



Colorado Avalanche
Information Center



friends of
CAIC

2024-25

ANNUAL REPORT

Promoting avalanche safety
throughout Colorado since 1973



Mission



The mission of the CAIC is to provide avalanche information, education, and promote research for the protection of life, property, and the enhancement of the state's economy.



The mission of the Friends of CAIC is to support avalanche forecasting and education throughout Colorado.



Letter from Friends of CAIC



Dear Friends,

I am proud to present the annual report for Friends of the Colorado Avalanche Information Center (FoCAIC) for the 2024-25 season. Each year, I am reminded of how far we have come since I started fundraising for this organization 18 years ago, and of how deeply our community's support continues to shape avalanche safety in Colorado.

This past fiscal year (FY25), FoCAIC invested \$602,442.21 into avalanche safety in Colorado. This includes a direct contribution of \$310,500 to the Colorado Avalanche Information Center (CAIC) to support forecasting operations. With this support, CAIC delivered 212 days of daily forecasts to backcountry travelers and hosted 106 educational events reaching 3,757 participants, including 441 youth under 18. These investments help ensure Colorado continues to lead the nation in avalanche forecasting, education, and innovation.

Our Trailhead Outreach Program (TOP) continued to grow this season, engaging directly with 8,809 backcountry users through

232 trailhead visits across the state. We also maintained avalanche awareness signage at more than 200 trailheads, replacing or installing 99 new signs to keep safety information visible and up to date. These on-the-ground efforts ensure safety messages reach backcountry users before they step into avalanche terrain.

This fiscal year was also marked by important internal progress. We started and completed the development of our new 2030 Strategic Plan. This was a collaborative effort that brought together our board, staff, partners, and stakeholders to chart a clear path forward for FoCAIC. The plan defines our long-term vision, identifies strategic pillars that will guide our work, and sets measurable goals for growth, impact, and sustainability. This process positions FoCAIC to build a stronger legacy and continue investing in avalanche safety for years to come.

FoCAIC remains dedicated to advancing avalanche safety, education, and forecasting throughout Colorado. Our promise to the backcountry community is that we will keep adapting, investing, and leading to ensure our programs meet the evolving needs of the community.

Thank you for being part of this mission. Your belief in our work and your commitment to avalanche safety make everything we do possible. Together, we will continue to make Colorado's backcountry safer for everyone who ventures into it.



With gratitude,

Aaron Carlson
Executive Director

Friends of the Colorado
Avalanche Information Center

Letter from CAIC

Dear Friends,

Winters in Colorado are changing, and our 2024-25 season provided a good example of the challenge of characterizing a year of snow and avalanche activity in our mountains. Multiple destructive cycles were interspersed in long, dry periods. Periods of heavy snowfall in the Park Range and surrounding areas built an above-average snowpack, while parts of the San Juan Mountains were far below normal. This dynamic weather pattern produced a winter that felt like we were either in a feast or famine, depending on where you were in Colorado.

Over the course of the season, the Colorado Avalanche Information Center (CAIC) recorded more than 5,500 avalanches. Nearly 1,000 were human-triggered, and while three people tragically lost their lives, this was below the 10-year average of six. With several close calls—including full burials and multi-party incidents—we could have seen many more tragedies.

We made important strides forward as an organization during the 2024-25 season. At the start of the winter, we launched an enhanced Avalanche Accident Data Platform, consolidating all reported accidents—ranging from minor encounters to fatalities—into an easy-to-navigate format that allowed users to explore reports and trends statewide. We also modernized other tools and data systems, improving both public access and our internal operations.

Partnerships remained central to our work. In collaboration with Colorado Parks and Wildlife, we integrated avalanche forecasts into the Colorado Trail Explorer (COTREX) app, making safety information more readily accessible. With San Miguel County, we launched a new partnership to support avalanche safety along the road to Ophir, providing weekly hazard assessments, mitigation recommendations, and training for the Road and Bridge Department. We also worked with Ouray and Hinsdale

Counties to provide avalanche accident data and hazard advice, and continued to support communities across the state with planning, search and rescue, and operational forecasting. The Friends of CAIC remain a long-standing and extremely important partner, and this year, we collaborated on several avalanche education programs, community outreach, and developed more technical tools to help the forecasters make better predictions and give the public better access to raw data.

We also continued important research. CAIC and Simon Fraser University advanced work on avalanche risk communication through the Snow Pool research panel and have exciting plans to build on this further next season. Our staff presented at the International Snow Science Workshop in Norway and participated in the European Avalanche Warning Service's biannual congress, contributing to global understanding of avalanches and promoting public avalanche safety programs.

Each season challenges us in new ways, but also moves us forward. The dedication of our staff, the commitment of our partners, and the engagement of our community all help advance our mission: keeping people safe in Colorado's mountains. Thank you for being part of this work, and for your continued support.



Sincerely,

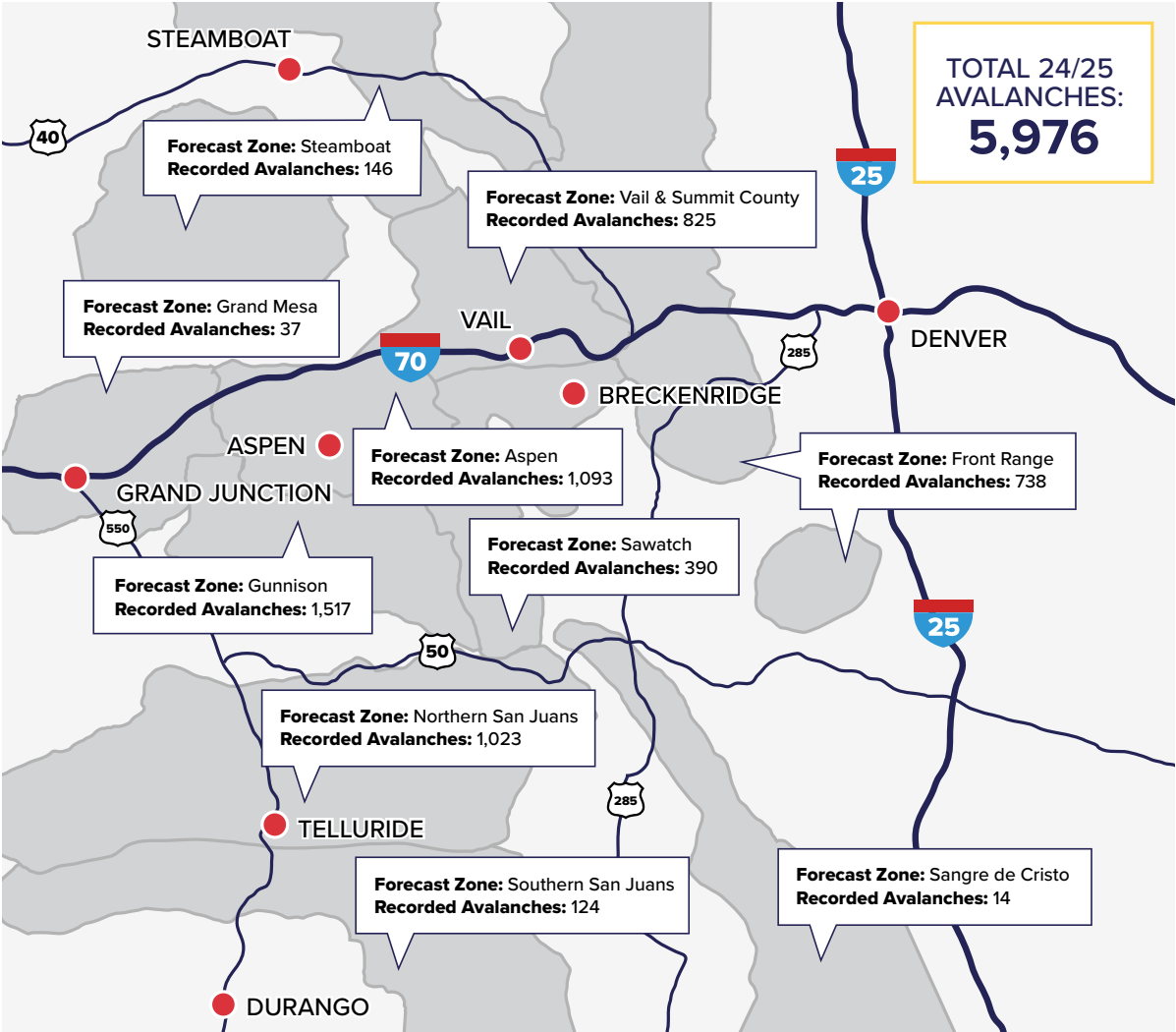
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ethan Greene". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Ethan Greene
Director
Colorado Avalanche
Information Center

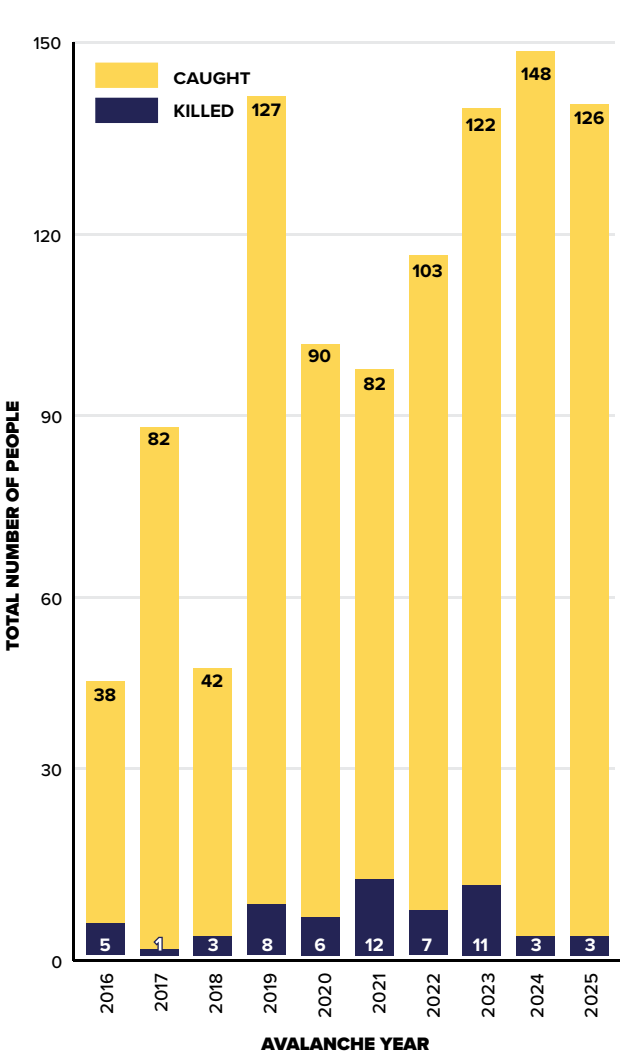
Avalanches & Accidents by the Numbers

- ▶ The CAIC recorded data on more than **5,976** avalanches between October 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025.
- ▶ There were **126** people reported caught in avalanches. Of those caught, **3** were killed.
- ▶ The CAIC published **1,682** forecasts throughout the season – each one of these requires staff time to research, discuss, write, and publish.

AVALARICHES BY FORECAST ZONE



PEOPLE CAUGHT & KILLED




Media Overview





WEBSITE

 **2,100,000**
Pageviews


 **257,515**
Users


MOBILE APP

 **1,786,374**
Mobile App Pageviews

 **21,922**
Users

SOCIAL MEDIA

 **178,000**
CAIC/Friends of CAIC
Meta Followers (FB/IG)

 **1,155**
Online Media Mentions
*including all mentions of
Colorado Avalanche Information
Center + Friends of CAIC*



PRESS INTERACTIONS

 **91**
CAIC Interviews

 **53.7 billion**
Unique Monthly Visitors



Preventing Cracks from Becoming Avalanches

Stress Resiliency at the Colorado Avalanche Information Center

By Ian Fowler, Avalanche Forecaster,
Colorado Avalanche Information Center

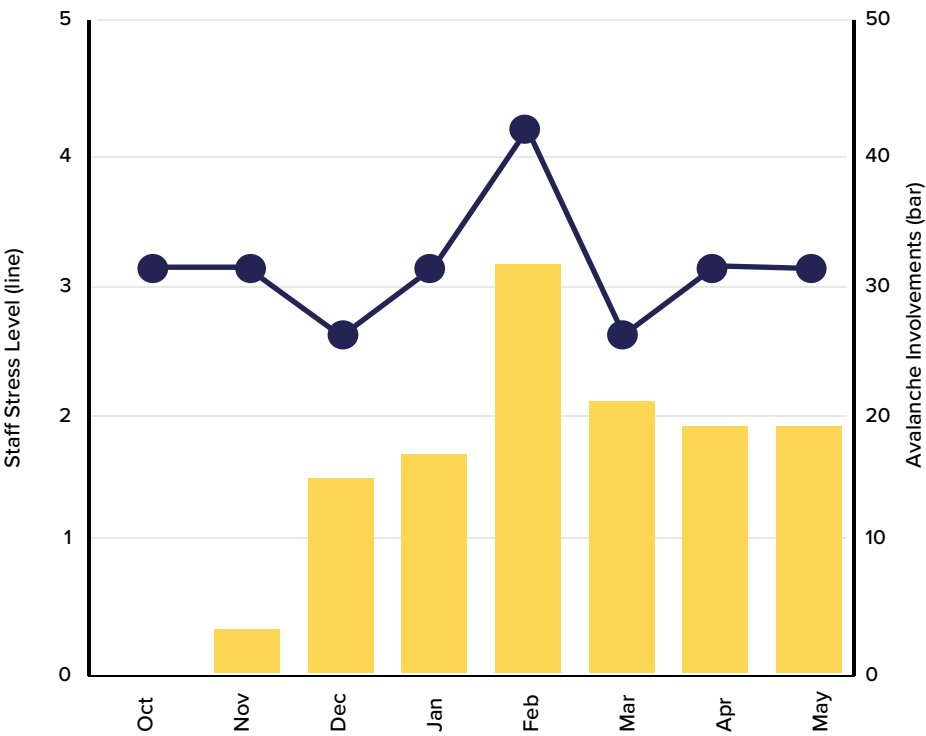
When the 2024-25 winter began, I was recovering from a head injury sustained while working as a mountain guide. I returned to work in the fall, but with the stress of healing, I was already carrying more weight than usual. Avalanche forecasting is demanding—every day is filled with high-stakes decisions that affect lives. That constant pressure can build chronic stress: the kind that accumulates over time and wears you down. By the time the spring storms came—one after another—my stress reached a new level. I wasn’t sleeping, the work I usually loved became a chore, and then the death of a friend triggered acute stress—a sudden and overwhelming response to crisis. That was my tipping point. Thanks to CAIC’s recently established resiliency program, I recognized what I truly needed, professional support, and was able to get help. At the Colorado Avalanche Information Center (CAIC), our mission is to provide avalanche information, education, and promote research for the protection of life, property, and the enhancement of the state’s economy. This mission involves a large amount of stress and is carried out by our staff—the organization’s most important asset. That’s why we partnered with Responder Alliance to create structures to support the team.

Managing chronic stress involves tracking our daily progress and making choices that move us towards a healthy baseline. The US Marine Corps originally developed the Stress Continuum, and Responder Alliance

helped us adapt this model into a CAIC-specific continuum (see page 9). The continuum describes behaviors for each level, from green to red. “Green choices” help reduce our stress to lower levels. In the 2023-24 season, I was probably in the yellow on day one and ended the season well into the orange.

Once a month, staff complete a survey that helps determine the stress level of the whole team. Seeing that another team member is struggling motivates us to support each other. The information from these surveys has been useful for observing trends in the team’s stress (figure below). Team stress levels tend to be higher in months when there are more involvements in avalanches.

Monthly median staff stress levels and avalanche involvement



From the Field



DYLAN CRAAYBEEK, CAIC

Acute stress occurs when we have a single potentially traumatizing event, like a fatal avalanche. When these incidents occur, we use Responder Alliance resources to assess the potential for a stress injury in staff. Team members construct a plan, which ranges from check-ins over a set schedule to professional resources. The goal is for every staff member involved to return to a healthy baseline without prolonged effects. Our therapist network includes professionals who are all trained and have experience working with first responders and mountain trauma.

The true success of the program can't be gauged by numbers or graphs alone. Its success is evident in the seemingly small ways we support each other, and our program supports us on a daily basis. For instance, when a team member feels comfortable acknowledging they are in the "yellow"—using our common language to indicate they need support—and then, a colleague volunteers to cover a 4 a.m. forecast shift. While stress and resiliency may lack the glamour of some of our other research, it is clear: a healthy, resilient team is essential to delivering CAIC's public safety mission.

This program could not have been possible without the help of ResponderAlliance.com, Eldora Ski Patrol, and Snowmass Snow Safety Team.

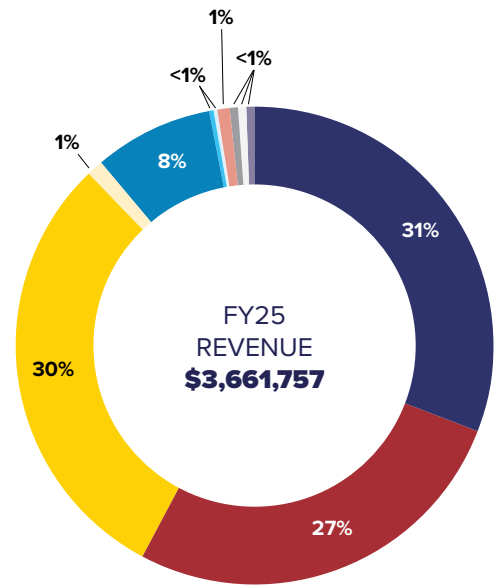
You can learn more about the development and implementation of this program in this research paper: [Stress Mitigation in Avalanche Work](#)

NORTH AMERICAN AVALANCHE STRESS CONTINUUM

Stress Level	Behaviors, Traits or Feelings	Travel Advice
4 HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to sleep without sleep aid • No possible time to take a break • Avoid forecasting/don't care • No exercise • No desire for growth • Avoid communication 	<p>Seek professional help</p>
3 CONSIDERABLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sleepless nights thinking about problems • Checking workplace chats and email when on break • Barely on time/late for forecasting/don't care • Minimum exercise needed for the job • CEs only when expressly ordered • Communication aggressive and defensive 	<p>Talk with spiritual advisor/ counselor/trusted friend Schedule some personal time</p>
2 MODERATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting tired but still able to sleep • Occasional short breaks • Just enough preparations for forecasting • Occasional exercise as time allows • Take part in minimum of CEs • Defensive communication, shorter fuse 	<p>3-3-3 Check-in after action review Create a plan to make more green choices</p>
1 LOW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well rested and ready • Scheduling and taking good breaks • Psyched, early and well prepared for forecasting • Exercising and healthy • Seek out personal development • Communicate openly and professionally 	<p>Continue to make green/good choices. Exercise, meditation, journaling, socializing, etc.</p>

Adapted from North American Public Avalanche Danger Scale by CAIC & Responder Alliance

Financial Breakdown // CAIC



FY25 CAIC REVENUE

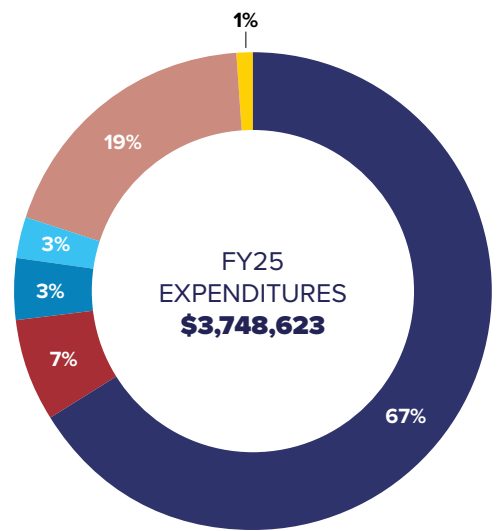
Colorado Severance Tax	\$1,117,547	(31%)
Keep Colorado Wild Pass (HB21-1326)	\$1,000,000	(27%)
Colorado Department of Transportation	\$1,107,265	(30%)
United States Forest Service	\$50,000	(1%)
Friends of CAIC	\$310,500	(8%)
Colorado Ski Country USA	\$10,000	(<1%)
Donations (non-FoCAIC)	\$6,050	(<1%)
Interest from Donations	\$30,116	(1%)
Interest Income	\$18,355	(<1%)
Snowmobile Fund	\$2,000	(<1%)
Educational Activities	\$20,424	(<1%)

Total \$3,661,757

FY25 CAIC EXPENDITURES

Personnel Services	\$2,510,498	(67%)
Total Admin Costs	\$261,611	(7%)
Rentals	\$133,102	(3%)
Utilities	\$115,594	(3%)
Cost of Goods and Services	\$701,482	(19%)
Travel Expenses	\$26,336	(1%)

Total Expenditures.....\$3,748,623



Financial Breakdown // Friends of CAIC



EXPENSE BREAKDOWN BY CLASS



- Administrative: \$170,678 (15%)
- Development: \$325,696 (30%)
- Programs: \$602,422 (55%)

REVENUE & EXPENSES



COST BREAKDOWN

The Friends of CAIC invested **\$602,422** into avalanche forecasting and education in Colorado during the 2024-25 season.



CAIC Forecasting
Operations
\$310,500



CAIC Technology
Support
\$7,695



Trailhead Outreach
Program
\$130,735



Other Program & Program
Management Costs
\$153,492

2024-25 Staff & Board



CAIC STAFF

Ethan Greene
Director

Brian Lazar
Deputy Director & Central
Mountains Regional Manager

Mike Cooperstein
Northern Mountains
Regional Manager

Matt Huber
Southern Mountains
Regional Manager

Jacob Barney
Technical Product Manager

Will Barrett
Avalanche Forecaster

Kelsy Been
Public Communications Officer

Krista Beyer
Avalanche Forecaster

Jewel Campbell
Field Technician

Dylan Craaybeek
Avalanche Forecaster

Jeff Davis
Senior Avalanche Forecaster

Chris Dickson
Avalanche Forecaster

Austin DiVesta
Snowmobile Outreach

Ian Fowler
Avalanche Forecaster

Alex Haddad
Avalanche Forecaster

Jason Konigsberg
Senior Avalanche Forecaster

Brandon Levy
Avalanche Forecaster

Spencer Logan
Science and
Operations Officer

Amanda Loughlin
Field Technician

Troy Nordquist
Avalanche Forecaster

Andrew McWilliams
Avalanche Forecaster

Colin Mitchell
Avalanche Forecaster

Julie Pomerantz
Program Assistant

Ben Pritchett
Senior Avalanche Forecaster

Rich Rogers
Field Technician

Kreston Rohrig
Avalanche Forecaster

Ron Simenhois
Avalanche Forecaster -
Data Scientist

John Snook
Numerical Prediction Specialist

Max Strotbeck
Field Technician

Jeremy Yanko
Avalanche Forecaster

Ryan Zarter
Avalanche Forecaster

FRIENDS OF CAIC STAFF

Aaron Carlson
Executive Director

Katie Thibideau
Development Director

Brian Rodine
Marketing and
Communications Director,
Trailhead Program Manager

Kia Soden
Development Officer

Todd Gillman
Strategic Partnerships Officer

Sean Tiffany
Trailhead Outreach
Coordinator

Meredith Kurtz
Trailhead Outreach
Coordinator

FRIENDS OF CAIC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Samantha Killgore
Board Chair

Bill Mueller
Board Vice Chair

Nathaniel Pearson
Board Treasurer

Allison Donovan
Board Secretary

Markian Feduschank
Board Member

Jonathan Lantz
Board Member

Rusty Perry
Board Member

Meg Twohig
Board Member

Ethan Greene
Non Voting CAIC Liaison

Aaron Carlson
Ex-Officio



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Evergreen, CO 80437



 **Colorado Avalanche
Information Center**



colorado.gov/avalanche