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2018 Leading Lady
Susan Jessup

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Meet NoCo's 2018 Women of Distinction

Northern Colorado continues to benefit from the leadership, entrepreneurship and mentorship of countless women in business, government and nonprofits. Many of those women are highlighted in the Northern Colorado Women of Distinction program, presented by BizWest.

Now in its 10th year, Women of Distinction continues to reveal inspiring stories. Our impressive list of honorees represents some of the most talented women in our region, as well as the most energetic volunteers and mentors. A willingness to give of oneself for the greater good always is an important component of our award criteria.

This year's Women of Distinction award winners are profiled in the following pages, demonstrating how our selection committee — comprised of past winners and representatives from BizWest — again chose wisely and well. As always, it was a tough job. The pool of nominees numbered more than 70, and all were more than worthy of inclusion. We are grateful to the selection committee for its dedication and hard work, including Pam Bricker, Dixie Daly, Patty Gates, Ann Hutchison, Jean Schober Morrell and Yvonne Myers.

We also would like to thank the sponsors whose generosity makes it possible for BizWest to bring the accomplishments of these impressive women to our attention. This year, our charter title sponsor, UCHealth, was joined by Linden, The Women's Clinic (charter), The Eye Center of Northern Colorado, Columbine Health Systems (charter), EKS&H, Orthopaedic and Spine Center of the Rockies (charter), Community Foundation of Northern Colorado, Monfort College of Business, Good Samaritan

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Photographs were taken by Chad Collins. Dallas Heltzell edited this special section, and Dallas, Michelle Venus and Shelley Widhalm wrote the profiles of our honorees.

On behalf of the entire staff of BizWest Media LLC, we extend our congratulations to this year's winners. May you continue to inspire us — and all of Northern Colorado.



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- 4 | Banking & Finance
- 6 | Leading Lady
- 8 | Education
- 10 | Exceptional Volunteer
- 11 | Government, Energy, Utilities
- 12 | Health Care
- 14 | Business and Business Services

- 15 | Nonprofit Creative Services
- 17 | Outstanding Mentor
- 18 | Nonprofit Human Services
- 21 | Real Estate, Construction and Development
- 22 | Women-Owned Businesses - Northern Colorado
- 23 | 2018 Nominees

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Banking and Finance

Tracy Axton, FMS Bank



Born and raised in the tiny Eastern Plains town of Cope, which had been founded by her great great grandfather, Tracy Axton likes to keep it simple.

She earned a degree in business administration and finance at the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley but decided to stay in Greeley because it was not too small but not too big for a small-town girl.

"I had always wanted to be a stock broker," she said, "but in late '87 the stock market crashed and I thought, well, maybe that's not the thing to do. I'll go into banking. Only thing you could do, though, was be a part-time teller. So I worked in retail and as a waitress, and fell into an IT position at a retail store."

She finally landed as a mortgage loan processor at 1st Choice Bank, where she met Patty Gates, the person who would become her mentor.

"Four banks later, we're still together," Axton said. "We travel in a herd. Every time we got bought out by a big bank, we'd move to a smaller bank. Smaller banks have a lot more freedom and power to help people. They can make local decisions, which I think are really important. It's more of a hometown feeling, somebody to call and have a face. I think that's really important today."

Axton said she takes pride in "all the people I've helped that think they could never buy a home. To work with those people, and when they come back to you again and again and again for your future purchases, that's what I think is so rewarding — when they're appreciative of what you're doing and you're not setting them up for failure."

"I'm very satisfied with what I do. I'm a numbers person, but I'm also a people person, and this allows me to do both."

"I also like being a farmer and working with the land. Helping people is the best thing, helping them fulfill their dreams or doing things in the community and helping kids with their 4-H projects."

She met Alan, the man who would become her husband, while she was doing volunteer work, and giving back remains important to her. Axton serves on the board of directors of the Greeley Philharmonic Orchestra — the oldest philharmonic west of the Mississippi, she points out — and as treasurer for the Weld County Fair Board. She also is on the Greeley Area Board of Realtors' Community Reinvestment Committee and Affiliate Committee.

She and her husband have a small farm where they raise a few head of cattle, a little alfalfa and a large garden containing mostly hot peppers that they dry and grind into "sprinkles" that are given to a few fortunate friends and family each year at Christmas.

By Dallas Heltzell

FMS Bank congratulates Tracy Axton on being named a Woman of Distinction in Banking and Finance!



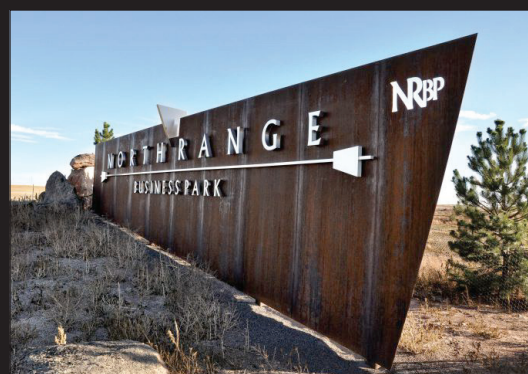
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Leading Lady Susan Jessup, Sylvan Dale Guest Ranch



Visitors come to Sylvan Dale Guest Ranch to get away, but for Susan Jessup of Loveland, she couldn't stay away — at least for the long term.

"It's just my life. Sylvan Dale is my life," Jessup said.

Jessup, second-generation owner of the 3,200-acre working guest ranch, grew up on the ranch her late parents, Maurice and Mayme, purchased as a run-down 125-acre property in 1946. They, with the help of Jessup and her brother, David, grew the business from a summer guest ranch into a year-round facility.

Susan originally planned to make a career of teaching, and in 1966 received a degree in elementary education with a Spanish minor at the University of Northern Colorado. She entered the teaching profession, including teaching for one year at an American Cooperative School in La Paz, Bolivia. In 1976, she had a job lined up to teach second grade, but the Big Thompson Flood on July 31 brought her home. "I said I need to be home to help my parents through this," Jessup said. "That's where I've been ever since."

Through the years, Jessup held several jobs on the ranch, including in house-keeping, on the grounds and in food and beverage. Now, she serves as general manager, overseeing the daily operations of the ranch, which serves as a venue for weddings and special events, offers overnight stays and provides trail rides and riding lessons.

"I like sharing the beauty of Sylvan Dale with others," Jessup said. "The surroundings are beautiful. We're nestled in the valley. We're surrounded by the foothills. The animals, the people and the beauty of the natural environment, that's what makes it beautiful to me."

Jessup wants to continue what her parents began, she said.

"My mom and dad dedicated their lives here. They left a legacy, and I'm committed to carrying it forward," Jessup said. "It's something I do out of love."

Jessup and her brother want to carry that legacy forward through the Heart-J Center for Experiential Learning, the ranch's nonprofit partner launched in 2014 that offers outdoor education for all ages in the form of field trips, workshops and retreats.

"It's special because it's going to carry the legacy of Sylvan Dale into the future for future generations," Jessup said. "It will continue providing a place for people to come to learn and to heal through its programs. ... They connect with each other, the natural environment, the horses, and through those connections, it's a healing process."

In Jessup's rare spare time, she rides horses, takes pilates classes, reads and spends time with her and her husband David's two children and two grandchildren. "If you're doing what you love and love what you do, why would you want spare time?" Jessup said.

She said her biggest accomplishment is keeping the ranch going.

"I'm very proud of that, and I think it's touched thousands of people and will continue," she said. "That's what I've given my life to."

By Shelley Widhalm

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Education **Christine Chin,** Colorado State University — College of Business



As director of executive programs at Colorado State University's College of Business, Christine Chin is responsible for implementing the blended classroom/online executive master's in business administration degree program and reimagining the college's executive education professional-development programs.

"In the immediate future," she said, "I'd love to continue building the executive programs to be a valuable resource for working professionals to be the best manager they can be, and move their teams forward and help them make a difference in the world."

If that's not enough to fill her plate, in December she also began leading the team that's launching a Global Business Academy summer program for high school students.

"Each area I've done work in has been a unique experience and I've learned something," she said. "I've valued and treasured every experience I've had. Each thing has been a unique challenge, with different solutions and wonderful people."

Chin's previous roles at the College of Business have included stints as director of strategic initiatives and interim director of the CSU business school's Institute for Entrepreneurship.

"I want to be inspired, challenged, be able to work with smart people to help visualize and deliver the next model for higher education," she said. "It will be a combination of delivery platforms — online and knowledge-as-a-service."

Before coming to CSU, she started Chin & Associates, a business consulting company that provided strategic and operational planning, market research and market development, and leadership and team development know-how to corporations, startups and emerging companies.

Before all that came a 20-year career in journalism-related ventures with media companies Knight-Ridder and Gannett. She held leadership positions around the country in marketing, strategy, circulation, and human resources, then served as president and publisher of the Bellingham (Wash.) Herald and the Fort Collins Coloradoan. She spent time at the helm of the Allied Daily Newspaper Association and was active in the Newspaper Association of America.

Chin's charitable work includes work on the boards of Poudre Valley Health and Medical Center of the Rockies. A former trustee of the Women's Foundation of Colorado, she also founded Give Next, a youth philanthropy program in Larimer County in partnership with Bohemian Foundation and the Community Foundation of Northern Colorado. As a board member of the Poudre School District Foundation board, she helped launch a digital educator program that increased the use of technology in Poudre School District classrooms. She also has sat on the boards of the Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce, Western Washington University Foundation, Whatcom Family YMCA, United Way of Whatcom County, and the UCLA Alumni Association.

Chin graduated magna cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa with a bachelor's degree in communication studies from UCLA and earned an MBA from Harvard Business School. She enjoys reading, baking, relaxing by the ocean, watching Formula 1 auto racing, and spending time with her husband and daughter.

By Dallas Heltzell



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Exceptional Volunteer **Maya Jairam,** KRFC



Maya Jairam volunteers for her play and organizes volunteer activities for her work.

She's the volunteer coordinator at KRFC-FM 88.9, a community-based radio station in Fort Collins.

"I plug them where they are needed. I get them involved," said Jairam, who has been with KRFC for more than two years.

Jairam works with more than 450 volunteers, overseeing the programming and making sure volunteers are trained for anything from grant writing to planning events. She helps fill in programming needs and get the volunteers on air.

"Pretty much anything at the station that's going on is filled by volunteers," Jairam said. "What I enjoy is, there are a lot of things I get to learn on the fly, and I've met a great number of really cool, interesting people who do a variety of things."

Jairam also did a variety of things, career and volunteer-wise, before landing at KRFC. A Fort Collins native, she attended middle and high school in Massachusetts and earned a bachelor's in psychology from Emory University in Atlanta. During her studies, she made sure she had time to volunteer, including spending a summer in Africa with Habitat for Humanity, working with Arts Alliance Emory and serving as a reading tutor.

"My experience outside of the classroom informed and continues to inform me more than anything I learned in the classroom," Jairam said. "The book stuff, it was intellectual knowledge, not practical knowledge."

After graduating, Jairam volunteered for a year in India at an orphanage as a liaison for international adopters. She worked for her father, Raju, for a couple of years, conducting administrative and bookkeeping duties, and in the banking industry for another 12 years in New York and Fort Collins. She also taught dance and pilates.

Through the years, Jairam continued on her volunteer track, including organizing exhibit work at the Fort Collins Museum of Art and the Global Village of Arts and Culture, where she was involved from concept to completion. She's also volunteered as an emcee at the Fort Collins Museum of Discovery, with the Bas Bleu Reader's Theater, during Bohemian Nights to provide support to the stages and staff, and at the Fort Collins Symphony to help with renewal notices. She served on the Human Relations Commission for the city of Fort Collins for four years until 2012 with her fourth year as chairwoman.

And if needed, Jairam steps in as a volunteer at KRFC to fill in.

"I'm the go-to person for most things," Jairam said, adding that before she became an employee, she served on the board, coordinating and organizing events for the station.

Jairam also is involved in acting, something she has done since high school. She's taken vocal lessons, and plays the cello, although poorly, she said.

"I've done a lot. I've accomplished a lot. I've covered a lot," Jairam said. "I've been a volunteer since childhood. That's who I am. ... I am naturally inclined to be in service to others. That's been instilled in me since childhood."

By Shelley Widhalm

Government, Energy, Utilities **Julie Cozad,** Weld County



Weld County Commissioner Julie Cozad represents a vast area — and a vast array of issues.

Her District 2 covers the southwest portion of the county, including nine of its 32 municipalities. Many of those nine are among the fastest growing in the state, clustered along the burgeoning Interstate 25 corridor.

Transportation, naturally, has been her major focus since being elected to the commission in 2014.

“Working on transportation has been the biggest accomplishment for me and the other commissioners,” she said. “Through planning and investment, we accomplished building the majority of Weld County Road 49” from Interstate 76 north to U.S. 34 between Greeley and Kersey — “a five-lane concrete road that’s very safe and well constructed, a good investment for the county. It was great how we’ve all worked together regionally on transportation issues and continue to do that.”

Cozad also chairs the Freedom Parkway Coalition, which focuses on Weld County Road 54 improvements, and is Weld County’s representative on the North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization, which has spearheaded the drive to widen Interstate 25.

Gov. John Hickenlooper recently appointed Cozad to the Regional Air Quality Control Commission, after picking her in 2015 to serve on the Colorado Commission on Aging — a post that’s extra special to her.

“Everything that we had gone through to get services for my mom and housing for my dad just got me really interested in aging issues,” she said. “So when a position opened up in the Fourth Congressional District, I applied as the Republican.” Each district sends a Republican and a Democrat to the panel; Cozad’s Democratic counterpart is Connie Ring of Springfield.

The list of Cozad’s other involvement seems almost as long as WCR 49. She serves on the Poudre River Trail Board, the Workforce Development Board, Weld County Area Agency on Aging, Weld Faith Partnership Council, Prevention Partnership Council, Weld County Fair Board and the Criminal Justice Advisory Council, as well as service with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Weld County, the Women’s Fund Board of Weld County and the Greeley Redeye Rotary Club.

Before being elected to the commission, Cozad worked as a professional land use planner for 20 years in the public and private sectors. She served in the Weld County Planning Department from 1995 to 2001 and worked at Hall-Irwin from 2001 to 2005 and Tetra Tech from 2006 to 2014. Cozad was a member of the Milliken Town Board from 2006 to 2014, the last four years as mayor pro tem.

“For me personally, it’s very important that I work with people,” Cozad said. “I think I have really good people skills — listening to people, solving problems by collaborating. It’s really important to me.” She held public coffees every month in Milliken, and often is available at Weld County’s southern office near I-25 and Colorado Highway 119 in Firestone.

Cozad and her husband live in Milliken, where they enjoy riding their motorcycles, gardening, hiking, camping and spending time with their family, including two adult daughters and five grandchildren.

By Dallas Heltzell

Health Care **Dr. Lesley C. Brooks,** Sunrise Community Health



Fighting for civil rights has always been central to the life of Dr. Lesley Brooks — and health care, she says, is definitely a civil right.

“For me, that is bedrock,” she said. “I wish I could say that I was as thoughtful and deliberate as a young person. My perspective has developed over time, as I have matured. My dad was an attorney and did lots of civil rights work, so it was fundamental for us in my family.

“I’m one of three siblings; my two older sisters were born with developmental delays,” Brooks said, “so vulnerable populations are really central to who I am.”

Brooks found her way to medicine during a 30-month tour with the Peace Corps in Malawi, where she worked in AIDS education and realized that health care is the most fundamental civil rights issue of them all.

“In the Peace Corps in the mid-‘90s, we did HIV and AIDS education work, teaching about safe sex and how this disease is and is not transmitted. I helped run mother-baby clinics. One woman after another — they’d had five, six, seven pregnancies but just one live child because children were dying of all these diseases and infections. Who cares if you have a First Amendment right if you’re losing your children to diarrheal disease? So health care and civil rights are the perfect marriage.

Back in Colorado, Brooks serves as chief medical officer for Evans-based Sunrise Community Health and as assistant medical director for the North Colorado Health Alliance.

“Sunrise is a federally qualified health center. We care for people regardless of their ability to pay — the most vulnerable in our communities,” she said.

“There was never a question about where I would practice medicine. Community health centers were born in the belly of the civil rights movement — (President Lyndon Johnson’s) war on poverty — that produced community health centers, community mental health centers, Head Start, Legal Services.

“This is the work I was supposed to do and where I’m supposed to be.”

Brooks, a board-certified family physician, has practiced full-scope family medicine including obstetrics in Northern Colorado since 2008. In her role as assistant medical director, she is responsible for oversight of care plans for Medicaid patients enrolled in the Regional Care Collaborative Organization and for coordination of an integrated team of providers working to better manage the use of opioids for treatment of chronic pain. She also co-chairs the Provider Education Work Group for the Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention.

Away from work, she said, “I’m proud of being a mom to two kids. My husband knew that he wanted to be a parent. I thought the world would be a better place if I wasn’t somebody’s mom but I found out the opposite — it’s a place where all my values come into play.

“I’m a work in progress. I think my children would confirm that — but I’m proud of that, too.”

By Dallas Heltzell

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Business and Business Services

Heidi Hostteter, H2 Manufacturing Solutions



Ask Heidi Hostteter, vice president of Fauston Tool, for her elevator speech and her reply is, “I’m a Jill-of-all-trades.”

The extended-play version of the elevator speech tells an interesting story. Hostteter runs a five-axis manufacturing company based in Jefferson County that focuses on the defense and aerospace industries, with aeronautics, energy, medical and semiconductor clients thrown in.

Hostteter heads a Weld County-based consulting business, H2 Manufacturing Solutions, which “tries to make the trials and tribulations that manufacturers face a little more manageable and a lot less frustrating,” she said. H2 is another set of eyes that assesses processes on the floor and in the office suite and then makes recommendations that build in new operational efficiencies.

On top of that, she works with the governor’s office, looking at infrastructure projects and programs from an altruistic standpoint that have positive community-wide impact. She is one of the founders of ADAPT (Alliance for the Development of Additive Processing Technologies), a research lab at Colorado School of Mines. In lay terms, ADAPT looks at the characteristics of materials used for 3-D metal printing and then looks at the next product development steps based on manufacturers’ needs.

There’s also a top-secret technology readiness project being developed in Northern Colorado. It’s very hush-hush right now because of NDA documents with Hostteter’s signature, but should be announced in about eight months. “It’s going to be super fun,” she said.

She’s a board member for Northern Colorado Manufacturing Partnership and ADAPT. She volunteers at a Boulder County respite program, spending time every week with one of the organization’s clients. She is a donor for ChildSafe in Fort Collins; H2 sponsors many of its events.

Hostteter’s career started as a program manager in electronics manufacturing, which led to a dedication to keeping manufacturing in the United States and especially Colorado. It’s not a typical career path for a woman, given that manufacturing is a male-dominated industry. For other women who want to enter the field, she has sage advice: “You can have it all.”

“Every time I give a career development talk at the college level, someone says, ‘Oh, my gosh, and you have a family, too?’ It comes up 100 percent of the time,” said Hostteter with a certain amount of frustration in her voice. She’s the mom of three boys — a 7-year-old and two sons in college. “Yes, yes I do. It doesn’t have to be a choice. You can have it all. You can want it all. And you can add a whole lot of value in pioneering as a woman in manufacturing technology.”

Hostteter’s advice: Be gender neutral at the conference table. Appreciate the content and value that people — women and men — bring to the table, and nothing else.

She plays just as hard as she works. She skis, mountain bikes and cuddles with her little boy while they watch movies and read books. “This is an incredible state we live in,” she said, “and I want to enjoy every bit of it.”

By Michelle Venus

Nonprofit Creative Services
Michelle Kempema,
 Greeley Model Railroad Museum



Michelle Kempema's career track is a busy one, since model trains run along it.

She first visited the Colorado Model Railroad Museum in Greeley with one of her daughters and fell in love with the infectious lore of railroading the museum presents in miniature. Her excitement about wanting to share that love with new generations led her to become the museum's executive director, a post she's held for seven years.

"I love to educate, inspire, bring joy," she said. "I truly believe in the joy factor. It's definitely a place of joy. The museum is my passion. It's a one-of-a-kind in the world — the largest of its kind and the only one that operates with a dispatcher, and we have individuals running the trains."

The immersive, miniature world in the museum was featured on the Travel Channel last year, and Kempema has ambitions for its growth. "We can grow our educational programming and be a destination in Greeley for families," she said. "We don't have room for all we're doing with our youth programs. Someday, hopefully, we'll grow and expand so we can continue on the great experience you get when you visit."

Kempema's drive to provide discoveries extends beyond the museum as well.

"I do a lot of ag tours also," she said. "I love taking people to see carrots, onions, where our food comes from." Her father worked in the irrigation industry in Nebraska and sold farm equipment for Noffsinger Manufacturing in Greeley, and the allure of farm and ranch life stuck with her as well.

Today, she serves on many boards including those of the Greeley Creative District. In 2015 she received the Outstanding Tourism Frontline Worker award from the Colorado Tourism Office. As president of the board of Visit Greeley, she said, she does "a lot of work trying to promote group tourism to Northern Colorado. At the helm of Tour Colorado, she targets the group tourism market, she said. "I represent the state when I go to conventions. It's really fun. I love our state and I love Greeley. I think Greeley can grow as a tourist attraction and be a destination."

A graduate of the University of Northern Colorado's Monfort College of Business with a degree in business and a minor in sociology, Kempema also is an artist and owns her own craft business, Colorado Craftworks, which takes her to regional shows in four states throughout the year.

She has two daughters, one studying engineering at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, and the other a junior in high school in the El Paso County town of Peyton. Her husband, Keith, works at IBM in Boulder, and the couple has a dog and two cats.

Eventually, Kempema said, "I want to own my own tour company — literally be the tour guide and do my own tours, pretty much around northern Colorado. I honestly love working in tourism."

By Dallas Heltzell



CONGRATULATIONS,

Tiffany Williamson

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Outstanding Mentor **Tiffany Williamson,** Safebuilt LLC

Tiffany Williamson is a strong advocate for paying it forward.

Her professor, Dr. Ann Gill, took Tiffany under her wing and mentored her when she was an undergrad at Colorado State University. It's really about making deposits in growth accounts — and that growth is all about helping build fruitful and satisfying careers, and reaching out to younger generations of women looking to keep the momentum rolling forward.

As a speech and communications major, Williamson found her own voice, both spoken and written. She followed that degree with a juris doctorate from Pepperdine University. Today, her guidance helps women to find their voices and gain the confidence they may not have known they had all along.

"A lot of what I do with the women I mentor is closed-door sessions," she said, "especially if they don't feel they are being heard and to help them get their points across, especially in male-dominated professions."

Williamson's career has landed her in publishing at LexisNexis, "... and we know that's a boy's club," she said, and at SafeBuilt, where she is chief technology officer. "Both publishing and construction are male-dominated industries, especially in the technology sectors, where I have always worked," she said. "Women are the unicorns in technology, and I've spent most of my career dealing with the reality of being a minority as I moved up in the ranks."

The common thread in Williamson's career is technology. She sees it as the conduit that improves people's lives and professional and personal relationships. "I love the power that technology has to transform lives and make processes easier, to be connected all of the time," she said. Her expertise is in organizational streamlining with workflow tools, and convincing colleagues and clients to drop cumbersome paper practices in favor of efficiency.

Williamson also pointed to her work in civil rights as a law student as an important facet in her career and personal growth.

"It was very meaningful," she said. "I worked on cases with the California Women's Law Center; on Title IX cases; the Breast Cancer Legal Project; I represented children with disabilities under federal law — that is my passion."

Law school student loans dictated the corporate career path, and when the time comes to wind down from her corporate life, she'll go back to civil rights work.

Williamson's free time is filled with snowboarding in Breckenridge. Summer-time finds her hiking, stand-up paddle boarding or playing beach volleyball with her husband. Their chocolate labs, Koa and Keoni, are constant companions. Right now, Williamson and her husband are in the middle of a home renovation, so lots of HGTV research takes place.

Building seems to be a part of her DNA, whether it's working on her home, working at SafeBuilt, or building up women to be more successful as they build their own careers.

What goes around comes around for Williamson — again and again and again.

By Michelle Venus



Nonprofit Human Services **Lisa Taylor,** Immigrant and Refugee Center of Northern Colorado



Lisa Taylor's days are never ordinary. Each one brings new challenges and new joys.

As executive director of the Immigrant and Refugee Center of Northern Colorado, she oversees a team of navigators that help IRC's students (their client base) navigate the complicated and frustrating path to citizenship. More than 500 active students utilize the nonprofit organization's services, and on any given day, 40 languages can be heard throughout the facility.

"Our goal is to empower immigrants and refugees, primarily through education," Taylor said. IRC offers six levels of instruction in English as a second language, citizen preparation and high school equivalency classes along with tutoring, workplace readiness and digital literacy classes. In addition, IRC provides community navigation services, staffed by volunteers who communicate with immigrants and refugees in their native languages. They help IRC's students with tasks as varied as locating primary physicians and scheduling appointments, sorting through mail to distinguish the important pieces from the junk and getting a handle on the complex bureaucracy of governmental agencies from local to federal levels.

"My work is amazing and rewarding," Taylor said.

Ten years ago, Taylor had no idea that her career would find meaning and focus in the nonprofit sector. She readily admits that she didn't even really understand the difference between an immigrant and a refugee, or even English language instruction. After teaching high school history, Taylor went back to the classroom herself, getting her graduate degree in English with plans to teach that subject and history. Along the way, she taught a four-night ESL class to adult immigrant students at Right to Read, a Greeley-based nonprofit.

"I loved it," Taylor said. She made a vow that if she could pay the bills by teaching adult learners from diverse communities, she'd go for it. After teaching at the college level in Arkansas, her home state, she returned to Colorado and to teaching at Right to Read. She found her work profoundly meaningful and satisfying.

She soon graduated to interim director, was hired as executive director and built programs that grew the organization. Five years later, Right to Read merged with the Global Refugee Center to become IRC, with Taylor at the helm.

Under her guidance, the student body and operating budget have tripled. She's reached out and formed meaningful community partnerships that further IRC's mission and outreach in five locations in Weld County.

When she's not changing the world, Taylor and her yellow lab, Henry, who she calls "the best dog ever," are avid hikers. Taylor snow skis, camps and reads, reads, reads. "It's my saving grace," she said. She's visited 18 different countries with summer plans to add six more to that list.

"I'm excited," she said about her travel plans. "It's a big world out there."

By Michelle Venus



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THE LISTS | PRIVATE EMPLOYERS | PUBLIC COMPANIES | PUBLIC EMPLOYERS | HIGHEST-PAID EXECS | BY MERCURY 100 | NOCO MERCURY 100

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The BizWest



500

They drive the economies of the Boulder Valley and Northern Colorado. The highest revenue. The fastest-growing. The largest employers. The highest-paid. With the BizWest 500, we bring these lists together in a powerful section that illustrates the diverse industries and dynamic nature of our region.

PAGE 10

BROOMFIELD

MWH Global's purchase won't change much

Engineering firm and suite Sutter don't plan layoffs, shakeups. **PAGE 6**

LOVELAND

Medeiros Music's success has strings attached

Variety, science and math make owner happier he's 'ever been in life.' **PAGE 8**

STARTUPS

Converge takes off with drone-control app

Boulder company targets insurance and other building inspectors. **PAGE 14**

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Upcoming BizWest Networking Events

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| Northern Colorado Energy Summit July 20 Hartwood Center Complex, Loveland | Brand! Entrepreneur Awards August 19 First United Bank, Fort Collins | Green Summit October 19 Poudre Valley Center and Convention Center, Longmont |
|--|---|---|

For more information or to register, go to BizWest.com and click on Events.

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Real Estate, Construction and Development

Nanci Garnand, Re/Max Eagle Rock



For Nanci Garnand, one of the greatest rewards of work is the constant learning.

“Whatever I do in the past builds on the future, never letting bad things hold me back,” she said. “I use them as a learning opportunity and look for the good.”

She helps her clients look for the good homes to buy, as a broker with Re/Max Eagle Rock in Loveland. A Kansas native, she came west to Santa Fe, N.M., and then to Flagstaff, Ariz., where she became a vice president and lender in the commercial banking world.

Along with a business partner, Dr. Sonja Jackson in Florida, Garnand owns Strategic Success Tools, an online tool for small businesses to use in attracting new clients and building relationships utilizing an online software system that includes a Customer Relationship Management system with landing pages and autoresponders.

“Part of my passion is to help people create wealth through real estate and understand that it’s not a bad thing to be in favor of the free market,” she said. “That’s one of the blessings we have here in the United States.”

Garnand has been helping the entrepreneurship programs in the Thompson School District high schools. “It’s amazing to see these kids create a product, develop it, learn presentation skills and then go for the money and actually take the product to market,” she said.

“I used to go into the classroom when I had time, try to help them get unstuck and do some creative thinking. I’ve hired two of the kids who came out of the program, to help them learn a little bit about marketing.

“I like taking what I’ve learned in real estate and sharing it.”

Garnand is past president of the Loveland Rotary Club and a member of the Loveland Museum and Gallery, Loveland and Berthoud chambers of commerce and the Loveland/Berthoud Board of Realtors.

She also is a board member for Anatomy In Clay Centers, a nonprofit that features hands-on workshops in human and animal anatomy, working in clay to build muscles, nerves and more on scale models of humans, horses or dogs. She sponsors community activities including the Loveland Opera Theatre, Loveland Choral Society, Habitat for Humanity, Community Kitchen and 65 Roses for Cystic Fibrosis. She has served on the Loveland Fire and Rescue Advisory Commission, the city’s housing authority and its disability advisory commission, and assisted with the McKee Classic Bike Tour.

She works with Mountain States Art Trail to attract buyers to art shows including western-themed events associated with the Greeley Stampede and Cheyenne Frontier Days.

Another passion is travel. “I really enjoy seeing the world,” she said. “We should be very blessed to live where we live, and we don’t really appreciate it until we see how the rest of the world lives.”

By Dallas Heltzell

BW

LIST

Women-Owned Businesses - Northern Colorado

Ranked by revenue

| Rank | Company | Revenue 2017 Revenue 2016 | Percent woman- owned No. of local employees | Products/Services | Phone Website | Owner, Title Year founded |
|------|---|------------------------------|--|---|--|--|
| 1 | Advance Tank & Construction Co. 3700 E. Larimer County Road 64 Wellington, CO 80549 | \$66,000,000 \$60,000,000 | 67% 65 | Fabricates, erects and repairs large-diameter, steel-plate storage structures, such as above-ground storage tanks, stacks, silos, clarifiers, bins and hoppers and related concrete work. | 970-568-3444 www.advancetank.com | Lisa K Clay, CEO 1981 |
| 2 | Employment Solutions 3600 Mitchell Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525 | \$29,605,000 \$33,485,000 | 51% 450 | Industrial & manufacturing staffing services. | 970-407-9675 www.employmentsolutions.com | Katherine J. Wagner, majority owner 1994 |
| 3 | Good Day Pharmacy — Corporate Office 3780 E. 15th St., Suite 102 Loveland, CO 80538 | \$28,424,000 \$30,272,000 | 60% 144 | Independent pharmacy chain. Specialties include compounding, bio-identical hormones, medical equipment, specialty care medications, specialty pharmacy serving assisted living and skilled nursing. | 970-461-1975 www.gooddaypharmacy.com | Vicki Einhellig, RPh, President, COO 1985 |
| 4 | The Women's Clinic of Northern Colorado 2500 Rocky Mountain Ave., Suite 150 Loveland, CO 80538 | \$20,245,000 \$19,670,000 | 77% 136 | OBGYN care, mammography, DEXA bone density screening, ultrasounds. | 970-493-7442 www.fcwc.com | Scott Kenyon, CEO 1970 |
| 5 | The McFaddin Group Re/Max Alliance 245 Urban Prairie St. Fort Collins, CO 80524 | \$12,100,000 \$11,500,000 | 100% 1 | Net Zero, DOE Challenge Home, sustainable development, renewable energy, LEED NC/EB, energy management, Energy Star. | 970-420-0000 www.revivefc.com | Susan McFaddin, president 2008 |
| 6 | Northern Colorado Traffic Control 1712 First Ave. Greeley, CO 80631 | \$12,009,912 \$7,781,107 | 55% 135 | Traffic-control solutions. | 970-356-6881 www.nocotraffic.com | Trisha Sandau, president/owner 1993 |
| 7 | Advanced Manufacturing Technology 3920 Patton Ave. Loveland, CO 80538 | \$12,000,000 \$14,000,000 | 60% 75 | Conveying systems for food, beverage, pharmaceutical, brewery, household products and more. Infinite automatic guiderail systems for packaging industry. | 970-612-0315 www.amtcolorado.com | Luanne Mullen, president 1996 |
| 8 | Diamond Spas Inc. 4409 Coriolis Way Frederick, CO 80504 | \$8,260,000 \$7,064,000 | 50% 33 | Diamond Spas manufactures custom stainless-steel & copper spas, pools, glass walled spas & pools, swim spas, cold plunge pools, water features and luxury custom indoor and outdoor bath fixtures. | 720-864-9115 www.diamondspas.com | Tom Bennett, vice president/co-founder; Stephanie Bennett, president & co-founder 1996 |
| 9 | Schlosser Signs Inc. 3597 Draft Horse Court Loveland, CO 80538 | \$7,800,000 \$6,500,000 | 65% 43 | Surveys, permit acquisition, code appeal, planned sign program development, design, custom fabrication, installation, removals, service, repair, night patrol, and lot lighting | 970-593-1334 www.schlossersigns.com | 1999 |
| 10 | Allura Skin, Laser & Wellness Clinic 2032 Lowe St., Suite 103 Fort Collins, CO 80525 | \$5,874,000 \$5,251,000 | 100% 23 | Skin care, facial lasers, botox, dermal fillers, hCG diet, spa, laser vein treatments, bio identical hormones, vaginal rejuvenation. | 970-223-0193 www.alluraclinic.com | Rebecca de la Torre, M.D.; Yvonne Hampson, RN 2008 |
| 11 | Diesel Services of Northern Colorado 1828 E. Mulberry St., Unit D Fort Collins, CO 80524 | \$3,226,000 \$2,800,000 | 51% 20 | Repair and service for all trucks, tractors, trailers, fleets, forklifts, earth movers, compressors, generators, cranes, booms and mobile repair service. | 970-221-9280 www.dsnc.biz | Marybeth Snyder, owner/manager 1998 |
| 12 | Chapel & Collins LLC 215 W. Oak St., Suite 901 Fort Collins, CO 80521 | \$2,471,127 \$2,138,700 | N/A 9 | Holistic financial-planning services for families, including retirement, education, investments, estate planning and risk-management issues. | 970-204-1376 www.chapelcollins.com | Donna Chapel; Dennis Collins; Stephen West, principals 1998 |
| 13 | A-Train Marketing Communications Inc. 125 S. Howes St., Suite 502 Fort Collins, CO 80521 | \$2,454,784 \$1,997,371 | 51% 15 | Branding, websites & digital marketing solutions, strategic planning, design & print materials, video & nonprofit marketing. | 970-419-3218 www.atrainmarketing.com | Gretchen Gaede, president 1998 |
| 14 | Denali Roofing LLC 3780 N. Garfield Ave., Suite 203 Loveland, CO 80538 | \$1,890,242 \$1,647,583 | 60% 5 | Roofing contractor, installation, repair and inspection. Serving commercial, residential, and multi-family properties with sloped and flat roofs. Serving Northern Colorado and Southern Wyoming. | 970-660-4417 www.denaliroofs.com | Katrina Fenzi, CEO 2009 |
| 15 | Mantooth Marketing Co. LLC 3030 S. College Ave., #204 Fort Collins, CO 80525 | \$1,800,000 \$1,650,000 | 100% 10 | Full-service marketing company. | 970-663-1888 www.mantoothcompany.com | Connie Hanrahan, CEO/ president 1995 |
| 16 | Linden 223 S. Howes St. Fort Collins, CO 80521 | \$1,550,000 \$2,000,000 | 100% 10 | Linden helps organizations connect with audiences by translating complex subjects into practical strategies, messages and materials. | 970-221-3232 www.golinden.com | Susie Cannon, president 1996 |
| 17 | Lightsource Creative Communications 121 W. Laporte Ave. Fort Collins, CO 80524 | \$1,500,000 \$1,500,000 | 67% 8 | Marketing communications services for businesses marketing to businesses. | 970-224-2806 www.lightsourcecreative.com | Gordon L. MacKinney, president 1996 |
| 18 | Rainbow Restaurant & Catering 212 W. Laurel St. Fort Collins, CO 80521 | \$1,400,000 \$1,200,000 | 67% 25 | Full-service catering. Restaurant dining room and patio available for special events, afternoons and evenings. Buffet, full service and alcohol service available. | 970-221-2664 www.rainbowfortcollins.com | Steve Jones, owner; Lynn Washetka, owner/ chef 1974 |
| 19 | Express Employment Professionals 2711 W. 10th St. Greeley, CO 80634 | \$1,279,932 \$1,110,512 | 99% 650 | Full-time and temporary staffing and job placement, human-resource services and consulting. | 970-353-8430 www.expresspros.com | Kathy Egan, president 1971 |
| 20 | 1-800-GOT-JUNK? 4009 S. Valley Drive Longmont, CO 80504 | \$1,275,786 \$1,159,931 | 76% 18 | Locally & female-owned and operated, full-service junk-hauling specializing in reusing/recycling/repurposing. | 303-827-5573 www.1800gotjunk.com | Lilly Wallace, Franchise owner. 2005 |
| 21 | Oglesby Design LLC 123 N. College Ave., No. 390 Fort Collins, CO 80524 | \$1,015,060 \$753,286 | 100% 7 | Commercial and residential architectural interior design with an emphasis on hospitality and corporate office design. | 970-416-8829 www.oglesby-design.com | Dawn Oglesby, president 2004 |
| 22 | Wilcoxson Manufacturing Inc. 14420 Mead Court Longmont, CO 80504 | \$1,000,000 \$1,000,000 | 100% 8 | Custom, precision, sheet-metal products. | 970-535-0505 www.wilcoxsonmfg.com | Clint Wilcoxson, general manager/shop foreman; Sandy Irby, business manager 1982 |
| 23 | Jet Marketing LLC 1929 W. County Road 56 Fort Collins, CO 80524 | \$780,000 \$653,000 | N/A 4 | Full-service marketing agency. | 970-218-4797 www.jetmarketing.net | Jackie A O'Hara, owner/ account executive 2009 |
| 24 | Goodwinol Products Corp. 41710 County Road 29 Pierce, CO 80650 | \$700,000 \$500,000 | 100% 3 | Products for the care of livestock and pets. | 970-834-1229 www.goodwinol.com | Elli Rathbun, owner 1950 |
| 25 | Bio-medical Janitorial 4025 Automation Way, Suite F2 Fort Collins, CO 80525 | \$575,000 \$560,000 | 51% 24 | Specialized janitorial service for the medical and class A commercial community. | 970-266-1065 www.BioMedicalJanitorial.com | Marquita Romero, vice president 1998 |

Regions surveyed include Larimer and Weld counties.

Researched by BizWest

2018 NOMINEES

BANKING AND FINANCE

Kari Coover
Senior Commercial Lender
Elevations Credit Union

Kelly Seidl
Director of Engineering
BILLGO

BUSINESS AND BUSINESS SERVICES

Amanda Hoffman
Senior Marketing Director
Madwire

Carol Cochran
Co-Owner
Horse & Dragon Brewing Company

Dawn Duncan
Owner
Yellow Bright

Diana Precht
Vice President Vergent Technology
Foothills Service League, Loveland Business Partnership

Gretchen Gaede
President
A-Train Marketing Communications, Inc.

Heidi Hostetter
Chairwoman
NOCO - Northern Colorado Manufacturer Partnership

Heidi Hostetter
CEO/H2; Board Chair, NoCo Mfg. Partnership
H2 Manufacturing Solutions, Northern Colorado
Manufacturing Partnership

Jade Lofton
Senior Executive Assistant
SAFEbuilt

Jennifer Guerriero
Co-owner
The Light Center

Jones
CEO
XYS

Kim O’Neil
Vice President
Encompass Technologies

Tiffany Williamson
Chief Technology Officer
SAFEbuilt

Vallene Kailburn
Art Director & Founder
Old Town Media, Inc.

EDUCATION

Allie Steg-Haskett
Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations
University of Northern Colorado

Christine Chin
Director, Executive Programming, College of Business
Colorado State University

Dr. Deborah Kish
Vice President, Academic Affairs
Aims Community College

EXCEPTIONAL VOLUNTEER

Amy Kolczak
Senior Associate General Counsel
UCHealth/Book Trust/Project Self Sufficiency and more

Bonnie Kay Sowder
retired
Colorado Future Farmers of America

Glenda Haines
co-owner
Eves and Haines Wealth Management

Maya D. Jairam
Volunteer Coordinator
KRFC FM Radio

GOVERNMENT, ENERGY, AND UTILITIES

Leah Johnson
city council member
City of Loveland

SeonAh Kendall
Economic Health Manager
City of Fort Collins

Tami Grant
Division Head
Employment Services of Weld County

HEALTH CARE

Amy Kolczak
Senior Associate General Counsel
UCHealth

Angela Mills
Medical Director of Care Coordination
Banner Health

Betty Stevens
Sr. Practice Manager, RN
Banner Occupational Health

Diana Breyer
Chief Quality Officer
UCHealth

Dr. Lesley C. Brooks
Chief Medical Officer and Physician
Sunrise Community Health

Kathy Waller
Medical Director
CSU Health Network

Patricia A Farnham
Chairwoman
Thompson Valley Health Services District - Chairwoman

LEADING LADY

Dr. Elena Estanol
Founder & Director
Synapse Integrative Wellness

Susan Jessup
Owner/General Manager
Sylvan Dale Ranch

Suzanne Jarboe-Simpson
Change Management Analyst, Ai Information Technology for
City of Fort Collins
Fort Collins Women’s Commission

NONPROFIT CREATIVE INDUSTRY

Michelle Kempema
Executive Director
Colorado Model Railroad Museum

Michelle Kempema
Executive Director, CMRM
Colorado Model Railroad Museum

NONPROFIT HUMAN SERVICES

Allison Hines
Senior Vice President
United Way of Larimer County

Allison Hines
Vice President of Resource Development
United Way of Larimer County

Christine Chard
Co-Founder
Smart Fit Girls

Erin Hottenstein
Founder
Colorado 50-50

Judy Calhoun
Executive Director
Larimer Humane Society

Laurel Twiggs
Program Director
Global Leaders and Girls’ Rites

Lisa Taylor
Executive Director
Immigrant & Refugee Center of Northern Colorado

OUTSTANDING MENTOR

Amanda Wicker
Co-Founder / Operations
Facette

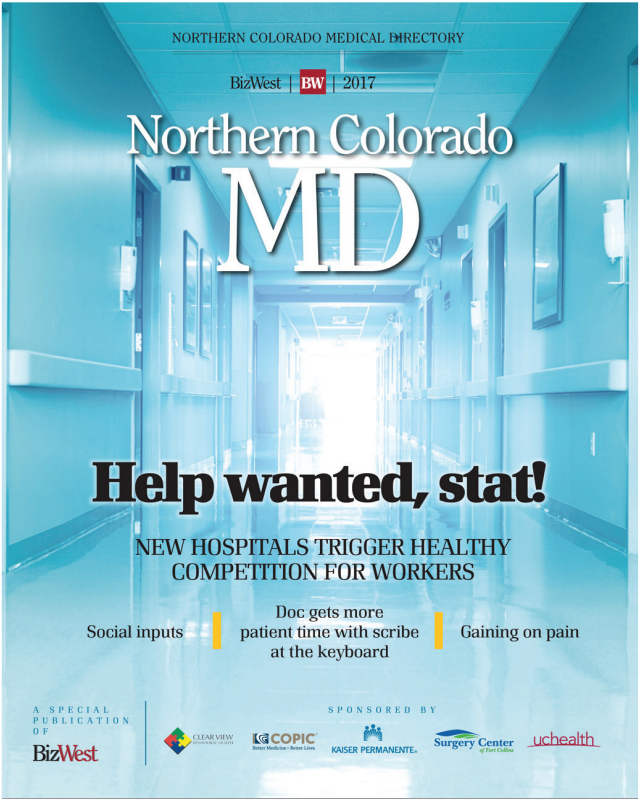
Hannah K Long
Owner
H3 Construction

Patricia Escobar
Director
Cesar Chavez Cultural Center

Sharon Dunn
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A woman with long brown hair and glasses, wearing a green top and blue jeans, is smiling and holding a baby. The baby is wearing an orange and white striped shirt and red shorts. They are standing in front of a large haystack. The background is dark.

I HAD EVERY
REASON TO LIVE.
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