



FORT COLLINS AREA
CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE

Strength in Public Policy Coalitions

ACCE Montreal 2015
Panelist:
David May, Fort Collins (CO) Area Chamber of Commerce

Northern Colorado Region

- Larimer and Weld Counties
- Between Denver and Wyoming
- Population
 - Current: 601,792
 - 2040: 1,000,000
- 6,651 square miles
 - Bigger than Hawaii (6,459 sq mi)
 - Bigger than CT & RI combined (6,219 sq mi)
- Largest cities: Fort Collins, Greeley, Loveland



Regional Competition & Cooperation

- Water wars of the 1870s – all western U.S. water law evolved from disputes in Northern Colorado
- Strong intra-regional government cooperation
- 3 main regional chamber programs / initiatives:
 - 1992 – Northern Colorado Legislative Alliance
 - 2009 – Leadership Northern Colorado
 - 2014 – Fix North I-25 Business Alliance



NCLA
NORTHERN COLORADO LEGISLATIVE ALLIANCE

Northern Colorado Legislative Alliance

Northern Colorado Legislative Alliance

- Joint state / federal government affairs committee of top business groups in Larimer / Weld Counties
 - 3 chambers, 2 edc's
- 1992 founded to align business interests in Northern Colorado and amplify voice in capitol
- <http://ncla.biz/>



LNC
LEADERSHIP NORTHERN COLORADO
www.LeadershipNorthernColorado.com

Leadership Northern Colorado

Leadership Northern Colorado

- Regional leadership development program for Larimer and Weld Counties
- Joint initiative of the Fort Collins, Greeley and Loveland Chambers of Commerce, the Community Foundation of Northern Colorado and the Community Foundation Serving Greeley and Weld County
- www.LeadershipNorthernColorado.com

LNC Purpose

- Mission: to build the human capacity and will to identify, define and address the issues facing the Northern Colorado region
- Genesis of program from recognition of need to grow leaders with broader understanding of regional issues, regional relationships, the skills to lead in a regional context

General Description

- Curriculum in three broad categories:
 - **Regional issues**
 - Globalization of the national economy
 - Education & workforce development
 - Transportation
 - The environment and land use
 - Utilities
 - **Regionalism**
 - Defining our region
 - How decisions get made in a regional context
 - Models for regional decision-making
 - Opportunities and limitations of regionalism
 - **Regional leadership skills**
 - Art and science of collaboration
 - Unique challenges of leading in a regional context
 - Northern Colorado's regional demographic and political profile (why we act the way we do)



Fix North I-25 Business Alliance

What is North I-25?



The Problem

- I-25 Fort Collins to Longmont (28 miles) lacks adequate capacity resulting in frequent traffic delays
- North I-25 at Level of Service D headed to LOS F by 2035 = 3 hours to Denver and DIA
- Population by 2040: +52% Larimer, +111% Weld
- Cost to widen I-25 fr Hwy 14 to Hwy 66: \$965M, but no funding has been committed
- Lack of an organized lobbying effort focused on securing funds to widen North I-25

Fix North I-25 Business Alliance

- A “permanent” lobbying effort
- Fix North I-25 Business Alliance created through Northern Colorado Legislative Alliance
- www.FixNorthI25.com
- Mission:
 - Help secure \$965M (or however much is necessary)...
 - ...to widen I-25 to 3 lanes each way...
 - ...between Highway 14 and Highway 66...
 - ...by 2025

Leadership Two-Tiered

- Leadership Council
 - The ‘heavies’
 - Total: 15
- Steering Committee
 - The ‘worker bees’
 - Total: 12

Activities of Alliance

- Clear focus – vision, guiding principles, goals
- Studying highway funding options
 - ‘Highway Funding 101’ manual
- Direct Lobbying – governor, legislators, county / city officials, CDOT, Highway Commission, Congressional delegation, chair of U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, etc
- Public relations and ally building

Six Projects Year 1

- Clarity of purpose – vision/mission, guiding principles
- 18-month plan of action
- Get leadership and management structure set
- Fund raising for Alliance
- Communications, lobbying, allies
- Understand the world of highway funding

Fix North I-25 Business Alliance

Project: How are Highways Funded?

Project title: How Highways Get Funded **Project leader:** Barb Koelzer **Q:** 2&3

Description: This project is about figuring out how highway and interstate projects are funded

Objective: get clear on funding options for the interstate widening and the decision-making process

Deliverable: a background paper and PowerPoint presentation explaining in general how highways and interstates are funded, a review of specific funding sources and an explanation of the decision-making process.

Team Members: Barb Koelzer (lead), Tom Norton, Pete Gashy, David May

Key Actions / milestones

Action	Date
Do research on funding options	
Draft 1 of background paper - funding sources	May 16
Draft 2 of background paper - funding sources edits and processes for how interstate projects get funded	May 30
Brief NCLA Board - paper and PowerPoint	June 19
Evaluate - What next?	

Touch-base meetings with I-25 Alliance Coordinator (DMay):

- Mid-May
- End of May
- Mid-June

Resources:

- Budget: _____
- Estimated hours: _____
- Location of files / resources:

Results To-Date (in 16 mos)

- \$99.5M committed to capacity improvements on north I-25 – interchange, climbing hill, etc
- North I-25 now considered a top state transportation priority
- Positioned Northern Colorado as a state leader in conversation about Colorado’s transportation funding needs
- Alliance creating regional consensus on strategy and priority funding options
- Within one vote in Legislature of getting \$3.6B bond measure on ballot
- Federal Highway Trust Fund bill has North I-25 funding



In Conclusion

- Many issues much bigger than one jurisdiction and require coordinated policy action
- Division freezes policy-setters, unity encourages their support (i.e. courage)
- Structure (like NCLA) and building leadership capacity & relationships (thru LNC) set stage for tackling big initiatives (Fix North I-25)
- Business community can set expectations for public partners
- Businesses hungry for leadership from Chamber (or some other group, if we don't lead)

