

An Interview with Katherine Neddenriep

Perspectives from the COVID-19 Pandemic: Leadership and Learning in Nevada

Produced by:

The University of Nevada Las Vegas  
The Lincy Institute  
2024

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The following interview was a part of the “Perspectives from the COVID-19 Pandemic: Leadership and Learning in Nevada” research project. The recorded interview and transcript were made possible through the generosity of The Lincy Institute at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. The goal of the project was to understand and document how Nevada organizations and leaders responded to the myriad challenges that the pandemic engendered. The interviewees thank The Lincy Institute and their supporters for the opportunity to reflect on their roles throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The researchers also acknowledge the following individuals who contributed to the conceptualization, data collection, and analysis of the project: Dr. John Hudak, Dr. Makada Henry-Nickie, Elia Del Carmen Solano-Patricio, Taylor Cummings, Peter Grema, Kristian Thymianos, Saha Salahi, Madison Frazee, and Katie Lim.

Each interviewee had the opportunity to review their transcript. All measures have been taken to preserve the style and language of the interviewee. This interview features Katherine Neddenriep, Elko Convention Visitors Authority, and was conducted on 7/13/22 by Kelliann Beavers. This interview covers topics including reflections on leadership, organizational challenges, and opportunities for collaboration.

## **Interview with Katie Neddenriep**

**Date: 7-13-2022**

**SPEAKERS: Kelliann Beavers, Katie Neddenriep**

**Kelliann Beavers [00:04]**

Okay. So, to confirm, you reviewed the consent form and you're comfortable with us recording the call.

**Katie Neddenriep [00:09]**

Yes.

**Kelliann Beavers [00:12]**

Okay. Great. So, thank you so much again for chatting with us. The first question that I have is, as a leader in your local community, how did you see your role and the role of ECVA throughout the pandemic? Keeping in mind that as I understand it, you stepped into your role at the very beginning of the pandemic...roughly.

**Katie Neddenriep [00:34]**

Yeah, it was my one-year anniversary was the day that-

**Kelliann Beavers [00:37]**

Oh, you had already been there the year prior. Okay.

**Katie Neddenriep [00:40]**

Yeah.

**Kelliann Beavers [00:41]**

So, at least, I may have just forgotten that since I looked. Okay.

**Katie Neddenriep [00:45]**

Yeah. So, yeah, I had been there a year. And so, it was kind of interesting, and I got the impression that this kind of happened everywhere. Everybody was trying to figure out, what do we do, and how do we manage this.

And so, the way the ECVA is organized, the board of directors has liaisons both from the city and the county. And Elko County kind of led the response efforts, that they had the task force and all this kind of stuff. And so they had tried to create a more broad community collaborative group to participate in figuring out, how do we navigate this, what do we do, and how do we get things opened up. And so I participated in those calls a couple of times, but it didn't really get traction. I think it was just that everybody had so much they were responsible for figuring out and trying to do-

**Kelliann Beavers** [01:45]

Meaning that board was trying itself to sort of become like a gathering point or a way for people to decide collaboratively.

**Katie Neddenriep** [01:53]

Right, right. So I did stay in close communication with both the county and the city, just through nature of trying to figure out – because their leaders had been around much longer than I had in those roles. And so, just kind of figuring out, as we were going along, how are we going to operate in this environment and that sort of thing.

And one of the other things we did at the ECVA while things were still shut down is, I was trying to work with the governor's office to go, "Hey, can we be open to support the critical industries?"

**Kelliann Beavers** [02:42]

Mm-hmm.

**Katie Neddenriep** [02:43]

So the example we had was, the mining operations still needed to hire people, and they needed to have safety meetings and these kinds of things. But, they didn't have space to social distance and that kind of thing, so they wanted to rent our facilities to do these meetings and trainings and that kind of thing. But that took so long, that by the time we got that authorization and any information, it was like two days before the governor allowed us to open up the-

**Kelliann Beavers** [03:15]

Oh – yeah, that's frustrating though because it seems like an obvious role that you would have played like it'd been an easy "Yes, that's what you're there for" sort of thing.

**Katie Neddenriep** [03:23]

Right, exactly. And I mean it's one of those things we probably could have done anyway, right?

**Kelliann Beavers** [03:28]

Yeah, but-

**Katie Neddenriep** [03:31]

But who was going to know?

**Kelliann Beavers** [03:32]

Yeah.

**Katie Neddenriep** [03:33]

But I'm also sitting there going, you know, I've been at this a year. I'm not going to put my job on the line for this.

**Kelliann Beavers** [03:36]

Of course not, yeah. Especially at that time when it was so unknown about transmission and everything.

**Katie Neddenriep** [03:42]

Right. And how long is this going to last, and all the things.

**Kelliann Beavers** [03:46]

Yeah.

**Katie Neddenriep** [03:49]

So then, once we opened up, it was, you know, helping the community to understand what could and couldn't be done. But that once our facilities were available, it was really working with people to make sure that they were able to have their events in compliance and, you know, but getting on with life, and trying to get back into just business, operation, and living, so, yeah.

**Kelliann Beavers** [04:15]

Yeah. Thanks for describing that. The next question is, how did you work with, or observe, groups who were hardest hit by the pandemic, and who were those groups in your opinion?

**Katie Neddenriep** [04:36]

Like here in our community?

**Kelliann Beavers** [04:38]

I think so. That's probably the best way for us to learn from you is what was there in your community or in your region. The things that you had the closest exposure to.

**Katie Neddenriep** [04:50]

And when you say, "hardest hit," are you talking about economically, or the health aspects of-

**Kelliann Beavers** [04:59]

That's a good question. Definitely, both.

**Katie Neddenriep** [05:03]

Okay.

**Kelliann Beavers** [05:05]

And probably in your role more so, the economic aspects.

**Katie Neddenriep** [05:09]

Right.

**Kelliann Beavers** [05:09]

But any way that you want to respond to it is relevant.

**Katie Neddenriep** [05:12]

Sure. Because I think – I'll address both. I would say, from the health standpoint, I would say our community followed the statistics of everybody else, right? Older, underlying health conditions. There is a sizeable concentration of Native American population in the Elko community, so their

reservations went on lockdown. And a lot of their signage is actually still up, telling people not to come onto those areas.

**Kelliann Beavers** [05:53]

Wow.

**Katie Neddenriep** [05:55]

Yeah. Economically in the community, I will say, Elko was not hit as hard as some of the other parts of the state because our biggest economic industry was allowed to continue operating. And so, while lodging tax revenue dipped, they did not take the hit that like, Tahoe, Reno, and some of those other communities did, which was a blessing. I mean that was phenomenal.

I think the other thing that happened for us, with people not traveling on airplanes, they were willing to spend more time in vehicles. And so we saw significantly greater traffic on Interstate 80. And so, if you were traveling through the Bay Area to Yellowstone, we're perfectly halfway to stop and spend the night or wherever you might be going.

**Kelliann Beavers** [06:53]

Mm-hmm.

**Katie Neddenriep** [06:54]

So we saw more vehicle traffic that kept tourism going.

**Kelliann Beavers** [07:02]

That's interesting.

**Katie Neddenriep** [07:05]

Yeah. But the industry, I mean all of the industries that got shut down, right: dining, anything hospitality, tourism, the casinos, that was a big one. One of the casinos here, it was the Red Lion, now it's Maverick. They have three properties. They have the main hotel; there's the Gold Country, and they have the High Desert Inn. And the High Desert Inn was kind of on the brink of not operating anymore anyway.

**Kelliann Beavers** [07:35]

Mm-hmm.

**Katie Neddenriep** [07:36]

COVID shut it down. It did not reopen. And we did lose one or two restaurants because of – and again, I feel like for a lot of those, they were probably on the brink anyway.

**Kelliann Beavers** [07:52]

Sure.

**Katie Neddenriep** [07:54]

And it was just the straw that broke that camel's back, right?

**Kelliann Beavers** [07:56]

Right, yeah.

**Katie Neddenriep** [08:00]

And so, from that standpoint otherwise, economically, I don't think we were hit – our community was hit nearly as hard as some of the other areas. Definitely, the hospitality, tourism, and gaming were hit the hardest. And I think those are the ones that are suffering the longest-term impacts because they had to let all these people go, and you can't just not work, and now they're really struggling to re-hire and staff back up.

**Kelliann Beavers** [08:33]

Mm-hmm.

**Katie Neddenriep** [08:35]

But I'm sure if you've talked to other people in the state, you've heard this multiple times already. (laughs)

**Kelliann Beavers** [08:42]

Yeah. Well, you know, some of the things we hear are iterative. But I do think that you know, I haven't spoken enough with, and we're working on expanding our conversations with folks that are in the northern part of the state. So, a lot of this is a very different experience, you know?

**Katie Neddenriep** [08:57]

Yeah.

**Kelliann Beavers** [08:58]

So it's really a value, to us, to understand broadly, what happened in Nevada. So I'm grateful that you're able to share your perspective with us.

The next question you kind of already talked about. So, if you want to add anything about the key points – the next question is, can you walk through a timeline, as you remember it, of how the pandemic unfolded? What happened, and what did you do?

**Katie Neddenriep** [09:28]

Sure. I mean it was one of those things – I think at first, at least for me, I did not anticipate it was going to go on nearly as long as it did.

**Kelliann Beavers** [09:38]

Of course not. No, me either.

**Katie Neddenriep** [09:42]

And so, we started out; it hit right as we were getting ready to plan our biggest event of the year, which is the Elko Mining Expo that takes place the first week of June. And it was like, "So, are we going to get to have this or not?" And then it became pretty clear that that was going to be a "not." And so we had to unravel all of that, and we'd bring in electrical contractors, tent

contractors. But then also, the economic impact to the organization. I mean that's a huge revenue driver for us, and it's like, "Oh, crap."

**Kelliann Beavers** [10:24]

Yeah.

**Katie Neddenriep** [10:25]

But then it started getting into – because the way the ECVA revenue streams work; the only revenue we have control over is our facility rentals and our events.

**Kelliann Beavers** [10:36]

Mm-hmm.

**Katie Neddenriep** [10:39]

Both of which were prohibited. So then we're at the mercy of the ad valorem tax that we get and room tax, which was also-

**Kelliann Beavers** [10:50]

Wasn't exactly thriving.

**Katie Neddenriep** [10:52]

-being obliterated, right? And so it's, "Okay, what are our reserves? What do our expenses look like?" And then it got into "What do we have control over?" And of course, your biggest driver is the staff. That's any organization's biggest expense, the headcount.

**Kelliann Beavers** [11:07]

Of course, yeah.

**Katie Neddenriep** [11:11]

The ECVA is a governmental organization, so we're subject to open meeting law. And so, I had to make the decision of what positions to recommend to the board to eliminate. And then that had to be publicly posted and voted upon-

**Kelliann Beavers** [11:28]

Good gracious. That's so challenging.

**Katie Neddenriep** [11:31]

I drink a *lot* of gin. (laughter)

**Kelliann Beavers** [11:35]

I can only imagine. (laughs)

**Katie Neddenriep** [11:39]

And like mid-April to May of that year of 2020 – because I had gone through layoffs in my past career, but I had never had to be the one to pick those people.



**Kelliann Beavers** [11:54]

Mm-hmm.

**Katie Neddenriep** [11:56]

And certainly, never had to execute it in a public forum.

**Kelliann Beavers** [11:58]

Mm-hmm.

**Katie Neddenriep** [12:02]

And it's a small organization. We had 14 employees. We cut four positions.

**Kelliann Beavers** [12:06]

Oh, my God! That's so tough.

**Katie Neddenriep** [12:10]

And so it was like family. And it was a business decision but people take it personally.

**Kelliann Beavers** [12:19]

Of course.

**Katie Neddenriep** [12:23]

Yeah, it was not good. It was not fun. So then we get into damage control, right? You've got to figure out, what do you need? What can you do without? And then it's, how do we cope? How do we optimize? How do we generate revenue? How do we cut expenses? And it just turned into like a constant analysis of what can we control, what can we do, and how long is this going to last? And you're constantly changing, or modifying, or delaying marketing campaigns because you're trying to be sensitive about – you want to drive revenue – like if somebody's going to be traveling, you want them to stay in Elko versus Winnemucca, but you also don't necessarily want to be drawing a bunch of people to your community from just anywhere during that time either.

**Kelliann Beavers** [13:14]

It was challenging then not to be tone-deaf and do any kind of marketing. Other than this job, I worked for a start-up, where we were trying to market software for urban design, and we pretty much had to stop during that period of time because anything we said sounded like we weren't in the same planet as everyone else.

**Katie Neddenriep** [13:28]

Right. (laughs) Well, and it got interesting, too, because we're such a small community, and the job that I had had before I came to the ECVA, I know the county commissioners and city council members and that kind of thing really well. And so I'm listening to and watching all of their agendas. I'm listening to all of their meetings and these kinds of things. And when the Western Folk Life Center canceled "Cowboy Poetry" that first year and one of the commissioners was like, "They don't need to be – it's so soon!" And this, that, and the other.

**Kelliann Beavers** [14:03]

What was it that they canceled? Sorry.

**Katie Neddenriep** [14:06]

The National Cowboy Poetry gathering, which is a huge event, in late January each year. So it's a nice tourism infusion, economic infusion for the community each year, especially in the middle of the winter. And they canceled it in like, July or August.

**Kelliann Beavers** [14:24]

So, far ahead of time that people were like-

**Katie Neddenriep** [14:26]

Yeah, that was the commissioner's response.

**Kelliann Beavers** [14:29]

It was probably the right decision but unfortunately, it was really far ahead of time and probably pissed people off.

**Katie Neddenriep** [14:36]

And this commissioner, like, decided "We're just going to do our own." Well, no – he wanted me and my team to do it, and I'm like "Dude, you don't understand what it takes. Like, here's a reason they canceled this."

So then you end up being in the position of trying to manage other people's irrationality and just lack of awareness.

**Kelliann Beavers** [15:03]

Yeah.

**Katie Neddenriep** [15:06]

Yeah. Anyway – but also in this, I don't know if you've followed any of the news out of Elko. It was very much like the Wild West. Everybody just kind of giving up the mandates and stuff the middle finger kind of thing. (laughter)

**Kelliann Beavers** [15:28]

Like all throughout, you mean, in terms of just the citizenry, yeah.

**Katie Neddenriep** [15:32]

It was kind of nice because you weren't in complete lockdown, and it didn't feel like you were suddenly in the middle of no man's land.

**Kelliann Beavers** [15:43]

Yeah.

**Katie Neddenriep** [15:44]

But at the same time, it's like "Guys, for real; people are dying. Have some – you might feel that way. You don't have to stay in a public meeting, right? Keep your mouth shut."

**Kelliann Beavers** [15:58]

And Elko walks a funny line of being small but not miniature. You did have enough of a lot of people that it was worth being cautious, and to some extent, fearful, but it's not quite as populated as some other parts of the state.

**Katie Neddenriep** [16:08]

Right. Yeah. And with some of the stuff that was done extreme, I would say, yes.

**Kelliann Beavers** [16:16]

Yeah, especially probably for y'all.

**Katie Neddenriep** [16:21]

Yeah, exactly. And so, some of the things, like there was– one of their agendas, they were passing a resolution, fairly early on, and in the resolution they had called it the "China Virus." And I finally called the commissioners and I said, "Look, I don't care what you want to call it in your day-to-day whatever. Call it by its name."

**Kelliann Beavers** [16:43]

Oh, they had that in the text, and you're like, "You don't want to do this – even for your own sake, you don't want to do this."

Oh, it froze. (Zoom hangs up) [16:52 – 20:41]

Oh, you're frozen, sorry. Let's see... Oh I see you now, it's fine. Okay, I- shoot. You unfroze and then it froze again.

**Katie Neddenriep**

Hello.

**Kelliann Beavers**

Yes! Now you're there. Oh dear, it's frozen again. Now, I can see you now. It seems like, whenever I try to say it's frozen and then it unfreezes and then it freezes again. I'm going to turn my video off in case that helps, like maybe it's pulling on the call. Too hard on the internet. I can see you still, but I can't hear you.

**Katie Neddenriep**

Hello.

**Kelliann Beavers**

Yes! I can hear you now. It's like the connection's dragging. You're moving, but you're moving really slowly, and then your audio cuts out. Your picture looks kind of cool, like a painting. (laughs) There you go now. Maybe it'll work now.

**Katie Neddenriep**

-just call it by its name and be done-

Oh no.

**Kelliann Beavers**

I hear that. I heard, "Oh no." (laughs) Shoot... Seems like I can hear you now, maybe. Oh, here we go. Here's the phone number's probably, uhm...

**Katie Neddenriep**

Uh, hang on a second. It's asking me for a password.

**Kelliann Beavers**

Oh, it says 308520, and ironically, I can hear you now, but that's the passcode that shows up.

**Katie Neddenriep** [20:42]

Okay. Can you hear me?

**Kelliann Beavers** [20:43]

Yep, I sure can.

**Katie Neddenriep** [20:50]

Okay. All right. Maybe this will be better. (laughs)

**Kelliann Beavers** [20:53]

I think so.

**Katie Neddenriep** [20:56]

Okay. So it was just kind of interesting, the emotional piece that started to come into play, even as people started to get back into regular operations. That sentimental impact and emotional piece of managing getting back into operation. And then the judgment that we started to get right as people started to have events, and open things back up, or if they did decide to cancel things, like, it really turned into you were damned if you do and you were damned if you didn't. Because some people were like "F\*— it, let's get on with life," and other people were like "Oh, my God, you're going to murder everybody." So it was pretty interesting. I've said there are going to be psychology students who are going to get content out of this for decades talking to people about how people responded and how it impacted them, and that kind of thing, yeah, and it still does, you know?

**Kelliann Beavers** [22:10]

Yeah. That's what I was going to say, how is it now comparatively? I know here, I guess statistically, our numbers of cases are really not actually very good right now, although hospitalizations seem to be down. But I was just wondering, like, generally, the climate of how it feels there now. Because here it's sort of like everything's just going as usual, even though it seems like every time I go somewhere, someone there has had it, or I hear that they got it at the event, and I have to go see if I caught it, and like, everything. It's kind of crazy.

**Katie Neddenriep** [22:41]

Right. Well, I think I would say here it's turned into – it's like the flu, except people test specifically for it, and there is still some specific guidance that people, particularly as mandated by employers follow if they're diagnosed with it, right?

**Kelliann Beavers** [23:09]

Yeah.

**Katie Neddenriep** [23:12]

Because even just yesterday I was talking to a good friend of mine, and she's got it, again. And so she's like, "Yeah, my home test was positive, so I'm going to go in and just confirm if that's really it, so I know what I need to do or if I need to stay home for a bit." This, that and the other. But I think otherwise here – I think some numbers are starting to go up, but what are we on, like the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> variant of it now? And I think I read something the other week that the hospital had had their first inpatient that they'd had since February just recently.

**Kelliann Beavers** [23:50]

Oh, okay.

**Katie Neddenriep** [23:55]

But otherwise, I think – and I don't think this is just Elko. I think this is everywhere. I think it's out there more than maybe we realize. People just aren't testing.

**Kelliann Beavers** [24:06]

Yeah.

**Katie Neddenriep** [24:09]

You know, they just go, "Well, if I have some of these things that are maybe those symptoms, I'm just going to stay home for five or ten days."

**Kelliann Beavers** [24:15]

Yeah.

**Katie Neddenriep** [24:18]

"And then I'll get on with my life when I feel better" kind of thing.

**Kelliann Beavers** [24:21]

Yeah. And it's so easy to test at home now. You don't necessarily get into the body of statistics, I guess. If you have it, you just care for yourself.

**Katie Neddenriep** [24:24]

Right. Well, and I think that's the other thing is, the CDC has changed their guidance enough that people just go, "I'll just" – which – this is what people should do *all* the time if they don't feel good, right?

**Kelliann Beavers** [24:43]

Yeah.

**Katie Neddenriep** [24:45]

Whether it's COVID, the flu, or whatever. If you're really sick, don't leave your house until you feel better.

**Kelliann Beavers** [24:50]

Yeah.

**Katie Neddenriep** [24:55]

So I think that's kind of where Elko is. It's pretty much the same. It is amazing that we didn't have more cases with the mines operating throughout. But they did a great job managing it and managing their transportation, that yeah, I think we followed the statistic – you know, the "curve" that everybody else did too.

**Kelliann Beavers** [25:19]

Right. Okay. The next question I think you did speak about somewhat at the beginning, but there may be other things you want to add which is, is there anything you wish that the government, at any level, did differently or could do differently now in response to the pandemic and the economic downturn?

**Katie Neddenriep** [25:42]

I think, so, a couple of things happened. One, loosening up the unemployment system was a cluster – I ended up with a fraudulent unemployment claim. And they were not – if they were going to do that, they should have increased the staffing to manage it. Because it was impossible to talk to someone to get information, and even then it was just kind of like, "Oh, that sucks." Okay. But what are you going to do about it, right?

**Kelliann Beavers** [26:21]

(laughs) Yeah.

**Katie Neddenriep** [26:25]

And it was like wow, okay. The other piece that I got really frustrated with was when they started throwing out the billions of dollars in the paycheck protection programs and these kinds of things. Our industry, like the Convention of Visitors Authority that I worked for, we weren't eligible for anything until the second round.

**Kelliann Beavers** [26:51]

Wow.

**Katie Neddenriep** [26:54]

Because of how they qualified them – yeah.

**Kelliann Beavers** [26:55]

Mmm.

**Katie Neddenriep** [26:57]

Because they're all structured differently. And so, if we had been a department of the city or county, we would have been getting some of their money.

**Kelliann Beavers** [27:10]

Even though you are a government agency, technically, but you're not a department within. Huh...

**Katie Neddenriep** [27:14]

Right.

**Kelliann Beavers** [27:17]

That is weird.

**Katie Neddenriep** [27:20]

Because of how we were structured, we weren't eligible until the second round, which is too late, right? I mean, I couldn't wait that long. There was just kind of a – I don't know. But, I mean, it's also one of those things, everybody's trying to figure it out as they go along. And could it have been done better? Absolutely. Who would have known that? I don't know, you know. (laughs)

**Kelliann Beavers** [27:50]

Exactly. Yeah, that's a good way to put it.

**Katie Neddenriep** [27:54]

Yeah, but at the same time, you know, was it really necessary? Did it really do what it was supposed to do? I think we learned that didn't really happen either, based on some of the stories that have come out after the fact. You know, I mean, not from my career standpoint, but from a personal perspective; my husband and I had a trailer park in Fernley, and when they put all of the rent moratoriums and eviction moratoriums and all of that kind of stuff out there, people just stopped paying rent. Well, the majority of people that lived in our trailer park were on social security, so they actually made more money during the pandemic but still didn't pay us rent because there was no consequence to it.

**Kelliann Beavers** [28:43]

Mmm.

**Katie Neddenriep** [28:45]

And that got to be extremely frustrating as well-

**Kelliann Beavers** [28:49]

Yeah. I just saw a book yesterday that's come out by someone who's specifically writing about the housing crisis, but writing about the experience of landlords, which generally speaking, is what you're describing, just a certain kind of example of it.

**Katie Neddenriep** [29:03]

Right.

**Kelliann Beavers** [29:06]

And the complexities of like, some of the language that's put in place to try and protect people, but that ends up hurting landlords and creating a situation where landlords end up – not that you did this – but landlords end up going around/under – doing things they shouldn't be doing because they're trying to deal with the fact the legislation isn't working for them and is creating serious problems.

**Katie Neddenriep** [29:30]

Right.

**Kelliann Beavers** [29:31]

So that's really interesting. I'm sorry that you had that experience.

**Katie Neddenriep** [29:33]

Yeah. It was just – I don't know – it's very frustrating, and it certainly changes your perspective on what government should and shouldn't be trying to manage and fix.

**Kelliann Beavers** [29:53]

Yeah... Yeah... Yeah That is actually what one of the other questions is somewhat like what you just described. So in case you want to speak to any more of it, I'm just kind of skipping to it. It's whether there were specific policies, like CARES or HEE, ERF, or any of the funding packages that came out, that you noticed had an impact on people, and how positively or negatively – like I was wondering when you said, with the second round, that ECVA was eligible for – did that – were you able to use that in a way that helped? I'm not sure how they limited the use of the funds or articulated what you could apply for or not. And so, I'm just curious how that worked for y'all or didn't.

**Katie Neddenriep** [30:48]

Yeah. So we did get round two of the PPP funding. And that – you basically just get to write off payroll benefits, and I think utilities were allowed to be charged against that.

**Kelliann Beavers** [31:05]

So, you guys got PPP, but am I wrong – if you were a department of a government, you wouldn't have even been able to play in the PPP pool. PPP wasn't for, like, parts of the government. But even though you're kind of an agency-



**Katie Neddenriep** [31:18]  
Right.

**Kelliann Beavers** [31:22]  
-you were – that's weird.

**Katie Neddenriep** [31:23]  
Right. So if we had been – so the one I'll use as an example is – let's say, the City of Fallon. Their tourism department is a function of the City of Fallon.

**Kelliann Beavers** [31:38]  
Mm-hmm.

**Katie Neddenriep** [31:41]  
Reno-Sparks Convention and Visitors Authority is a department of Washoe County. So if Washoe County got PPP funding, the department of the Reno-Sparks Convention and Visitors Authority would have been part of their calculation of what funding they would have been eligible for.

**Kelliann Beavers** [31:56]  
Oh, that's so weird, and it's probably not something that, like, consciously is done, to be good or bad, at the beginning.

**Katie Neddenriep** [32:02]  
No.

**Kelliann Beavers** [32:04]  
It's just a different way that different cities do it. Hmm.

**Katie Neddenriep** [32:06]  
Right. And so, what happened on the second round is, we were eligible because they put a rider in round two to allow for destination management organization, regardless of how you were structured to be eligible. And I had to fight with the bank, and I was on every webinar I could be on. I was taking screenshots of the slides that said, "These are the criteria," and circling and emailing to the bank, "This is what we are. We are eligible."

**Kelliann Beavers** [32:47]  
What's the phrase that you used? The "something" managed organization – I couldn't understand you.

**Katie Neddenriep** [32:53]  
Destination management.

**Kelliann Beavers** [32:52]  
Oh, gotcha. Yeah.

**Katie Neddenriep** [32:53]

Destination management organization or association. So we were eligible on that round two, and you calculated – it's basically, there's a formula that's a percentage of the eligible expenditures is how it's calculated.

**Kelliann Beavers** [33:11]

Uh-huh.

**Katie Neddenriep** [33:12]

And then it's a forgivable loan. It's what they are.

**Kelliann Beavers** [33:14]

Right.

**Katie Neddenriep** [33:17]

And so, once we got it, we just filled – once we knew we had exhausted the amount we were approved for, we submitted for forgiveness, and it was done.

**Kelliann Beavers** [33:25]

Right.

**Katie Neddenriep** [33:28]

We did end up getting – when the city got their ARPA funding, they did calculate room tax loss during the time period that was allowed for that.

**Kelliann Beavers** [33:45]

Mm-hmm.

**Katie Neddenriep** [33:47]

And so the ECVA did get an allocation of that calculated lost revenue. So it helped- [overtalking]

**Kelliann Beavers** [33:57]

That makes sense because you would have gotten that, yeah.

**Katie Neddenriep** [34:00]

Right. Right.

**Kelliann Beavers** [34:04]

But it's sort of so late maybe you would have not had to let so many people go if that could have been done ahead of time, but yeah.

**Katie Neddenriep** [34:08]

Right. Or you would have potentially started hiring people back sooner, but – so, it's fine. I mean, it was one of those things that helped, if it makes sense, to help plug back up the reserve funds, right, that we had dipped into. But yeah, it was – yeah, just crazy. But really, those were the only funds that one, helped the ECVA, but that two, really did any benefit in the community.

They were to apply, and then the management of them was so cumbersome, for people that had already cut staff or were having a hard time hiring staff.

**Kelliann Beavers** [35:01]

Hmm.

**Katie Neddenriep** [35:03]

Because the other thing that happened, you know, schools shut down, so some parents are quitting their jobs because what else are they going to do with their kids? So you have organizations that are losing revenue, and now they're losing personnel. And then they're trying to hire people back who had time to figure out what the program was, were they eligible, the application process, and then the management of the funds if they got them. But I think a lot of folks just said, "Never mind. I'll figure it out otherwise," unfortunately, right?

**Kelliann Beavers** [35:37]

Yeah. Okay. The next question is, what can we learn from the COVID crisis that could be lessons for future crises?

**Katie Neddenriep** [35:51]

(hesitates) There's a ton, right? I mean, I think certainly, a "one-size-did-not-fit-all." So when you start talking about shutting things down and not allowing certain things to happen, or certain businesses to operate, it doesn't – a federal, or even a statewide dictate doesn't necessarily work.

**Kelliann Beavers** [36:29]

Mm-hmm.

**Katie Neddenriep** [36:34]

And so I think you can certainly put guidance out, but putting in situations where then, people are trying to police and that sort of thing, I think you've got to let people do what they're comfortable with.

**Kelliann Beavers** [36:52]

Mm-hmm.

**Katie Neddenriep** [36:56]

Sure – the first 90 days, when you're trying to figure out, what is going on and what does it look like, yeah, okay. But once you start to see that this isn't going anywhere anytime soon, it's not effective, and it's not efficient. Because things were changing so often and they were contradicting, I think that eroded a ton of trust and belief across the board. I think we saw that everywhere, right? That people just went "Well, I don't know. I don't know what the rules are right now, so I'm just going to do *this*."

**Kelliann Beavers** [37:45]

Yeah.

**Katie Neddenriep** [37:50]

Because the bigger impact and fallout we saw, and I think continue to see, is the impact it had on the mental health of everybody everywhere. That you don't turn it off and on like a light, right? There's longer-term – and I would dare to say, more severe consequences and impacts in the mental health arena than anything else we've seen.

**Kelliann Beavers** [38:28]

Yeah. I think that's definitely especially true in Nevada. It's created a pretty scary situation in terms of mental health.

**Katie Neddenriep** [38:35]

Yes.

**Kelliann Beavers** [38:40]

Okay. The next question, on a more positive note, is what do you think were the most innovative ways that you saw organizations and communities deal with in your area – deal with the challenges of the pandemic and the recession? It could be examples of collaboration, or programs, or anything else that comes to mind that you thought was notable.

**Katie Neddenriep** [39:05]

I think, certainly, people getting more comfortable with and adopting the use of technology for staying in contact with one another and meeting and continuing to do business. For Elko, it was pretty exciting. We saw more of our restaurants starting to use technology for, like, online ordering, delivery, and that kind of thing than what they'd had before. Which, when we go to Reno or, you know, a bigger city, those are nice little conveniences to have.

**Kelliann Beavers** [39:42]

Yeah. And also, Elko can support that – you're big enough that that would and should have been in place but is probably kind of complicated for them to make happen.

**Katie Neddenriep** [39:50]

Right. Yeah. Or it was just a business expense that they were like, "Nah, no, I don't need to do that right now, so I'm not going to."

**Kelliann Beavers** [39:58]

Yeah.

**Katie Neddenriep** [39:59]

And then they kind of went, "Oh, yeah. This might be an important thing now." And then they kept it because they realized it's a good thing to have. So that's been pretty cool, like, to have some of those conveniences implemented and being used in the community now.

One of the things that happened when I was at the ECVA is, right before the pandemic had hit, I had asked the State Tourism Office, "Hey, do you have, like, a directory of the rural BBB/DMO leaders? Like, who's my peer group that I can reach out to, to ask questions or whatever?" and they didn't really have anything. But then we had just started pulling that together when the

pandemic hit. And so we started having, like, weekly Zoom meetings with all of these directors, and it's like, this is really cool. Like, you're seeing everybody, we're talking through, and we're sharing information. Because we were also all being impacted in the same way.

**Kelliann Beavers** [41:09]

Yeah. Realizing that you have a cohort, and like knowing that you had a cohort out there, but not knowing how to make it connect.

**Katie Neddenriep** [41:17]

Yeah. So we could commiserate with one another but also share information.

**Kelliann Beavers** [41:21]

Sure.

**Katie Neddenriep** [41:24]

Because there were so many webinars, it was impossible to be on all of them all the time. So we were sharing tidbits of information, and helping to interpret, you know, guidance, and mandates, and what was happening. And yeah, that was super-helpful, and that continued, like, even once we didn't meet as regularly. But that networking opportunity and collaborative group continued to meet, even once things started opening up again, so that was really cool.

**Kelliann Beavers** [42:00]

Yeah, that's great to hear. And I think, really, really, cool.

Okay. There's only one more question, and then I just have a random question. The question that's part of the list is, are you hopeful, and, if yes, what are you hopeful for?

**Katie Neddenriep** [42:18]

I am hopeful. I think I'm generally a positive person. So I left the ECVA because I had gotten to a point that I didn't enjoy my job anymore, and I was burnt out. I ended up talking to a counselor and yeah, I was like "This was too much, and I need a break." And so, I'm very blessed to be in a position where I could do that and have time with my family. But I am much better, and it's going to get better, you know. There's not a pandemic. There are some other terrible things going on in the world, but there are also a lot of wonderful things that are going on in the world too. And unfortunately, those don't make the headlines as much as the bad stuff. But that goes back to where I just – we each have to manage for ourselves, right, what we expose ourselves to and how we're going to react and respond. And then live our lives the best way *we* know how. And I'm hoping to raise great little boys who create hope in the world for other people. So that's – yeah. It's going to be good.

**Kelliann Beavers** [43:56]

Yeah. I didn't realize you have children of your own. But that couldn't have been an easy part of the overall experience either, as having to think about what's best for them and their needs with respect to their school, daycare, or whatever else you had to think about.

**Katie Neddenriep** [44:11]

Yes – no. I mean we were actually really thankful that neither of our kids had started school yet. So they were both – our oldest was still in preschool, and then our youngest – they're now six and three. So he just finished his first year of kindergarten. But we were like, "Thank God they're not in, like, middle school."

**Kelliann Beavers** [44:35]

Yeah.

**Katie Neddenriep** [44:36]

I mean I would have had to quit my job in the middle of the pandemic.

**Kelliann Beavers** [44:39]

My sister's boys are the same age. My sister's boys are almost the same age as your children, and it was definitely, you know, obviously not easy. But she also had to work throughout, and I don't think she would have if they were a bit older.

**Katie Neddenriep** [44:53]

Right. And it got weird for us – my husband's mom, she, right as it was starting and well, really, kind of settling into "Okay, we're in this for the long haul," she got diagnosed with cancer. And then we were having to manage – nobody can be around her; we can't see her.

**Kelliann Beavers** [45:21]

Oh, my God.

**Katie Neddenriep** [45:25]

Not knowing, how is this going to go? And she was wanting to move to Elko, and just – it's one thing when you're dealing with work stress but everything else is kind of okay. But when there's just chaos everywhere, and you add on this additional layer of stress with the pandemic, it's overwhelming. And we all managed through it, and it was crazy. Because we were like "Okay, we can't see her," and then it's like "Okay, well, if we go see her, we're going to sit outside, and we can't touch her."

**Kelliann Beavers** [46:08]

Which is so hard with little boys that little, to make them understand why they can't touch Grandma.

**Katie Neddenriep** [46:12]

Right. Because they don't know. Yeah...But then she ended up getting COVID anyway, and she had less symptoms than the rest of us did when we all got it. (laughs)

**Kelliann Beavers** [46:24]

Oh, that's fortunate. I'm glad to hear that. But that had to have been terrifying, yeah.

**Katie Neddenriep** [46:29]

Yeah, yeah. And then, once she had it, and everybody else had it, we were all just kind of like,

well, okay. And then it was just back to Christmas dinner at our house and whatever. Yeah, a little bit crazy.

**Kelliann Beavers** [46:49]

Yeah, that's a lot though. I appreciate you sharing that with me, and it gives kind of a human perspective to the whole thing.

**Katie Neddenriep** [46:54]

Yeah.

**Kelliann Beavers** [46:59]

Well, Elko's certainly lucky to have had you in the role that you were in. And the only other thing that I was saying, that came to mind for me – which you could always email me if you think of anyone – whether there are other people you think that I should speak with. It could be in Elko, or just generally, in Northern Nevada or rural Nevada. Because obviously, we are able to find the names of folks; but it's always good to hear from people who are in the experience, who they think it might be good for us to chat with.

**Katie Neddenriep** [47:30]

Okay. I'll think about that. And is there any particular, like, industry or anything that you're hoping to connect with or get contacts from?

**Kelliann Beavers** [47:39]

So I'll answer that in two ways. The way our research is organized it's very broad. We're looking at leaders within the business community, within community organizations, like nonprofits within the government itself, within education, and we've talked to a few people who are in the media. But the second answer to that is, I haven't spoken to many people, and we intend to speak more to folks who represent trade organizations or unions. People who represent the business community in sort of niche ways. And I think that's something we want to be sure we incorporate. I just bring that up because it's possible you may have crossed paths with that sort of part of the community or folks from the Chambers of Commerce and things like that.

**Katie Neddenriep** [48:34]

Right. Okay. Yeah, I'll think about that. Are you guys talking to, like, religious leaders at all?

**Kelliann Beavers** [48:51]

That's a great idea. And we would definitely be open to that as a part of community organizations. You know, I think it's a really powerful touchstone to the community itself.

**Katie Neddenriep** [49:02]

Yeah.

**Kelliann Beavers** [49:04]

We do have another research project that's being done, sort of parallel to ours, and in collaboration with just citizens who worked in retail, or at restaurants, or were nurses.

**Katie Neddenriep** [49:15]  
Right.

**Kelliann Beavers** [49:16]  
And so it's kind of a bridge between that with the community organizations, so certainly, that could be a really good idea as well.

**Katie Neddenriep** [49:28]  
The reason I ask is, I know our church has been impacted by it, but we've also seen and heard about it kind of across the board. When everything went virtual, people didn't come back.

**Kelliann Beavers** [49:46]  
Yes. Oh, gosh.

**Katie Neddenriep** [49:52]  
And how different churches – and so it's like a business, right? How they responded or managed to continue to run their business. People got so polarized in "Oh, you're not making people wear masks," or keeping social distance, or whatever. "I'm not going there anymore." But like, then they won't even attend online – and it's like the message and the mission of the organization didn't change.

**Kelliann Beavers** [50:32]  
Yeah. That's really sad and really hard for organizations of that size.

**Katie Neddenriep** [50:38]  
Yeah. And so, it's just been interesting to hear about that, and we've got family that live in other communities that have kind of done that same thing. And so it's just been interesting, as political as everything became, and then what plans, or position, communication, action, or decision that organization took. And then the reaction that you've got from people if they felt the slightest bit differently. It's like the world forgot how to have a "gray area" or to agreeing to disagree.

**Kelliann Beavers** [51:22]  
Yeah.

**Katie Neddenriep** [51:23]  
It just became very black and white, and it's been sad to see that. But yeah, that was one that came to mind here.

**Kelliann Beavers** [51:39]  
Yeah, I'm glad you shared that. And I'm glad you shared everything that you did. I think you have a gift for saying things that I think everyone has felt, but putting them into really nice, easy-to-understand words. So thank you again for talking with me and It's nice to meet you.

**Katie Neddenriep** [51:53]  
Yes.



**Kelliann Beavers** [51:54]

I know you are a long way from where I am, but if you're ever here, it would be lovely to cross paths in person.

**Katie Neddenriep** [52:01]

Thank you. Yeah, for sure. And if you have any other questions or need clarification on anything, don't hesitate to reach out. And it was cool to be contacted by you guys. Because I was like – I was familiar with the Brookings Institution from when I worked for Barrick because they used to give quite a bit of funding to your- [overtalking]

**Kelliann Beavers** [52:23]

Yeah, I saw that when I looked up your name. That's wonderful and interesting. When I reviewed the email I sent you this morning, I noticed I had called you "Katie." And then I looked at your email address and I'm like "Oh, my gosh. Maybe she doesn't go by Katie." But I swear I saw that somewhere; so then I googled it and I saw your past experience. I was like, oh, good. At least I wasn't oddly casual in calling you something that's not your nickname.

**Katie Neddenriep** [52:46]

No. My formal name, my given name is "Katherine." I've always been "Katie." So, anytime somebody calls me "Katherine," I'm like, mmm...either you don't know me, or you've lost something. What is it? (laughter) So it's a good screening mechanism anymore.

**Kelliann Beavers** [53:06]

That's funny.

**Katie Neddenriep** [53:08]

It's like, hmm...you don't know me. What do you want (laughter) So, no. That's perfectly fine. Yes.

**Kelliann Beavers** [53:15]

Well, I hope you have a great afternoon. And I will also send you a transcript of the call just in case you want to look it over. If there's anything you want to revise about it or something, you're welcome to. But like I said, we'll just use it internally for our research, and then, once we do start putting out deliverables, we'll be sure and share that with you as well.

**Katie Neddenriep** [53:38]

Cool, awesome. Thank you.

**Kelliann Beavers** [53:39]

Okay, well, thanks again so much. I hope you have a great afternoon and evening.

**Katie Neddenriep** [53:45]

Thanks, you too.

**Kelliann Beavers**

Alright, bye.

**Katie Neddenriep**

Bye.

**End of audio: 53:51**