



# TOWN OF NEDERLAND

## OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

*"Nederland is just a little bit cooler ... on multiple levels"*

P.O. Box 396  
45 West First Street  
Nederland, CO 80466  
(303) 258-3266



<http://nedermayor.blogspot.com>

<http://nederlandco.org>

## The Legacy of Ned Mayor Paul Luedtke

NederMayor Blog – April 17, 2014

By Mayor Joe Gierlach

Congratulations to candidates Kristopher Larsen, Charles Wood, and Kevin Mueller that were elected to the Board of Trustees last Tuesday. I thank the voters for re-electing myself as well, because I believe that being re-elected has more to do with the political wind of the community than the particular individual who was mayor at the time.

The Nederland Municipal Code dictates that a mayor is limited to only three, two-year terms. None the less, now that I am in my third term, I began asking community elders, "Who was the last mayor to serve three terms?" No one could remember. Neither the [Boulder County Clerk & Recorder's Elections Office](#), nor the [Colorado Secretary of State](#) could verify our election history. This is probably due to Colorado's 'wild west' constitution and strong preference for [Home Rule and local control](#). Therefore, our historical election records are locally controlled.



My question triggered a research project at the [Boulder Library Carnegie Branch's local history archives](#) to produce a list of former mayors, and we now have a [list of Nederland Mayors available on the town's website](#). I came across Paul H. Luedtke, who was our mayor fifty years ago, from 1964 to 1972, which is actually four terms. I found that the basic town issues that Mayor Luedtke was addressing fifty years ago, is fairly interesting.

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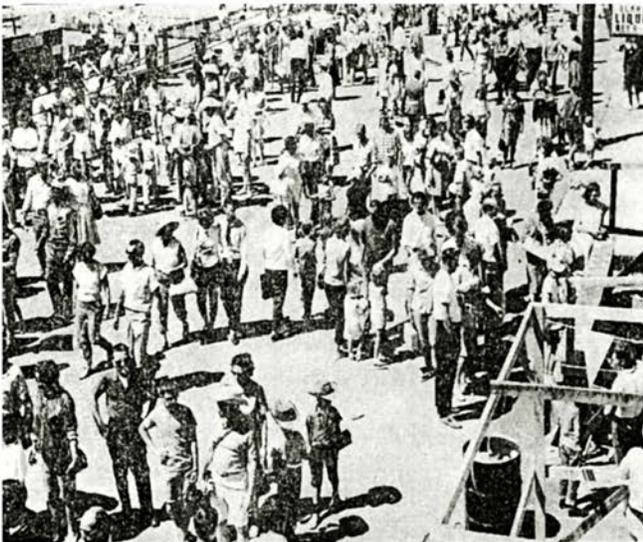
For example, back then, they had two local political parties: the Citizens Party and the Taxpayers Party, loosely representing Democrats and Libertarians respectively. Even today, Nederland is mostly Democrats and Libertarians. Paul Luedtke was in the Citizens Party. Perhaps the very nature of being located 3,000 feet above Boulder skews our population toward this political ideology.

### Origins of Town Planning:

In 1964, Nederland received help from the [Colorado Municipal League](#) (CML) for its first basic zoning plan. Ten years later (1974) our town received a \$4,000 grant from the [Denver Regional Council of Governments](#) (DRCOG) to create the town's first Comprehensive Plan. DRCOG was [one of the first Metropolitan Planning Organizations](#) (MPO's) in the nation, and Boulder County (and Nederland) were the newest members (1968) of this fairly new council. Throughout Mayor Luedtke's tenure, the [Nederland Board of Trustees](#) (BOT) were focused on infrastructure, town planning, and regional collaboration. It is possible that if the BOT had not made these plans, that Nederland could have easily degraded into a ghost town like Caribou.

Today, we have used [Envision 2020](#), to guide our update of the town's Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan, Comprehensive Plan, Master Infrastructure Plan, and Sustainability Action Plan. Updating these plans was long overdue, but I'm glad that we took the time to think things through, and I am grateful that Mayor Luedtke had the insight to begin these plans.

### Events and Economic Development:



**NEDERLAND AT NOON** — The main street of Nederland was a sea of people Sunday as the 2nd annual Nederland Jamboree came into the stretch. The annual event is sponsored by Lions Club. A parade was the highlight of the day morning, with 62 units including every-

thing from drum and bugle corps to antique automobiles and many horses. Other events in the three-day celebration included a rock-drilling contest, street dances, "gunfighters," can-can girl and Lions club concession stands.  
(Daily Camera Photos)



**Frozen Dead Guy Days 2014**

In the 1960's, they also knew that municipalities relied on sales tax to exist, and the impact of cultural events on infrastructure, as well as the sales tax it generates. Paul Luedtke was a prominent figure of the Lions Club that started the Nederland Jamboree

fifty years ago, which has evolved into today's Nederland Miners' Days. The [Boulder Daily Camera](#) described the 1965 event this way, "The main street of Nederland was a sea of people as the second annual Nederland Jamboree came into the home stretch."

The Nederland Jamboree featured competitions in spike driving, jack leg drilling, bow sawing, mucking, single-jack and double-jack rock drilling along with panning for gold. They crowned a Jamboree Queen who rode a horse in the parade. Not a far cry from the [Frozen Dead Guy Days](#) events like coffin races, polar plunge, frozen t-shirt contest, or the Ice Queen riding a hearse in the parade. Both attractions drew similar sized crowds and similar issues with traffic congestion.

As the town marketed itself as a cultural venue in the Peak to Peak region in 1965, the remake of the 1939 John Ford classic film: *Stagecoach* was filmed at [Caribou Ranch and the Indian Peaks Wilderness](#) near Nederland, starring [Bing Crosby](#), [Ann-Margret](#), [Red Buttons](#), and [Stefanie Powers](#) among others. Last year, *Fishing Naked* was filmed in Nederland.

Today, we realize the benefit of Mayor Luedtke's vision of positioning Nederland as a socially sustainable, cultural center of ideas. In the 1960's the town leadership recognized the importance of supporting local artists, musicians, and local businesses, which generate sales tax, to support itself.

### **Infrastructure Projects:**

By 1968, Paul Luedtke ran unopposed for his third term as mayor and was addressing water pollution. Two months later, Nederland received a \$364,000 federal loan for the 'new' sewage collection and treatment system (our old lagoons) and a \$28,000 grant from the Federal Water Pollution Control Administration. It was also designed to relieve stream pollution and health hazard situations. By 1971 the system was complete and they met the state mandated deadline to build a sewer system. The loan was repayable over a 40-year period, until 2009.

Guided by [Envision 2020](#), the Board of Trustees have been addressing water quality issues for our water supply, waste water, and storm water. I was proud to [cut the ribbon on our award winning Waste Water Treatment Facility](#) last year – the most energy efficient of its kind on the Front Range. Because of its green features, we obtained a zero percent loan for much of the project, ultimately saving \$8.9 million over the life of the facility through financing and energy savings.

Today, we see the benefit of the vision that Mayor Luedtke and the Board of Trustees had fifty years ago. They addressed the mining-related pollution in the same two rivers that run through our community today. We continue the same tradition, by creating the town's first Master Infrastructure Plan addressing storm water issues, and with the guidance of

the [Nederland Downtown Development Authority](#) (NDDA), designing the innovative [NedPeds Project](#) to include bio-swailes and water filtering systems.

### **Public Involvement:**

I wanted to say that if it hadn't been for Mayor Paul Luedtke (and to a lesser degree Mayor Tom Riley), Nederland wouldn't exist as a municipality, but really they were just representing the will of the people of Nederland from 1958 through 1972.

By 1970 there was a growing 'hippie problem' as documented in old Daily Camera articles, and mayor Paul Luedtke created a "Peace Committee" made up of three 'hippies' and three 'citizens'.

I mention Nederland's long-standing tradition of open public input (on any topic) in every Board of Trustees meeting. Indeed, it has been written into Chapter 2, Section 2-54 of our municipal code since the 1970's, and we continue the tradition today.

Our current administration, expanded the concept, spent a year and a half creating [Envision 2020](#) to guide our decision making, and we instituted the [Nederland Planning Process](#) (NPP) to ensure that our decisions are compatible with Envision 2020, and consistent with the will of our citizens.

After Mayor Paul Luedtke left office, Nederland went through several periods of conflict, riddled with police firings, recall elections, law suits, and instability. It is also rumored that during that time, the legendary town cat was elected mayor as a write-in candidate. We believe that his remains are buried in the front lawn of Town Hall beneath the commemorative stone which you can see today under a tree that was planted about thirty years ago.

As I thank the voters for another term of office, it's interesting to reflect upon how far we have come, perhaps how little has changed, and think about where we go from here as a community.

