

Castle Rock Downtown Alliance

A partnership between the Downtown Development Authority and Downtown Merchants Association

Downtown Merchants Association Mid-Year Report to Town Council 2026

Background

The Castle Rock Downtown Alliance is a partnership between the Downtown Merchants Association and Downtown Development Authority. This partnership unifies the Downtown organizations under one roof. The two organizations share one office and one staff, helping to further the collective vision of a vibrant and prosperous Downtown.

The **Downtown Merchants Association (DMA)** is a non-profit organization with an eight-member board made up of Downtown business owners and property owners and has a membership of roughly 160 Downtown businesses. Their role is to function as the collective voice of Downtown businesses and to organize and produce events in Downtown aimed at bringing visitors into historic Downtown Castle Rock to increase commerce and create a sense of community in the center of Castle Rock.

Report

In the first half of 2026, the Downtown economy is showing some signs of caution with potential shifts in the economy, both as local (Castle Rock) and statewide (CO) demographics show a slowing in population growth. While both are still growing, that growth is slowing and is projected to continue to slow according to recent data provided by the State Demography Office. Both the State and local economy have benefited from new people that generate new sales for many years. As this potentially slows, we believe it is more important than ever to focus on Downtown Castle Rock. With inflation and economic uncertainty leading consumers to cut back and local population growth slowing, it is vital that Downtown Castle Rock provides compelling reasons for visitors to choose to visit.

The events produced by the DMA are an effort to strengthen the Downtown economy and give the public a reason to visit Downtown Castle Rock. Hopefully residents and visitors visit Downtown for an event, have great experience, and see something new, perhaps a new shop or place to eat, and then they get their family and friends and come back at a later date.

The DMA has also experimented with smaller activations and pop ups, with the goal that when people do visit Downtown Castle Rock, their experience will be memorable and lead to repeat visits. Previous efforts for things like running the Town Trolley, Holiday Carriage Rides, and smaller more frequent events like Jazz in the Park, work towards the goal of enhancing a visit that was already going to happen, rather than being the reason for the visit. This year a few new ideas have been added including paying Street Performers to perform on the County Lawn on the 3rd Thursday of June, July and August and adding an interactive hopscotch sidewalk decal on 3rd Street – again with the goal to enhance a visit.

Looking more closely at DMA Produced events, here is a short recap:

DMA events in the first half of 2026 had strong attendance from Castle Rock residents and visitors and benefitted from great event weather except for one event – a Jazz in the Park Night – that received rain. The DMA has a Service Contract with the Town of Castle Rock to produce 6 events in 2026. Of these events, 4 of them have occurred as of the time of this Mid-Year Report, and in addition to these contracted events, the DMA has produced:

- 11 additional events in Downtown
- 9 evenings of trolley rides during the summer

In total, the DMA will produce 25 events and activations by the end of the year, stretching the dollars the DMA receives from the Town to go further and produce more than just what is required by the 2026 Service Contract.

This report provides information on each event produced by the DMA and their estimated attendance numbers. Following is the list of events and approximate attendance for each event to date:

Date	Event	Est. Attendance
May 16, 2026	Summer Kickoff Concert	3,400
June 3, 10, 17, 24, 2026	Jazz In the Park	50-150 per event (4 events)
June 19, 2026	Street Party & Concert	5,500
June 20, 2026	Classic Rock Cruise-In Car Show	9,000
July 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, 2026	Jazz In the Park	50-150 per event (5 events)
July 25, 2026	Boots & Brews	3,000

2026 DMA Service Contract with Town: 6 events

2026 Total Events That Will Be Produced by DMA: 25 with Summer Street Performers

Events Recap

Summer Kickoff Concert

The Castle Rock community turned out in force on Saturday, May 16, 2026, for the Summer Kickoff Concert in Festival Park. Held from 5:00–10:00 PM, the event celebrated the arrival of warmer weather and the start of the community event season. Six food trucks were present providing everything from barbecue to gelato. We also got to welcome Glacier Homemade Ice Cream & Gelato's newly converted ice cream truck with a ribbon cutting ceremony.

The concert opened with Tiny Pockets, a high-energy cover band that delivers a mix of pop, rock, country, and dance favorites. This year's headliner, Millennial Romance, entertained the crowd with pop-punk hits from the late 1990s and early 2000s. Several local beverage vendors were present, including Rockyard Brewing, Wild Blue Yonder, 105 West Brewing, Alidade Brewing, Purgatory Cellars, and Molly Brown Spirits. A few rain clouds were present early in the evening, but they dissipated, providing pleasant weather and occasional blue skies for the remainder of the event. Families also enjoyed complimentary face painting and balloon art throughout the event. An estimated 3,400 people were in attendance, and we received great feedback from the community.

Jazz In the Park – June and July Series

Jazz in the Park is a pop-up style series of events with a low-key and relaxed vibe. The DMA once again partnered with Castle Rock Music to provide jazz music in the park every Wednesday in June, July and August from 6:30-8pm with the plan to provide a total of 13 evenings of free entertainment in the park. Performances are given by local jazz musicians as well as local jazz students.

The goal for this series is focused around enhancing the Downtown experience, encouraging guests to eat dinner before or after at a Downtown restaurant or enjoy a cocktail or ice cream at

the many delightful spots. This also activates Downtown by changing habits to include a trip Downtown. People are more likely to return if they have visited and had a great, safe, fun experience. This strengthens the Downtown economy and supports the great places to eat and shop that the community loves and hopes will stay in business for their next visit. So far this year's turnout has exceeded expectations, including evenings where the threat of rain persisted.

Street Party & Concert/Car Show Kick Off

On Friday, June 19, 2026, the DMA held a fantastic kickoff to the weekend festivities with a Street Party and Concert from 6-9pm at 4th and Wilcox Street. The weather was great and gave the community perfect weather for the event. Roughly 85 cars from the members of the Vintage Car Club of Castle Rock were on display. Live rockabilly style music was provided by Shelvis and Roustabouts who had attendees dancing up until the very last beat of the night. The free bounce house and slide was a hit for the families and local beverages were available from Wild Blue Yonder, Molly Brown Spirits, Bear'L Cellars, 105 West, Purgatory Cellars, Alidade Brewing, Woods Boss Brewing, Platt Park Brewing, and Dos Santos. Staff received positive feedback from both participants and partners.

Classic Rock Cruise-In Car Show

The Castle Rock community celebrated the 18th Annual Classic Rock Cruise-In Car Show on Saturday, June 20, 2026, in partnership with the Vintage Car Club of Castle Rock. We had over 300 classic and exotic cars, a free rock-climbing wall, multiple free inflatable games, a free face painter, and a free balloon artist. Local bands Steve and the Cruisers and 6202 played music that was enjoyed by all ages and had everyone dancing. There were 11 different food trucks providing a great selection of food, snacks, and desserts at the event. Helping keep everyone cool on the hot summer day, beverages were available from Wild Blue Yonder, Molly Brown Spirits, Bear'L Cellars, 105 West, Purgatory Cellars, Alidade Brewing, Woods Boss Brewing, Platt Park Brewing, and Dos Santos. Overall, the 2026 Car Show Weekend was a success, and it was rewarding to see many happy people enjoying Downtown Castle Rock.

Boots & Brews

Always a community favorite, Boots & Brews, took place on Saturday, July 25, following the Douglas County Fair Parade and served as the kickoff to the Douglas County Fair. Eight beverage vendors participated, offering a variety of beer, wine, and mixed drinks, while six food vendors served a diverse selection of options, from hot empanadas to delicious gelato. The event featured a free mechanical bull, performances by three local bands, free face painting, and balloon artistry, providing entertainment for attendees of all ages. In the afternoon, lightning in the area required a temporary delay but once conditions were deemed safe, event activities resumed, and the remainder of the event proceeded as planned with strong attendance and positive feedback from participants.

To ensure a successful weekend, the DMA, the Town of Castle Rock, and the Castle Rock Chamber of Commerce held a coordination meeting with Town departments to support effective communication and event logistics. With the Western Heritage Welcome Cattle Drive on Friday evening produced by the Town, the Douglas County Fair Parade on Saturday morning produced by the Chamber, and Boots & Brews produced by the DMA immediately following the parade, the weekend offered a full schedule of family-friendly activities, and of course these events kick off a week of the Douglas County Fair produced by Douglas County and the Douglas County Fair Board.

Downtown Businesses Engagement

Once a year, the DMA and DDA hold a Downtown Stakeholders meeting that is open to the public and information is presented about downtown events, programs, and projects. The DMA hopes these efforts assist the Town in answering questions and disseminating vital information. This year, among a variety of downtown Alliance updates, Town Public Works Staff presented information on Phase 1 of the 5th Street Widening improvements that are under construction on a road that many use to enter Downtown. Public Works staff presented images and a map and updates that the project was on track for completion by the end of the year. Police were also present to provide information on their new SHIELD program and they answered questions. Community feedback from these meetings has been positive expressing appreciation for the ability to have questions answered directly by those leading impactful projects.

The DMA continues to invest in quality, positive social media activity on the Downtown Castle Rock social media pages. Social media has proven to be an excellent tool for sharing information about Downtown, DMA events and collecting real-time feedback. This social media presence provides Castle Rock with an online presence that demonstrates to the world that Castle Rock is a safe, vibrant, happy, and healthy community full of great events, great people, and a great downtown.

In Q2 of 2026, the DMA and DDA launched an online Downtown calendar on the Downtown website. This new calendar provides a one stop shop for visitors and residents to find “Things To Do” in Downtown Castle Rock. As summer came into full swing this new calendar filled up with many great things to do including live music, comedy nights, music lessons, candle-making workshops, and other interesting and entertaining events being produced by Downtown businesses.

The DMA also launched two small activations in Q2 of 2026. With approval from Douglas County, the DMA programmed the 3rd Thursday of June, July and August with Street Performing that will be set up on the Douglas County Lawn. The idea is that the performer will play music or entertain for 1-2 hours with minimal setup. These performances are not marketed. They are designed to enhance the experience of people that are already Downtown, and hopefully lead to repeat visits. The DMA also partnered with Castle Toys to design, print and install a full-size hopscotch, sidewalk decal on the sidewalk in front of their business. Each of the 10 hopscotch squares contains an image of something related to Castle Rock. Here is a short list of the images: 1. Cowboy and cattle. 2. Iconic clock on Wilcox Square. 3. Rhyolite Quarry Tools. 4. The Barn. 5. View of the historic 300 block of Wilcox looking up at the Rock. 6. Town Trolley. 7. Train. 8. Iconic Festival Park Tower. 9. Lost Canyon Ranch Open Space. 10. The Rock. (see image at the end of this report)

Summary

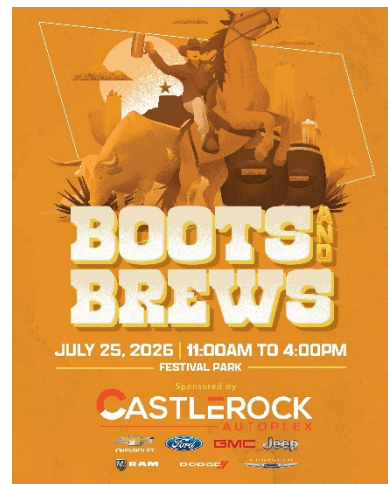
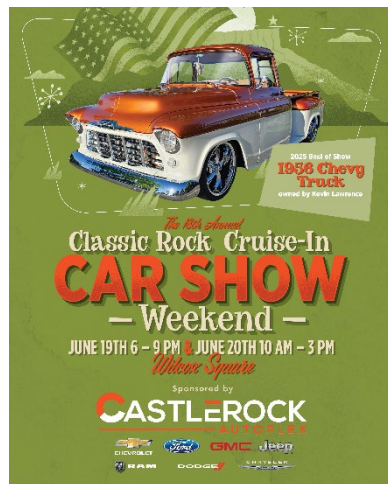
This Mid-Year Report provides an update not only on the 4 out of 6 events that have occurred that the DMA has contracted with the Town to produce, but also on the many other efforts conducted aimed at creating and maintaining a vibrant Downtown.

The partnership between the Town and DMA leverages taxpayer dollars to go further. For every \$1 received through this service contract from the Town of Castle Rock, the DMA generates an additional \$3 that go straight to free events and free entertainment for the Castle Rock community and visitors. The DMA is proud of this model for funding community events and is thankful for the partnership with the Town of Castle Rock. The impact of these events has provided safe, family friendly entertainment to the community as well as to serve as an economic generator for the small businesses in Downtown.

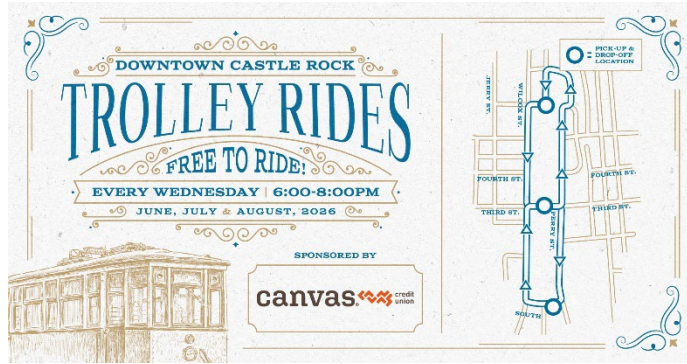
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Attached on the following pages are several examples of the marketing materials from DMA produced events in 2026, as well as a few photos.



Summer Trolley – Every Wednesday in June, July, August



Summer Kickoff Concert



Car Show Weekend - Friday Concert



Car Show Weekend – Saturday Car Show



Jazz in the Park – Every Weds. June, July & Aug.



Boots & Brews

Summer Busker



Hopscotch Sidewalk Decal in front of Castle Toys

