

Food Recovery Network at Work in Routt County

In 2014, [Feeding America](#), an organization dedicated to fighting hunger, estimated that 3,030 Routt County residents were food insecure, which equates to almost 13% of our local population. LiftUp of Routt County Executive Director Laura von Boecklin says: “Many of our neighbors, co-workers, and friends in Routt County do not have reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food. They are food insecure.”

Each year, 40% of food produced in the United States is thrown away. Enter the [Food Recovery Network](#) (FRN), an organization focused on the benefits of recovering surplus food before it becomes food waste. The FRN was started as a student movement against food waste and hunger in America and since its inception in 2011 FRN has recovered and donated more than 1.4 million pounds of food nationwide, resulting in the service of more than 1.2 million meals to those in need.

In March, 2015, The Routt County Department of Environmental Health joined a collaborative with Colorado Mountain College (CMC), Sodexo, LiftUp of Routt County, and SK8 Church to assist in the development of a local Food Recovery Network Chapter. Environmental Health’s role in this partnership is to ensure donated foods are being properly handled and processes and procedures are in place to prioritize Food Safety on both ends of the spectrum in accordance with the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment’s [Guidelines for Accepting and Serving Donated Foods](#).

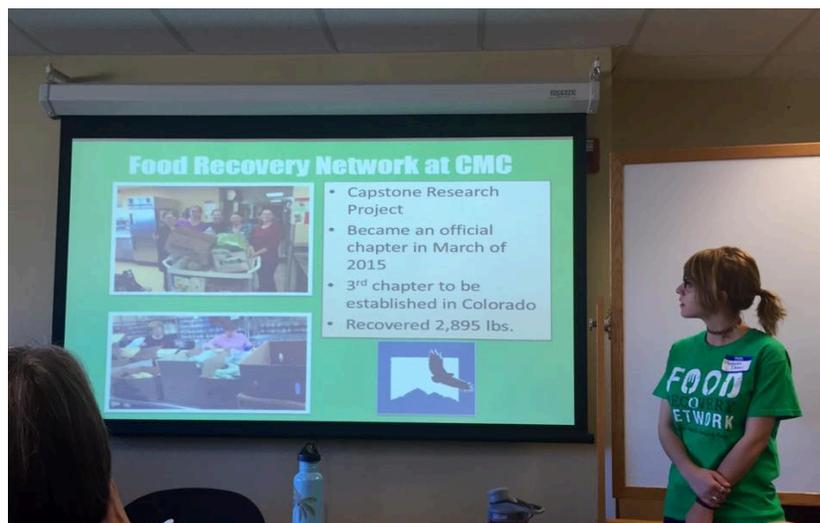


In November, 2015, CMC’s Food Recovery Network Chapter became one of three Colorado sites recognized as Food Recovery Certified. This distinction recognizes and rewards FRN Partners for recovering their surplus food and donating it to nonprofits fighting hunger. Food Recovery Certified is accredited by the Food Recovery Network. The intent of this designation

is to attract positive attention by promoting awareness and driving new partnerships in food recovery.



In February, 2016, the Northwest Colorado Food Coalition (NCFC) together with the Yampa Valley Sustainability Council (YVSC) identified Food Waste as one of their 2016-2017 Strategic Goals with a plan “to assist three local restaurants in becoming Food Recovery Network partners by January, 2017”. This goal led to a Collaborative Food Recovery Kick-Off Information Session at CMC targeting restaurants, non-profits, and volunteers interested in learning about FRN. Partners from CMC’s Food Recovery Network Chapter, YVSC, and Environmental Health discussed program details with over 20 agencies at this event, including The Cabin (Steamboat Ski & Resort Corporation), Horizons Specialized Services, and The Steamboat Christian Center, who have since joined FRN as the newest food recovery partners.



Since March, 2015, CMC's Food Recovery Network Chapter has recovered and donated more than 3,000 pounds of food in Routt County. LiftUp of Routt County has distributed nearly 300 meals within the last year and SK8 Church has used their donated food as part of their weekly youth outreach programs. The Cabin, Horizons, and The Steamboat Christian Center are gearing up their food recovery programs with an anticipated launch date of mid to late August, 2016. Stay tuned as this valuable program expands to reduce food waste, increase food recovery, and works to positively influence the future of food security throughout Routt County!