

As the Carbondale Aquatic Center nears completion, it aims to be an ambitious example of sustainability

Aspen Public Radio | By Michael Fanelli

Published November 13, 2025 at 3:35 PM MST



Courtesy Town Of Carbondale

Crews work on the final construction stages of the Carbondale Aquatic Center in Oct. 2025. The facility will have a lap pool, a recreation pool, and spa, as well as a bathhouse and gathering spaces

The Town of Carbondale is making a final fundraising push as it nears completion of its cutting-edge Aquatic Center.

The facility will achieve a rare standard of sustainability: the three pools will be heated entirely by electric heat pumps, powered by renewable energy.

Eric Brendlinger, the town's Parks & Recreation Director, says as far as he knows, Carbondale will soon have Colorado's first municipal outdoor pool to run on electricity, without any gas backup

KAJX
Here & Now

That's possible thanks to six "Big Bopper" heat pumps, each the size of a small car. Brendlinger said the air-source heat pumps are specifically designed to warm water, and have been proven elsewhere.

"They'll be conducting all the energy needs of heating that water, but also heating and cooling the building," Brendlinger said. "So once we found that technology, we are trusting it and we cut our gas access to the whole property."

The facility will have a 48 kW solar array on site, and the town plans to supplement that exclusively with renewable energy.

Andi Korber with Land + Shelter, a Carbondale architecture firm, designed the project.

She called it a "once-in-a-lifetime" opportunity to work on something so central to her community.

"I just don't think that I'm going to be able to do a project where my kids, and maybe my kids' kids, are going to go," Korber said. "I love working on single family homes, sure, but they don't offer that like, just being a part of people's lives in the way that feels so fulfilling."

But she said the sustainability at the heart of the design has made it even more fulfilling.

"For everyone involved — structural engineer, mechanical engineer, aquatics, consultant — we're pushing the envelope of what they've done before," Korber said. "And we're really proud of that. I think it's right for Carbondale."

The solar array will consist of bi-facial panels, forming the roof of a shaded picnic area by the pools. Those absorb sunlight from the top, and also some on the bottom as light reflects off the ground. Korber said the beams for that solar structure are going in soon.

The entire project is on track for completion by spring 2026, with an anticipated opening on Memorial Day.

But the town is still hoping to raise \$500,000 before the end of the year. Residents and businesses have already contributed more than \$1 million to help cover inflating

Brendlinger said the pool will be completed and open regardless, but its operations may be affected if they don't hit their goal.

The pool will be closed for the winter months each year and open for what Brendlinger calls an "extended summer season." He hopes to open for an extra month or so before Memorial Day and after Labor Day.

Tags

Climate & Environment

Local News

Homepage



Michael Fanelli

Michael is a reporter for Aspen Public Radio's Climate Desk. He moved to the valley in June 2025, after spending three years living and reporting in Alaska. In Anchorage, he hosted the statewide morning news and reported on a variety of economic stories, often with a climate focus. He was most recently the news director of KRBD in Ketchikan.

See stories by Michael Fanelli

The logo features the text "THE TRANSMITTER" in a bold, sans-serif font, with "Aspen Public Radio" in a smaller font below it. To the left of the text is a stylized graphic of vertical bars of varying heights, resembling a radio signal or a bar chart. The entire logo is enclosed in a thin black border.

THE TRANSMITTER
Aspen Public Radio

Sign Up

© 2026 Aspen Public Radio

About

- About Us
- Our Team
- Station News
- Careers & Internships
- Contact Us
- Newsletter

Support Us

- Become a member
- Donate a vehicle
- Business Support
- Shop the store
- National Council
- City Market Rewards

Resources

- Schedule
- Programs
- Frequency Map
- FCC Applications
- KAJX FCC Public Inspection File
- KCJX FCC Public Inspection File



KAJX
Here & Now

