of Larimer County

Marcy Yoder
United Way of Larimer County

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The Moxie Exchange Movement

Debbie Davis
Guaranty Bank and Trust Company

Annette Landes
CHIP Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind

Randy Ratliff
SummitStone Health Partners

Stephanie Torrez
University of Northern Colorado

Jo ZumBrunnen
Poudre Valley Hospital

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Keller Williams

Connie Dohn
Dohn Construction Inc.

Julie Jensen
Greeley Area Realtor Association

Jennifer Kelly
Keller Williams Fort Collins

Jenna McCarty, ARA
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