



Economic Development & Workforce Council Newsletter

2026| May

TOP STORIES



Colorado Employment Update

Colorado's unemployment rate held steady at 3.9 percent in February 2026, remaining well below the national rate of 4.4 percent despite a decrease of 7,200 nonfarm payroll jobs. While the labor force participation rate dipped to 66.6 percent, the state continues to see construction gains and average hourly earnings that significantly outperform the national average

[Read the Report](#)



Kevin Benes of Running Wild Events, has been elected as the Vice Chair of our Economic Development & Workforce Council

Join us in congratulating him!

Wednesday May 20
5:00 PM - 7:30 PM
Bristlecone Inn

Join us for an evening celebrating the hard work and growth of local entrepreneurs as BASE 2.0 graduates share the operating plans they have developed over the past 10 weeks. This event brings together community members, business leaders, and supporters for a mix of networking and inspiring presentations. Enjoy meaningful connections, fresh ideas, and light appetizers provided by Jubilations, with a cash bar available.

Thank you to our generous sponsors: Holiday Inn Estes Park by IHG, Platte River Power Authority / Efficiency Works, and EDWC for supporting this program and our local



business community.

Our 2026 Graduates are entrepreneurs from the following businesses:

Estes Valley Vacation Rentals
Newhouse Group
Backbone Adventures
Avant Garde Aleworks
Space Coyote Tattoo
Twin Owls Productions
Glacier Gorge Property Management
Estes Park Provisions
Colorado Games Company
Omnibus

Park Supply
Jubilations
Bristlecone Inn
Animal Medical Center of Estes Park

\$25 – includes appetizers and cash bar

Register Today

Local, Regional, & State Opportunities



Tariff Navigation Program

OEDIT is partnering with the [World Trade Center](#) (WTC) to offer [two programs](#) to assist businesses with trade navigation and optimization. The new Basic Tariff Navigation Training provides webinars with up-to-date information from experts and WTC Service Subject Matter Expert packages in supply chain optimization, tariff classification review and changes, global business operational audit, and trade compliance audit.

Live Tariff Navigation Webinars:

Practical, expert-led training for real-world challenges

Participating companies gain access to a series of live, expert-led tariff navigation briefings designed to help businesses:

- Understand the current U.S. tariff environment
- Stay informed on new and emerging trade policy changes



Small Business Resources

Business Startup Bootcamp

Saturday, May 30, 2026 | 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

*\$40

This event is perfectly suited for aspiring entrepreneurs in the idea stage and early-stage startup founders looking for a clear, hands-on roadmap to formalize and budget for their new business venture.

Colorado Small Business Recovery and Resiliency Guide

Disasters can strike unexpectedly, but proactive planning is the best way to protect a business and its employees. We are pleased to share a new resource from the Colorado Small Business Development Center (SBDC) intended to help our local entrepreneurs and small businesses build a "disaster-proof" foundation.

The Business Recovery and Resiliency Guide is a comprehensive roadmap

- Identify compliance risks and cost exposure
 - Learn practical tariff navigation strategies
 - Build internal confidence in navigating tariff impacts
- These webinars provide the foundation companies need to make informed decisions and are required to qualify for state-funded one-on-one support.

One-on-One Tariff Navigation Support:

Customized Strategies for Your Business
Eligible companies can receive personalized, expert consulting support to evaluate and implement tariff navigation strategies, including:

- Supply chain optimization
- Tariff classification review
- Trade compliance assessments
- Global operations and sourcing strategies

Cost Support Available:

Through support from OEDIT, eligible Colorado companies may receive up to \$1,000 in consulting support, available on a first-come, first-served basis until \$20,000 in program funding is allocated. This makes high-quality trade expertise accessible and affordable for businesses that need real solutions, not just information.

[Live Webinars](#)

[One-on-One Support](#)



Introduction to LYNX

There's a difference between chasing opportunities and actually knowing where you fit. That's exactly what the

designed to identify vulnerabilities today so businesses remain open tomorrow. How this guide supports our business community:

- Risk Mitigation: Owners can identify vulnerabilities and build a 13-topic Business Continuity Plan (BCP).
- Comprehensive Asset Protection: The curriculum provides actionable strategies to secure digital assets and ensure staff safety.
- Self-Paced Learning: The expert-led courses allow entrepreneurs to start at any point in the preparedness cycle.
- Flexible Access: This guide is available in both English and Spanish.

[Bootcamp Registration](#)

[Access the Guide](#)



Proposed Data Center Regulation Feedback Needed

Make your voice heard:

A recent moratorium on data center applications in unincorporated Larimer County has provided community members with an opportunity to share feedback on proposed data center regulations.

Members of the community are asked to complete a short online survey to develop these regulations.

The button below will take you to the survey and information learn more about the regulations. The survey is open until June 12, 2026.

[Take the Survey](#)



COLORADO
Department of
Labor and Employment

Department of Defense Office of Small Business Programs is tackling with LYNX, and these live demo sessions are worth your time if you're serious about government contracting. This isn't another platform to "figure out later." It's built to help you:

- Show your capabilities the right way
- Understand your readiness (no guesswork)
- Find contracts that actually align
- Use real data to guide your next move

If you've ever felt like GovCon is too complex or too crowded, this is how you start cutting through the noise. Upcoming live demos (2:30 PM ET): May 20th, June 4th, June 11th

[Learn More](#)



Business Succession Planning Event

Date: May 15th

Time: 9:00 - 11:00 am

Location: Community Development Center - 200 N. 11th Street in Windsor

Open to: Windsor and Northern Colorado Businesses

Cost: Free

Most business owners wait too long to think about their exit—usually after an event that leaves them without a choice. This session will show you how to start planning now so your business is ready whenever the time comes.

This session will feature a Live Panel and open Q&A with a local business

Your Experience Matters, and Could Win You Cash – Take the 50+ Job Seeker Survey

If you're 50 or older and considering your next work opportunity, whether finding a new job, changing careers, or returning to work after retirement, your voice matters!

We invite you to take a brief, confidential survey to share your experiences in today's job market.

Your input will help shape programs, policies, and resources to better support older job seekers across Colorado.

Complete Part 1 of the survey to be entered into a drawing for one of five \$100 gift cards.

Complete Part 2 for a second chance to win one of five \$150 gift cards.

[Take of Survey](#)



Essential Business Skills for Child Care Administrators

The Essential Business Skills for Child Care Administrators program provides no-cost, confidential one-on-one business advising and no- or low-cost training designed specifically for child care businesses. Whether you are starting, growing, or planning to exit your child care business, this program offers essential skills in business planning,

broker, attorney, CFO, accountant, and wealth advisor.

[Register](#)

financial management, marketing, and more.

[Learn More](#)



CHRYSTA BAIRRE

Tuesday Talent Series: Mental Wellness Through Change and Uncertainty

Tuesday, May 26 | 11:00 am - 12:00 pm
Virtual

When you are mentally healthy, you enjoy life and the people in it. This is when you and your team can be creative, learn, try new things, and take risks.

Here's what you'll learn in this interactive session:

- When to increase individual resourcing for mental wellness, even before you or your team may be struggling
- How to identify when mental health is declining and you or a team member needs extra support
- Strategies to improve individual mental wellness and resilience, and when to ask for help

As a leader, you can lead by example and improve your mental wellness while also supporting the mental wellness of your team through ensuring you are personally well-resourced in this area and modeling this behavior for your staff.

[Learn More](#)



Registration now open for the Colorado Global Export Summit

The Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT) invites Colorado small businesses in the advanced industries to the Colorado Global Summit on May 20, 2026 from 9am - 4pm in Denver. Join us to learn how your company can utilize state export assistance programs to export to a new market or expand in a market you are currently exporting to. International representatives from the **Global Consultant Network** will present on export opportunities in 12 markets. The markets include Australia, Brazil, Canada, Germany, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, the Netherlands, Philippines, Spain, and Thailand.

Attendees will:

- Gain insights on export opportunities in each of the above markets for the advanced industries
- Hear from Colorado companies that have used the state's export assistance programs
- Learn about other export programs and resources
- Network with other Colorado exporters

Registration will close on May 4, 2026.

Colorado's advanced industries are:

- Advanced manufacturing
- Aerospace
- Bioscience
- Electronics
- Energy and natural resources
- Infrastructure engineering
- Technology and information

If you have any questions, please contact Sophia Gonzalez-Mayagoitia, International Export Grant Manager at OEDIT.

USDOL AI Training

The U.S. Department of Labor is offering a free, one-week AI literacy course specifically designed for the American worker. The best part? You don't need a laptop, a high-speed internet connection, or an advanced degree to participate—the entire course is delivered via text message directly to your phone. This initiative levels the playing field, ensuring every Coloradan has the opportunity to understand and harness the power of Artificial Intelligence in their daily work. **Text READY to 20202 to register.**



CONTINUING EDUCATION

Aims Nonprofit Leadership Academy

The Aims Nonprofit Leadership Academy (NLA) offers a dynamic series of courses designed for those working in the nonprofit sector.

Explore a wide range of topics from fundraising, finance, strategic planning and executive leadership.

Each class offers practical tools you can apply right away and the chance to connect with other nonprofit professionals.

Take the courses that fit your goals or work toward a Nonprofit Leadership Certificate. Classes are available in Loveland and online.

Start today at aims.co/nonprofit-academy.

Scholarships available
Apply at aims.co/npla-weldtrust

CONTACT
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 LOVELAND
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All in.

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Christina Kraft, Bank of Colorado, Market President Estes Park, EDWC Chair

Kevin Benes, Running Wild Events, EDWC Vice-Chair

Bill Brown, Estes Park Town Trustee

Jason Damweber, Estes Park, Deputy Town Administrator

Adam Crowe, Larimer County, Economic Development Manager

Sarah Leonard, Visit Estes Park, CEO

Nick Smith, Lumpy Ridge Brewing, Owner

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EDWC Investors



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