

AMY SHERMAN | ECO-DEVO MASTERMIND

BY JOEY BUNCH
Colorado Politics

If you have big bucks to invest in jobs and commerce in metro Denver, then you've probably discussed it with Amy Sherman.

Sherman has served as the president of the Northwest Douglas County Chamber and Economic Development Corp. and president of the West Metro Chamber in Jefferson County. Before that, she worked for the Longmont Area Chamber of Commerce, the Colorado Tourism Office and the National Potato Council.

You might also know her from any of a number of nonprofit boards, including the Douglas County Community Foundation and Colorado Women's Alliance Advisory Board. She has been recognized repeatedly by the Denver Business Journal — on its 40 Under 40 list, its economic development rookie of the year, as well as its Top Women in Energy list in 2015.

Her work on boards for charitable, business and educational groups reads like a list of Colorado's top causes, including the boards of the Douglas County Community Foundation, Lamb Spring Archaeological Preserve, Jefferson County EDC, St. Anthony Health Foundation, Lakewood Legacy Foundation, Wheat Ridge 2020, the Denver West Kiwanis Club and the Wheat Ridge Rotary Club.

Last month, Sherman opened a new chapter in her storied Colorado business career, when she was named senior project director for Catalyst Public Affairs in Denver, an all-woman firm that specializes in strategic communications, stakeholder outreach and mobilization campaigns.

She joined principals Cinamon Watson, Jennifer Webster and Kristi Pollard.

A Douglas County native, Sherman holds an undergraduate degree, majoring in communication and psychology, from the University of Kansas. She also graduated from the U.S. Chamber's Institute for Organizational Management at Colorado College.

We caught up with the veteran economic developer about her new gig.

Colorado Politics: Your economic development background is extensive. What drew you to that line of work?

Sherman: In high school and college, I worked at the local chamber of commerce and learned the connection between a strong business community and a thriving overall community. After graduation, I went to work for the Longmont Chamber, later the West Metro Chamber, and most recently the Northwest Douglas County Chamber & EDC. This line of work is extremely important to the health of a region as it includes efforts to increase employment opportunities, push for improved infrastructure, grow entrepreneurs, and lead a community. We are the conveners and collaborators in a community.

CP: What's Colorado's most mar-



Colorado Politics talks with leaders & influencers from around the state



Amy Sherman, a globe-trotter, is shown at the Skaftafell waterfalls in Vatnajökull National Park in Iceland on a pre-pandemic trip.

ketable asset? Which industries do you expect to surge and where?

Sherman: I believe Colorado's most marketable asset is the diversity of our regions around the state. We have a wonderful balance of agriculture, tourism and thriving cities with innovative and diverse industries with an educated and talented workforce.

I do believe Colorado will come back strong as we increase vaccinations for our hardest-hit industries, especially tourism-related jobs. From my economic development experience, I foresee growth in aerospace and outdoor recreation industry clusters throughout Colorado.

Not only do we have the nation's second-largest aerospace economy, we have the talent to support addi-

tional growth in the industry.

Colorado's outdoor recreation industry is one of the fastest growing clusters, as we support start-ups well and have the natural environment to foster their growth. Towns all over Colorado are seeing start-up outdoor recreation companies and growing their local economy.

CP: Can you explain the nexus between good jobs and public policy? How does the statehouse or city hall impact where companies locate and the economy long term?

Sherman: The short answer is that good jobs help support a strong community and economy. Business owners want consistency and reliability to run their business and need elected leaders to

QUICK BIO

Where did you grow up? A proud Colorado native, I was born in Chaffee County in 1973 and grew up in Castle Rock.

What was your first job? My first job was working the reception desk at the Castle Rock Chamber of Commerce in high school.

Tell me about your family: I have been married to Steve for 20 years and we have built a beautiful life in Roxborough and Sterling Ranch with our boy/girl twins (16). As a family, we ski all winter and camp, hike and mountain bike all summer. We love to travel, swapping between Europe and beautiful beach adventures.

Why did you name your pet what you named it? Our dogs, Chewie and Finn, are always ready for an exploration and clearly show we are a "Star Wars" family.

Are you a good bowler? No, not even on the Wii.

What are you reading? "The Gifts of Imperfection" by Brené Brown.

One thing you'd change about Colorado:

As a frequent driver to the mountains, I wish Colorado leaders would have a genuine bipartisan effort to fund transportation infrastructure to move people and goods from A to B faster and smoother.

Any new skills during the pandemic?

Usually an organized person, I took my skills to a new level and every drawer, cabinet and closet are organized to precision.

support a pro-business environment. Smart-growth public policies include so many issues including education, workforce, infrastructure, entrepreneurial development. So many times, there are well-intended policies that have unintended consequences that negatively impact businesses. Elected leaders should make decisions based on if their community is not safe and growing, it's declining.

CP: What are you up to these days?

Sherman: I recently made an exciting move to Catalyst Public Affairs as the senior project director. My career skills in business advocacy, community affairs, economic development, government relations and organizational management are a great fit for our clients. I am impressed daily with the women I get to work beside at Catalyst Public Affairs and feel very fortunate.

CP: What's one thing you'd change about Colorado?

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