



Intro

Once a year we celebrate Pitkin County residents who made a difference in the place we call home, for our neighbors and for the land. Through the Pitkin County Cares awards we recognize those who serve, as residents who choose to make a difference.

As an illustration, last year we honored a community member for her impact on the community, reaching Dark Sky Accreditation for the valley and the watersheds of Snowmass and Capitol Creek. This year, other communities, even our own airport, look to follow her lead and ensure this valley respects people and wildlife and lessens our impact on the night sky, so we can enjoy October meteor showers and the dance of autumn leaves.

And, today we recognize an honoree for his impact on protecting wilderness. For bringing people and ideas together to protect meadows, water rights and connected landscapes for wildlife. The protection of this ranch was not a singular act, rather a series of plays, demonstrating a fierce loyalty to maintaining a balance between development pressures and sanctuaries.

The gentleman's actions set the stage for elected officials to pause. Elected officials on the land, put the land first. Put wildlife first. The elected officials did not have an eye to development; rather, the folks assembled asked if we could manage this sanctuary, possibly in perpetuity for agriculture and wildlife. The recipient helped put the land in trust; and his action put a series of conversations about wildlife sanctuaries into motion. (Maybe the greatest achievement is not putting the land in trust; but on the policy and plan to follow. While the administration threatens our sanctuaries this gentleman fought to protect the quiet of the valley).

Importantly the policy to follow demonstrates that one person's actions can cascade into larger county conversations, may set off a series of collective events, spur thinking into action, or even start a larger movement.

A Pitkin County Cares Award recognizes work that may happen in the stillness of a meadow, while holding an arrowhead. The award recognizes what happens quietly. The award recognizes residents and a community that cares.

When we look across the recipients of the awards this year we see several common traits. The individuals do not need an organizational chart or corporate remit; rather they take charge as volunteers, as leaders caring for Pitkin County.

Let's get started...

Outro

Today we recognized leaders in nine categories who are making a difference in Pitkin County-

Arts- sustaining community through theater.

Community Champion- maintaining trails and philanthropy through recycled fashion

Community Preservation- placemaking through preservation and honoring history

Education- balancing the analogue & digital worlds, while maintaining children's wellbeing

Environment- speaking for the health of the river through exceptional drought

Health- encouraging open conversations about mental health

Local civics- thinking through strategy, a voice for future decisions

Rising stars- recognizing the work of students and our rising leaders

Greg Mace- lasting impact on people and place

What makes our county unique is our land, passing two hunters on the West Snowmass trail to Willow, seeing four bears in an afternoon up the Frying Pan at a

corn boil, organizing a rescue at the Bells, or walking with water aficionados at Lost Man, reading weirs and gages.

That's why we gathered today: to take time to recognize our neighbors achievements in the community. To say thank you, and to celebrate the diversity of our community members' service and contributions.

I am so glad that we can gather in celebration today.
