



Legislation Text

File #: 22-007, **Version:** 1

Spirit of the Springs Award for Dirk Draper

Presenter:

Mayor John Suthers

Summary:

In honor of Dirk Draper's retirement, Mayor Suthers will present him with the Spirit of the Springs Celebration Award.

Background:

Draper has served as President and CEO of the Chamber & EDC, then known as the Colorado Springs Regional Business Alliance, since early 2015. Draper previously served as a board member of both the Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce, including serving as board chair in 2010, and the Colorado Springs Economic Development Corporation prior to their merger in 2013.

The Chamber & EDC's accomplishments, financial strength, and reputation grew significantly under Draper's leadership. The Chamber & EDC:

- Formed the Regional Recovery Council with El Paso County Public Health to ensure balanced consideration of economic health and public health during the COVID pandemic. That effort recently received a national award for innovation from the National Association of City and County Health Officials.
- Assisted local businesses with expansions, including Ent Credit Union, Jaxon Engineering, Swire Coca-Cola, and Titan Robotics, among others.
- Led or assisted with the attraction of new employers, including Amazon, Formstack, InvestorTools, and Trisco Foods, among others.
- Attracted Southwest Airlines to serve Colorado Springs with 13 flights daily to five cities. Southwest Airlines' presence also includes employing more than 60 employees.
- Led the region's campaign to be the permanent headquarters of US Space Command.
- Implemented a national public relations strategy to tell the story of the region's business community. This has resulted in more than 70 stories placed since 2018 in regional and national media.
- Led multiple successful local ballot campaigns to improve business climate, including policy wins eliminating the 30-word limit on ballot language for local measures; establishing dedicated funding for stormwater infrastructure; and a defeat of proposed collective bargaining by city firefighters.

- Increased diversity of its board - 38.1% are women and 23.8% are people of color - and launched a Diversity in the Workplace Committee to provide an opportunity for business leaders to learn and discuss diversity, equity, and inclusion.

- Membership grew from 950 in 2015 to more than 1,400 in 2020.

Prior to joining the Chamber & EDC in 2015, Draper was Area Manager for the Colorado Springs office of CH2M HILL (now Jacobs Engineering). His professional practice included conducting community and environmental impact assessments for public infrastructure projects. He has been active in many community organizations and initiatives, including serving as co-chair of the 2014 campaign to renew the Rural Transportation Authority program. He has served on boards of Memorial Hospital, Colorado Springs Leadership Institute, and the city's Trails and Open Space Working Committee, among others.

Previous Council Action:

N/A

Financial Implications:

N/A

City Council Appointed Board/Commission/Committee Recommendation:

N/A

Stakeholder Process:

N/A

Alternatives:

N/A

Proposed Motion:

N/A

N/A