



CASTLE ROCK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Submitted to: Mayor Gray and Town Council
Report by: Pam Ridler, Castle Rock Chamber of Commerce
Submitted: August 13, 2020
Re: Castle Rock Chamber's January-July 2020 Mid-Year Reporting

The Castle Rock Chamber of Commerce's mission:

- Support, encourage and promote businesses in our community.
- Be a "voice" for businesses to local and regional governments.
- Foster a livable, vital community where quality of life, community character and positive growth are possible; and
- Educate business, government entities, youth and individuals regarding business acumen, leadership and entrepreneurial development

The scope of this Contract for Services with the Town of Castle Rock, the Chamber is responsible for coordinating the efforts of Business Support Services/Workforce programming, Community Marketing and Tourism efforts which include community signature events.

I. BUSINESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAMING

PURPOSE/OBJECTIVE:

A. The **eXcelerate Business Development** continues to foster entrepreneurial activity by providing the essential information, infrastructure and resources required for successful business development and growth. The Chamber has been offering services and information at little or no cost to both start-ups and established businesses in Castle Rock for more than nineteen years. We strategize and plan relevant training events, workshops, and other programs to educate and equip business owners, executives, managers, and their employees in addition to providing one-on-one business consultations.

Due to COVID-19 we have had cancelations of some classes which caused reductions in services from March-May. We have shifted our programming to virtual classes and job fairs.

B. **Workforce Development—Talent Pipeline DC** focuses on workforce readiness efforts, which is a multi-industry lead program and serves to champion a stronger Castle Rock through collaborative partnerships between business, government, and education communities. Together, we foster a pro-business environment supporting a strong workforce and talent pipeline for the success and sustainability of our local businesses. We work on a collaborative conversation regarding the workforce needs of our businesses and the opportunities to support educators, students, and families for a strong talent pipeline into the future.

C. Since the beginning of COVID, in partnership with the Castle Rock Economic Partnership (CREP), Virtual Business Community meetings were conducted with Colorado Lending Source, the SBA, Centura Health, Town and County officials, Tri-County Health and the SBDC to communicate and answer questions from our local businesses on available financial resources such as EIDL, PPP, CARES Act and Town of Castle Rock's grant and low interest funding opportunities.

MEASURABLE OUTCOMES of Business Assistance Programing:

- **One-on-one business consultations** with expert volunteer counseling to date with 17 businesses and/or start-ups with 25 (-32%) hours of services. The value of volunteer services is \$2,500 to date.
- **Business trainings**--3rd Tech Tuesday, BizBuilder Lunch 'n Learn, Horizon Breakfasts and Women of Influence series continue to grow in popularity. To date we have conducted 8 trainings with 293 (+67%) participants. Business volunteers have contributed a value of over \$3,150 of in-kind professional staffing.
- **Job Fairs:** The Chamber, Arapahoe Community College/Sturm Campus and Arapahoe/Douglas Works! have partnered this year to offer one in-person job fair as well as two virtual job fairs. Each fair has garnered increased participation from local businesses as well as the job-seeking community. The in-person fair yielded 25 businesses and approximately 50 jobseekers. The two virtual fairs had over 50 businesses participate and nearly 200 job seekers, combined. We plan to host a virtual job fair once a month, for the remainder of 2020 and will reassess needs going into 2021.
- **Business Outreach program** welcomes new businesses on behalf of the Castle Rock Economic Partnership, offering to help them make local connections, find local resources, etc. So far in 2020, 147 (-4%) new businesses have been mailed a welcome letter and business assistance brochure which is followed up with a phone call and an email by Chamber staff. A second connection letter is mailed eight months after they appear on the business license list. The idea is to communicate in a variety of ways, a variety of times. We invite them to attend Chamber networking events and training classes for free and emphasize the Castle Rock Economic Partnership (Town, Chamber, EDC & Downtown Alliance) welcome them to our community and we are here to help them get established.

**Town funding is received in the amount of \$15,000 for Business Assistance programming.*

***Volunteer staffing is valued at \$50-\$100/hr. for professional volunteers.*

II. SPECIAL EVENTS & TOURISM PROJECTS

PURPOSE/OBJECTIVE:

A. Community Event Management

Community character and events have been identified by our residents through the Town's surveys as reasons why they love Castle Rock. Community events celebrate our hometown feel atmosphere. The Chamber takes pride in leading several of the community signature events with the assistance of the Town, Downtown Alliance, and volunteer business staffing. While we could not plan for this year's COVID Pandemic and the impacts that have challenged us, we have adapted, changed lanes and gears, and moved forward to serve our businesses and community. The Chamber continues to work towards improvement and increased quality by providing family-oriented entertainment and to capture and record data to evaluate the return on objectives of these events.

The Chamber's Contract of Service with the Town includes to organize, promote, and implement the Douglas County Fair Parade (July 25-canceled), Colorado Artfest (September 12 & 13) and Starlighting (November 21) events. Due to the Governor's Orders of event social distancing requirements we were unable to host this year's 65th Annual Douglas County Fair Parade which was scheduled in July. We are currently moving forward to conduct the 31st Annual Colorado Artfest in

downtown as a free festival in September and Starlighting in November staying in line with the Douglas County variance for the safety of event participants.

**Town funding is received in the amount \$2,153 for DC Fair Parade, \$7,376 for Artfest and \$5,286 for Starlighting events.*

***Volunteer event staffing is valued at \$27.20/hr. by the State of CO*

III. **COMMUNITY MARKETING, ADVERTISING AND SOCIAL MEDIA PROMOTION**

PURPOSE/OBJECTIVE:

- A. To facilitate community marketing by continuing to manage the VisitCastleRock.org website and Community Events Calendar with the VisitCastleRock.org/events and ongoing content curation. This site is visually engaging and interactive for the user and allows local organizations, vendors, and event planners to submit their events to the community calendar for posting with the objective to promote community activities. The goal is to keep our residents connected and give them a sense of community with enhanced social, cultural and recreational experiences.

Cross marketing efforts have been created by working with our community partners with the Castle Rock Events Managers group, with the goal of expanding our communities' exposure. Production of our annual Livability magazine has been published in print and digitally with an interactive mobile version. This magazine showcases Castle Rock's strengths through photography and professionally written stories of Castle Rock's community character.

- B. The Chamber boasts superior customer service that embraces our new residents and visitors to the community with friendly assistance. The Chamber's *Visitor Center* acts as the Town's one-stop-shop for all things Castle Rock offering a welcoming and helpful face always ready to assist Monday through Friday from 9 am-5 pm.
- C. NEW due to COVID-the Chamber created a CRCStrong.com website to connect and unify the community during COVID-19 pandemic. The site offers free business listings to all local businesses. In addition, we provided up-to-date resources and information related to health, business, prevention, and the reopening of businesses. A partnership between the Town's Communications Dept., Chamber and Downtown Alliance with the *creation of a social media campaign in reopening of Castle Rock businesses*. In addition, the Chamber created a *Reopen Castle Rock Businesses Playbook* providing best practices and guidelines focusing on health and safety as our area businesses reopen responsibly.

MEASURABLE OUTCOMES of Community Marketing:

- VisitCastleRock.org page views currently are 109,468 (+42%) with 56% being new users.
- This VisitCastleRock site-In addition to the Business Directory website hits are 82,228 (+40%) and the Event Calendar Pageviews 13,462 (+236%) *data recorded as of 6-15-20*
- CRCStrong.com-New page views for the months of March-July were 73,353 (+85%).
- Our social media presence on Facebook through July 2020 is 6287 followers (+13%), Twitter followers are 1949 (+9%) and Instagram followers are 1634 (+41%). Our efforts are to maintain our following and to emerge throughout the community as 'the source' for community events will continue as a top priority.

- Produce a monthly full-page tabloid advertisement distributed through the Castle Rock News Press to residents which promotes upcoming community events and programs (112,000+ distribution monthly throughout Castle Rock and Castle Pines).
- Mailing of 1,796 (-19%) new residents' packets which are sent monthly to new water hookups to encourage shopping for products and services locally.
- Visitor Center—was closed from March 26-June 1st due to COVID. To date the Chamber has welcomed 4,359 visitors (-23.4%).

**Town funding is received in the amount of \$22,600 for community marketing.*

V. VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
Leadership Douglas County Program (LDC):
PURPOSE/OBJECTIVE:

LDC is designed to identify, educate, and motivate current and emerging leaders who will strengthen and enhance the experiential program of personal growth and skill development through this 10-month program.

MEASURABLE OUTCOMES of Leadership DC:

- LDC completed its 21st year in June graduating 23 class participants (graduation postponed until September 19th) 11 class members either live and/or work in Castle Rock representing local businesses, non-profits or in the public sector.
- The program has graduated a total of 407 graduates since 2000).
- During January to June of 2020, LDC included 2,383 class participant hours and a total of 914 volunteer hours (377 volunteer programming committee hours and 537 hours for volunteer presenters/panelists). The hours above performed by 89 different volunteers, contributing a value of \$45,720.
- Due to COVID and social distance event requirements the 2020/21 class selection which has been completed has acceptance 13 new participants representing local businesses, non-profit and government employers who will begin their classes in September.

**Town funding is received in the amount of \$2,000 for this program.*

***Professional Volunteer staffing is valued at \$50-100/hr.*