

An Update from the COPAS Colorado New Professionals Committee

How the New Professionals Committee (NPC) Started in Colorado



(L-R) Pat Lytle, Jenny Emerson, and Dash Victor

In the summer of 2008, Deanna Duell, Owner of Duell & Associates, and then President of COPAS - Colorado, approached Tristan Farel and Jenny Emerson about starting a committee for new professionals. Deanna was familiar with the success of Houston's Young Professional Committee (YPC) and wanted to start a similar committee for COPAS - Colorado. Deanna identified a growing local need for a committee that focused on helping educate and acclimate new professionals into the oil and gas industry.

At the end of the 2008-2009 COPAS year, COPAS - Colorado's membership included more than 700 professionals in finance and accounting, including a growing number of professionals who recently joined the industry.

Tristan Farel from Resolute Natural Resources, Pat Lytle from St. Mary Land & Exploration Company, Dash Victor from Deloitte & Touche, and Jenny Emerson were all involved with the formation of the NPC Charter and approval of the new committee by the COPAS - Colorado Board. We got advice from Michael Simpson, Chair of the YPC in Houston, on forming and running the committee. Michael assisted us by forwarding the PASH YPC Charter, which we modified to fit our society.

Current Leadership for the NPC in Colorado

ChairJenny Emerson
Vice-Chair, EducationPat Lytle
Vice-Chair, SocialDash Victor
Colorado Board Liaison.....Tristan Farel

Mission Statement

The New Professionals Committee wants to introduce and attract new professionals working in accounting and finance to COPAS and the oil and gas industry through networking events and educational settings. The committee strives to provide a comfortable atmosphere where new professionals will learn about the industry, and obtain general education, training, and guidance to assist them in their current positions, as well as help them develop into future leaders.

Accomplishments

In its first year of operation, COPAS - Colorado's NPC held four Lunch & Learns, three planning meetings, and two accounting Happy Hours. We also had a bowling team in an Energy League, a kickball team in the Colorado Society of CPA's Young Professional Tournament, and helped organize three Next Generation of Oil and Gas Professionals Happy Hours. Approximately 50-75 people attend every Lunch & Learn, 15-25 people attend every planning meeting, and about 50-100 professionals attend the Happy Hours.

We see the NPC as a springboard to COPAS - Colorado and several new professionals are taking leadership positions on other COPAS - Colorado committees, including the Education and Financial Reporting Committees. We have had many new professionals join or re-join COPAS - Colorado just to take part in the NPC activities. One of our most important accomplishments is engaging new professionals in participating in COPAS so that COPAS continues to see growth, maintains industry relevance, and has leadership continuity when members retire. COPAS - Colorado is taking steps in the right direction to increase new professionals' involvement in an industry with a high level of experience.

Secrets to COPAS-NPC Success

COPAS - Colorado NPC decided to keep our goals simple for the first year by focusing on Lunch & Learns and a few networking opportunities. Our membership is unique for a couple of reasons: 1) many of the oil and gas companies are located in downtown Denver; and 2) a large membership base with very strong attendance.

We believe that our successes of high participation, active volunteers, and willing sponsor companies are due to the excitement and passion of our new professionals wanting to get involved! NPC would not have experienced such a phenomenal first year if there had not been overwhelming interest and support from both the new professionals and the oil and gas companies

sponsoring our events.

We extend a special thanks to our sponsors this past year including: BOLO by Well-Point Systems, Deloitte & Touche, Duell & Associates, EKS&H, Emerson Search, Encana Oil & Gas, Enerplus Resources, Hein & Associates, Resolute Natural Resources, Oildex, St. Mary Land & Exploration Company, and Whiting Petroleum.

Key factors in our success

Holding regular planning meetings, usually once a quarter, to discuss Lunch & Learn topics, networking events and volunteers needed to accomplish activities.

Encouraging our members to share ideas during our planning meetings and organizing events that make sense for new professionals.

Developing a NPC email list to regularly communicate information to over 300 current and prospective COPAS members that are interested in upcoming events.

Starting a group on LinkedIn and Facebook to connect our members and help encourage networking.

Conscientiously staying away from specific technical accounting topics, as these topics are covered by the other committees, and providing more industry or personal development education to help our new professionals learn more about the industry and become more successful in the workplace.

And last, but not least, having the support of the COPAS - Colorado board and member companies and our eager and involved members. Our success wouldn't have been possible without all of them!

Outlook of COPAS-Colorado NPC

As the committee moves forward into our second year, we hope to continue successfully providing a valuable and enjoyable resource to our members and COPAS - Colorado. COPAS - Colorado NPC has already started planning for the fall and we are excited about what we can accomplish in the upcoming year!

Interested in Starting a NPC? Contact Chair Jenny Emerson at jenny@emersonsearchllc.com with any questions about the NPC!