



**PAX8 FINDS RIGHT  
"WINGMAN" FOR ITS  
RURAL EMPOWERMENT  
PROGRAM**

The “Wingman Experience” is more than a slogan for Pax8. The traditional definition of a “Wingman” is used to define a second aircraft that flies off the right wing of a lead fighter. For Pax8, it means being passionate about the quality of your work, caring about the people you serve, and capitalizing on opportunities to improve. Every employee at Pax8 is expected to have each other’s backs and to never stop until a problem is solved. “And it is also important for us to have fun at the same time,” adds Susan Mitnick, Chief Human Resource Officer at Pax8.

# Empowerment Programs Critical to Success

Pax8 CEO John Street believes empowerment programs are a critical part of building a successful company. He should know. Founded in 2012, Pax8 is the fastest growing extra-large business in Denver per the Denver Business Journal FAST50 and has garnered rankings in the Inc. 500 for three consecutive years. “There are two key elements to our empowerment programs,” says Cleve Lewis, the Vice President of Empowerment Programs at Pax8. “The first is diversity, equity and inclusion which includes social transformation such as our unconscious bias training and support for Black Lives Matter and LGBTQ initiatives. The second is rural engagement.

In 2019, the company embarked on making the second leg of its empowerment programs a reality when it secured an \$18 million incentive package from the Colorado Office of Economic Development to create 1,800 jobs in the state by 2027, some of which are to include hiring in rural communities. Mitnick and Lewis were chartered to oversee the design and execution of the rural program. Where to start was the question. The answer was in Lewis’ existing professional network. He had previously worked with Ashlie Arnold—the Co-Chair for the Upper Arkansas Region 13 Tech Sector Partnership, which includes Fremont County, since early 2018. In several capacities, Lewis learned about the Fremont Economic Development Corporation (FEDC) initiatives from her.

## WHAT IS IN A NAME?

When CEO John Street started Pax8 in 2012, he wanted a company name that would stand out—short, easy to spell and pronounce, alpha-numeric, and one that tapped the strength of the letter “X.” He ultimately decided to combine the Latin word for “peace” (PAX) with the luckiest number in Chinese business—the number “8”—Pax8.

# Finding the Right Pilot Program Location

Lewis, who lives in Atlanta, relayed details of his exchange with Arnold to Mitnick. Both of them were intrigued, as Mitnick had decided to check out the details on FEDC's TechSTART and Emergent Campus for herself—arranging to attend a quarterly meeting in September 2019, prior to the establishment of Pax8's empowerment programs department. "I honestly didn't know what to expect," she recalls. "I was blown away at what I saw and heard and concluded that we need to be part of this. TechSTART and the Emergent Campus are exactly the type of rural engagement opportunities that would fit perfectly into Pax8's vision."

Before COVID-19, most Pax8 employees were located in its Denver headquarters offices. "Around 10% of our employees were remote before COVID-19," Mitnick says. "But the pandemic completely transformed the way we work. We were already planning to move toward a hybrid-mobile workforce, with our rural engagement programs as one of the catalysts of this transformation. COVID-19 simply accelerated our plans."

Because Pax8 already had a well-defined plan in place and the advantage of running its technology infrastructure in the cloud, the transition to a 100% remote workforce went easily and quickly. "Literally, within 48 hours of the COVID-19 shutdown mandates, we had 100% of our employees up and running remotely," Mitnick says.

Despite the logistical challenges of the new COVID-19 normal, the Pax8 team proceeded with their rural empowerment plans and decided to roll out an initial pilot program at the Emergent Campus. "There were two reasons we concluded the Emergent Campus was the right fit for us," Lewis relates. "The first is its relative proximity to our Denver headquarters. The second was the fact that the underlying infrastructure—from workstations to high-speed broadband—were already in place."





# Getting Started in Fremont County

Before launching the pilot program, Lewis and several other members of the Pax8 team, including Arnold who joined Pax8 at about the same time as a Rural Empowerment Programs Manager, spent several days in June 2020 at the Emergent Campus working with General Manager and Co Founder Brad Rowland to ensure they had all of the right pieces in place. These strategic planning sessions proved critical in laying the groundwork for a successful program rollout. The Pax8 team decided to focus on roles for its service delivery and support organizations. “The tech community in Fremont County is vibrant as a result of TechSTART and the Emergent Campus,” Arnold relays. “With the support of the Emergent Campus, we were able to recruit and hire eight local professionals for the program. We guided candidates through a three-step interview process and found that many of them would be qualified for a position in the service delivery and support organizations at Pax8.”

Another aspect that excited the Pax8 team was the diversity of the hires. “Some are veterans, and some are people of color,” Arnold observes. “One of the new hires literally got her citizenship last week.” Currently, the Pax8 employees work in the same office space as the Second-61 team at the Emergent Campus. “Integrating our team into the same coworking space as Second-61 has been seamless,” Arnold continues. “Having

## THE PAX8 VALUE PROPOSITION

Pax8 was founded with the mission to be the world’s favorite marketplace for technology professionals to buy cloud products. The Pax8 platform consolidates billing, automates provisioning, and delivers industry-leading PSA integrations. It also provides partners with insights needed to optimize margins and to sell more. The result is a simplification of how its partners buy, sell and manage cloud services.



an established business in the same location makes it much easier to get a remote team member onboarded quickly.”

While Pax8 is starting the program with eight employees on the Emergent Campus, the team has an aggressive goal of hiring 55 more employees over the long run.

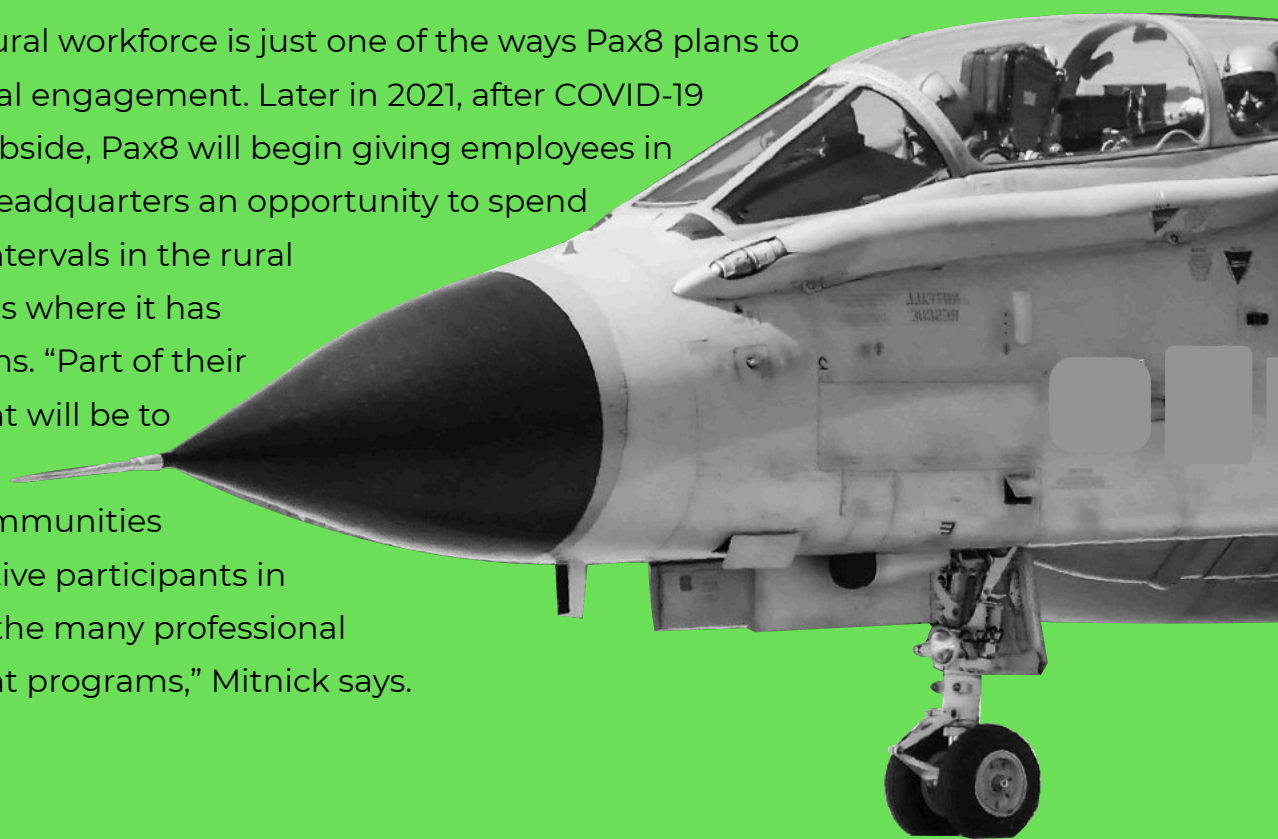
“We’re also looking to expand our rural empowerment program into other rural

counties in Colorado,” Lewis says. “The challenge is that many do not have the resources and infrastructure in place.” That is why Lewis foresees that the Emergent Campus will play a crucial role in helping the Pax8 team share the framework with other Colorado counties about the infrastructure and resources needed for successful program execution. “We

hope to use our program at the Emergent Campus as a template for other rural counties to engage with tech companies like Pax8,” Lewis adds.

# Opportunities to Give Back to the Community

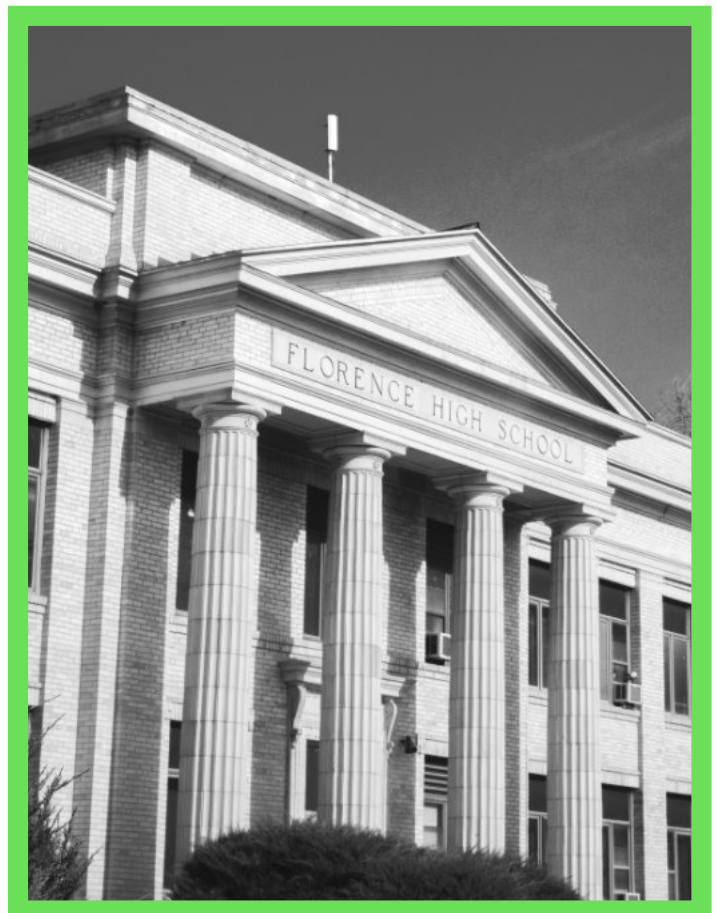
Building a rural workforce is just one of the ways Pax8 plans to facilitate rural engagement. Later in 2021, after COVID-19 begins to subside, Pax8 will begin giving employees in its Denver headquarters an opportunity to spend six-month intervals in the rural communities where it has remote teams. “Part of their commitment will be to give back to the local communities by being active participants in supporting the many professional development programs,” Mitnick says.



This is actually another facet of Fremont County that excites the Pax8 team. The Capstone Project at the local high schools in Florence and Cañon City is one such program. The Pathways in Technology Early College High School (PTECH) program, which allows high school students to earn a high school diploma as well as an associates of Applied Science degree from Pueblo Community College at no cost, is another. “Internship and mentorship opportunities through Capstone Projects and PTECH will enable our employees to give back to the community, making for a strong partnership,” Mitnick says. “Fremont County is leading the way when it comes to having a sustainable, long-term mentorship foundation.”

# Creating a Broader Rural Engagement Ecosystem

Pax8 is setting its sights higher than just its employees when it comes to the successful execution of its rural engagement program. “We’ve created a framework for a social impact ecosystem that can be extended to our MSP partners and even vendors,” Mitnick says. “We’ve already had conversations with some of our MSP partners and supplying vendors, and they are excited about the chance to participate in our rural engagement efforts. When we go into a rural community or work with a nonprofit, we want to be all in and help in every way possible. We’re all very excited about the future of expanding what



we're doing to other counties across the state—and the chance to include others in this ecosystem is further invigorating.”

One of the Pax8 partners that is highly involved in the company's empowerment program is Microsoft. “We do a lot of business with Microsoft,” Lewis says. “They are very interested in what we're doing, and we're in the beginning stages of discussing how they can get involved.”



# The Right Wingman for Program Launch

Pax8 aspires to be on the focal point of transformation—from transforming the cloud distribution space with its Pax8 Platform or transforming how enterprises engage with rural communities. “We believe the Wingman experience is part of our DNA, which we believe is at the center of our rural engagement program,” Lewis sums up. “Rural communities are an important part of our country, and we are very passionate about what we're doing to build engagement across the state of Colorado. The Emergent Campus was a great starting point in this undertaking and has been a true ‘Wingman’ in helping us to build a scalable rural engagement ecosystem.”



**Cleve Lewis**  
Vice President of  
Empowerment  
Programs at Pax8

As the Vice President of Empowerment Programs at Pax8, Cleve provides leadership and vision for key initiatives that drive rural empowerment, diversity and inclusion, and social impact. He is responsible for developing and fostering partnerships between Pax8 and organizations aligned with advancing opportunities throughout the state and increasing diversity and inclusion. Under his guidance, the Empowerment Program is enabling rural economies in Colorado and expanding the diverse culture within Pax8 by engaging with talented candidates in these regions.

Cleve has spent over 20 years in executive leadership roles, leading sales organizations in the telecommunications and cloud services industries. As an early member of the Pax8 executive team, he has been instrumental in driving its vision and growth.

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**Susan Mitnick**  
Chief Human  
Resources Officer at  
Pax8

As Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO) at Pax8, Susan Mitnick is responsible for ensuring that our fantastic culture of high employee engagement, teamwork, and fun remains a cornerstone of our success throughout the company's evolution. With a focus on our values to Innov8, Advoc8, Elev8, and Celebr8, Susan's team works to create an environment that encourages and supports our employees' growth and advancement. Whether through our professional development programs, employee-led committees, working groups to propose new and innovative solutions, social impact programs, or special events, we strive to provide opportunities that allow each individual to participate in a meaningful manner as part of the Pax8 family.

Susan is a proven leader with more than 25 years of combined leadership, change management, and learning & development experience and holds a Merchandising degree from the Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising.

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**Ashlie Arnold**  
Rural Empowerment  
Programs Manager at  
Pax8

As the Rural Empowerment Programs Manager at Pax8, Ashlie oversees projects and programs that utilize innovative technology to enable economic growth throughout rural Colorado. With a data-driven and strategic approach, she connects Pax8 to unique talent pools throughout the state, increasing diversity within the company and technology industry.

Ashlie co-chaired the Upper Arkansas Region 13 Partnership of Business Development, attracting companies to rural Colorado through speaking engagements, in-depth research, and social media engagements. She has held many roles using data science and analytics to solve business use case problems and growing the small to midsize business market.





## **ABOUT PAX8**

Pax8 is modernizing how partners buy, sell, and manage cloud. As a born-in-the-cloud company, Pax8 simplifies the buying journey, empowering its partners to achieve more with cloud technology. The company's technology displaces legacy distribution by connecting the channel ecosystem to its award-winning transactional cloud marketplace. Through billing, provisioning, automation, industry-leading PSA integrations, and pre and post-sales support, and education, Pax8 is a proven disruptor in the market. Pax8 has ranked in the Inc. 5000 for three consecutive years — #68 in 2018, #60 in 2019, and #111 in 2020 — as one of the fastest-growing private companies in the US. If you want to be successful with cloud, you want to work with Pax8. Get started today at [www.pax8.com](http://www.pax8.com).

## **ABOUT FEDC TECHSTART**

Fremont Economic Development Corporation is a 501(c)6 professional economic development organization focused directly on business attraction, retention and expansion in Fremont County, Colorado. With an established and growing network of business, academic and governmental partners, we directly assist companies with competitive location or expansion projects by connecting them with the right people, the appropriate resources and the most meaningful and relevant information. FEDC's TechSTART program is an award-winning tech sector co-working community, creating an innovation catalyst for rural Colorado.

FEDC TechSTART is a proud supporter of the Upper Arkansas Technology Sector Partnership, the second tech sector partnership in the state of Colorado.