

Boulder wins economic development award

TOP RECOGNITION FOR 11-STATE REGION GOES TO COMMUNITY

by Jan Anderson, editor

Three leaders behind the “Making Boulder’s Future Bright” effort were honored Tuesday, June 13 by the National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals.

Micky Zurcher, Tom Harrington and Drew Dawson were presented with the first place “Excellence in Teamwork” award for the 11-state Western Region of the NACDEP.

The award, presented during the NACDEP national conference at Big Sky, recognizes accomplishments in meeting community development needs.

Zurcher, an MSU Extension Agent who works with Harrington at the Jefferson Local Development Corporation (JLDC), said the award truly honors the entirety of Boulder residents who participated in the study circles and “Making Boulder’s Future Bright” effort.

“This is really for all of us,” she told those gathered at a recent Boulder Transition Advisory Committee (BTAC) meeting. Dawson has guided the BTAC efforts as chair.

“Over a 16-month period, Boulder residents have collectively invested 21,278 hours (10.2 years) of work toward the project,” Zurcher told the NACDEP judges. “The Extension faculty were instrumental in securing a \$20,520 grant to fund the effort. As a result of the community meetings, the Governor recently proposed a \$500,000 Boulder Economic Impact Fund.”

Since the award process, that \$500,000 has been approved by the legislature and put into the Department of Commerce budget earmarked for Boulder.

In her application for the recognition, Zurcher credited the program’s success to “all the community meetings, letters to the Governor, and Boulder’s eagerness to be optimistic.”

As a result of the award, Zurcher and Tara Mastel, a former JLDC manager who worked to create the study circle guide, were invited to present a poster at the national gathering in Big Sky. Titled “Visioning a New Future after 122 Years of Caring,” the poster details the process used by Boulder to achieve the “Making Boulder’s Future Bright” goals thus far.

At right, the poster created by Zurcher and Mastel details the process Boulder has followed to spur economic development. Zurcher says the recognition belongs to everyone who participated.



Community Rebranding

Making Boulder’s Future Bright

Visioning a New Future after 122 Years of Caring



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ABSTRACT

Rural communities struggle to keep vibrancy and economic impacts local. Challenges are increased when the community’s largest employer closes. Boulder, Montana, was faced with this challenge. Two options existed:

- accept the economic impacts
- assemble community citizens to create a community rebranding

Citizens overwhelmingly report the process had educational value and had a positive economic consequence.



Picture 1: Master Plan Priorities Dot Voting

RESULTS

Social and Political Capital Learning Opportunities Resulting from this Project

- Montana Department of Commerce Presentation about technical assistance and funding (June 2016)
- Montana Department of Agriculture, Montana Food & Agriculture Development Network and MSU Extension Community meeting about value-added products and successful Montana business entrepreneurs (June 2016)
- Master Plan Community Information (July 2016)
- Phillipsburg Branding Tour (September 2016)
- Community Conversation post study circle progress with Everyday Democracy (October 2016)
- Master Plan Priorities Coordination Public meeting (Picture 1) (December 2016)
- Main Street Montana Presentation (March 2017)

METHODS

Boulder Transition Advisory Committee (BTAC) – Objectives

- Initiated September 2015
- Consists of elected officials, businesses, community organizations and citizens of the Boulder area meeting monthly
- Build community capacity and enhance economic future
- Create proactive leadership & community vision
- Adopt community goals

Study Circles

- Kick-off event to advertise Boulder’s Study Circle process (March 2016)
- Steering Committee Formed (March 2016)
- Facilitator Training (March 2016)
- Four Study Circle Sessions – (March & April 2016)
- Action Forum – (Picture 2) (April 2016)

Action Forum Committees

During the Action Forum, citizens organized into four committees addressing the top four ideas generated from Study Circles.

- Attract and Retain Small Business
- Repurposing MDC Campus
- Marketing
- Recreation



Picture 2: Action Forum

Funding

Grant	Value	Partners
Big Sky Trust Fund Grant for Master Plan	\$20,520	Headwaters RC&D; Jefferson Local Development Corporation (JLDC), City of Boulder
Building Active Communities Initiative	3-day workshop all expenses paid for a team of five	BTAC, City of Boulder, Jefferson County Commissioners, County Health Department, Bear Grass Suites, JLDC
Facilitator Training Technical Assistance	\$1,500 + travel	Everyday Democracy
Boulder Development Fund	\$500,000	2017 Montana State Legislature
Southwest Montana.com	\$3,000	Boulder Chamber, BTAC

Impact and Investment

An on-line evaluation (n=31) show BTAC participants report overwhelming approval for the program.

- 96.4% feel the process has educational value.
- 87.5% feel the process has a positive economic consequence.
- Collectively invested 21,278 hours or 10.2 years in 20 months



Additional Information

Mastel, T. (2016). Making Boulder’s Future Bright Study Circle Participatory Guide. Everyday Democracy and the Northwest Area Foundation’s Building Strong Neighbors and Thriving Communities publication.

Zurcher, M. (2017, Spring). Community Rebranding. *Rural Connections*, 11(1), 49-52.

WEATHER FORECAST FOR BOULDER, MONTANA 59632

Thursday, June 15	Friday, June 16	Saturday, June 17	Sunday, June 18	Monday, June 19	Tuesday, June 20	Wednesday, June 21
						
Mostly cloudy. High 66°F Low 48°F	Mostly cloudy. High 64°F Low 44°F	Partly cloudy. High 66°F Low 44°F	Partly cloudy. High 71°F Low 45°F	Sunny. High 79°F Low 51°F	Sunny. High 79°F Low 48°F	Sunny. High 70°F Low 45°F

WEATHER FORECAST FOR CLANCY AND MONTANA CITY, MONTANA 59634

Thursday, June 15	Friday, June 16	Saturday, June 17	Sunday, June 18	Monday, June 19	Tuesday, June 20	Wednesday, June 21
						
Scattered showers. High 68°F Low 50°F	Mostly cloudy. High 66°F Low 46°F	Partly cloudy. High 68°F Low 46°F	Partly cloudy. High 74°F Low 47°F	Sunny. High 81°F Low 54°F	Sunny. High 81°F Low 52°F	Sunny. High 73°F Low 48°F