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Meet Northern Colorado's emerging young leaders

BizWest Media publishers Jeff Nuttall and Christopher Wood present 40 Under Forty for 2017, our program that recognizes emerging young leaders in Northern Colorado who make a difference in their companies, industries and communities.

Those being honored had to be younger than age 40 by Nov. 2 of this year. This is the 14th year for the program, which was expanded to the Boulder Valley two years ago.

As always, we are grateful to our 2017 Title Sponsor, Eide Bailly; our Presenting Sponsors, EKS&H and The Lincoln Center; our Community Award Sponsor, Community Foundation of

Northern Colorado; and our Associate Sponsors, BBB of Northern Colorado and Wyoming, DaVinci Sign Systems, Eye Center of Northern Colorado, Flood and Peterson and Palmer Flowers.

Thanks also go to the members of our selection committee, who spent many hours poring through the nominations: 40 Under Forty alums Heather Buoniconti of the Food Bank for Larimer County, Allison Hines of United Way of Larimer County, Justin Davis of Wells Fargo Advisors, Ann Hutchison of the Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce, Leah Johnson of JD Consulting, Amanda Miller of The



Christopher Wood



Jeff Nuttall

Collins for all the photos of this year's honorees and to Dallas Heltzell for writing their stories.

Year-round access to the digital edition of this supplement can be found at fortyunderforty.com.

We at BizWest and our sponsors salute the winners for their enthusiasm and dedication in helping enhance Northern Colorado's reputation as a great place to live.

Place Setting Co., Rochelle Reynolds of Kia I-25, and Randy Watkins of Anton Collins Mitchell LLP.

Thanks also to Miller for helping us manage this event, to BizWest's Chad

Jeff Nuttall and Christopher Wood are publishers of BizWest, the Business Journal of the Boulder Valley and Northern Colorado. Reach them at jnuttall@bizwest.com or cwood@bizwest.com.

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Thomas Ahrens

Tax partner
Eide Bailly, LLP



“The game of golf is humbling,” Thomas Ahrens believes, “and reminds me to be humble and to never give up on what you are passionate about.”

At prominent Fort Collins accounting firm Eide Bailly, Ahrens said, he is passionate about “providing business and tax-advisory services to my clients in a variety of industries along with mentoring staff and helping grow the firm.”

A Colorado State University graduate, Ahrens started his career in 2005 as an intern with Sample and Bailey, certified public accountants, and worked his way up by 2016 to becoming one of Eide Bailly’s youngest partners.

Still, he said, his greatest achievement is “the trust my clients have in me. Whether it’s a small business or some of our community’s most recognized companies, they are making important business and personal financial decisions based on advice that I provide. There is no greater achievement than helping a client meet their business and personal goals.”

In the community, Ahrens serves as board vice president for Northern Colorado United for Youth (NOCO UNIFY), which raises money for children’s and youth charities in Northern Colorado. He also has provided financial support to nonprofits including Respite Care, United Way and the Junior League of Fort Collins, as well as helping his firm participate in community service and charitable giving.

“One of the best ways a young person can understand and experience leadership is to be charitable,” Ahrens said, “not only with money but time. In order to shape the community, I have given both.”

Jeffrey Albert

Medical director
of oncology services
Banner Health



With his special shoes and hydration vest, it’s obvious that Dr. Jeffrey Albert takes his trail running seriously.

“I have a passion for the outdoors, and have further developed that through long-distance running,” said Albert, medical director of oncology services for Banner Health in Northern Colorado. “It energizes and invigorates me.”

Albert said he sees running an ultramarathon as “a perfect metaphor for so many things in life, in terms of preparation, hard work, continuous improvement, dealing with obstacles both expected and unexpected, learning humility (nothing will humble you more than trying to run up a mountain), exploring yourself and the world around you, and learning to appreciate and respect all of the people who make it possible.”

Albert adeptly scaled his career mountain, joining Banner Health immediately after his residency and within his first year led the effort to standardize and regionalize its radiation oncology program. In his current position, he works with clinical and administrative teams in Greeley, Loveland, Fort Collins and Sterling to guide its regional cancer program.

Albert also is a full-time practicing radiation oncologist at North Colorado Medical Center in Greeley and McKee Medical Center in Loveland.

His community service centers on cancer education and outreach. He also established and funded a scholarship as a memorial to his mother, aimed at helping students in need achieve their goals. He donates to efforts to preserve public lands, connect at-risk youths with the outdoors and aid people who struggle to provide health care and end-of-life care for their pets.

Chris Aronson

Principal architect
Vaught Frye
Larson Architects



Chris Aronson sees architectural models as “a great way to express our ideas to clients,” helping them visualize the wonderful projects they can create together.

A University of Southern California graduate, Aronson founded Floh Design Group in Fort Collins in 2009, then joined Vaught Frye Larson Architects in 2011 as a project manager. He was promoted to principal architect three years later. On his watch over the past four years, the firm’s staff has grown by 180 percent and its revenue by 145 percent. The success culminated in its being named 2017 Small Business of the Year by the Fort Collins Chamber of Commerce.

“Chris’s ability to strategically think outside the box and bring forward creative solutions is paramount to everything we do,” said Steve Schroyer, director of real estate at Blue Ocean Enterprises. “Chris can understand the project as a whole, and creatively align the design process to fit each and every need of that particular development.”

Part of Aronson’s creativity is the ability to use architecture as a way to give back to the community, helping enhance nonprofit properties such as Elderhaus Day Program and the Gardens at Spring Creek through VFLA’s membership in United Way’s Business Cares program. He promoted the donation of more than \$37,000 worth of design services to the new Animal House campus.

Aronson also serves on the board of Fort Collins’ Downtown Development Authority and its landmark-preservation subcommittee. “This is a tremendous honor to use my architectural background to enhance discussions surrounding development,” he said.

Jenna Baker

Marketing manager
Rodelle Inc.



In her Greeley kitchen or her Fort Collins office, food is integral to Jenna Baker’s life.

“I have always enjoyed the challenge of finding just the right recipe and making it perfectly,” she said. “Baking and making treats has always been a stress reliever, and I love creating something for friends and family to enjoy. And my last name just happens to be Baker, so it’s a perfect fit!”

As marketing manager at food manufacturer Rodelle Inc., Baker knows what’s cooking at work as well. She supports Rodelle’s regulatory and compliance department by creating food labels that follow government guidelines. She also creates and executes the company’s marketing strategies for public relations, social media, web presence, content marketing, advertising and more.

“I have increased website traffic for Rodelle by 25 percent while growing social following by more than 27,000 fans,” Baker said, but added that her proudest accomplishment has been staging a successful Colorado Moves to End Cancer event with less than six weeks of planning. The event raised \$60,000.

Baker volunteers her time with organizations including Habitat for Humanity, Weld Food Bank, Miramont Cares and the Girl Scouts. As an academic advisory board member for the Alpha Omicron Pi sorority at the University of Northern Colorado, the Allegheny College alum mentors young women through volunteer positions and fields questions they have about life after college. On the Woman2Woman board, she helps women stay self-sufficient. “Since the nonprofit was founded,” she said, “we have helped over 1,000 women with one-time grants.”

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Devon Beitzel

Risk adviser

Flood and Peterson



During periods of adversity, Devon Beitzel finds hope in hoops.

Basketball, he said, “has helped shape the person I am today by being my release when times get tough, bringing incredible coaches and teammates into my life and teaching me many key life lessons.”

Teamwork helps him score points at Flood and Peterson as well. “Everything I’ve ever accomplished has been a result of a phenomenal team,” Beitzel said. “Our team’s greatest accomplishment is getting up every day focused on finding ways to make our clients and communities better.”

Beitzel and his team help client companies evaluate their risks and connect them with people and resources both within Flood and Peterson and externally.

“We get paid for delivering insurance programs,” he said, “but our job is to be an extension of our clients’ companies — a partner, an adviser — and help them be successful.”

His team helps Beitzel avoid “hiding behind technology,” he said, so he can spend more time onsite, “meeting with business leaders face to face so that they understand that we are an extension of their company.”

Involvement in community service is very personal to Beitzel. “My mother was a drug addict and my father spent some time in prison, which caused me to move out when I was 14,” he said. “Because of this, I understand the struggles families, kids especially, can go through.” He’s a member of Unify, which raises funds for at-risk youths through various events, and serves on the board of Partners Mentoring Youth.

Mary Branton-Housley

Director of student life

Front Range Community College



“I really believe in the power of education to change lives,” said Mary Branton-Housley, “both in the knowledge students gain in the classroom and the experiences they have in learning how to be civically engaged, respectful of others’ thoughts and ideas, and learn how to live well.”

As director of student life at Front Range Community College’s Fort Collins campus, Branton-Housley and her team provide students with co-curricular activities in which they can apply skills learned in the classroom to develop leadership skills, wellness and character.

Armed with a master’s degree in student affairs from Colorado State University, “I joined FRCC at the beginning of an organizational culture shift,” she said. “I loved having the chance to create a position that focuses on educating the campus community about diversity and inclusion. It is the only position like it at FRCC, and it has really helped us as a campus to think about our community differently.”

That spirit is reflected in Branton-Housley’s community-service choices as well.

“I have loved being part of the Fort Collins Multicultural Community Retreat,” she said, “from being a part of the group that advocated bringing back this phenomenal learning experience to serving as a facilitator.” The city-led program “raises awareness of the power dynamics existing locally,” she said, “and starts a dialogue for how we can collaboratively solve these inequities.”

A donor to KUNC-FM 91.5, she also has volunteered with Fort Collins Cat Rescue, in classrooms at Kruse Elementary School and as an Odyssey of the Mind coach.

Moira Bright

Senior VP/development

Spirit Hospitality LLC



Like Mick, her 18-month-old English bulldog, Moira Bright is dogged in her determination to “make pretty places and help create good jobs.”

As senior vice president for development at Spirit Hospitality in Fort Collins, which collaborates in developing, building and managing hotels in Colorado and Wyoming, Bright oversees hotel and restaurant site selection, manages franchise documents and requirements with a focus on bolstering franchises’ brand standards, and oversees the hiring of designers, engineers, architects and subcontractors. Once the project is built, she oversees the transition from construction to operation to ensure that the staff is fully trained and educated on running and maintaining the new facility.

Bright came to Spirit in 2013 as administration and development manager after working with Heath Construction Co., the Water Valley Land Co. and the Northern Colorado Economic Development Corp.

“Part of me has to commend anyone who was able to stick with real-estate development during the recession,” Bright said. “I actually believe that in my young age at that time, I learned so much during that time and use those lessons still.”

The wide range of her duties is reflected in her community service as well, especially her support for vibrant arts programs.

“I think remaining consistently involved is very important, and really can’t place a higher value on one piece of involvement over another,” she said. “The organizations and purposes I’ve been involved with over the years are very different from one to the next, but each offers an opportunity to continue the betterment of our community.”

Gerald Chen

Chief financial officer

Otter Products LLC



Company meetings at Fort Collins-based Otter Products sometimes are more entertaining than your average corporate gathering — especially when chief financial officer Gerald Chen picks up his guitar.

“I love music and have played the guitar for over 20 years,” Chen said. “It is a passion that I have even extended to my work life” — either in front of a meeting room or at an occasional after-hours jam session.

Chen, who oversees Otter’s finance, accounting and tax functions, characterized his CFO job as half finance expert and half leader.

“As a finance expert, my role is to offer strategic insights to the business, raise capital and provide training on financial concepts to our employees,” he said. “My role as a leader is to develop employees through coaching and mentoring, and to motivate them while holding them accountable.”

“The CEO definitely took a risk in promoting me to this role, as he skipped me up four levels, but I am somehow still here 18 months later.”

His philanthropic efforts, Chen said, “have been aligned with that of the OtterCares mission: to champion innovative education that inspires youth to become entrepreneurs.” He has delivered innovation stations to schools, taught financial principles to high school students and concepts of revenue versus expenses to middle-schoolers.

Through his family’s private charitable foundation, Chen said, he has contributed to OtterCares’ efforts to get children in the community to think more creatively, embrace innovation and work through failure, “things that I never really learned at a young age.”



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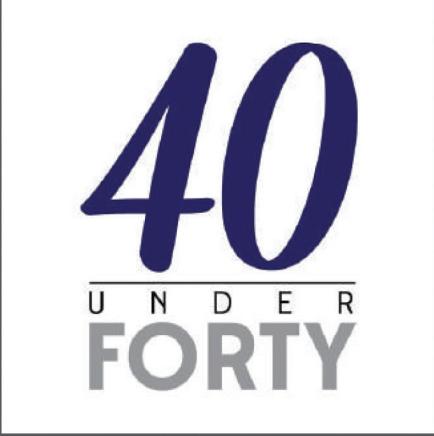
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Barbara Dean

Youth program manager
Crossroads Safehouse



At any moment, Barbara Dean's pager might alert her to go tend to a victim of domestic violence.

"I came to Crossroads Safehouse in 2011 after returning from two years of service in the Peace Corps," Dean said. "I was hired as the bilingual youth advocate, where I quickly learned that I had a passion for working with families who have experienced domestic violence. Before long, I became the youth program manager, where I am a vital member of the management team."

The programming Dean oversees includes family advocacy, support groups, children's activities and a teen-dating violence-prevention program. She also mentors and trains her team.

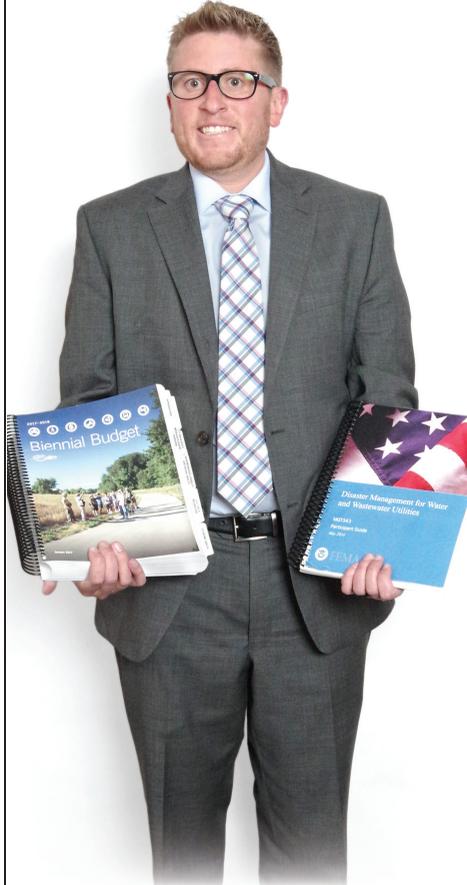
A volunteer in Fort Collins since she was 14, Dean also has worked to make Crossroads better known in the community, created a cross-training program between the safehouse and the Department of Human Services' Youth and Family Division. That collaboration opened the door to partnering with various other nonprofit agencies. She also has coordinated with the Poudre School District and served on the Survivors Against Violence Everywhere (SAVE) panel, which provides post-conviction and restorative-justice services to both domestic-violence survivors and offenders.

Usually, she said, "I will never know the extent of my impact on families I have had the honor to serve. Every day, I benefit more from the work I do than anything I could give to them."

Sometimes, however, her effect on others is starkly evident, such as when a former client told Dean, "If it weren't for you and Crossroads, I wouldn't be here today."

Chris Donegon

Financial analyst
City of Fort Collins



Helping with budgeting in the city of Fort Collins' Utilities Department is just part of financial analyst Chris Donegon's job. He also has to be prepared to deal with emergencies.

In September, Donegon answered the call to be part of an Emergency Operations Center support team that traveled to the Florida Keys to assist Monroe County officials in the wake of Hurricane Irma.

Mostly, though, he said, his work in Fort Collins is "assisting the water and wastewater funds with the setting of budgets, initiating capital projects, monitoring expenditures and assisting upper management with financial decisions by preparing reports that highlight the current financial position of each fund."

Donegon started with the city 10 years ago as a sales-tax auditor, earning election as vice president of the Colorado Association for Municipal Tax Auditors. He then moved to the city's Treasury Department, where he earned a Certified Treasury Professional designation.

He completed his master's in business administration two years ago at the University of Wyoming and is pursuing a Financial Planning and Analysis designation that will further his acumen and career.

In the community, Donegon for many years has been a team leader for the city's United Way campaign, and serves on the Life Safety team at Mill City Church, which is responsible for keeping church members safe. He's also part of an outreach team at the church that helps supply Lincoln Middle School students and teachers with items they need. He also recruits helpers for Brewfest, the Downtown Business Association's top fundraising event.

Kerri Ertman

Gallery director
Thompson Valley Art League/Lincoln Gallery



Once a residential appraiser, Kerri Ertman's life took a decidedly more creative turn in 2006 when she became involved in the Loveland arts community. By 2014 she had started working for the Thompson Valley Art League and now directs its Lincoln Gallery.

"The gallery was struggling to keep artists and sales were poor," she said. "I initiated and worked on a gallery remodel. Since then, the gallery's sales have increased significantly."

Ertman supervises one part-time gallery assistant and a number of volunteers, and coordinates with more than 30 active artists and members. She also creates social-media content for the gallery and the league's "Art in the Park" event.

Ertman co-founded the Colorado State Snow Sculpting Competition and set up an award-winning exhibit that was the main attraction at the inaugural Berthoud Snowfest.

As her reputation grew, Ertman was hired as artist coordinator for the Loveland Downtown Partnership, where she developed creative and engaging sidewalk chalk art. She also has been a speaker and speaker coach at TEDx Front Range, is creative director for Loveland Startup Week and mentors and advises other local artists.

Ertman has worked with the Alzheimer's Association in its "Memories in the Making" art auction, where her personal artwork helped raise more than \$10,000. She also has donated artwork to other charities including the "65 Roses for Cystic Fibrosis" event, and works with other nonprofits including the Loveland Community Kitchen.

Her other pet project is a pet. Last spring she adopted an orphaned, bottle-fed kitten from the Colorado Kitty Coalition.

Ella Fahrlander

VP/Community Engagement
Community Foundation of Northern Colorado



As Ella Fahrlander was growing up in the small Colorado ski town of Crested Butte, her father taught her that "To make it on the mountains, you must wear many hats."

She and her sister grew up as skiers, mountain bikers, horseback riders, students, employees, friends and family members who also were always involved in their communities.

"This lesson in adaptability has served me well throughout my career," Fahrlander said. In her role as vice president for community engagement at the Community Foundation of Northern Colorado, she added, "on any given day I wear the hat of event planner, philanthropic adviser, nonprofit consultant, marketing director, employee, employer and always-involved community member."

When Fahrlander started as an intern at the foundation in 2005, it had four employees and an annual budget of \$600,000. "I worked in fundraising for eight years and as development director for six," she said. "When I departed, the budget had reached \$2 million with 10 employees, and held what was recognized as the valley's premier fundraiser."

She began studying for her master's in business administration at the University of Colorado-Cororado Springs, then returned to Fort Collins and the foundation.

Among her typical activities: She recently provided resources to a widow to raise funds to benefit local youth in perpetuity and collaborated in a community hurricane-relief effort.

Fahrlander sits on the advisory board of the Better Business Bureau, has worked with Partners Mentoring Youth and is passionate about mainstreaming mental-health services by decreasing the stigma often attached to seeking them.

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Rollin Goering

Partner/broker
LC Real Estate Group



Just as the baritone represents the passion for music that Rollin Goering and his family share, it also could suggest the melodious relationship between builders, brokers and buyers he works to develop at Loveland-based LC Real Estate Group.

"I have grown from an onsite salesperson to an owner" at the firm, Goering said. "I oversee our residential sales team that has been instrumental in the company growing from a new company in 2009 to an organization delivering 100 homes locally in 2017."

Goering also assisted in creating his firm's "SEED" group. "At a time when the construction side of our company faltered to keep up with rapid growth," he said, "the SEED group was critical in creating a company culture of support for our construction team, who is now one of the top in the industry."

Goering participates and coaches with Landmark Education's Team Management and Leadership Program and serves on the Loveland Chamber of Commerce executive board, where he'll wield the chairman's gavel next year. A Leadership Loveland graduate, he assisted with Winona Elementary School's Loveland Coats and Boots Drive and joined LC team members in building a house for a family through Habitat for Humanity.

Given his musical proclivities, it's not surprising Goering is known for fostering harmony. He said he is told by his partners that, "when the company has an issue, any issue, I am someone they look to for a positive response and as a go-to person to resolve conflicts and promote successful resolution."

Andrew Gordon

Director, Wyoming & NoCo
Encore Electric Inc.



Andrew Gordon enjoys watching new buildings being constructed and old ones being revitalized. Either way, Encore Electric in Fort Collins plays a key role.

His current role in charge of Encore's Northern Business Unit "brings together business development, operations and executive leadership," Gordon said. "I manage many imperative job functions such as client-relationship development and management, budgeting, scheduling, leadership, project management and strategic planning."

Gordon earned a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering and a master's in business administration from Colorado State University. His first job at Encore was as project foreman for the construction of the Sonnenalp Resort in Vail, where weather and location challenged his leadership abilities.

"Throughout my 13 years with Encore," he said, "I have taken on a number of roles with increasing responsibilities, including superintendent, project manager, operations manager, project director and my current role as a business-unit leader."

One of Encore's youngest leaders, Gordon, winner of the National Independent Electrical Contractors Association's Emerging Leaders Award, has taken on projects including a major data center in Wyoming and the new CSU football stadium — both of which he handled while completing his MBA and starting a family.

Gordon supports Boys and Girls Clubs in Larimer and Weld counties and Cheyenne, Wyo., and is active with a club for electrical-engineering students at CSU, helping them get ready for the careers that await them in the construction industry. His primary volunteer time is spent with the Independent Electrical Contractors Association's Rocky Mountain chapter, which helps prepare apprentices for their electrical-licensing exam.

Tessa Greregor

FC Bikes program manager
City of Fort Collins



Professionally and personally, Tessa Greregor's life has been propelled by bicycles.

"It's what I do in my free time, it's how I met my husband, it's allowed me to explore multiple countries and states," she said. So it's no wonder, she added, that her career "has focused on creating better communities through bicycling."

For nearly five years, Greregor has managed the city of Fort Collins' bicycle program, which focuses on making bicycling safer and more comfortable for people of all ages and abilities. She has led the effort to design and implement the city's low-stress bicycling network, launched a bike-sharing program, introducing and continuing an Open Streets initiative and supporting the development of a nationally recognized bicycling education program.

"I am always looking for opportunities for Fort Collins to stay on the cutting edge," she said, "and for opportunities to evaluate and refine our initiatives to be more effective."

Greregor earned a bachelor's degree in environmental studies from the University of Utah and a master's in urban planning and design from the University of Washington. She was principal planner for the 15,000-member Cascade Bicycle Club in Washington before coming to Colorado.

In Fort Collins, she said, "the majority of my community service is the time I devote to advancing bicycle-related programs and initiatives beyond my day-to-day work hours." She often spends weekends and evenings at community events or speaking engagements, presenting to university classes, hosting tour groups from around the country and volunteering to support bike-related nonprofit events.

Ginger Hagel Coatman

Chief operating officer
Coan, Payton & Payne LLC



"Computers have always been a big part of who I am and how I have advanced in my professional life," said Ginger Hagel Coatman. "I love the advancement and challenge technology represents."

Technology plays a big part in her work as chief operating officer at the Coan, Payton & Payne law firm, she said. "Several years ago, our firm was struggling to find technology solutions to accommodate growth and allow for expansion of our regional presence. While we had amazing legal minds in the firm, no one really understood the technology that was needed to take our organization to the next level, and third-party vendors were challenging."

Hagel Coatman responded by getting a master's degree in management with an emphasis on information systems — "probably a little overkill for a midsize business," she admitted, but it gave her the knowledge and perspective to help the management team make good decisions about technology.

As COO, she said, "put simply, it is my job to preserve and protect the culture of the company."

She has worked with the firm's core executive team for more than 20 years but rarely has stood still in a position. "I started as a part-time errand runner during my first semester of college, then progressed through various positions with increasing responsibility until reaching the second-in-command position I currently hold," she said.

Hagel Coatman volunteers with Habitat for Humanity in Larimer and Weld counties, and organized teams for Weld County Relay for Life events when she lived in Greeley.

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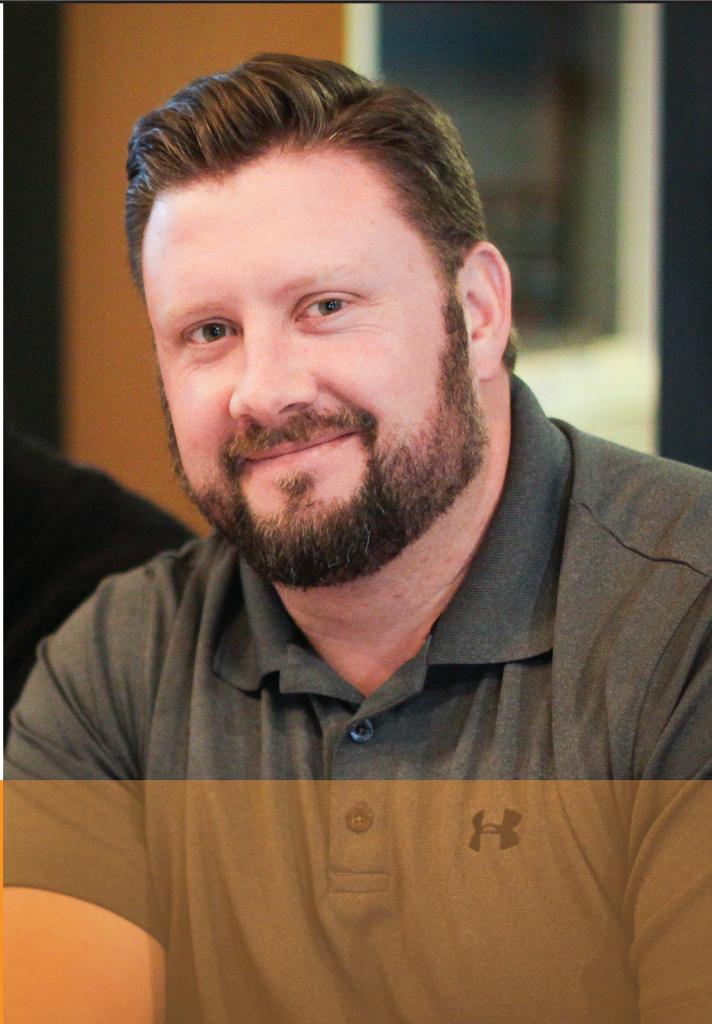
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Tiffany Hettinger

Chief nursing officer
North Colorado
Medical Center



Tiffany Hettinger keeps her eyes and ears attuned to vital signs.

"I am a nurse," she said. "In everything I do, it is important for me to remember our patients, families and team. As a leader, it is my goal to advocate and inspire my team to always keep our focus on excellent care and quality."

Hettinger joined Banner Health's North Colorado Medical Center in Greeley in 1999 as a nursing assistant, then took on roles as a clinical resource coordinator, interim clinical manager and patient-care service director in the cardiovascular care unit. By 2013 she had become director of surgical services and then associate chief nursing officer. She was promoted to chief nursing officer in October 2016.

"I have realized that my greatest impact to others is to share my enthusiasm and passion for people, quality and care," she said. "I have the opportunity to make a difference in someone's life every day by being an advocate and inspiring others to be their best self."

Outside the hospital as well as inside it, Hettinger said, "my passion is to help others during tough times." Since 2012, she has served on the board of Greeley Transitional House, a nonprofit emergency shelter that provides supportive services for homeless families.

"They offer shelter, comfort, love and support as families face a difficult time," Hettinger said. "They also provide support through case management to assure these families get back up on their feet and can be successful on their journey through life."

Kelly Houghteling

Communications/Assistant to
town manager
Town of Windsor



"My Kansas roots taught me the value of hard work and perseverance," said Kelly Houghteling. That's a good thing because, in the town government for rapidly growing Windsor, hard work is easy to come by.

"My primary responsibilities include overseeing communications, special projects, grant management, and tracking and reporting on the Strategic Plan," she said. "I respond to media requests, respond to calls from citizens, and assist with the preparation of the annual operating and capital budget. I am fortunate to be a jack of all trades and assist all departments on high-level projects."

Armed with a master's degree in public administration from the University of Kansas, Houghteling is compiling an impressive list of accomplishments on the job in Windsor. She successfully applied for a \$1.5 million grant from the state Department of Local Affairs for a new public-works and parks-service facility, and was given an award by her peers for her work with Poudre Valley REA to replace residential streetlights with more economical and efficient LED lamps. She recently was picked to chair Colorado Women Leading Government.

She spent months training for a triathlon to raise money and awareness for Homes for Our Troops, a nonprofit that builds specially adapted homes for veterans. Her goal was to raise \$500, but she surpassed it by 35 percent.

In 2015, she coordinated an effort to have each town employee volunteer at least two hours through the year. They donated their time and efforts at schools, Habitat for Humanity, food pantries and natural areas.

Lisa Hudson

Director
East Colorado SBDC



One of Lisa Hudson's jobs looks inward and the other looks outward. Way outward.

"I'm a mother (to son Jacob) and a dedicated young professional," she said. "The support and love from my family drives me to be better each day."

Given her career's responsibility, she probably does a lot of driving herself. As director of the East Colorado Small Business Development Center — the youngest and only millennial head of an SBDC in the state — Hudson is in charge of a 13-county territory that spans more than 22,000 square miles, and supervises five full-time employees, six contracted consultants and 28 satellite offices in addition to one full-time main office hosted by the Monfort College of Business at the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley.

Hudson joined the East Colorado SBDC in 2010 and became director in January. She runs the center as a nonprofit and is responsible for raising funds to support its programs. She works with higher-education institutions, communities, lending sources, private enterprise and other local service providers to better serve local small businesses.

"Each day brings a new business owner through my doors who has a dream and passion to do something that affects the communities I serve," Hudson said. "The best part of this is helping them bring an idea to life and prepare to start a new chapter. Whether they have been in business for 20 years and are looking to grow or if they just have what seems to them a crazy idea, every day is different."

Paulette Jackson

Regional senior manager
Banner Health



"I love backcountry camping with my family," said Paulette Jackson. "It is a way to get off the grid and away from the hustle and bustle of work."

Her work comes with a formidable title: Jackson is "regional non-invasive cardiovascular senior manager" for Banner Health locations in Fort Collins, Greeley and Loveland.

"My job description is inaccurate," she said. "It does not reflect the scope, complexity or level of responsibility for the cost centers and staff that I supervise. Although I only have three leaders who directly report to me, I am responsible for 36 employees and manage eight cost centers across the Northern Colorado region."

Jackson has handled some formidable challenges. While working full time, she earned a master's degree in nursing leadership. Without a director for two years and without a mentor, she guided multiple departments through a period of significant change in the company.

"Professionally, my cardiac rehab department hosts one of the biggest Turkey Trot races in Northern Colorado," Jackson said. "We raise money to assist our community members who need to attend cardiac rehab but may not be able to afford this expense."

Jackson also contributes annually to the American Cancer Society and donates scarves and hats to the local cancer center.

"As a cancer survivor, I know how important a support system is while you are battling cancer," she said. "This is why I often send cards and care packages to current cancer patients. I want to give back and support those fighting for their lives."

Vallene Kailburn

President
Old Town Media



"Chocolate is amazing," said Vallene Kailburn. "Everybody needs a little chocolate to get through the day."

For Kailburn, developing a marketing campaign that helps a local business be successful can be just as sweet.

As co-founder and president of Fort Collins-based Old Town Media, she said, "we generally do not pursue notoriety for our work and prefer to focus our efforts on giving back to the community. With that said, we build approximately 30 websites a year, manage 50 active marketing clients and have year-over-year growth of at least 45 percent every year for nine years."

A Leadership Fort Collins graduate who was named a Featured Young Professional by the Fort Collins Chamber of Commerce, Kailburn said she feels "privileged to have the unique opportunity to cultivate an environment that attracts top talent and great people. Our team continually pushes me to be a better leader, and I love that about what I do."

Kailburn and her husband are active members of the Fort Collins Breakfast Rotary group. Through Rotary, she volunteers her time and talent to the annual Peach Festival and Sale, Greens Fore Giving golf event, Meals on Wheels and the Larimer County Food Bank. She has donated time and work to more than 15 local nonprofits including Women Give, Project Smile, Realities for Children, the American Cancer Society, Animal House and the Poudre School District Foundation.

She also pays Old Town Media team members for 10 hours a year to do volunteer projects of their choosing.

Kira Koldewey

General manager, design and business development
HighCraft Builders



Kira Koldewey regards her son, Hudson, as "my favorite thing and my biggest accomplishment. I love being a mom."

But professionally, she added, her greatest accomplishment is being part of HighCraft Builders' four-member leadership team, responsible for driving the company's strategic growth.

"As a rare female general manager in the male-dominated building industry," she said, "I hope my position at HighCraft inspires other construction companies to include more women in leadership roles."

Koldewey has the credentials to back it up. She's an allied member of the American Society of Interior Designers, an affiliate of the International Interior Design Association and a founding member of the Northern Colorado IIDA chapter.

She established, assembled and continues to oversee HighCraft's entire in-house interior design department, which includes supervising designers and interns working on nearly 40 projects every year. She leads all the company's business-development efforts while serving as lead interior designer for six to eight projects at a time, managing them through multiple phases of construction. She also manages the company's marketing contractors, suppliers, trade relations, company culture and community outreach.

Before coming to HighCraft in 2008, Koldewey was a designer and showroom consultant at two other Fort Collins firms, Sharp Cabinet Corp. and Ferguson Enterprises.

"In the last nine years," Koldewey said, "I've been fortunate enough to direct corporate gifts, coordinate volunteer work days and organize drives to support local nonprofits including the Food Bank for Larimer County, Fort Collins Rescue Mission, Harmony House, Respite Care, Women Give and more."

Matt Kurtz

Broker associate, partner
The Group Inc. Real Estate



Matt Kurtz played baseball from childhood through college at Colorado State University and continues to stay involved in the game as a volunteer assistant coach for Mountain View High School's varsity team.

In his professional life, he goes to bat for home buyers and sellers as broker associate and partner at The Group Inc. Real Estate.

In addition to working as a residential broker, Kurtz also is a representative for Wonderland Homes, which currently is building in the Loveland area.

"I believe I have impacted my organization by setting an example to newer agents to show them that you don't need years of experience to find success in the industry," Kurtz said. "Through hard work and a positive attitude, you can determine the outcome of your career."

Kurtz, who received a bachelor's degree in journalism and technical communication at CSU, is in the middle of his third year at The Group, "and year to date," he added, "my gross commission income has totaled \$189,568."

He was elected to the Loveland-Berthoud Association of Realtors' board of directors and nominated as its Rookie of the Year.

In his spare time, besides coaching baseball, Kurtz serves on Loveland SERTOMA's board of directors, won that group's first New SERTOMA Member of the Year award, and chaired its 2016 Loveland Loves BBQ, which raised more than \$35,000 for area nonprofits.

"I grew up in Northern Colorado," he said, "and try to find any way possible to give back to the community that has given me so much."

Annie Lilyblade

President
Salt Design



Annie Lilyblade has plenty of artistic talent to draw on.

She's president of Salt Design, an innovative interior-design firm whose diverse and eclectic projects she described as being "at the intersection of creativity and collaboration." Originally an internal team within Fort Collins-based Blue Ocean Enterprises, a real-estate development and private-equity investment company that integrates traditional business success with civic responsibility, Salt Design now works outside the portfolio.

Lilyblade manages projects from the local to the international. "By working collaboratively with our clients to explore their needs," she said, "we are able to design environments that activate the senses and infuse creative ideas."

She earned a bachelor's degree in interior design and a master's in construction management at Colorado State University and now works with CSU to bring opportunities and interdisciplinary learning to its students.

She came to Blue Ocean from The Neenan Co., where her work was featured in publications such as Hospital Build, Healthcare Global and Green Building & Design.

A second-generation Fort Collins native, Lilyblade serves as secretary of the Blue Ocean Foundation, the charitable arm of Blue Ocean Enterprises, where she provides support for local nonprofits that promote economic growth. She spent six years as a board member of Respite Care, a Larimer County-based nonprofit that provides short-term care for children with developmental disabilities. She also has donated her artwork to local organizations such as Respite Care, ChildSafe, La Familia Family Center, the CSU Foundation and Poudre High School for use at events and fundraisers.

Jennifer Little

Owner

Heyday and Knapsack



When Ryan and Jennifer Little arrived in Fort Collins five years ago, Ryan took a job as a fundraiser while Jennifer, a professional photographer with a degree in furnishings and interiors from the University of Georgia, opened Sugar Photography and specialized in weddings.

That career path changed with the development of the Jessup Farm artisan village, where — with no retail ownership experience and no partner or mentor who had worked in retail — Jennifer Little opened Heyday in a former loafing shed. The shop sells a highly curated collection of women's apparel and accessories. Its website describes Heyday as “a fresh, clean, playful retail shop epitomizing the simple-living lifestyle.”

“I'm no different than any other entrepreneur who strikes out on her own,” she said. “This undertaking involved great personal financial risk, as do all enterprises. Thus far, I am pleased with the results.”

She's confident as well, enough so that in November 2016 she opened a sister store, Knapsack, selling home accessories and gifts.

“We have 11 young ladies on staff, and I am constantly working to mentor and help them evolve into incredible employees so that, if they leave Heyday and Knapsack, they are incredible employees or business owners.”

She's also a mom to Luke, 9, and Emory, 7, but said her employees are like family as well and “I do everything I can to give them the opportunity to learn the workings of small business.”

Through donations and silent-auction proceeds, Jennifer Little supports community organizations including Liberty Commons and Save the Poudre.

Hannah Long

Owner

H3 Construction and Design



“I feel everyone has the opportunity to live a peaceful life,” said Hannah Long. “In all of the things we do, peace can be the priority.”

Long certainly can be at peace about success in business. In 2012, after 11 years in the honey and honeybee pollination trade, she launched SolBee, a company that featured six different organically infused honeys that found their way onto Whole Foods shelves within four months.

But another idea was growing as well, one born when, as a college student, Long spent a summer rebuilding low-income housing in Anchorage, Alaska. “It was there that a seed was planted and began to grow my love for the construction industry,” she said. Her new venture, H3 Construction and Design, turned out to be a honey of an idea as well, grossing more than \$1 million in its first year.

“In an industry where so much relies on service, quality, trust, craftsmanship and honesty, and where the demand for those services is so great, H3 Construction fills the gaps through human connection,” Long said.

Multiple sclerosis claimed Long's mother in 2007, and Long paid tribute to her by founding Patty's Pack, a cycling team that would compete to raise money to fight MS. “We have since raised about \$400,000 for MS research,” Long said.

She also raises funds for Labor of Love, a nonprofit that remodels or renovates housing for people in need. As part of that venture, she completed a mold-abatement project for a World War II veteran.

Jami McMannes

Publicity and marketing specialist

Fort Collins Recreation Department



“I love to recreate,” said Jami McMannes, “and mountain biking is one of my favorite ways to recreate. We live in an amazing community with infinite opportunities to discover what fuels us, meet new people, stay active and play.”

That attitude makes McMannes a perfect fit as publicity and marketing specialist at the city of Fort Collins' Recreation Department, where she works to connect and engage the community with health, wellness and recreation programming. Some of her most visible projects are the Recreator, which she calls “a guide to all things fun” throughout the city, and the “Rec on Record” show on the city's cable television channel. She also manages promotional trade agreements with nearly a dozen media companies including the Coloradoan, iHeartRadio, Townsquare Media, KRFC-FM 88.9 and KCSU-FM 90.7 to spread the news about the department and its offerings.

“Within my role, I have the honor of recognizing those in our community whose voices aren't always the strongest,” she said. “This includes those that participate in the Adaptive Recreation Opportunities program, which works to include individuals of all intellectual and physical abilities in recreational programming, as well as the reduced-fee program that works to ensure that anyone, regardless of income, has access to recreational programming.”

In her tenure on an American Red Cross fundraising committee, McMannes helped coordinate an annual Celebrating Community Heroes event that generated more than \$100,000 for the Red Cross and honored a dozen people who dedicate their time and talents to the safety and well-being of others.

Ed Osgood

Chiropractor

Lighthouse Chiropractic



Chiropractor Ed Osgood has many things to be passionate about: taking care of his patients' spines at Lighthouse Chiropractic, his family including the son they adopted four years ago, and starting Giv Luv Chocolate to help orphans in Belize.

Lighthouse Chiropractic started in January 2008 and eventually moved from a one-room 12-by-12 office space to become an established, successful business in downtown Fort Collins.

“Starting and growing a business in the recession allowed me to build a strong foundation focused on quality personal care,” Osgood said. He was able to add an associate doctor in November 2015, and he and his wife now own their first commercial building. One of his practice's specialties is working with expectant mothers.

Osgood has given back to the community through work with Realities for Children, Habitat for Humanity, the Larimer County Food Bank, Christ Center Community Church, Life for the Innocent and Partners Mentoring Youth, as well as providing school supplies for underprivileged children. His efforts for the Matthews House has earned him two awards from that local nonprofit.

The idea for Giv Luv Chocolate originated in 2015 when Osgood visited friends who had started an orphanage in Belize. “In this region, cacao beans grow amazing,” he said, “and I had my first encounter with bean-to-bar chocolate. Through visiting Belizean chocolate makers and networking with friends that had started a local cacao farm, a dream was birthed. Giv Luv Chocolate was formed, and we are now selling Belizean craft chocolate bars to support the orphanage.”

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Kelly Osthoff

Regional director
Alzheimer's Association



Gardening is a hobby and passion for Kelly Osthoff, she said, "because it always symbolized tomorrow, new growth and hope."

Hope for a cure for Alzheimer's disease, symbolized by the white promise flower, drives Osthoff's role as regional director for the Alzheimer's Association. She oversees general-awareness, professional training and family-education programs, care consultations and support services for people in the nine counties that make up the northeast corner of Colorado. All programs are offered at no cost, so Osthoff also supports and leads fundraising efforts in the area.

"I advocate for three largely underserved populations," she said, "older adults, people with dementia and their caregivers, and rural populations."

Under her watch, the organization saw 30 percent growth in service contracts from fiscal year 2015 to 2016.

One of her focuses is to serve the "hidden elderly," people who are homebound because of dementia or their rural environment. "Many of them feel forgotten and exhausted," said Osthoff, who is pursuing a certificate in gerontology. Seniors, she said, "are our most precious people and need advocacy; they still have life to live and gifts to give."

Osthoff sits on the board of directors for Envision, Weld County's community-centered organization that provides early intervention, services and case management to people with intellectual or developmental disabilities. She's a board member of the Greeley-Weld Housing Authority and Greeley-Weld Senior Foundation, which honored her with its President's Award in May. She regularly drives for Meals on Wheels, delivering hot and frozen meals to people who are homebound and isolated.

Romia Pritchett

Owner
RC Auto Detail & Carpet
Cleaning



Romia Pritchett started his small business out of his garage in 2006 and peddled his services door to door. Two years later, he rented a 1,500-square-foot shop in Greeley that still is operating today, and has expanded to a second location, this one of 1,800 square feet in Fort Collins.

"I am proud of where we are today," said Pritchett, owner of RC Auto Detail and Carpet Cleaning. "I am the entrepreneur and run all aspects of my business with the help of two full-time staff, a few part time, some subcontractors and a whole lot of professionals such as bookkeepers, accountants, payroll folks, public relations, marketing, insurance, etc."

Pritchett's company has served more than 9,000 clients in Northern Colorado. "Although it may seem odd," he said, "we proudly answer all of our clients' inquiries — phone, email or social media. Because of this, I believe my business made it through the first few years because I would not allow an inquiry to go unanswered."

Pritchett said his main professional accomplishment has been "building my business to the point I have the time and means to give back to the communities I live and work in." He supports United Way efforts in Larimer and Weld counties through payroll deductions and, as president of Greeley Centennial Rotary, he steers aid to such groups as Meals on Wheels, Habitat for Humanity and food banks.

"We offer a car wash where 25 percent of the profit is donated to the United Way," Pritchett said.

Greg Roeder

Partner, co-founder
Waypoint Real Estate



Greg Roeder likes to spend as much time as he can with his son, Nolan, he said, because "he's such a joy" and "these days go by fast."

As a self-employed real estate broker, the time he gets to be with his son is precious. He founded Waypoint Real Estate in 2016 and Waypoint Property Management this year.

"I help business owners and property owners buy, sell and lease real estate," he said. "I view the organization I work for as our community. I work to make my clients happy and make our community a better place in the process."

"I have also grown in that I have come to view my competition as part of my team," Roeder said. "I spent a half-hour collecting lease-comparable data for one of my competitors, specifically related to deals I have completed in Old Town. I did this because I truly want him to have accurate information and achieve even more success."

Roeder is director of programming for the Mountain View Rotary Club and recently joined the board of directors for Animal House Rescue. He repeatedly has volunteered with Sertoma to sell beer to raise money for youth athletics and hot dogs to benefit the coats-and-boots program. He has helped guide volunteer support to Ramstrength events, donated to Respite Care and the Character Fort Collins organization and sponsored tables at the annual Boys and Girls Club fundraiser.

"I am just getting started, though," Roeder said, "and I have big plans for the coming years."

Ryan Sahd

Senior vice president
FirstBank Northern
Colorado



"Golf is a great reminder to me to not take myself too seriously," said Ryan Sahd. "It reminds me that I can't change the past but I can be present and impact the future."

As senior vice president of FirstBank in Northern Colorado, Sahd said, he can use his more than 16 years of retail bank management and commercial-lending experience to impact the future through "financing great projects that enhance our community."

As a manager, he's responsible for the performance of three FirstBank branches in Fort Collins. As a producing lender, he's responsible for growing the loan portfolio and deposit base for those same branches. He also works to meet his personal loan-production and relationship-management goals on an annual basis.

Those branches total \$257 million in assets. Personally, Sahd has managed high-profile loan transactions this year including ground-up development of more than 100,000 square feet of Class A retail and office space in Fort Collins, 155,000 square feet of mixed-use retail and residential space in downtown Loveland as part of a public-private redevelopment, and 10 high-end lock-and-leave townhomes in Old Town Fort Collins with a total retail value of \$14 million.

"I have always strived to be involved and give back within the communities in which I live and work," Sahd said. He has served on the boards of the Poudre School District, Meals on Wheels and Respite Care. He also has been a member of Northern Colorado United for Youth, formerly known as NOCO Active 20/30.



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Keith Sapp

Securities associate
Thrivent Financial



According to Keith Sapp, exercise such as racquetball keeps his life in balance. Keeping balances is part of his professional life as well since, as a securities associate at Thrivent Financial in Loveland, he is responsible for the portfolio management of more than \$200 million across more than 500 households.

His responsibilities include model portfolio asset allocations, fund-manager due diligence, strategic and tactical portfolio adjustments, trading, tax analysis, publishing weekly and quarterly commentaries, and portfolio performance attribution analysis. Since earning his Chartered Financial Analyst designation in 2010, Sapp has established an investment committee that he chairs, which offers custom portfolio-management services.

"I take great pride in growing the base of assets that I manage," he said, "and knowing that I am one of only three Chartered Financial Analysts in a Fortune 500 firm, working in the field to serve clients and/or advisers directly."

Before coming to Thrivent in 2007, Sapp worked as a financial adviser at McManus Wealth Building and Management in Boulder.

For the past three years, the University of Wyoming graduate has volunteered with the local Loveland chapter of Habitat for Humanity, where he chairs the selections committee. "We are typically able to provide housing for six to eight families annually from a pool of applicants that has, in recent years, has exceeded 100 applicants," Sapp said.

He also has volunteered on the Alternatives to Violence golf committee, which is responsible for organizing the annual "Fore" golf tournament. The event contributes approximately \$25,000 to ATV's annual operating budget.

Joel Schwartzkopf

Physician assistant
CSU Health Network



The stethoscope "represents the symbol of my profession," said Joel Schwartzkopf. "We listen, diagnose and problem solve. My passion is caring for my patients and working with my team to help others."

As a physician assistant with the Colorado State University Health Network, he said, "I am the only full-time medical provider who is exclusively responsible for the care of patients in our urgent-care clinic.

"When I started in early 2016, the walk-in clinic was being staffed by other providers who volunteered for half-day shifts. I proposed a new staffing model that mirrored the urgent-care and emergency-room workflows I've used in the past," Schwartzkopf said. "As a result, we now staff longer shifts and have a more regular schedule that maximizes efficiency and allows providers to better use their time."

He's developing a narcotic-prescribing policy that will help improve treatment of acute pain and ensures that the network is doing its part to help combat the opioid-abuse crisis.

Schwartzkopf completed a fellowship in wilderness medicine and contributes writing and editing to the quarterly newsletter of the Colorado Association of Physician Assistants. He's also studying for his master's in business administration at CSU and plans to graduate in 2019.

Schwartzkopf is a member of the local Elks Club, through which he sponsors a scholarship. He and his wife sponsor a scholarship at the University of Wyoming in memory of his mother, who was an alum and faculty member there. He also works in a mentorship program for youths at his church.

Justin Steinhart

Administrative pastor
Mill City Church



Since joining the new Mill City Church in Fort Collins in 2011, said administrative pastor Justin Steinhart, "I've had to do a lot of on-the-job training, so I've looked to a number of resources to navigate the nonprofit world."

The church started with a \$200,000 budget that now has swelled past \$1.5 million. From a low point of 164 people attending services, the church now draws more than 1,400.

"With all of this growth," Steinhart said, "I've had to strategize, research and create new policies and procedures not just for my areas but for the entire church" — all without having a specific degree in finance. After undergoing its first audit, the church won accreditation by the national Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability, which ran several ads featuring Mill City Church.

Steinhart was solely responsible for submitting the church's 501 (c) (3) application to the Internal Revenue Service. "I was only 30 years old at the time and had no idea what I was doing," he said. "However, I read through the application, crossed the Ts and dotted the Is. Three months after the submission, we had our nonprofit status without any hiccups."

Several years ago, the church adopted Lincoln Middle School, where Steinhart has participated in annual backpack drives and work projects. Next came the idea of distributing Christmas bonuses, he said.

"I'll never forget dropping off the Christmas cards with bonus checks, receiving the phone calls asking if it was a joke, and crying as I drove off, knowing the impact we had that day."

Brian Trainor

Realtor
C3 Real Estate Solutions.



Brian Trainor has learned about life from a dumbbell.

It was his grandfather's, he said, and "the weight has taught me so many lessons. It is heavy and has always been heavy. Times are changing but it is consistent. It has taught me to fail and try again tomorrow. It promises to be there, waiting, with no pretense, as it was for my grandpa, my dad, me, and my son someday.

"It taught me that life is shaped by the work we are willing to do."

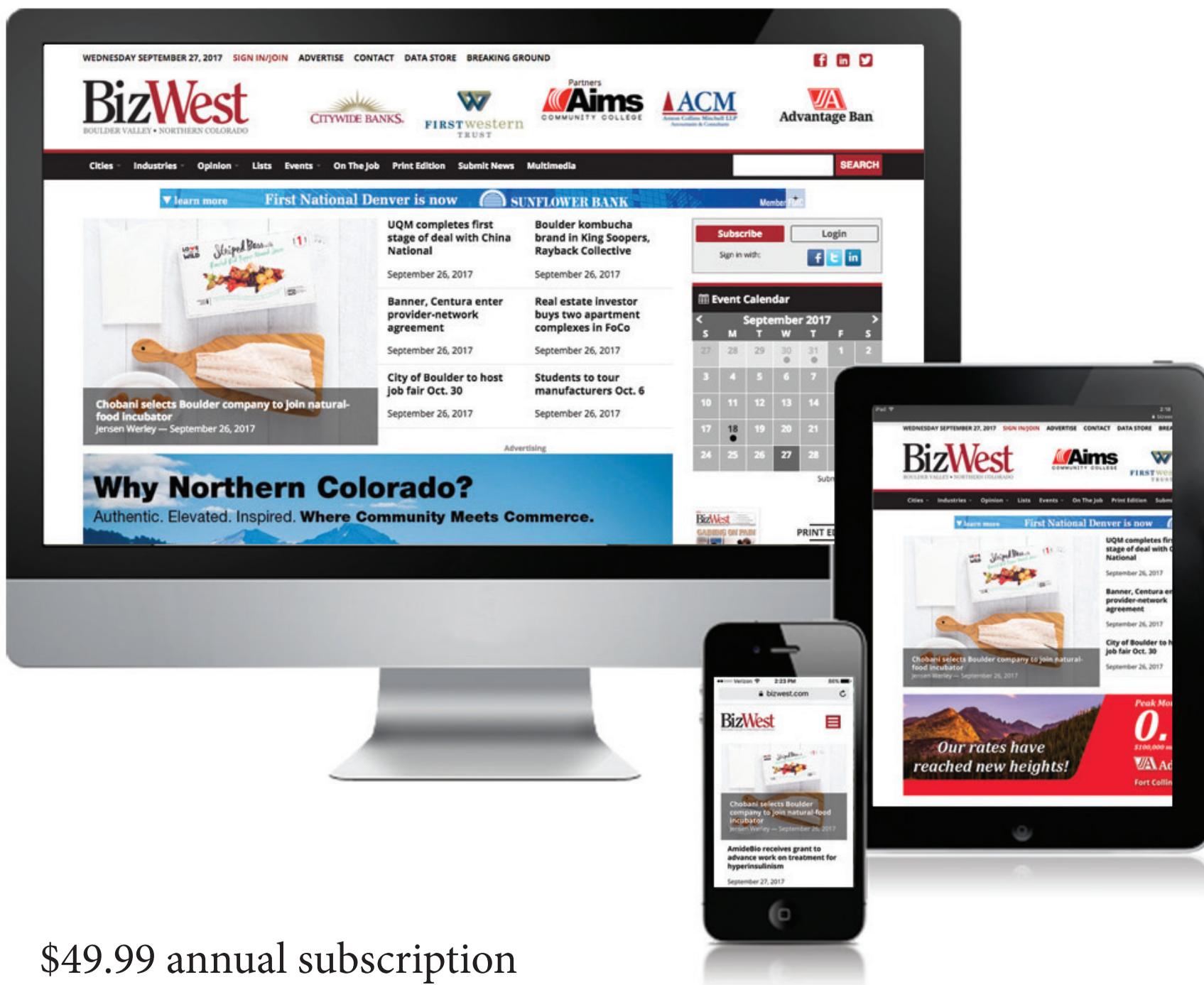
As a self-employed agent for C3 Real Estate Solutions, Trainor said, "I am one of the top-producing agents in our area and do not actively market. I work hard for my clients, and my business grows.

"The same is true for the other companies," he added. "We grow by planting deep roots of integrity and craftsmanship in our trade."

The business-development company he co-owns with his brothers, 970 Services, won the Fort Collins Chamber of Commerce's Small Business of the Year award.

Trainor and his brothers also operate a service-based nonprofit called Labor of Love, which does home repairs for people in need. He coached recreational T-ball for the city of Loveland and had no idea how difficult it would be to get 4- and 5-year-olds to run counterclockwise around the bases. He also has served as a guardian on Rocky Mountain Honor Flights and has competed in the MS-150 bicycle race to raise funds for multiple-sclerosis research and pay tribute to a friend's mother.

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Heather Vesgaard

Executive director
Partners Mentoring Youth



"I've pretty much dedicated my life to kids — my own and other people's," said Heather Vesgaard, who heads Fort Collins-based nonprofit Partners Mentoring Youth. "The story of 'The Little Engine That Could' is also a great metaphor for how I live my life and try to encourage others: Work hard and believe in yourself, and good things happen."

Vesgaard, who received bachelor's and master's degrees in social work from Colorado State University, has spent 15 years as a staff member of the Partners team, including the last 10 on the leadership team and the last three as executive director. During her time at the helm, the organization has grown 23 percent in the number of youths served and its organizational budget has increased by 20 percent.

"As a social worker, my commitment is to human service," Vesgaard said. "My role has changed, but my social worker's heart drives my work in fundraising and administration, and is a reason I am able to achieve success."

Partners has been providing high-quality mentoring to area youths who need it most for 40 years, she noted, including around 500 this year. "This work has also touched thousands of volunteers," she said. "It is humbling to run into people when I'm out around town and hear their stories of either having a senior partner when they were young or of their experience being a senior partner with our organization. Both the youth we serve and the volunteers who serve them are positively impacted by the power of mentoring."

Nicole Watkins

Owner
Aliquam Financial
Services, Socius, Smart
Rides, Property Technica



Nicole Watkins enjoys meeting clients on the golf course and getting to know them outside of the office. It's also a fun way to enjoy the day with her husband and daughters — and sometimes it's also a nice break from the stress of running her four businesses.

"As owner of Aliquam Financial Services, I have focused in the past year to make sure we have processes and systems in place and, to ensure we provide value-added services to every one of our clients," Watkins said.

Then there's Socius, an office-sharing opportunity in Greeley for professional-services tenants who can network and be around like-minded people.

She's part owner of Smart Rides, in which she's constantly striving to improve customer service and stay on the leading edge of taxi services.

Finally, there's Property Technica, which she also co-owns. It's a property-management, homeowners' association and real-estate sales company that was acquired in June 2016 and serves all of Northern Colorado.

If that's not enough hats, she and husband Randy also chaired the American Cancer Society's 25th annual Cattle Baron's Ball in September. They moved the event to the Budweiser Event Center, drew more than 1,100 people, and grossed \$1.066 million for cancer research — a net of \$766,000.

Nicole Wallace is a member of Scroll and Fan, a board that manages the School District 6 clothing bank. She previously served on the board for Greeley Transitional House, which helps families on the verge of homelessness transition back into homes and provide for themselves.

Emily Wilson

Communication director
Innosphere



Between her job as communication director at Fort Collins-based technology incubator Innosphere, and the challenges of raising a family, Emily Wilson never passes up the chance for a good conversation about work-life balance.

After all, that's part of what startups learn under Innosphere's wing.

Wilson works with Innosphere client companies on their overall marketing strategies while also managing the accelerator's own public and investor relations. She also runs the successful Innovation After Hours monthly networking forum.

Although she received bachelor's and master's degrees in communication studies from Colorado State University, Wilson believes that real educational accomplishments happen when you find ways to never stop learning about your trade, your passions and your community. That's why she's a proud graduate of Leadership Fort Collins and Leadership Northern Colorado, two programs that are designed to identify and address issues facing the region.

"I've had a rewarding career path that has led me to working within the realm of economic development," Wilson said. "I've had exciting opportunities along the way, which range from teaching public speaking at CSU to coordinating the city of Fort Collins' youth football program."

Wilson, who formerly worked for the city of Fort Collins' Economic Health office, co-chairs the nonprofit Colorado C3E (Clean Energy, Education and Empowerment), a workforce-development program for increasing the role of women in the clean-energy workforce. She also volunteers as a Larimer Small Business Development Center marketing consultant, meeting with business owners in confidential one-on-one sessions to discuss their marketing plans and strategies.

Marie Zimenoff

President and CEO
Career Thought Leaders /
A Strategic Advantage



"I love sports," said Marie Zimenoff. "I was often the only girl on the pickup basketball court at CSU, spent one season as the only girl in the competitive league at a local gym, have run two marathons, drag my husband to all the CSU sporting events. You get the point?"

She's just as aggressive in helping businesses win.

She founded two companies, one offering career and leadership coaching and the other training professionals in the field. She also acquired two of the leading companies that trained career-development professionals worldwide, Career Thought Leaders and Resume Writing Academy.

She provides career and executive coaching locally through A Strategic Advantage, which will celebrate 10 years in business in 2018.

Zimenoff was selected by her peers for the presidencies of the Colorado Career Development Association before she had finished her master's degree and the National Resume Writers' Association just three years after joining it.

In what spare time she has, Zimenoff has an eight-year membership in Fort Collins Breakfast Rotary, serving as membership chair and president-elect, and donating more than \$6,000 to Rotary International and more than \$3,000 to local Rotary clubs. Those funds and her hands-on work support literacy in the community, including providing dictionaries to every third-grader each year.

She also participates in the Fort Collins Chamber's Local Legislative Affairs Committee.

"My favorite activities," she said, "are delivering Meals on Wheels, engaging with those in our community who are often forgotten, and supporting scholarships for disadvantaged youth to attend leadership camps and college."



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