

ERIE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ERIE, COLORADO

“OUR STORY”



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PREFACE

Erie Chamber of Commerce Mission: Uniting Community and Commerce

The Chamber of Commerce would like to emphasize that when our Major Events are unable to be held, we, too, suffer. As our community and chamber continue to grow, we have not requested additional funding.

Since the Chamber's inception, it has collaborated in partnership with the Town to providing diverse and evolving activities and events to unite commerce and community. Long standing Chamber events have defined what Erie is known for and emphasized the feel of our community.

- **The Total Attendance for all Chamber Major Events = 65,700**
- **Total annual Activities & Programs = 152**
- **Chamber Membership 1996 = 17 Current Membership 2021 = 374**
- **Erie Population 1995 = 1,480 Current Population = 28,308**

The Erie Chamber of Commerce is committed to creating a strong community. By partnering with businesses and professionals, we work together to build a healthy economy and improve the quality of life in Erie. Your investment helps support this work that benefits both the business community and the residents of Erie.

The Chamber embodies our mission of Connecting Community and Commerce. We focus on continually highlighting our business members to not only the business community but to Erie as a whole, with the intent of driving business locally. We utilize social media, community events and other forums to highlight not only the Chamber and its activities, but to simultaneously promote the Town, the EEDC, and other local organizations for the success of the entire community.

- **Chamber Website Visits (includes Social Media) (Oct. 2020-Jan. 2021) = 6,000**
- **Facebook Followers 2019 = 1,800; Current over 4,000**
- **Balloons launched 1996 = ~12 Current Balloons Launched = ~30-60**
- **Town Fair Vendor Booths 1996 = ~25 Current Vendor Booths = ~270-300**

A hybrid solution to parallel the past events with digital or virtual events is to involve, entertain, fundraise, and ultimately build community presence in a new era. The definition of parallel events is to provide ROI from the Town of Erie funds to be redirected to digital or virtual events if the “in person” events do not take place due to whatever reason. The strategic plan includes a more efficient use of the funds received and will enable the shift of budget to support a higher level of digital presence than in past years. The reach is presumably and predictably larger than hoping for in person events with limited numbers in 2021. The change is inevitable and the time to embrace the change is planning now through open and transparent conversation.

It is also important to note that the Chamber acts as a connection and advocate between its business members and other stakeholders in the community to promote and drive local business relationships. The Chamber is also an educational resource and connection to outside agencies such as the SBDC and others to help our local businesses thrive and grow.

OUR HISTORY

In 1995 Erie's population was 1,480; today our population is 28,308. The Town's Postmaster, Cecilla Barthan, was the Chamber's first President and on June 29, 1995, the Erie Chamber of Commerce filed their *Articles of Incorporation* with the State of Colorado. During the first several years as a Chamber of Commerce, the Board of Directors held their meetings at the Erie Town Hall building. In 1998, Chamber President Pat Bundy and the Board of Directors began searching for a permanent location. The historic house located at 235 Wells Street, [owned by the Town of Erie] became the future, and current, home of the Erie Chamber of Commerce.

In May, 1996, Burton Moquist chaired the Chamber's first, and very successful, Erie Town Fair and Balloon Festival. They had approximately 25 vendor booths and approximately 12 hot air balloons. Since this time, the Town Fair hosts between 275-300 craft, service, and food vendors and attracts more than 25,000 people to the fair every year. The Hot Air Balloon Festival continues to be a three-day event and fluctuates between 30-60 hot air balloons, attracting an average of 3,000 spectators per day.

The Chamber added two additional fundraising events between 1997-2008: The Coal Miner's Golf Classic and Oktoberfest. In 2004-2005, long-time resident Dave Stone attended many of the Erie Chamber Board meetings and proposed the Board of Directors award a Chamber Scholarship. As a young boy, Dave grew up "in and out" of numerous foster homes. Throughout his early, turbulent years he realized the value of a good education, consequently, the idea of a scholarship program to students in Erie High School was very significant and meaningful to Dave Stone. Sadly, Dave passed-away in December 2011. In 2012, the Chamber Board of Directors renamed the scholarship his memory to be the Dave Stone Scholarship.

Membership in 1996 consisted of 17 local Erie businesses and has continued to grow throughout the years to over 370 members.

TO THE FORE

Major Chamber Events 2008-2019

1. The **Town Fair and Hot Air Balloon Festival** held in May, hosts over 25,000 attending the fair and an average of 3,000/day at the Hot Air Balloon Festival
2. The **EB Erie Brewfest** held in June, attracts over 1,200 brew tasters, 30-40 local brewers from throughout the state, and is one of our most popular events. In 2016, it became Erie's first Zero-Waste event in Erie
3. The Wine & Cheese Festival has evolved into The **Wine & Jazz Festival** and will debut in 2021. This event has attracted between 250-30 wineries throughout the region attracting over 1,000 in attendance. We anticipate adding the Jazz Festival will result in an increase in our attendance.
4. Years ago, the Chamber was asked by the Town to consider hosting the Concerts in the Park. We have enjoyed the **Concerts in the Park Summer Series** (5). The estimated attendance is between 2,500-6,000 (average 3,500/concert plus 5 concerts reflects a total of 17,500 people attending the concert series in Erie)
5. In addition to the Concerts in the Park Headliner Band, we have incorporated Erie **Local Bands as our "opening band"** to highlight, acknowledge, and engage more within our community
6. The Chamber's original Octoberfest has changed names several times over the years for various reasons. Today we call this great family event **Miner's Blast!** It is held the 1st Saturday in October. Booths are free but are required to provide games, and/or free swag, etc. for the children. The Chamber hosts the Colorado Garden Tractor Pull, bouncy castles, pedal cars, and touch a truck. The Pumpkin Patch bears 1,000 free pumpkins for children. Attendance is estimated at 5,500

7. The Erie Rotary Club reached out to the Chamber in 2011 requesting we relieve them of their Saturday Christmas Parade that was attracting approximately 200 people. We agreed. We changed the name to **Erie's Country Christmas and Parade of Lights** – all taking place on the 1st Friday of December. This event has grown (along with the Town's growth) over the past years. Our first parade attracted an estimated 2,500 and we have grown over the years to 6,500+ lining. Our entries average 50, and attendance is between 5,500-6,000.

Programs

1. The original Erie Scholarship was renamed to The **Dave Stone Scholarship**. The scholarship is awarded to two Erie graduating high school students and the amount has increased over the years to \$2,000 per student.
2. The following programs were originally offered as annual events but have since been classified as every two-five years or review as needed:
 - a. The Business Expo
 - b. The Business Summit
 - c. The Coal Miner's Golf Tournament
 - d. Love You!
3. **Erie's Pre-School Fair** was held in the fall of 2018 at the Calvary Bible Church. The Chamber partnered with Vista Ridge Academy in organizing, promoting, and executing the fair. This is a "special" event vs annual.
4. **The EPIC Experience**. In collaboration with the SBDC, this bi-annual program was launched in 2016. In addition to participants receiving a one-year membership in the Erie Chamber, they also receive a variety of awards. The concept of the EPIC (Erie Pitch Idea Challenge) is to develop High School Students and adults on how to start a business. The vision is Financial literacy through business; the mission is to develop high school students (and adults) into future business leaders through entrepreneurship.

Educational and Learning Opportunities

1. **Business Visions** (formerly Network at Noon). Meetings are held at the Erie Community Center on the 1st Tuesday of every month from 11:45-1:00 pm. Speakers include other business members, Town of Erie Economic Development Director, SBDC, and outside speakers. There is no cost to attend and guests are welcome
2. **Erie Business Connections** (a leads group). Meetings are held the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of every month at the Calvary Bible Church in Erie. Speakers include other business members, SBDC, and outside speakers. Light snacks are provided. There is no cost to attend and guests are welcome
3. **New Members Coffee**. Gatherings are held at the Erie Chamber Office on the 1st Friday of the month from 7:30-8:00 am. New members meet other members, Chamber Board of Directors, and Chamber Ambassadors. Light snacks are provided. Guests are welcome
4. **Women United**. A discussion group at the Erie Chamber Office on the 3rd Tuesday of every month from 6:30-8:00 pm. The purpose is to unite women, discuss common concerns, make connections, give leads, and support one-another. Guests are welcome
5. **TGI Thursday**. An informal gathering at the Old Mine on the 2nd Thursday of every month from 4:00-6:00 pm. It is open to both Chamber members and non-members. There is no agenda or speaker. The purpose is to build relationships, get to know about different local businesses and the people working at these businesses
6. **Ambassador Program**. Meetings are held the 2nd Wednesday of every month from 9:00-10:00 am at the Erie Chamber Office. Ambassadors are comprised of owners or employees of Erie businesses. They promote and volunteer at all events; plan speakers for upcoming years; brainstorm on new programs and how to improve upon the current events and activities

Partnerships (Local, State, and County Organizations)

1. **SW Weld County Partnership.** Quarterly meetings with Weld County Chambers and Economic Development Departments. Meeting locations are at different Chamber Offices in SW Weld County
2. **Boulder County Partnership.** Quarterly meetings with Boulder County Chambers and Economic Development Departments. Meeting locations are at different Chamber Offices in Boulder County
3. **Boulder County Covid-19 Relief Partnership.** Weekly meetings for updates, questions, and discussion relating to Covid-19
4. **Green Business & Sustainability Program.** Meetings 3rd Wednesday of every month. Boulder County PACE, Town of Erie Sustainability, Town of Erie Economic Development, and City of Longmont
5. **Lead Team.** Meeting the 3 Thursday of every month (9:30-11:00 am). Participating organizations include: SBDC, Town of Erie Economic Development, EEDC, Upstate Colorado, and Erie Chamber
6. **Association of Colorado Chambers of Colorado (ACCC).** During the Covid-19 Pandemic, virtual meetings are held the 2nd Monday of every month from 10:00-11:00 am with Chambers throughout the State of Colorado
7. **Weld County Employment Services and Workforce Boulder County.** Partnering, supporting, and promoting both agencies through training, educating, internships, and placement of all job seekers, including those in poverty and without a high school education
8. **SBDC (Small Business Development Center).** The Chamber hosts the office space for Jesse Esparza (SBDC counselor) to meet with clients weekly and give them support and direction for starting, or maintaining, a business.
9. **Commuting Solutions.** Hosting and advertising information and meetings.

Campaigns, Promotions, Marketing

1. **Mayor's State of Town Address.** Held March-April: date at the discretion of the Mayor
2. **Candidates Forum.** A service to the Erie Community, and held in March
3. **Ground-Breaking Ceremonies.** Welcoming new businesses – Initial “ground” stage
4. **Ribbon Cuttings.** Promoting new and relocated Chamber businesses
5. **Business After Hours.** Networking with other Chamber businesses at different business locations
6. **Erie Chamber Directory and Community Guide.** A directory with Town information and listings of Chamber businesses
7. **Erie Lifestyle Magazine.** Published, printed, and mailed [bi-annually] to over 6,000 homes in Erie, parts of Broomfield and Lafayette
8. **Erie Town and Regional Map [with street index].** Published and printed every two years
9. **Friday Features.** A weekly News and Updates flyer, emailed to all Chamber members. Includes Town Administrator's Weekly News brief, Erie Police Department notices, Town of Erie street repairs and more
10. **Facebook, Twitter, Instagram.** Postings on regular basis to inform Erie residents
11. **Chamber Website.** Includes Covid-19 daily updates as provided by the State of Colorado, Boulder County, and Weld County. Local information, calendar of events, Senior Citizens and High Plains Library resources, and more.
12. **A Culinary Road Trip.** A promotion of all restaurants, breweries, and coffee shops in Historic Downtown. [Hwy 7 restaurants declined to participate.] The videos are approximately 2 minutes each, are posted on the Chamber's website with phone, google map, and website URL easy access
13. **Mental Health 4-part Series.** 4 videos accessible via Chamber website, to give assistance to those who may be seeking it. Also was posted on Facebook and Twitter
14. **Erie Farmer's Market.** Promoting the market on website, FB, directory and other
15. **Visit Greeley & Discover Weld County.** A Visitor's Guide in partnership with Greeley Chamber

2020 COVID-19 PANDEMIC

2020 Cancellations

1. **Town Fair, Brewfest, and Wine & Jazz**
2. **Hot Air Balloon Festival**
3. **All Concerts**
4. **Miner's Blast!**
5. **Country Christmas and Parade of Lights.** Reformatted event (see below)

New Covid-19 Additions

1. **Membership Renewals.** A 10% discount was given to new and renewing members between March 2020 through September 2021
2. Erie Chamber's First **Rubber Duck Race.** Revenue from this event supports the Dave Stone Scholarship Program
3. Erie Chamber's **First Community Kids Juried Art Show.** In partnership with the Erie Library and local artist Kristi Arzola
4. **A "Unique" Parade of Lights.** All entries were stationary at the Calvary Bible Church and all spectators remained inside their cars while driving through the "parade". This was a Zero-waste event
5. **Zoom Webinars.** Covid-19 related. Partnering with SBDC, ACCC, EEDC, Business Connections, and other organizations
6. **FACE Concert.** A video of this covid-19 concert performance, held at private location, was placed on YouTube, Chamber Website, and Social Media and promoted to our residents
7. **DEBA's 1st Musical Concert Downtown**– Chamber funded 100% of the performance by musician Dan Rodriquez

2021 STRATEGIC PLANNING

1. Continue working on Covid-19 Recovery

- a. Posting information on website pertaining to Covid-19 grants, Health Department Guidelines, Federal, State and Local Pandemic Information; Erie Traffic and Police Information, Local events and activities, and general updates
- b. Posting information on social media pertaining to Covid-19 grants, Health Department Guidelines, Federal, State and Local Pandemic Information; Erie Traffic and Police Information, Local events and activities, and general updates
- c. Relaying information to members on Friday Features pertaining to Covid-19 grants, Health Department Guidelines, Federal, State and Local Pandemic Information; Town of Erie's Administrator's Weekly Update, Traffic and Police Information, Local events and activities, and general updates
- d. Relaying information to members via Constant Contact Emails pertaining to Covid-19 grants, Health Department Guidelines, Federal, State and Local Pandemic Information; Town of Erie's Administrator's Weekly Update, Erie Traffic and Police Information, Local events and activities, and general updates
- e. Continue meeting on regular basis with Association of Colorado Chambers of Commerce (ACCC), and Boulder County Economic Recovery
- f. Continue promoting All businesses in Erie through social media, Chamber Website, and Friday Features
- g. Continue promoting virtual webinars through social media, Chamber Website, and Friday Features
- h. Continue offering Mental Health webinars and contact information through social media and Chamber Website

- i. Continue promoting Green Business & Sustainability Programs in Erie on Chamber Website and social media

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- j. Reaching out to both Erie Businesses (Chamber Members and Non-Members) by coordinating a one-hour “We Want To Hear From You” zoom meeting with the groups listed below, that will be facilitated by two Chamber Board of Directors. The purpose is to listen to the different businesses and the different locations and find out (from them) how we, as a Chamber of Commerce, can better serve their needs for them to prosper in the Town of Erie!

- i. Erie Airport
- ii. Hwy 7 Businesses
- iii. 9 Mile Corner
- iv. DEBA
- v. EEDC
- vi. CoSolve

2. Virtual and/or In-person Events

a. Major events that can be held with or without Covid-19 Guidelines include:

- i. Rubber Duck Race
- ii. Erie Hot Air Balloon Festival
- iii. Community Kids Juried Art Show
- iv. Disc Golf Tournament
- v. Aerial Bike Tournament
- vi. Erie Single Track – Kids Strider Race
- vii. Parade of Lights

b. Major Events that can be held in-person include all of the above and those below:

- i. Erie Town Fair
- ii. Concerts in the Park
- iii. EB Brewfest

- iv. Erie Wine and Jazz Festival
- v. Miner's Blast
- vi. Country Christmas and Parade of Lights