State: Colorado

Community Name: Age Friendly Chaffee

Population Size: 20356

Percentage of Residents Above Age 60: 37

Community Structure: County

Other:

Community Type: Rural

Elected Official Signing the Letter of Commitment

Name: Greg Felt
Title: Chair, Chaffee County Board of Commissioners

Office Mailing Address: P.O. Box 699 Salida, CO 81201

Community Contact Name: Marilyn Bouldin
Email: [Contact Information]
Position: Community volunteer
Telephone: [Contact Information]

Role: Marilyn is an RN and retired director of Chaffee County Public Health. Since retirement she has been actively involved in volunteer work mostly related to meeting the needs of older adults. She was a founding member of Ark Valley Helping Hands, a nonprofit whose mission is to assist older adults with chores, transportation and socialization. She is also a member of the county health coalition, serves on the master senior plan committee for public health and is on the steering committee for Chaffee County Women Who Care.

Older Adult Involvement: Our community has a good track record of coordinated efforts to reach out to our older population. We have used social media, print mailings, phone conversations, and home visits and have a number of organizations we work with to accomplish this. For example, Ark Valley Helping Hands has 92 registered members and 102 volunteers (mostly older adults themselves) and conducts periodic surveys and informational mailings to all. In addition, we have established a Senior Master Plan team of volunteers, many of whom would identify themselves as older adults. In a small county, relationships are critical, and we intend on leveraging the relationships we do have to become more age-friendly.

Increasing Collaboration and Coordination: Our community has a statewide reputation for excellent collaboration with various entities as exhibited by the recent 20 person leadership team which has led us to a successful COVID-19 strategy. We also have a 40 member Chaffee County Health Coalition which meets regularly to share information, network and work together on identified health related challenges. We have positive collaborative relationships with our county commissioners, local city and town governments, local newspapers, the Upper Arkansas Area Agency on
Aging, Ark Valley Helping Hands, Sage Generation, Chaffee County Department of Human Services, Heart of the Rockies Regional Medical Center, Columbine Manor (our local skilled nursing facility), 3 Rotary Clubs, several churches, Salida Community Center, Solvista Health (our local community mental health center), Salida Department of Parks and Recreation, Buena Vista Parks and Recreation, Chaffee County Department of Housing and local home health agencies, the Partnership for Community Action, Neighbor to Neighbor Shuttle and bus service, and both local libraries. Cultural activities such as concerts, art shows and presentations are a very important component to our older adult population and these will be assessed as well.

AARP Team Member Contact Info:

Roberto Rey
Associate State Director
rey@aarp.org

Most Instructive Area of Work:

Our extraordinary ability as a county to collaborate across multiple sectors, as evidenced by our recent effective approach to dealing with the COVID pandemic, is worth duplicating in other communities. We plan to be actively involved with the network at both the national and state levels. Most recently we participated in the state AARP annual conference which was very informative. We can contribute by volunteering with the state AARP office and Lifelong Colorado, and sharing our experiences with others as we learn along the way. As our current population of those over 65 is twice the average in the state we are proactive in developing ways to ensure a diverse and inclusive community. We want to learn and share with others rather than always "inventing the wheel" ourselves.