

Emerging Managers in Action – Ben Goldstein

Ben has been actively involved in CCCMA Emerging Managers for nearly 10 years. He began his career working in Boulder in 2001, and has also worked in Fort Collins, Denver, San Mateo (CA), Westminster, Golden, and is currently the Deputy City Manager in Lakewood.

What was your first job out of graduate school and what did you learn most from it?

I worked for the City and County of Denver in the Budget Management Office. My “lesson learned” was that it is incredibly difficult to work within a strong-mayor system. For example, I was responsible for a project evaluating the installation of solar panels on a City and County facility. After many months of analysis, we determined that it did not make sense to move forward with the project at that time. One call from the Mayor’s office changed all that and solar panels were up within a few months.

However, my first “job” in local government was what actually drove me to city management. I had the opportunity to intern with Ron Secrist, the City Manager for the City of Boulder. Ron was incredible and would allow me to sit in on any meeting he had. It was a bit surreal being 19 years old and sitting in negotiations between Boulder and Walmart.

If you could change one thing about your professional development choices up to this point in your career, what would it be?

I actually have two things. First, I would have spent a bit more time completing my MPA. I rushed through it, taking four classes a semester, and feel that did not allow for full-absorption of the material. Second, I would focus more on reaching out and spending time with managers and deputy managers from outside of my organization. Early on I was focused on those in my own organization and may have missed opportunities to learn from other managers with varying styles, though I am truly appreciative of every opportunity I have had to learn from others in this profession.

What advice would you give those who are just beginning their careers in city government and looking for their first job?

Don’t be afraid to do an internship, even if it means you have to work a second job for awhile. This is a great way to test your fit with an organization and learn more about it. If you have already completed an internship and are looking for your first “real” job, just remember that your first job does not have to be your forever job. You will learn from every experience, even bad ones.



What is your favorite spot in Colorado?

Definitely A-Basin ski area!

Loving it there with his daughter, Brielle.