Building an economy for the working class

Blaine County’s working class—the lack of affordable housing, the high cost of health insurance, the cost-of-living bonuses that don’t come every year. The theme of the event—“Building the Gaps in Our Resort Community: Building a Working Economy for Those That Live It”—will feature several speakers who will offer insight on how our community can provide better for those who aren’t retired and aren’t enjoying days off in one of those luxurious second homes.

The keynote speaker, Lowell Apthorp, will discuss how Blaine County leaders and residents can use enhanced communication and networking to bridge the disparities in incomes, housing alternatives and access to health care and education. Additional discussions will include “Building a Regional Partnership,” “Our Future: Can the Next Generation Live the Dream?” and “The Nonprofit Role in Building Community Bridges.”

This year’s summit will take place Monday, Oct. 28, from 8 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. in the Limelight Room of the Sun Valley Inn, at Sun Valley Resort. Coffee, breakfast and networking will begin at 8 a.m., followed by a welcome address at 8:30 a.m. That will be followed by a presentation from Robert Spendlove, the senior vice president, economic and public policy, of Zions Bank, on national trends impacting local economies. The keynote speaker will begin at 9:30 a.m. Other speakers and discussions will follow, concluding with feedback and final remarks from 2:15 to 2:45 p.m.

Following the summit, Sun Valley Economic Development will compile the ideas generated and report them to the community. The event is a fundraiser for Sun Valley Economic Development, a nonprofit-private partnership organization in the valley that brings economic education and advocacy to bear on issues that affect businesses and communities in Blaine County.

The organization has worked on bringing new businesses and entrepreneurs to the Wood River Valley, as well as advocating for existing businesses and causes that support them, such as the development of workforce housing.

Registration and payment for the summit can be done online at Sun Valley Economic Development’s website, www.sunvalleyeconomy.org.