

Thank you to everyone attending today. To our elected officials, community members, friends, and of course one of our most treasured assets, our members. We appreciate you attending, showing interest in the Tri-Lakes Region and supporting us along the way.

It is an honor to be joining you again, for our Annual State of the Tri-Lakes Region. We have had some great information shared already, so thank you to all the elected officials who spoke today.

2018 can be described no other way than the year of growth. When the recession ended, on paper, in reality, it took a lot longer for businesses to recover. I feel many discussions to expand or join our community started in 2016/2017 and we saw the executions in 2018.

A couple examples of some of those businesses would be Hearth House, a new wedding and corporate venue, right in downtown Monument, which incredibly improved their curb appeal. On the east side of Monument, we have Jackson Creek Senior Living, serving all seniors in their needs, but especially filling a niche of independent senior living.

New businesses in the Northgate corridor are waaay too many to mention and several more on Interquest. But everyone is enjoying the increase of retail on the north side of the county, which helps us when we encourage our residents to head south, instead of north, when making their food and shopping choices. It is always better to keep our tax dollars within El Paso County.

What prompted this increase in businesses all over Northern El Paso County? More rooftops! As most are aware, housing has been growing at an even greater pace, which means commercial

growth is anticipated to continue. Those of us living up here know why we want to be under one of those roof tops. The smaller community feel, with the close proximity to what some would call larger civilization.

We are still a large commuter community, with many families having one spouse headed north and the other headed south to work. Throw in a great school district and you have the recipe for why Northern El Paso County is a desirable and sought after place to lay your head.

According to the Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations, (otherwise known as NEPCO), in the Monument 80132 area code, which refers to both within town limits and those living in the county with a Monument address, they are projecting the population to be 32,332 by 2022, which is a 38% increase since July of 2017. That might sound far away but it is only 3 years.

According to the Housing and Building Association 1,184 single family homes are currently approved to be built plus a 194-unit apartment complex which is in the review process. Those numbers do not address the single custom homes being built here and there that are not part of a larger development.

In addition, we know that south and east of Monument there are many additional residential developments already approved, like Flying Horse, with more right behind them in the planning stages.

Residential growth is music to most business's ears. With more locals, we have a greater chance of attracting businesses that people want to see up here. Plus, we have a greater potential workforce to help fill needed positions. We will be looking at who

can we attract and who will bring good paying jobs to the area. I have mentioned this before, but after some commute north to Denver for enough years, they welcome the opportunity to work closer to home.

Are there challenges with growth, like water? Absolutely. The Town of Monument is looking hard at what they want their next steps to be. Could be reuse, additional water tanks, connecting to CSU or other options. Palmer Lake took steps to protect their water supply and El Paso County just updated their county-wide master water plan. Water is definitely on everyone's minds.

Now onto chamber news...

As a chamber, we had our largest membership growth spurt, over my last almost 8 years here. Number of members grew 18.1%, but represented a 29% increase in membership dollars indicating we are attracting more mid to larger size businesses. This is good news for members looking to work with them.

As Rich Schur, our Chair of the Board of Directors, mentioned, last Friday our board held their annual Board Retreat at The Club at Flying Horse. Thank you Jeff Howell for hosting us! That was a treat!

Anyway, we took our new strategic plan from last year and fine tuned it even more to benefit you, our members and community partners.

Rich has dubbed this year to be the year of "Engagement"! That can mean different things and take different forms, but bottom line is, you will hear more from us and see more from us.

This includes our Board Members, they have made a commitment and guess what? Engagement includes you too! We will make sure you, as our members, have access to all of our engagement opportunities, so you can take advantage at whatever level you feel comfortable with, or have time for.

One of my goals this year is to get our Chamber Annex up and running so that more groups can have an additional comfortable place to meet. We are running out of available times and days for people to use our community room where we currently are.

If you would like to help, in either sweat equity, donation or purchase of materials, etc., please let me know. We hope to get it up and running by this summer.

I cannot have a State of the Tri-Lakes Region without thanking our ambassadors. They play such a huge part in helping us reach out to our members and communicate with them, when our total of 3.5 staff members just don't have the physical time to do so because we currently sit at 536 members! So you can see why we are truly thankful for them and all of our volunteers.

Our Membership committee will be working on how we can show even more value to not only our existing members, but future members and to the community as a whole. We will be looking to educate and inform them on how we help, but also, we will be looking to them to let us know what they might want. What are we missing? What should we be doing more or less of? We want to listen and listen, implement some things, then listen some more. This is an ongoing endeavor and truly the best way I can see to support our members.

Did you look through our Annual Report? Almost 1.6 million member exposures on our website. Over 32,000 attendees to our events. 92 opportunities throughout the year for businesses to connect. People say we are busy, but so are you, coming to those events!

Whether you are an emerging small business, experiencing growing pains, or are a larger organization, we want you to think of us as your proactive business partner. You can look to the chamber to provide business development opportunities, solid business strategies and effective advocacy, all geared towards your success. Engaging with us dramatically expands your connections.

We get invited to the table for most topics that come up for discussion locally and regionally. When it makes sense, we consider it our job to educate decision makers, in a manner that helps our businesses. Our community role is growing every year and I know we have a positive and influential impact on those around us.

We had a great year last year and know we will have an even better one this year. But many of our greater goals that we want to accomplish this year for the benefit of our members and community, are going to take increased funding because we currently operate very lean.

Therefore...we will be reaching out to our members and others around us, to talk about future relationship building. So when I or a member of our sponsorship/investor team ask to meet, please hear us out. I promise it won't be painful!

Speaking of investors, here is a quick list :

- Town of Monument
- Monument Occupational Medicine
- Mountain View Electric Association
- Black Hills Energy
- Kaiser Permanente
- Comcast/Xfinity
- BBSI, HR Consulting
- Jackson Creek Senior Living

Media Investors:

- The Tri-Lakes Tribune
- Snippetz
- KOAA News Channel 5

Wouldn't you like your name added to this very prominent list?
Wink, wink, we will talk.

I, along with our great staff, want to do nothing but support. Support our members, support the towns and county we represent, support the community and help keep it the best darn place to live and work.

Thank you for being a part of our Chamber & EDC family. We look forward to providing an even better partnership in 2019.