

# SPECIAL EVENTS



# STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-2018



## **Vision Statement**

To educate and inspire participation in the community through memorable events, festivals and distinctive outreach opportunities.

## **Mission Statement**

The Castle Rock Special Events Division is dedicated to excellence through community outreach, programming initiatives, and quality of service. Our mission is achieved by providing exceptional experiences, delivering outstanding customer service, and discovering innovative methods to celebrate, communicate and enhance the quality of life in Castle Rock.

## Summary

The Town's quality of life is enhanced by its historic Downtown and numerous annual events and festivals. Castle Rock residents consider maintaining community character a core priority and value. Special events are a key component that adds to Castle Rock's unique, family friendly community.

In 2014, the Special Events Committee developed an analysis of events in Castle Rock. Castle Rock was involved with approximately 117 events in 2014, including fairs and festivals, athletic tournaments, races and more. In 2014, Castle Rock spent approximately \$216,752 on events and event support.

In 2016, we look to move forward with a plan that helps us build the framework for a robust events program and anticipates growth in our community while proactively addressing the areas that need improvement.

Important elements of Castle Rock's community character and identity:

- Stewardship of the spectacular natural environment
- Maintaining the character of the built environment
- Respecting Castle Rock's history and heritage
- Support for local businesses
- Community involvement and engagement
- Being a healthy, friendly and safe place for families
- Improving and expanding community special events
- Improving overall community branding and marketing
- Increasing and enhancing community engagement on achieving the Community Vision, including maintaining community character within a balanced, planned approach to value-added community growth
- Enhancing community partnerships

This information will give us the insight and direction that we should navigate Special Events initiatives for the Town of Castle Rock. This is an overview of the work completed by the leadership of the Special Events Division. This reflects the strategic direction outlined as a result of meeting with members of Council, industry partners and affiliates.

Current external event partners:

- Castle Rock Chamber of Commerce
- Castle Rock Downtown Alliance

## **Strategic Priority 1: Activate Venues**

With the launch of several new venues and facilities over the past year and in the coming months, there is opportunity to highlight our amenities while developing new programming that will become time-honored traditions. Our aim is to establish a special events program that better showcases recent Town additions; drives economic impact back into the community; helps better position our community identity; and elevates the quality of programming available to residents.

Cultural Activities have been listed in numerous Town surveys as something the community sees the Town as needing. The Amphitheater in Miller Park, along with the Mill House, will provide the Town with the opportunity for more cultural events. This has the ability to benefit the Town with both economic return, through ticket sales and increased activity from nonresidents, and community return by meeting an identified need of our residents.

### ***Goal 1: Partner with Parks and Recreation to activate the Amphitheater at Philip S. Miller Park***

**Strategy 1.1.1** Establish operations plan for events at the Amphitheater

**Strategy 1.1.2** Determine logistics surrounding vendors, ticketing, contracts and infrastructure

**Strategy 1.1.3** Establish programming and marketing calendar

**Strategy 1.1.4** Establish pricing and rental structure for outside events

**Strategy 1.1.5** Negotiate and secure contracts with outside service providers such as ticketing, beverage, parking, hospitality and staffing agencies for maximum efficiency and return on investment

### ***Goal 2: Launch a Signature Event Series***

#### **We will utilize the following strategies:**

**Strategy 1.2.1** Develop and implement a comprehensive events and programming calendar that will better position the Town for high-level programming and sponsorship initiatives

**Strategy 1.2.2** Craft a Signature Event Series that will drive economic impact to the Town of Castle Rock

**Strategy 1.2.3** Launch the grand opening event and event series for the Amphitheater

**Strategy 1.2.4** Implement an event series in the slower programming months to keep residents and visitors engaged

### ***Goal 3: Better utilize existing venues***

#### **We will utilize the following strategies:**

**Strategy 1.3.1** Facilitate the creation and implementation of a “Common Consumption Area” within a designated Entertainment District by providing a physically sanctioned space which allows patrons to purchase an alcoholic beverage from a participating establishment on designated evenings and move freely between participating establishments

**Strategy 1.3.2** Explore and establish public/private partnerships that will contribute to programming efforts and revenue goals

**Strategy 1.3.3** Establish a parking plan that addresses a logistics strategy that better utilizes downtown parking that will contribute to a better event attendee experience

**Strategy 1.3.4** Establish programming that highlights new amenities as well as contributes to a vibrant downtown

## **Strategic Priority 2: Collaborate on Affiliate and Outside Events**

As the community has continued to grow, so has the desire to provide quality programming for residents, as well as the requests by outside event promoters to host events within the Town. Our approach to how we approve these requests and who we choose to work with will determine the level of success the Special Events Division experiences. An organized, systematic approach to service contracts, public/private partnerships and the permitting process will enable us to set measurable goals and reap the benefits of a sustainable events program for the Town of Castle Rock.

### ***Goal 1: Add enhancements to events that already exist in our community***

#### **We will utilize the following strategies:**

**Strategy 2.1.1** Assist affiliate partners in programming enhancements

**Strategy 2.1.2** Serve as a liaison to affiliate partners by providing guidance as they navigate Town department requirements and requests

**Strategy 2.1.3** Provide resources, suggestions and support to help implement special projects

**Strategy 2.1.4** Lead a special events roundtable with Townwide event promoters monthly to discuss event opportunities and issues that affect us all

### ***Goal 2: Establish a procedure for identifying and partnering with outside promoters to maximize programming offerings in the community***

#### **We will utilize the following strategies:**

**Strategy 2.2.1** Develop and implement a Special Event Impact Assessment to better understand potential events and their impact and benefit on the community

**Strategy 2.2.2** Use funds from special event ticket revenue convenience charges to assist in establishing a fund to waive fees for outside promoters that have the capability to elevate our programming offerings

**Strategy 2.2.3** Launch an initiative that establishes an attractive event package which includes resource allocation for potential promoters that positions Castle Rock as a favorable place to bring large-scale events

**Strategy 2.2.4** Establish a target list of desirable events we would like to partner with

### ***Goal 3: Establish venue rental protocol for outside public and private event promoters***

#### **We will utilize the following strategies:**

**Strategy 2.3.1** Implement a partnership program for outside event partners

**Strategy 2.3.2** Establish a Preferred vendor list

**Strategy 2.3.3** Establish a fee structure for venue rentals

**Strategy 2.3.4** Establish contracts with outside service providers to better facilitate event requests and logistics

## Castle Rock 2016 Events Calendar

### Town events

January - Winterfest - Kick off the New Year at Winterfest, a celebration of the New Year and Winter Season. Join us as we feature a variety of activities including ice carving and light installations, a fun run, Cyclocross Race and a host of outdoor and sporting activities meant to encourage participants to kick off the New Year on the right foot. Bring your loved ones to ring in the New Year and get a start on your resolutions for 2016!

February – Daddy Daughter Ball – The Parks and Recreation Department runs this popular annual daddy-daughter dance, now held at the Douglas County Events Center.

April - Scavenge the Rock / The Scavenger Games - Scurry around Castle Rock on a hunt for forgotten places, off-the-wall items, new amenities, and little known facts! Part 5K race, part scavenger hunt, and part Town exploration. Scavenge the Rock will test participants' ability to solve clues, and crunch mind-bending riddles in an effort to plot game-winning strategies as they go head-to-head with other contestants and beat them to the finish line! In addition to our signature scavenger games, Scavenge the Rock will be host to Live Music, Food Trucks, & general merriment as contestants cross the finish line.

April – Arbor Day – The Parks and Recreation Department partners with an elementary school each year to plant trees in observance of Arbor Day at different Town parks.

April – 9Health Fair – 9Health Fair stops at the Castle Rock Recreation Center each April to provide a crowd of thousands with free and reduced-cost health screenings.

May – Spring Up the Creek Day – This is an annual event for the Town Utilities Department to clean up creeks in Town, particularly East Plum Creek and Sellars Gulch.

May – Tri the Rock – Attendance at this youth triathlon, held by the Parks and Recreation Department at Butterfield Crossing Park and Pool, grows every year.

May - Rocky Mountain Sports Festival – The Rocky Mountain Sports Festival is a weekend event that celebrates community, athletics and local business, while showcasing the terrain, environment and unique culture of the region. Crafted to highlight over a dozen different sports, local associations will be encouraged to hold tournaments throughout Town, encouraging participation on all levels.

May through September - The “Celebration Series” at Philip S. Miller, monthly May through September – To be held the last Saturday of each month in the summer, the Celebration Series will highlight various genres of music while featuring programming and vendor opportunities that are complementary in nature.

May through September - Downtown After 5 in Festival Park, monthly May through September– Aimed at bringing people downtown on Fridays after work with food trucks, vendors, free music and a festive environment. This event could segue into programming for an entertainment district or common consumption area.

June – National Trails Day – The Parks and Recreation Department sponsors a community event each National Trails Day. The location and scale varies.

June – Bike to Work Day – Many Town employees and community members participate in Bike to Work Day each year. It's held at Festival Park.

July – Rockin' the Fourth: Red, White & Boom! – The Town hosts a free fireworks show on July 4.

August - Western Heritage Days during the Fair and Rodeo featuring arts and crafts, programming and concerts around Town.

September – Pooch Plunge – The Parks and Recreation Department sponsors this annual dip for dogs, which raises money for The Buddy Center.

October - Harvest Festival – Fall festival kicking off the autumn season and start to fall programming activities

October – Castle of Terror – The Fire and Rescue and Parks and Recreation departments work together on this haunted house at the Town’s Fire Training Tower.

October – Spooktacular – The Parks and Recreation Department hosts this annual family Halloween festival at the Castle Rock Recreation Center.

October – Trick or Treat Street – Community Relations runs this event in conjunction with the Downtown Alliance’s business trick-or-treating. Typically, it involves pumpkin decorating, live music and a costume contest.

November – January - Season of the Star, Weekly - A month-long and Townwide celebration of winter that starts with the lighting of the Star and runs to the end of the year on Saturday afternoons.

Household Chemical Roundups and Electronics Recycling events also are important in Town. In addition, there are other athletic events including the Hoopla and Nuggets Skills Challenge.

\*Events in Blue are proposed potential programming to be added to the 2016 event calendar. This plan is built with a \$200,000 budget in supplies and services in mind. The Town’s contribution to the operation is expected to decrease as the revenues and sponsorships increase.

### **Chamber events**

July – Castle Rock Winefest – Winefest draws thousands and features wines from throughout the state. It’s held at The Grange in The Meadows.

August – Douglas County Fair Parade – The Chamber organizes the parade that’s held the last weekend of the Douglas County Fair each year. The parade shuts down both Wilcox and Perry streets for the morning it’s held.

September – Artfest – This is one of the Town’s longest-running events.

November – Starlighting – This event is the oldest in Castle Rock; it’s been going more than 75 years. Downtown is filled with activities the entire afternoon and evening before the star on top of The Rock is lit. It’s always the weekend before Thanksgiving, and the star stays lit until the end of the National Western Stock Show. The Fire Department has a chili feed as part of the festivities.

### **Downtown Alliance events**

June-September – Starlight Summer Movie Series – Three movies are shown on a large, inflatable screen in Festival Park each summer. A street festival precedes the movies, which are shown at dusk.

June – Castle Rock Classic Cruise-in car show – This event started in 2009 and has proved popular. Cars are shown on Fourth and Wilcox streets.

October – Oktoberfest – It’s your typical Oktoberfest, with German music, food and beer along with vendor booths.

November-February – Rink at the Rock – Ice skating rink under the White Pavilion on Perry Street

## **Other events**

March – Empty Bowl Event – This fundraiser for the Women’s Crisis and Family Outreach Center at the Douglas County Events Center is another popular event.

June – Elephant Rock Ride – This huge cycling festival draws thousands and is based at the Douglas County Fairgrounds.

June – Ducky Derby – The Castle Rock Rotary Clubs sponsor this annual fundraiser at Festival Park.

July-September – Farmers Market – The Farmers Market is open on Saturday mornings from early July through early October.

August – Douglas County Fair and Rodeo – This typically falls the first week each August and is your typical county fair with lots of animals, rodeo, live music and contests.

September – Sassy Soiree – This fashion show and auction to raise money for the local food bank is held at the Douglas County Events Center.

*Several events also are held at The Grange in The Meadows. Visit [meadowslink.com](http://meadowslink.com) for more information on dates and details.*



## **Strategic Priority 3: Develop and Implement Special Event Operations**

As we move from an organization that offers free public programming to one that has the capability to sell tickets and secure high-level sponsorships, it is imperative that we build the organizational structure to support these goals. How we grow and develop the events team to achieve the quality of service we hope to deliver will be paramount to our success. Our operations strategy will help us better define the roles we need to fill as we create our action plan for new programming initiatives.

### ***Goal 1: Determine organizational structure for supporting the Special Events Division***

**We will utilize the following strategies:**

- Strategy 3.1.1** Undergo a comprehensive analysis of internal resources, roles and job descriptions
- Strategy 3.1.2** Develop an organizational structure for the Events Division
- Strategy 3.1.3** Contract with service providers to fill necessary event support positions
- Strategy 3.1.4** Develop an action plan to support programming initiatives

### ***Goal 2: Establish an event support team consisting of staff, contracted employees and volunteers***

**We will utilize the following strategies:**

- Strategy 3.2.1** Hire an Event Specialist
- Strategy 3.2.2** Determine a staffing structure comprised of contracted employees, seasonal staff, interns and part-time employees
- Strategy 3.2.3** Find alternatives to standard requests for resources within the Town by engaging outside vendors to cover various aspects of events such as food and beverage sales, box office operations, event staff, security and hospitality functions
- Strategy 3.2.4** Establish an event volunteer management and outreach program that encompasses job descriptions, a communication strategy and the development of a rewards program

### ***Goal 3: Activate a Town-wide implementation of Event Management Software (EMS)***

- Strategy 3.3.1** Activate all facets of the EMS comprehensive event management tool to coordinate special events throughout Town departments, including the scheduling or reserving of facilities and resources
- Strategy 3.3.2** Hold a training seminar to ensure staff comfort level with new approach to scheduling events
- Strategy 3.3.3** Activate the robust calendaring system that can handle all Department, Town and Community events on one main calendar, as well as individual calendars
- Strategy 3.3.4** Set up and launch the resource scheduling application for better management of personnel, equipment, and materials to better understand the true costs of producing events within the Town

## **Strategic Priority 4: Implement a Marketing and Communications Strategy**

A well-thought-out marketing and event communications plan will support the mission and the objectives laid out in the strategic plan. It allows us to focus our marketing and communications, making sure that all activities work together to support our overall goals. An effective marketing and communications plan will have many purposes; it will lay the framework for a successful events program enabling us to focus on: 1) the people we serve and their safety when attending our events, 2) the individuals we seek to influence and 3) the donors we hope to cultivate. Through integrated marketing communications, we can create powerful, focused and targeted appeals to build our brand, better communicate our efforts both internally and externally, establish a public safety communications plan and facilitate fundraising efforts.

### ***Goal 1: Establish a marketing and communications plan for the Special Events Division***

#### **We will utilize the following strategies:**

**Strategy 4.1.1** Engage Community Relations to better position event marketing efforts and messaging initiatives

**Strategy 4.1.2** Establish a comprehensive event marketing and communication plan for the Special Events Division that includes a crisis communication plan and year round communication strategy

**Strategy 4.1.3** Identify, create and cultivate promotional and marketing opportunities

**Strategy 4.1.4** Create an easily identifiable sub brand and identity to be used in marketing efforts

### ***Goal 2: Increase events visibility through online methods***

#### **We will utilize the following strategies:**

**Strategy 4.2.1** Establish a robust events page on Facebook as well as the Town's website with an online special events guide, application and up-to-date events calendar

**Strategy 4.2.2** Create an e-newsletter and distribution email list to better communicate events, sponsors and community outreach initiatives

**Strategy 4.2.3** Maintain a comprehensive Townwide event calendar

**Strategy 4.2.4** Adopt a joint umbrella marketing partnership to better communicate event series and programming efforts while maximizing exposure and resources

### ***Goal 3: Implement an internal communication strategy for events***

#### **We will utilize the following strategies:**

**Strategy 4.3.1** Establish an internal communication process for events

**Strategy 4.3.2** Implement a workflow process in EMS to improve communication among all involved parties to include automatic notifications for the event itself, alcohol permits, and commercial activity permits

**Strategy 4.3.3** Continue and build upon the Special Events Committee review process

**Strategy 4.3.4** Establish an interactive multi-person approval process for event approval, events-related personnel scheduling, equipment and materials

## **Strategic Priority 5: Establish Policies and Procedures**

Castle Rock is known for its traditional community signature events. They are popular and well attended. Moving forward, our goal is to create a formalized policy and procedure process. This will optimize internal Town staff operations for all events and will also work to strengthen our community partnerships.

Our goal is to create a system that is efficient and well organized. By bringing everyone together and establishing well-defined roles both internally and externally, we set the stage for a successful special events program for the Town of Castle Rock.

### ***Goal 1: Establish and implement “Policies and Procedures” for hosting events within the Town of Castle Rock***

#### **We will utilize the following strategies:**

- Strategy 5.1.1** Undergo a comprehensive policy and procedure review to better understand and evaluate the state of our current requirements for events
- Strategy 5.1.2** Establish a policy and procedures process for executing events in Castle Rock
- Strategy 5.1.3** Define roles and responsibilities internally and externally as they relate to Townwide support of events
- Strategy 5.1.4** Host a training and implementation retreat to better educate Town staff on policies and procedures as they relate to special events in the Town

### ***Goal 2: Develop and implement a comprehensive Special Events Guidebook***

#### **We will utilize the following strategies:**

- Strategy 5.2.1** Produce a Special Events Guidebook as a comprehensive resource to better communicate timeline, requirements and pricing structure to potential event promoters and internal Town departments
- Strategy 5.2.2** Create an easily accessible online version to better assist staff and applicants as they navigate the application process
- Strategy 5.2.3** Create a special event assessment application as a supplement to the Special Event Guidebook to better identify desirable event partners
- Strategy 5.2.4** Streamline the permitting process

### ***Goal 3: Establish an online application process for producing special events within the Town***

#### **We will utilize the following strategies:**

- Strategy 5.3.1** Establish an interactive one-stop online application process for potential event promoters
- Strategy 5.3.2** Funnel all event-related requests through the Special Events Division
- Strategy 5.3.3** Manage the application and approval process across all departments by establishing a notification system that seamlessly notifies Town departments when their services are required
- Strategy 5.3.4** Create an area online to educate promoters, vendors, sponsors and participants of processes and requirements as they relate to policies and procedures

## **Strategic Priority 6: Define Capacity**

As our community continues to grow, the need to determine the capacity for doing so successfully will become even more critical. The methods we use to develop our programming offerings without taking away from resident availability of amenities will become a top priority. This balancing act will determine our approach as we strategically manage departmental and staff fatigue versus the expectations of residents. Additionally, we will address the needs of event-going patrons versus the public who utilizes event spaces, like parks and trails. Once established, our system for defining capacity will need to be scalable, as we anticipate growth in Town.

### ***Goal 1: Better utilize EMS***

#### **We will utilize the following strategies:**

- Strategy 6.1.1** Implement the Event Management Software (EMS) venue-management system Town wide to better understand when resources are tapped
- Strategy 6.1.2** Conduct a staff training session to ensure 100% staff conversion to utilizing this tool
- Strategy 6.1.3** Implement a special event impact assessment to quantify benefits and risks of special events and their impact on the local community
- Strategy 6.1.4** Activate a robust calendaring system within EMS to better understand what events are happening, their impact on the community on any given weekend and when resources are at maximum capacity

### ***Goal 2: Implement a resource-tracking initiative***

#### **We will utilize the following strategies:**

- Strategy 6.2.1** Activate the resource-scheduling function of EMS
- Strategy 6.2.2** Analyze financial implications and true cost to the Town for use of internal resources
- Strategy 6.2.3** Engage the reporting function in EMS that will allow us to track property, resources and staff availability
- Strategy 6.2.4** Establish a profit/loss evaluation process for resource allocation

### ***Goal 3: Engage the Special Events Task Force to better answer questions of resources, capacity***

#### **We will utilize the following strategies:**

- Strategy 6.3.1** Hold an initial capacity planning summit to engage Town departments and get feedback on the effect of events on individual departments
- Strategy 6.3.2** Undergo a review process to better understand who should be included on the Special Events Task Force and their respective roles within the group
- Strategy 6.3.3** Establish a standing meeting with the Special Events Task Force to discuss developments in policies, calendars and requests

## **Strategic Priority 7: Generate Revenue**

Events have the ability to rejuvenate communities while bringing tremendous revenue-generating opportunities to both internal and external entities. As new venues open, we have the opportunity to craft programming and operational initiatives to establish new revenue streams and leverage sponsorship opportunities. Undertaking events as a source of revenue is a long-term project that has the ability to help the Town beyond the dollars taken in. Events can be used to drive economic impact, boost Town exposure regionally and nationally, build a brand image, and solidify relationships with sponsors and donors that will continue to add more value over time.

Gaining a better understanding of what we budget and spend and the economic impact for doing so will be instrumental in establishing a strong revenue plan for the Special Events Division.

### ***Goal 1: Establish a separate events budget***

#### **We will utilize the following strategies:**

- Strategy 7.1.1** Work with the finance team and Deputy Town Managers Office to establish a budget and revenue plan for the Special Events Division
- Strategy 7.1.2** Build capacity to properly plan for staff time and resources needed
- Strategy 7.1.3** Implement a cost-tracking and cost-recovery system to better understand expenses versus profitability
- Strategy 7.1.4** Develop a fee structure to ensure events are not costing the Town money and are profitable

### ***Goal 2: By 2018, the Special Events Division will become self-sustaining, with the Town's contribution to the operation expected to decrease as creative revenue generation initiatives are implemented***

#### **We will utilize the following strategies:**

- Strategy 7.2.1** Create a revenue-generation plan
- Strategy 7.2.2** Implement a season pass-holder program for residents
- Strategy 7.2.3** Develop long-term funding strategies such as a lodging tax initiative to establish funding for Special Events
- Strategy 7.2.4** Activate new streams of revenue by engaging outside vendors such as food and beverage companies, ticketing agencies, parking management and merchandise vendors to contract for services

### ***Goal 3: Elevate the sponsorship program for the Town of Castle Rock***

#### **We will utilize the following strategies:**

- Strategy 7.3.1** Develop a comprehensive sponsorship plan for special events within the Town of Castle Rock
- Strategy 7.3.2** Establish a large-scale sponsorship outreach and involvement program by undergoing a full scale property and amenity audit
- Strategy 7.3.3** Develop a VIP, Patron and Donor Program
- Strategy 7.3.4** Establish a 501c3 to facilitate funding initiatives through sponsorships

### ***Strategies to measure success:***

- Survey event participants, volunteers, sponsors, vendors and staff by taking a strategic and immediate approach to gain valuable feedback on their experience
- Conduct economic impact surveys at events to better determine impact and benefit on local community
- Receive recognition in International Festivals and Events Association Industry awards for new event programming initiatives
- Implement 5 regionally recognized events per year
- Utilize online resources such a feedback on forums and post event surveys to track success of the special events program
- Examine profitability by implementing a tracking and reporting function within EMS
- Undergo an independent economic impact study that tracks the overall event program for the Town
- Design, develop and deliver critical logistics training annually
- Implement a special event impact assessment
- Conduct an after event analysis and year round communication plan to gain feedback

### **Attachments:**

SWOT Analysis

## SWOT Analysis

### Strengths:

- Outstanding parks and venues
- Outside event promoters have the desire to do events here
- Community support is strong
- Opportunity for world class events

### Weaknesses:

- Absence of organizational structure, position descriptions, and training
- Event execution, organization and coordination of some events
- Communication internally and externally
- Need for better branded events and community identity
- Lack of existing Sponsorship program
- Programming offerings need updating
- Application process for event permits is confusing and lengthy
- Lack of Town-wide policies and procedures

### Opportunities:

- Building volunteer bench strength and volunteer training
- Leveraging our network
- Social media event activation
- Establish annual programming calendar
- Establish sponsorship program
- Sponsorship acquisition and retention
- Continue to build traditional media relationships
- Build online application process and special events guidebook

### Threats:

- Event and volunteer fatigue
- Local sponsor fatigue
- Financial risks - planning, budget allocation, cash management, budgeting
- Organizational growth
- Segmented staffing
- Lack of diversity
- Lack of core event team
- Parking for potential special events is limited
- Accessibility for residents versus large scale programming initiatives