



## Economic Development & Workforce Council Newsletter

2026 | March

### TOP STORY Bridging the Seasons



#### Chamber Releases Financial Tools to Help Local Businesses Stay Resilient

Local businesses across the Estes Valley experience natural highs and lows throughout the year. Seasonal shifts can impact cash flow, staffing, and long-term planning, making access to the right financial tools especially important. To support our business community, we have compiled a list of trusted local, regional, and state resources designed to help businesses stay resilient, plan ahead, and navigate changing economic conditions with confidence.

[Access the Tools](#)

### Local, Regional, & State Opportunities



#### Application now open for the 2026 Governor's Award for Excellence in Exporting

The Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT) is accepting applications for the



#### Project Management Professional (PMP) Prep Series

March 11-April 8 from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. | Zoom | \$750  
The Project Management Professional Series combines Essentials of Project

2026 Governor's Award for Excellence in Exporting.

This award honors Colorado-based companies that have exported products or services for at least two years.

Winners will be formally recognized at World Trade Day on May 21, 2026, the region's premier annual international trade event.

Applications are due by March 27, 2026. Companies can self-nominate or nominate another company that they find deserving.

The nominated company needs to:

- Have exported products or services outside of Colorado domestically and/or internationally for two years or more
  - Be new to export internationally or expanding to a new export market
  - Have headquarters in Colorado or have at least 50% of employees based in Colorado
  - Have at least two years of sales experience in the United States
  - Have a commercialized product or service to export
  - Be registered with the Colorado Secretary of State and in Good Standing
- To apply, navigate to the application under the "More" dropdown menu.

[Learn More](#)

**Free CFPM Food Safety Training for Small Businesses**

Strengthen your team and meet state requirements in just one day with free Certified Food Protection Manager (CFPM) training & certification.

**Why Apply?**

- Train up to 5 employees to meet CFPM requirements
- Earn an industry-recognized credential accepted across the U.S.
- Strengthen food safety leadership and regulatory compliance
- Improve retention and professional growth at no cost to you

**Who Qualifies?**  
Small food-related businesses in Larimer County with fewer than 50 employees. Classes must be completed by March 31.

Reserve your team's free CFPM certification.  See you if you qualify today!



## Free CFPM Food Safety Training English & Spanish


Strengthen your team and meet state requirements in just one day with free Certified Food Protection Manager (CFPM) training & certification.

Why Apply?

- Train up to 5 employees to meet CFPM requirements
- Earn an industry-recognized credential accepted across the U.S.

Management, and PMP® Exam Prep into one comprehensive program. Participants gain a strong foundation in project management principles, develop advanced skills to manage complex projects, and prepare for the PMP® or CAPM® certification exams.

[Learn More](#)



**RSVP NOW!**

April 22nd / 4:30 - 9:00 pm MT  
Social Capitol, Arvada, CO

**Naturally**  
COLORADO

## Naturally Rising "The Conscious Business Pitch Competition"

Naturally Rising: The Conscious Business Pitch Competition is a groundbreaking pitch event celebrating innovation, sustainability, and conscious business practices. Over the last five years, it has evolved into a competition that not only showcases emerging, purpose-driven brands but also celebrates conscious leaders in the natural products industry.

What to Expect:

- Inspiring pitches from visionary Consumer Packaged Goods (CPG) entrepreneurs
- A showcase featuring brands tabling, selling products, and sharing samples
- Thought-provoking discussions about conscious business in the modern world
- A community of like-minded individuals dedicated to creating positive impact

- Strengthen food safety leadership and regulatory compliance
  - Improve retention and professional growth at no cost to you
- Who Qualifies?

Small food-related businesses in Larimer County with fewer than 50 employees. Classes must be completed by March 31.

### Capacitación Gratuita CFPM para Pequeñas Empresas

Fortalezca a su equipo y cumpla los requisitos estatales en un solo día con la certificación gratuita de Certified Food Protection Manager.

[Learn More](#)



### Performance Management Training

Monday April 20, 2026  
11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Join us for a virtual Performance Management training designed for employers managing a full-time, seasonal and part-time workforce. Led by a professional HR Professional, this session will focus on practical strategies for managing performance, accountability, and engagement in fast-paced, short-tenure roles common in Estes Park.

Topics will include:

- Managing employee performance and accountability in seasonal and part-time roles.
- Addressing attendance and scheduling challenges, including availability changes during peak seasons.
- Setting clear expectations quickly for short-term roles, including positions with 60–90 day tenures.
- Maintaining engagement and consistency when onboarding and managing a high-turnover workforce.

This training will be held virtually. A meeting link will be sent to all registered participants

Join us as we support these amazing changemakers as they pitch their sustainable businesses and ideas. It's an opportunity to connect, learn, and be part of the movement toward a more sustainable future.

Date: April 22, 2026

Time: 4:30-9 p.m.

Location: 6543 Wadsworth Blvd, Arvada, CO, 80003

[Learn More](#)



### Social Media Reality Check

Thursday, Mar 26, 2026 | 8:30 AM - 10:00 AM

Estes Valley Community Center, Estes Park

\$No Cost

Turn your years of business credibility into your greatest digital advantage. This course helps you leverage your established history to build a simple, 30-day social media strategy that no startup can replicate.

[Learn More](#)

### How Can My Business Be Bankable?

Thursday, Apr 09, 2026 | 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM

\$No Cost

This event is ideal for small-business owners, entrepreneurs, and leaders who want stronger forecasting skills, a clearer understanding of working-capital

prior to the session. Registration details may be found on the Chamber's website.

needs, and a better grasp of funding options and banking relationships

Learn More



## COLORADO Energy Office

### Home Electrification and Appliance Rebates (HEAR) For Single-Family Homes Are Now Available!

HEAR rebates are available to income-qualified homeowners and renters living in existing single-family homes. Eligible equipment upgrades include heat pumps; heat pump water heaters; electric stoves, cooktops, ranges, and ovens; electrical panels; air sealing; insulation; ventilation; and electric wiring.

Learn More



### Career Day Speakers Needed

We are so excited to have our **THIRD** annual Career Day on **Wednesday, April 29th!** The purpose of Career Day is to expose students to a variety of careers in order to jumpstart their thinking about the future. By preparing early, students will be more likely to be college, technical, or career ready

after high school graduation. All students, from Pre-K through 5th grade, will participate in Career Day. However, we can't do it without you!

We need volunteers to speak to kids as they walk around the gymnasium with a "Career Day Passport" with specific questions they need to ask. Career Day activities will **start at 9:00am and end at 3:00pm** with an hour and a half lunch break from 12:00-1:30. You have three options to choose from:

- A morning option from 9:00-12:00 (we are anticipating 5 grade levels attending)
- An afternoon option from 1:30-3:00 (we are anticipating 2 grade levels attending)
- The full day (9:00-3:00)

We will provide lunch for all volunteers! If you are interested in volunteering to speak about your career, **please complete the Google form below by Monday, April 6th.** Bringing any posters to show, equipment to show/handle, etc is encouraged. We will provide bags for students to hold any work-related freebies you may give, so please feel free to bring any swag! If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at [ashley\\_silva@psdr3.k12.co.us](mailto:ashley_silva@psdr3.k12.co.us) or

Learn More

**Habitat for Humanity of the St. Vrain Valley**

*Open Applications* **ESTES PARK**

Make Owning a Home Your Reality!  
Apply for consideration to **PURCHASE** a Habitat Home!

**Applications open year round**  
Don't miss this new and exciting opportunity to apply for Habitat for Humanity in Estes Park. Whether you're looking for a counseling session or just apply for a new home, now is the time to start! For more information and to get started, contact us or get more information at the Housing Authority in Estes Park.

- 3 Bedroom Homes
- Two Story Homes
- 1,760 Sq. ft.
- Built by volunteers alongside Future Homeowners
- First time Home Buyers

**Program Guidelines**  
Habitat for Humanity of the St. Vrain Valley provides the opportunity to purchase a home through an affordable mortgage in the St. Vrain School District and Estes Park for qualifying households.

**Free counseling meeting**  
We offer a free counseling session to review your application and guide you through the process, considering your income, credit, residency, and first-time homebuyer status.

**Affordable Housing**  
Built with Volunteers & Future Homeowners - reducing construction cost  
No Profit Added - homes are sold at cost  
Truly Affordable Payments - monthly payments are based on 30% your income

**Willingness to Partner**  
Watch the Orientation class online  
Turn in all paperwork and documents  
Contribute 250-500 hours of "Sweat Equity" the able to save \$1,000 for closing cost  
Must be US Citizen or Legal Permanent Resident

Contact: Fabiola Carmichael (Hablo Español) (303) 682-2485 x 2

363 E. Elkhorn Ave Ste. 101, Estes Park www.stvrainhabitat.org info@stvrainhabitat.org

Learn More

[korinna\\_light@psdr3.k12.co.us](mailto:korinna_light@psdr3.k12.co.us) or give us a call at 970-577-5505. With your help, we look forward to having a wonderful and engaging Career Day! More specific information to come!

Register

## EDWC Council Members

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

**Bill Brown**, Estes Park Town Trustee

**Jason Damweber**, Estes Park, Deputy Town Administrator

**Adam Crowe**, Larimer County, Economic Development Manager

**Rebecca D. Gelsing**, Visit Estes Park, Director of Operations

**Nick Smith**, Lumpy Ridge Brewing, Owner

**Val Thompson**, Your Swag Squad

**Kevin Benes**, Running Wild Events

**Peter Levine**, Estes Park Housing Authority



Estes Chamber of Commerce | 533 Big Thompson Ave, Ste. 103 | [info@esteschamber.org](mailto:info@esteschamber.org) | [Privacy Policy](#)

Estes Chamber of Commerce | 533 Big Thompson Ave, Ste. 103 mail to: PO Box 2376 | ESTES PARK, CO 80517 US

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