



Visit Estes Park
The Destination
Marketing Organization
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GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES

ESTES PARK, Colo (January 2019) - The current government shutdown, which started on December 22, has furloughed 800,000 federal employees and drastically limited access to our National Parks.

Though Rocky is “open,” the main entrance gates on the east side of our undisputed heavyweight champion attraction are closed to cars. And this creates ripples of anxiety about lost business for those of us who depend on dollars from park visitors.

Local business persons Charley Dickey and Kirby Hazelton were both featured in a [story on CBS](#) about how business has been pretty good this season—and in some cases better than expected as folks turned back from their park plans to look for something else to do—but, due to the shutdown, it’s also been more erratic. But there are some things you can do to weather this storm.

Reach out to your most loyal base

Have you built a newsletter list or social media following? Now’s the time to put that work to use with messaging—or deals—for customers who have already given you a yes vote by subscribing to or liking your page.

“Communicate to your e-mail lists, asking them to support Estes Park during a closure by visiting for a day or weekend,” says Adam Shake, Vice President at Estes Park Economic Development Corporation. “Many customers love and frequent a business because of its own sense of place and not because of its location near Rocky Mountain National Park. Remind them of that.”

Here’s a great example from the [Estes Park Mountain Shop on Facebook](#).

Have a good answer for “what else can we do?”

Rocky always gets top billing (and for good reason), so it’s natural for visitors to feel a bit clueless when the park as they know it isn’t an option. We’ve created a [blog post of what visitors can do during the shutdown](#) that we are actively promoting in social media that outlines many worthwhile ideas. Feel free to share it.

- First, go ahead and stroll or bike the blissfully empty and car-free roads of RMNP. You’ll be able to see the park in a way you never have and more than likely experience some solitude. Just make sure to remind guests that winter weather is no joke and that services (from toilets to rescue) are limited at best during the shutdown.
- Visitors can still explore the “hike-in” entrances at Longs Peak and Lumpy Ridge trailheads.
- Check out the nearby national forest. Snowshoe or fatbike Buchanan Pass Trail or Crosier Mountain.
- Go on a guided horseback ride or off-road tour.
- And remind people that the amenities of town, perhaps normally the reward for a big day of adventure, are worthwhile on their own. See a movie. Have dinner and a drink. Visit a gallery.

Charley Dickey, President of Estes Valley Partners for Commerce says, “Estes Park has many options to the government shut down of services in Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP). We live in the mountains here and there is plenty of accessible great hiking, snowshoeing and cross country skiing.”

Voice your opinions

There's no need to sit idly by (unless you want to). But Jon Nicholas, president of the Estes Park Economic Development Corporation says, "Let our congressional representatives and the White House know how this is affecting your business."

You can call, or use the contact forms on their websites:

Colorado Senators and Our U.S. Representative

Senator Michael Bennet , 202-224-5852 (DC), Contact Form and Office Information, Facebook, @SenBennetCO

Senator Cory Gardner, 202-224-5941(DC), Contact Form, Office Information, Facebook, @SenCoryGardner

U.S. Representative Joe Neguse: 202- 225-2161 (DC).

The White House

202-456-1111; <https://www.whitehouse.gov/contact/>

And... consider the big picture

We're not exactly experts on federal government shutdowns, but we're confident that this one, like the others that have preceded it, will eventually end. There have been 20 shutdowns in U.S. history, the average duration lasting eight days. The longest shutdown was 20 days. But they all ended, and this one will end, too. When it does, we will be here to stoke potential visitors' pent-up energy with paid, targeted social media campaigns and fresh content on our website to help support visitation to the park—and your businesses.

Visit Estes Park's mission is to drive tourism and year-round economic growth through effective and efficient destination marketing. For more details about VEP go to VisitEstesPark.com.

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