



Colorado County Agents Association

from the mountains to the plains

September 20, 2021

Attendees for the Chad Reid NACAA Western Region PIC:

I hope that this letter finds you well and that you survived the summer with gusto and zest. It is difficult to believe how quickly the year is passing and that we are now within a month of the upcoming Professional Improvement Conference in Grand Junction. I wanted to reach out with a few items of note for those who have registered for the conference.

Masks*

At the current time, Colorado has a variety of mask guidelines depending on the type of establishment you are in and the County you are in. The PIC is going to be held in Mesa County. The Board of Mesa County Commissioners approved a "Free to Choose Resolution." Therefore, while there currently are no public health orders in place in Mesa County, a business can choose to have health guidelines for entry. So the planning committee and I would encourage you to consider having a mask with you in your travels, in case you need it to enter a particular business. I am including a link to the Mesa County Health Department's website so that you are able to review the site if you desire:

<https://health.mesacounty.us/covid19/>. Additionally, here is a link to the COVID-19 website for the Colorado Department of Public Health: <https://covid19.colorado.gov/>

While on the tour, we will be using vans and county vehicles for transportation, and at this time, masks are being strongly encouraged for all passengers in the vans. If you have any concerns regarding mask-wearing or safety, please contact Jenny Beiermann at jenny.beiermann@colostate.edu.

*Colorado health guidelines have changed frequently and rapidly throughout the pandemic period. Should they change again prior to or during the PIC, our group will need to adapt at that time, and we will do our best to notify you of changes as soon as possible.

I-70 Weather Closures

Across many of our states, Extension offices have found themselves impacted with preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disasters over the past few years. Many of you know that Colorado was one of several states that battled major wildfires in 2020. This year we are contending with flooding and mudslides that have resulted in the fire scars created in 2020. A seventeen-mile stretch of I-70, passing through Glenwood Canyon, had to be closed for two months this summer due to flooding and

mudslides. As I write this letter, the interstate is back open; however, it is now intermittently closed during inclement weather. Should your travel plans to Grand Junction include driving between Dotsero and Glenwood Springs, it is strongly suggested that you monitor the Colorado Department of Transportation website (<https://www.codot.gov/>) for closures and keep a close eye on the weather. The suggested route of travel around the closure is via Highway 50 through Gunnison, CO.

Registration and Check-in

Check-in for the conference will be available at the Fairfield by Marriott lobby from 2:00 – 5:00 pm on Monday, October 4. If you are attending the wine tasting, please stop by and grab your ticket at registration before the tasting begins at 3:00 pm. Check-in will continue Tuesday morning at the Two Rivers Convention Center on October 5. The educational day will begin at 8:30 am at the Convention Center, less than one block west of the hotel.

Raffle tickets for our door prize basket drawings will be available for sale during registration and throughout the day until the close of the educational session. Winners will be announced at the banquet. Half of the proceeds will go to the Colorado Scholarship Fund, and the other half will go towards the National Scholarship Fund. Tickets will be one for \$10 or 3 for \$20. We have some beautiful baskets donated by CCAA members from around the state. You will be able to view the baskets at check-in and registration. If you fly in for the conference, we will mail your basket to you upon request.

Presentation and Poster Sessions

If you are presenting, please remember to submit your presentation electronically by October 1 to Kara Harders, kara.harders@colostate.edu. We will have your presentations loaded onto the conference computer for ease of access. However, as Extension agents, we all understand technical difficulties, so it may be wise to have a backup copy of your presentation file on a thumb drive. If you have a poster to display, please arrive at the convention center before the session begins at 8:30 to set up your poster for display in the foyer. Registration opens at 8:00 am, so you can begin set-up then. We will provide a foam display platform, an easel, and thumbtacks. If you have handouts or other display items and require a table next to your poster, please let us know immediately. If you wish to display your poster using alternative items, please provide them yourself. You may print your poster on any type of paper or medium. If you wish to laminate your poster for use at another time, please feel free to do so.

Banquet

We plan to have an interactive activity at our banquet, prepared by one of our own Colorado County Agents Association member. We will announce the winners from the poster and presentation sessions and draw for winners of the scholarship fund raffle. Cash bar will open at 5:30, and dinner will begin promptly after welcome announcements and an invocation at 6:00. Business casual dress for the banquet is encouraged.

Wine Tasting and Closing Session

We still have tickets available for the wine tasting event with Carlson Vineyards on Monday, October 4, at 3:00 pm. This is a great opportunity to meet other attendees and kick-off the conference with some friendly networking. Those can be purchased through the Eventbrite registration website. We will feature an array of wines and also exquisite charcuterie boards featuring local goods from Taste of Palisade. This is one you won't want to miss!

Our closing session will be held at The Glorious Fig in downtown Grand Junction. Light appetizers will be provided, as well as your first beverage. The Glorious Fig has a full-service bar with wine, beer, and specialty cocktails. Their beverage menu also includes specialty mocktails, sodas, lemonades, and local ciders for those who do not drink alcohol. Join us for a post-tour snack and to toast a successful conference as we reunite with the other attendees from our separate tours for a final networking opportunity. The Fig is located just behind the Fairfield by Marriott.

Tours

Early October is a beautiful time to visit Colorado, one of my favorite times to be in our state. Still, our weather can be fickle and unpredictable during early October, with wide changes during a day and across varying elevations. Dressing in layers is a good plan during that time of year. Please bring a refillable water bottle for the tour to stay hydrated. This will be especially true for those taking the Livestock & Range Tour, as our travels will begin at approximately 4,500 feet elevation and climb to nearly 9,000 feet elevation.

Additionally, the sun can be intense at high elevations, especially if snow is on the ground and reflecting it back up at you. (Fewer air molecules and less pollution in the air to filter the sun's rays). We do not plan on having snow on the ground, but it has been known to snow in October at higher elevations. Sunscreen, hats, long sleeve clothing, and sunglasses can all be beneficial when visiting higher altitudes. Also, please plan to wear sturdy shoes for being outside and moving around on the uneven ground. Also, as an FYI, for the livestock & range tour, vault toilets will be the primary facilities available throughout the day. If this does not work for you, you may choose to switch to the agronomy & horticulture tour. Please contact Jenny.Beiermann@colostate.edu if you wish to change your tour track.

Those who are used to elevation already know this paragraph and how their body reacts to altitudes. If you are not used to elevations over 5,000 feet, there are some simple and helpful things you can do to prepare. Twenty-four hours beforehand, reduce the amount of caffeine, alcohol, and/or carbonation that you consume. Drink hydrating fluids, like water, at twice the amount you would normally. Enjoy some potassium in your diet. (i.e., bananas, avocados, dried fruit, etc.) And pace yourself as you enter higher elevation. If you are not used to it and not well acclimated to the altitude, you don't want to over-exert yourself just prior to and while getting to that 8,000+ feet of altitude.

If you feel that you cannot handle these described elevation changes, again, you may choose to participate in the Horticulture/Agronomy tour that will take place in the valley at normal elevations. On the Livestock & Range tour, there will be an extra vehicle available to take any attendees experiencing altitude issues back down to Grand Junction, if necessary.

Looking Forward to a GREAT PIC!

Our Colorado team is so delighted that you are planning to trek our way in October! As you may imagine, planning an event after what our world has experienced over the past eighteen months has been wrought with challenges. But our planning committee has been dedicated to the idea of providing you with the best experience that they can while being ever mindful of your safety and well-being. We hope that you are as excited for the 2021 Chad Reid NACAA Western Region PIC as we are!

Looking Forward,
MJ Fisher
Colorado County Agents Association, 2021 President