

Vail housing director earns honor from state group

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VD Staff Report



George Ruther goes through site specifications with the Vail Town Council at one possible site to build more housing in East Vail. Ruther is the recipient of a 2019 Eagle Award.

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The town of Vail's approach to increasing the supply of resident housing through the Vail InDEED Deed-Restriction Purchase Program has been recognized by a state industry group.

HousingColorado, an industry association dedicated to serving professionals who are designing, developing and increasing support for affordable housing in Colorado, has named Vail InDEED one of five outstanding programs in the state. During an award ceremony on May 9, George Ruther was the recipient of a 2019 Eagle Award. Ruther, in 2018, was appointed Vail's Director of Housing, where he has been instrumental in implementing the Vail InDEED program.

In partnership with members of the Vail Local Housing Authority, the Vail Town Council, town staff and members of the community, Vail InDEED has been used to acquire deed restrictions on 105 homes from East Vail to Edwards since its inception in 2018.

By acquiring real estate interest in these homes, totaling \$6.5 million in funding, to date, the properties have become deed-restricted and must be occupied by residents working an average of 30 hours a week for an Eagle County business. The Vail Local Housing Authority serves as the Vail InDEED agent, while the Vail Town Council appropriates the funding. The program has ensured housing stability for nearly 215 Vail residents.

Vail Mayor Dave Chapin said the recognition by HousingColorado is a tremendous honor for Vail.



“It’s so gratifying to see the benefits of our housing efforts recognized alongside so many other deserving people, projects, and programs taking place across the state,” Chapin said. “We’re especially proud of the work George Ruther and the Housing Authority members have done to keep more lights on in our neighborhoods.”

In 2017, the Town Council adopted a housing goal of acquiring 1,000 new deed-restrictions by the year 2027.

Ruther is one of five Eagle Award recipients to be recognized by HousingColorado in 2019. In accepting the award, Ruther noted the support and encouragement of others who have made Vail’s housing programs possible. “The Vail Town Council and the Vail Local Housing Authority members are to be commended for their dedication, commitment and willingness to think differently about our housing challenges,” Ruther said. Their leadership is an example for others to follow and our momentum is strong.”

“This well-deserved award is a reminder of how fortunate we are to have someone as dedicated, talented and effective as George working on our behalf,” Vail Local Housing Authority Board Chairman Steve Lindstrom said. “Additionally, the nomination of the Vail InDeed program is further validation that we are on the right track with this collaborative and flexible approach to addressing our housing needs.”

In an effort to maintain the strong momentum created, the Vail Local Housing Authority, in collaboration with the Vail Town Council, will soon be conducting a public opinion survey to gauge community support for the creation of a long-term funding source for housing initiatives. A funding source which is consistent, predictable, and dedicated to housing has been demonstrated to be effective in similar resort communities in addressing resident housing challenges.

Ruther has been heading the town’s newly-created housing department since 2018. He had previously been the town’s community development director since 2007 and has been employed by the town since 1994.

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Keystone	0"	0"	0"
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