



# The Up & Up

*Showcasing Colorado's #localgov Superstars*

Travis Machalek | Town Administrator | Estes Park

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## WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

### Educational Background:

B.A. in Political Science from the University of Wyoming and an MPA from the University of Kansas.

### Where was your first internship and/or local government gig?

Full-time summer intern in the City Manager's Office in Laramie, WY.

### How do you recharge/practice self-care?

I recharge by reading (anything and everything), enjoying the great outdoors, and spending time with my wife and friends.

### Why local government?

I love working in local government because it is easy to observe the direct impact that you are able to have on your community.

## PROFESSIONALLY SPEAKING....

### If you could change 1 thing about your professional development choices to this point, what would it be?

I would have spent more time earlier in my career asking managers and deputies/assistants why they made certain decisions and what went into those decisions. I've had the fortune of working for wonderful managers, all with strikingly different styles. Having a deeper understanding of the thought processes behind those styles would have enabled a deeper consideration of which style works best for me.

### What advice would you give to someone just starting his/her career in local government?

Do not be afraid to jump at an opportunity in an area that you are unfamiliar with or even not that interested in. Some of the projects that I dreaded most out of the gate ended up being the most interesting and/or beneficial to my long-term career development. At the same time, learning how to say "no" is critical to ensuring that all of your commitments are receiving appropriate attention (better to do an excellent job on three projects than an acceptable job on five).

### What's your proudest moment of your career so far?

Helping one of my teams through a difficult and controversial transfer of their division to another local taxing entity. Enacting the policy decision to make the transfer was difficult and complicated, but we were able to address the major issues and make the transition as smooth as possible.

### How did you learn to embrace failure?

The key for me has been to accept that failure is a growth opportunity and is an unavoidable part of acquiring any skill. No one is born knowing how to ride a bike. It takes a teacher, practice, and probably some pain to acquire that skill. Failure is not fun (nor should it be), but it is inherent in learning and striving to be better. It is painful, but it is also critical to bettering ourselves, our organizations, and our communities.

## FAST FACTS:

**Favorite Colorado Spot:** Sky Pond, Rocky Mountain National Park

**Favorite Book:** Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance

**Childhood Dream Job:** Doctor

**Most Unusual Item in your Office:** Youth Basketball Trophy

**One Item on your Bucket List:** See the Northern Lights!