

Governor Ritter Opens Conference with Review of Legislative Achievements

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Got PILT?

CCI has received county by county 2009 PILT payment information from NACo. If you did not receive this information directly, go to CCI's home page (www.ccionline.org) and click on "About" and enter the Announcements page and look for 2009 PILT payments.

CCI was pleased to have Governor Bill Ritter provide the keynote address at the opening session of the summer conference. Governor Ritter began by thanking commissioners for their service and noted what an interesting time it is to be Governor and in government. He suggested that now, in the current economy, is when the values of public servants are tested, even more than in good times, and expressed his empathy for the situation of county officials. He noted that a large number of his cabinet members were attending the conference and expressed his commitment to the state-county partnership through these times, even when we do not agree.

On the legislative front, Governor Ritter reported successes in education reform that have been in the works for a couple of years and Colorado's competitive position for President Obama's "race to the top" education funding. Specifically, he mentioned the legislative authorization of an associate degree program offered through high schools, as well as the implementation of teacher identifiers to help track successful strategies in education. In the area of economic development, the Governor emphasized attracting new business, retaining existing business and developing Colorado's workforce. He expressed his optimism about the creation of a job incentive tax credit for businesses that create more than five new jobs and about a small business capital reserve program to help small businesses that need financing. Governor Ritter lauded Colorado's status as an international leader in renewable energy development and

reported with cautious optimism Colorado's favorable unemployment rate compared to the current national figures.

Governor Ritter mentioned the Health Care Affordability Act, a bill in which he had been very involved that covered 100,000 more Coloradans with no new tax. Although there is progress being made, he said that he has asked his staff to prioritize concerns and further improvements related to the CBMS. He also thanked his Department of Human Services Executive Director, Karen Beye, for her work in protecting kids and for heading the Child Welfare Action Committee, which has promoted establishing a child welfare training academy. The Governor also proudly reported the increases in human services funding, including the use of stimulus funding that was within his discretion to allocate, which allowed the state to maintain the level of "county admin" funding in the budget.

Governor Ritter expressed his appreciation to CCI's Executive Director, Larry Kallenberger, for his counsel in ensuring that Recovery Act dollars – largely allocated to the state – were distributed to places where it can be most effectively used.

The Governor thanked CCI for the counties' ongoing help in securing transportation funding, which resulted in the first, sustainable new funding source for transportation in many years. This is essential in light of the tenuous status of the federal highway trust fund in the future. Governor Ritter concluded by once again noting the mutual benefits of our successful state-county partnerships.



Governor Bill Ritter makes a point during his speech at the opening session of CCI's Annual Summer Conference.

Governor Speaks to More Than 300 County Officials

Governor cont. from page 1

The Governor responded to questions from the crowd that ranged from the legislative action to replace “SB 1” transfers for state transportation needs with a new 2% allocation starting in 2012 to concerns about alternative vocational training for young people, noting that both public and private efforts to make community colleges and workforce development a priority. He fielded questions about recent changes to elevator standards and laws in other states relative to gun manufacturing. Near the end of the session, the Governor responded with delight to a question from San Miguel County about developing mineral resources more responsibly through better mapping and surveys, exclaiming, “I want the record



Baca County Commissioner Peter Dawson poses a question to the Governor.

to reflect that Commissioner Art Goodtimes is in favor of mineral development!”

CCI President, Commissioner Kathy Rennels, thanked the Governor and offered CCI’s resources and facilities through the summer to the business personal property tax taskforce, whose work will be of great interest to counties.

The conclusion of the opening session included a welcome from Eagle County Commissioner Sara Fischer offering a brief report on the activities and priorities for Eagle County.



Governor Ritter stayed after his opening address to delegates to chat with commissioners including Phillips County Commissioner Bud Bieseimer.

State Cabinet Members Discuss ARRA

Mid June marks the four month anniversary since the passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). With this in mind, cabinet officers joined county commissioners on Wednesday, June 10 to update local leaders on the state’s use of stimulus funding.

Don Elliman, former Director of the Office of Economic Development and International Trade and recently appointed Chief Operating Officer, is responsible for the direct management, supervision and oversight of Colorado’s Recovery Act funding. Mr. Elliman explained that stimulus funding is being used to prevent cuts in state services, to provide tax relief to individuals and businesses, to stimulate job growth, to retain existing jobs and to reinvest in Colorado’s future. As the chairman of the Colorado Economic Recovery and Accountability Board, Mr. Elliman stated that the role of the board is to respond to “whistleblower” reports pertaining to the inappropriate use of stimulus funding. The Board is also responsible for communication and ensuring that state agencies and eligible recipients know and understand what funding is available through ARRA’s 140 funding buckets. Finally, the Board oversees Colorado’s ability to compete for competitive grants in the areas of Health Information Technology, Renewable Energy, Education and Broadband.



CDOT Executive Director Russ George answers a question from the audience during the ARRA session.

Following Mr. Elliman’s presentation, Department of Local Affairs’s (DoLA) Executive Director Susan Kirkpatrick gave a quick overview of the stimulus funding available through her office. Specifically, she noted that \$8.6 million and \$2.8 million in additional funding is available under the Community Services Block Grant and Community Development Block Grant programs respectively. Using her prerogative as speaker, she shared the SFY 2009-2010 revenue forecast for severance and FML revenue. Current projections indicate that roughly \$47.1 million will be available via the grant program for eligible entities. Given the fact that next year’s revenue projections are lower than this year’s funding, it has been recommended that DoLA not implement its tier III funding phase. The tier III phase typically occurs once per year targeting multi-million dollar, multi-year projects between \$2 million and \$10 million dollars. Additionally, DoLA intends to offer tier I and tier II funding only twice next year instead of three times.

Russ George, Director of Colorado’s Department of Transportation, reported that Colorado will receive over \$500 million for transportation projects statewide. Of this funding, \$330 million is federal highway funding, \$12.5 million is transit funding for non-urbanized areas and \$175 million goes

Former U.S. Senator Addresses Conference Delegates

Former U.S. Senator and University of Colorado President Hank Brown graciously accepted CCI's invitation as the luncheon speaker on the final day of the CCI Annual Summer Conference. CCI President-Elect Commissioner David Foy, Washington County, introduced the Senator and highlighted the many roles that Senator Brown has held in his over 40 years of service to Colorado. The topic of his address: Budget deficits and the current state of our federal fiscal health.



Former U.S. Senator Hank Brown spoke to more than 300 county officials at the closing luncheon of the CCI Annual Summer Conference in Vail on June 10.

Senator Brown began his discussion with a number of lively quips about lawyers, not all of which were flattering to lawyers, of course. The crowd favorite seemed to be Senator Brown's noting what the result of crossing the Godfather with a lawyer may be: an offer you can't understand.

As a way of framing the topic, Senator Brown anecdotally connected some real-life examples such as pharmaceutical advertisement caveats, professional wrestling fans and guaranteed-return commodity investment schemes under a single theme: "We tend to believe what we want to believe." He carried this theme forward in a discussion of the belief that budget deficits don't matter. After identifying the traditional political party views on deficits and the results thereof, Senator Brown noted that even the famous economist and theorist Keynes didn't state that deficits could be run in perpetuity, rather, only during times of recession, whereas times of prosperity should result in the "smoothing out" of deficits by subsequent gains.

The Senator then offered a list of statistics on the current federal budget deficit, specifically stating that as of June 2009, the federal deficit had gone from \$400 billion to over \$1.85 trillion or an amount that equates to six thousand dollars for every person in the U.S. If this is coupled with the fact that only half of the people in the U.S. pay income tax, and with other assumptions and constants in place, by 2019 the interest payments to creditor nations will be the largest item of the federal budget. Senator Brown commented that the forces in place now take an "optimistic" view and use these optimistic projections as revenues, which are not sustainable and will not ultimately reduce this imbalance.

In another context, Senator Brown stated that the outstanding liability to pay for Medicaid, Medicare and Social Security is now \$60 trillion and by 2045 these three programs would theoretically be the only federal programs able to be budgeted for, requiring the borrowing of 400% of gross domestic product to pay for the liability under current growth.

As an answer and resolution, Sen. Brown offered three suggestions to remedy the situation: requiring a two-thirds vote of Congress to increase the size of the federal deficit, streamlining health care for those most in need and reforming Social Security in any manner of ways including increasing the retirement age or

early retirement incentives.

Senator Brown finished with a quote from Sir Edward Gibbon: *"In the end more than they wanted freedom, they wanted security. When the Athenians finally wanted not to give to society but for society to give to them, when the freedom they wished for was freedom from responsibility, then Athens ceased to be free."*

CCI wishes to thank Senator Brown for speaking to CCI's membership during a very dynamic period in our nation's economic health.



Senator Brown speaks with El Paso County Commissioner Amy Lathen after his luncheon address.

District Meetings

Eastern District

CCI's Summer Conference marks the annual election of CCI's District President and Vice President. And so, in due fashion, Lincoln County Commissioner Gary Beedy and Elbert County Commissioner John Shipper were unanimously elected president and vice president, respectively. Congratulations Commissioners Beedy and Shipper! Their leadership will begin at the Thursday, August 13 District Meeting in Akron.

Yuma County Commissioner Trent Bushner and Kit Carson County Commissioner Dave Gwyn were recognized for their past year of service as district president and vice president, respectively. Thank you Commissioner Bushner and Gwyn for your organized and engaging leadership!



Elbert County Commissioner John Shipper, Phillips County Commissioner Susan Roll Walters and Washington County Commissioner Lea Ann Laybourn listen to a presentation during the Eastern District meeting.

Commissioners were joined by CDOT staff and received a general update on HUTF funding. Kit Carson County asked specifically why it was that their December and January payments decrease from their November payments and subsequently go back up in February. CCI staff explained the three funding "tiers" that comprise the HUTF formula and how a requirement to fund tier II and the 17 counties that receive HUTF payments in this tier annually results in a drop-off in funding for those 45 counties that are ineligible for tier II funding. (Denver and Broomfield are considered cities under the HUTF formula and thus receive funding under the city share.) Once tier II distributions are satisfied, "normal" allocations for the 45 counties resume. Kit Carson County is one of the 45 counties that experiences this annual dip. On the other hand, Lincoln, Logan and Morgan are three of the 17 counties that receive tier II funding so their HUTF allocation does not swing downward like the majority of counties experience.

The Eastern District counties also discussed S.787 the Clean Water Restoration Act. This proposed legislation was introduced in April 2009. The bill, as introduced, substitutes the term "navigable waters" with a new term "waters of the United States". The later term is much more expansive and would

make intrastate waters and tributaries subject to permitting requirements under the Federal Clean Water Act. Landon Gates, Director of Public Policy for the Colorado Farm Bureau, explained that Senators Udall and Bennet have indicated that they will not support S.787.

Yuma County Commissioner Robin Wiley gave a brief update on the Republican River and the region's efforts to comply with the compact. Commissioner Wiley explained that the Republican River Water Conservation District Board of Directors voted to authorize closing on the purchase and sale of the groundwater rights for the Republican River Compact Compliance Pipeline, even though the Republican River Compact Administration has not yet approved the augmentation plan and accounting procedures for the Pipeline project. The RRWCD Board of Directors voted to authorize the closing because of concerns that the \$60 million loan funds from the Colorado Water Conservation Board may not be available in the future because of the State's current budget situation.

Logan County Commissioner Debbie Zwirn updated commissioners on the activities and programs offered by Rural Solutions. She also briefed her fellow commissioners on the Department of Public Health and Environment's Medical Marijuana Registry Program and her service on the Courtroom Security Commission.

Elbert County Commissioner John Shipper engaged his peers in a dialog on how neighboring counties are providing various services. Specifically, he inquired about departmental consolidation and dispatch services.

Finally, Eastern District Counties discussed CSU's extension services and how counties are being asked to contribute more even when the University is cutting back on field workers. Additionally, CSU is exploring regionalizing counties and there is concern that such efforts will result in limiting services to counties.

Front Range District

Front Range District Vice President Cindy Domenico, Boulder County, called the meeting to order. After introductions and roll call the district unanimously elected Commissioner Domenico to be the next Front Range District President and Councilman Dennis McCloskey, Broomfield, as Vice President.

Senator Ted Harvey, Douglas County, was invited to discuss the past legislative session, including bills on water quality and quantity, transportation, voting issues, air quality, economic development and taxation. On the latter topic, commissioners and the Senator discussed the ramifications of state actions such as the elimination of personal property tax and the re-



Larimer County Commissioner Steve Johnson discusses items during the Front Range District meeting while Larimer County Commissioner and CCI President Kathy Rennels listens.

cently formed interim committee to study this topic. The group also discussed unfunded mandates and the legislative fiscal note process with respect to fully identifying local government impacts for all legislation, a continued concern of counties statewide.

Following the presentation and discussion with Senator Harvey, Front Range member counties reported on one or more hot topics in their county. Douglas started off and announced breaking ground for a new crisis center, which is the product of a cooperative effort between local government, nonprofit agencies and the private sector. A joint Arapahoe-Elbert-Douglas meeting of Commissioners is being contemplated for the fall. Broomfield highlighted its infill-development status and need to work regionally with other governments on certain issues such as transportation and the development of successful regional projects therein. El Paso discussed the relatively new land use code and recent review of the code to allow for a balance between the public interest of regularity and reducing burdens on local businesses, particularly small business within the county. The commissioners also noted recent legislation dealing with the Fountain Creek watershed. Weld reported advances in energy development, specifically two new Vestas plants and an Abound Solar facility opening, creating 2,300 new jobs in the county, which when coupled with existing 7,000 jobs in the natural gas development sector has been beneficial to the county. The commissioners also noted two new reservoir projects underway in relation to Weld's \$2 billion annual agricultural industry, the 7th most productive county nationally.

Adams noted recent developments with the Pecos Street intersection project in the county and intergovernmental actions related to the construction. Adams also noted a new government center construction project, the largest public works project currently underway statewide. Larimer discussed a sea-change in their budgeting process, moving toward an outcome-based approach that includes employee teams in the county bidding on county services with the hope of dissolving traditional county stovepipes of services and departments while finding efficiencies and savings wherever possible. Larimer also noted success with new early intervention programming working with the local justice system to save on jail bed days and costs. Arapahoe noted a situation with a large parcel of

land previously deeded as state school land that is now been complicated by multiple land and mineral transactions prior to a private development interest moving forward. The county also noted their move to a pay-as-you-go performance based budgeting system. Finally, Boulder discussed success in their Climate Smart homeowner renewable energy loan program after passing a ballot issue last November to authorize \$40 million in bonding authority. To date, \$6.6 million has been issued benefitting 394 homeowners and nearly 100 local contractors.

The first discussion item of *"What will the elimination of personal property valuation and tax do to your county?"* picked up on a prior conversation on this subject. El Paso noted the past elimination of their county mill levy on personal property and, on balance, noted that it may not have had the desired impact of business attraction or retention. They noted that a more impactful change may have been to raise the exemption threshold, thus boosting smaller businesses. Not without debate, issues surrounding disproportional impacts, relative importance of the tax versus elimination of the tax, income and real property taxes were all discussed. While data on county proportions of personal property, pertaining to the total property tax, was provided, more detailed data relative to all revenue will be sought.

The next topic of discussion was *"What conversation have you had with your cities and economic developers regarding Tax Increment Financing?"* that began with Broomfield noting their appropriate exemption from a piece of TIF-reform legislation the past session. Commissioners shared ideas regarding the need and desire for intergovernmental agreements with TIF-utilizing municipalities, but ultimately agreed a legislative fix is desired. Conversation included reform of the definition of "blight" because of abuse, the unfortunate inter- and intra-city cannibalization of revenues, as well as the "blight cycle" that municipalities have experienced, which adds to the issue.

Finally, discussion items for the next Front Range District meeting to be held Thursday, August 20th in Jefferson County yielded only one topic thus far: Forest Health and Watershed issues presented by Commissioner Jeanne Nicholson, Gilpin. Additional topics may be suggested to Commissioner Domenico or via CCI staff.

Mountain District

The Mountain District counties had a wide-ranging discussion at their meeting, including several topics about which the counties had been surveyed in advance. After re-electing Commissioner Jim Ignatius and Commissioner Nancy Stuart to their respective positions as president and vice president, the commissioners began discussing jails and their impact on county budgets. A survey conducted prior to the meeting revealed that the mountain counties have taken different approaches to their jails. Some counties have deliberately built facilities large enough to accommodate inmates from other jurisdictions, while others only build enough to meet the county's local needs. Additional jail issues the commissioners discussed in-



Summit County Commissioner Thomas Davidson discusses an agenda item during the Mountain District meeting as Pitkin County Administrator Hilary Fletcher listens.

cluded: models for charging inmates a housing cost (as well as legal and collection issues); the impacts of jail population variations that occur during the year or even on a weekly basis; the implications of running the jail as a TABOR enterprise; disparities in the reimbursement rates paid by federal, state and municipal users of the county jail; political considerations associated with housing

inmates from other areas; planning for expansion; and the benefits of having programming to help inmates after their release. The counties have a strong continuing interest in receiving adequate compensation and avoiding having inmates foisted upon them by other entities through the use of procedural gimmicks.

The district also had a lengthy discussion concerning fair and rodeo grounds, which was also the subject of a pre-conference survey. On this topic, as well, the counties expressed divergent approaches. While some counties do not own the grounds and have used volunteers to operate and maintain them, other counties take on the operation and maintenance of the fair as one of their county responsibilities. One county reported that it maintains two public fair/rodeo grounds, and that there is a third private one in the county. There was discussion about the common request for the construction of events centers at the fairgrounds. In some counties, an events center is used for many different community purposes and therefore receives county funding support. In other cases, the community's desire is for an events center that can raise revenue and be more of a venue for concerts and shows, rather than a community center meeting place. Even the fairs themselves take on different characters. Some counties hire professional entertainment and advertise for folks to come, while other counties prefer for the county fair to be focused solely on county residents.

As in some other districts, the mountain commissioners received a briefing from CDOT concerning the implementation of SB 108's road safety fee (of which counties receive a portion), as well as, the more significant role for counties in tolling discussions, funding for state bridges and availability of bond financing. Commissioners noted the ongoing impact of "off the top" uses of HUTF revenues on actual highway funding and suggested some of these items should receive state general fund support.

The final substantive topic for the commissioners was the beginning of a discussion concerning the issuance of building permits and the presence of water to serve the proposed building. The bottom line of this discussion was a request for experts to come to a future meeting to discuss water availability throughout the state, the interaction of water basins and what kinds of county policies are legally defensible.

Southern District

Southern District members elected a new President, Commissioner Spike Ausmus, Baca County, and a new Vice President, Commissioner Crestina Martinez, Costilla County.

The National Association of Counties (NACo) presented information to the members about the national prescription drug program for counties. This program allows counties to provide a discount on medications to county residents. There are no formularies in the NACo plan and every medication is covered for uninsured, underinsured, seniors, citizens and many other county populations.

Commissioner Scott King, Huerfano County, raised the next order of business, about the Colorado Water Conservation Board's (CWCB) work in Huerfano County. The CWCB filed for in stream flow rights on three streams in Huerfano County. The filings were for habitat protection, however, water flow in the streams provides spring runoff only, so commissioners questioned the need for CWCB's instream flow claims. Huerfano County also expressed concern that the only notification CWCB provided was what was required in statute, which is limited to a mailing to interested parties that signed up for the notifications. Other commissioners expressed concern about the latest filings, yet reminded members that the CWCB can be a useful ally for counties in protecting water rights within the county borders.

Bill Cordova, County Manager for Las Animas County, spoke to members

about the federal stimulus money proposed for Colorado. There was an expectation that rural counties would receive their share of federal stimulus dollars yet the funding for job training and transportation have not ar-



Prowers County Commissioner Henry Schnabel makes a point during the Southern District meeting while his fellow Prowers County Commissioner Joe Marble looks on.

rived. Pueblo County spoke about their efforts to monitor the stimulus monies coming to their county and complimented Interior Secretary Salazar and Senators Bennett and Udall's help in this budget process.

Prowers County spoke to members about a tax increment financing district proposed for the town of Lamar. Commissioners are very concerned about the plan to use county tax revenue for a municipal urban development project. Members expressed concerns about the growing statewide trend that pushes tax increment financing as economic development instead of urban redevelopment, its true purpose. Prowers County will continue to have conversations with other Colorado counties that have had experience with municipalities taking advantage of the tax increment financing.

Commissioner Jeff Chostner, Pueblo County, asked members about their interest in collaborating on a regional recycling program. The cost was estimated at around \$20 million and the program would process the tons of recycled waste generated in the southern district, as well as, counties in the mountains. With tight budgets and local recycling programs already in place, the decision was made that if counties were interested they would contact Pueblo for further details.

Commissioner Martinez expressed concerns about the lack of cell phone access for Costilla County residents in some parts of the county. Verizon and the local cell phone provider are the only providers and if a citizen does not have one or the other, there is not another option. AT&T is now offering data services in the county but this is seen as a short term fix for internet coverage. The lack of providers in Costilla County affects their ability to host larger meetings or conferences since others travelling to the county who have phone plans with other carriers lost access upon entering the county.

Finally, an agenda item for the upcoming District meeting in August included coordination of video conferencing for juvenile defendants between southern counties and the Pueblo juvenile holding facility.

Western District

In the Western District meeting Commissioner Gary Ellis (Montrose) was elected President and Commissioner Wally White (La Plata) Vice President.

The Western District represents sixteen counties and typically 50 to 65 commissioners and administrators attend district meetings. In such large meetings most people don't have an opportunity to talk about their important concerns. The district experimented with round tables of ten chairs to have general agenda issues discussed during half of the meeting. Agenda items were proposed by district members before the meeting and specific issues were also raised at individual tables. Feedback was positive and commissioners suggested that this style be used at the winter conference.

Agenda topics were:

- What are you doing to prepare for summer wildfire season?
- What are you doing about affordable/worker housing?
- What are you doing about sustainability and economic development?

At one table, La Plata County's Regional Housing Alliance was discussed as a model. It is a multi-jurisdictional housing authority leveraging local resources to provide affordable housing. It is testing innovative solutions to provide housing and to keep people in their present homes. For example, it did an energy audit of an entire town and is seeking grant funds to make homes and businesses more energy efficient thus lowering operating costs for home owners and businesses.



Routt County Administrator Tom Sullivan and Commissioner Diane Mitsch Bush listen as topics are discussed at their table during the Western District Meeting.

Another example was the use of HB08-1350 (Facilitating Financing of Renewable Energy). Boulder County has tested it by issuing bonds for a collection of individual home owners to install energy conservation measures in their home. It was suggested that, after Boulder County has worked out the wrinkles, that they provide a workshop at a future CCI conference on how to make it work efficiently for other counties to try.

A representative from the Governor's Energy Office (GEO), Joani Matranga who represents Western Colorado, presented information on the grant programs available through GEO. GEO is receiving a \$50 million infusion of stimulus funding over a two year period. Grant applications are out and there more to come on a variety of programs. *(Please see CCI's website under conferences to obtain a copy of the handout.)*

DoLA Executive Director Susan Kirkpatrick handed out an early version of the process proposed for the new large grant program for substantially impacted oil and gas counties on Federal Mineral Lease land. Under SB09-232 there is \$17 million available, which theoretically could be used on a single project. *(Please see CCI's website under conferences to obtain a copy of the handout.)*

2009 Summer Conference Photo Highlights



La Plata County Commissioner Kellie Hotter, Troy Bernberg of Stifel Nicolaus and Montezuma County Commissioner Larrie Rule catch up during the opening reception at CCI's Summer Conference.



Washington County Commissioner David Foy, Conejos County Commissioner John Sandoval and Yuma County Commissioners Robin Wiley and Dean Wingfield share ideas at the CCI opening reception.



San Miguel County Commissioner Art Goodtimes and Routt County Commissioner Doug Monger share a laugh at the CCI opening reception.



CCI Executive Director Larry Kallenberger catches up with San Miguel County Commissioner Joan May and Garfield County Commissioner Trési Houpt.



CCI Special Projects Coordinator Gini Pingnot and Gilpin County Commissioner Jeanne Nicholson smile for the camera at the CCI opening reception.



State Senator Ted Harvey and Douglas County Commissioner Jill Repella discuss further ideas after the district meetings.



Conejos County Commissioner John Sandoval, Garfield County Commissioner Trési Houpt and El Paso County Commissioner Dennis Hisey (all CCI board members) share a laugh with CCI Executive Director Larry Kallenberger prior to the business meeting.



Larimer County Commissioner Kathay Rennels takes a moment to laugh at a comment made during the Counties in Crisis session she facilitated.



Pueblo County Commissioner Anthony Nuñez was the winner of one of the over 30 baskets given away at the Tuesday dinner.



Denver City Auditor Dennis Gallagher, Weld County Commissioner Sean Conway and El Paso County Commissioner Wayne Williams enjoy the Tuesday night dinner.



San Miguel County Commissioner Art Goodtimes is elated with the basket he won.



Custer County Commissioner Carole Custer asks the Governor a question during the opening session.



Eagle County Commissioner Sara Fisher takes a moment to welcome the more than 300 conference delegates to her county.

ARRA Could Assist Counties

ARRA cont. from page 2

directly to the three large metropolitan planning organizations (DRCOG, Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments and North Front Range MPO) in the state for their prioritized projects. Director George explained that CDOT has met and exceeded the obligation requirements established under ARRA for the commitment of stimulus funds. He complimented CDOT staff and the Transportation Planning Regions for their hard work in helping the state meet ARRA requirements. Speaking generally about CDOT's budget, Director George explained that CDOT's budget began failing even before we got to where we are today. He said he is "panicked" about CDOT's budgetary situation following the expiration of ARRA. He lamented that if CDOT is to be more than just a maintenance department and to actually construct projects, the state must have new revenues.



CDPHE Director Jim Martin presented on the funds his department is receiving from the ARRA.

Jim Martin, Director of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, spoke broadly about the ARRA funding his department has received and spent to date. Director Martin highlighted the \$1.2 million that the state has used to retrofit 250 Weld County Public School buses with oxidation catalysts, closed crankcase filtration systems and engine pre-heaters. This funding will help reduce air pollution and protect children from exposure to pollutants.

Additionally, \$17 million will be used to cleanup the Summitville Superfund site in southwest Colorado. The project involves building a 1,600 gallons-per-minute water treatment plant. Finally, Director Martin stated that Colorado will receive \$32 million and \$30 million for the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund and the Water Pollution Control Revolving Fund respectively. These funds will be used for priority public water projects for which construction must begin before September 30, 2009.

Tom Plant, Director of the Governor's Energy Office, spoke about the funding his office will receive primarily via the State Energy Program (SEP), the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program (EECBG) and the Low-income Weatherization Program. There will be \$49.2 million available via the SEP for initiatives ranging from capital investment grants to energy efficiency projects on commercial buildings. Director Plant explained that construction projects are not eligible for this funding. Under the EECBG program, Colorado will receive \$42.7 million in formula grants for

energy efficiency and renewable energy programs and projects. At least 60% of the GEO's allocation must be distributed to Colorado cities and counties which do not receive a direct allocation of funds from the DOE. And, under the weatherization program, \$79.5 million will be used to reduce energy costs for low-income families by improving the energy efficiency of their homes. Priority will be given to those who are elderly, those with disabilities and families with children.



Garfield County Commissioner John Martin asks a question of the panelists.

The session concluded with a presentation by State Treasurer Cary Kennedy. Treasurer Kennedy highlighted the financing opportunities available under the ARRA. Between now and December 2010, local communities can take advantage of a series of zero-to-low interest bonds to help finance their infrastructure projects. While some of the bonding opportunities are subject to a statewide cap, others like the Build America Bonds, are not. In the case of Build America Bonds, all public entities are eligible to apply for these bonds and the federal government will pay 35% of the interest costs incurred by projects financed with these bonds. Treasurer Kennedy encouraged commissioners who might be delaying the implementation of a project to determine whether these financing opportunities make sense for their communities and if so, to go ahead and secure voter approval this November for the project's debt.



El Paso County Commissioner Wayne Williams poses a question to the panelists.

Counties in Times of Crisis



This joint, roll-up-the-sleeves session was attended by well over 100 commissioners, managers, administrators and staff. CCI Board President Kathay Rennels, Larimer County, convened the session and facilitated the discussion. Commissioner Rennels quickly instructed the group to purposely mix themselves up and sit among folks with whom they normally do not work. The desired effect of ensuring a variety of size of counties and individuals from across the state was achieved and resulted in a great deal of information sharing.

- Reducing county assistance, training and benefits and
- Updating county fees where possible and permissible.



Pitkin County Commissioner Rachel Richards acted as the spokesperson for her table during the session.

The more long-range and innovative ideas included:

- Beginning to revamp the budgetary process through performance- and outcome-based criteria,
- Zero-base or reduced-base budgeting ,
- Engaging in complete county reorganization of departments, duties and responsibilities,
- Utilizing county economic development strategically and in a locally appropriate manner,
- Investing in video arraignment for prisoners, saving on multiple cost centers,
- Revenue sharing efforts with municipalities and
- Creating an in-county clinic for employees to access care, saving on medical expenses.

Finally, a county manager in attendance offered that ACCA maintains a portion of their website for requests for information and input, with many of the themes from this session getting attention of late.



Teller County Commissioner Jim Ignatius reports discussion items from his table during the interactive session.



Fremont County Commissioner Ed Norden reports what his table discussed and the problems they are facing.

The goal of this workshop was to keep with the Counties Helping Counties concept the Board adopted last summer and began with the question: *“In these hard times, what are you doing to manage the budget crisis in your county?”* A number of prompting questions were given to

participants to stimulate the conversation, but not surprisingly, a number of themes

emerged after each table had an opportunity to discuss then report their results to the group.

One major theme was a grave concern over reductions in revenues beginning in 2010 and 2011, after the full effects of the economic downturn are reflected in property tax assessments. Although a number of counties reported continued or new reductions of revenue, staff and resources, many are anticipating even greater reductions in the near future. This negative environment may be exacerbated by downturns in HUTF, PILT, sales tax, use tax or other key revenue sources for counties.

In order to cope with a difficult budgetary climate, session attendees listed a vast number of possible solutions, including direct and immediate strategies, such as:

- Using natural attrition and retirement incentives for employees,
- Fleet management and targeted reductions,
- Refinancing existing and outstanding bonds,
- Shifting of resources away from departments where specific employees are in a down-cycle of work,
- Teaming with department heads and elected officials to look for budget cuts and reductions,

CCI Business Meeting

The CCI Business Meeting was called to order by President Kathay Rennels on June 9, 2009. The meeting began with the introduction of the Board of Directors, acknowledgement of 2008-2009 district officers, recognition of CCI Past Presidents and the announcement of 2009-2010 district officers.

Before the membership were four proposed National Association of Counties (NACo) resolutions: Support Funding for Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act, Conditional Support for the National Criminal Justice Commission Act of 2009, Restore Ability to Use Federal Matching Dollars for Child Support Enforcement and Support for Reinstating the H-2B Visas Exemption for Returning Workers. The first three resolutions passed as presented. The H-2B resolution passed after amending language accepted to limit the maximum number of workers to the number of workers allowed in 2007.

Two additional resolutions, Support for the Community Building Code Administration Grant Act and Support for the Reduction of the 24-Month Waiting Period for Participants in Social Security Disability Insurance were also considered. While CCI's bylaws require a 10-day advance notice for all meeting agenda items, the action is permissible if the members in attendance vote to deliberate on the resolutions. Both resolutions



El Paso County Commissioner Sallie Clark proposes a NACo Resolution to be voted on by the membership during the business meeting.

passed - the building code resolution as presented and the social security disability insurance resolution after amending language to remove reference to specific legislation was accepted.

These resolutions will move forward with Colorado's support to the NACo Annual Conference, July 24-28 in Nashville, Tennessee.

The President adjourned the official business meeting, then reported on several items of interest to the membership. Responses to the recent survey regarding CCI involvement at the Colorado State Fair's Junior Livestock Sale indicate that CCI should continue this support of Colorado's agriculture and youth.

Commissioners from Baca, Conejos and Costilla counties highlighted some of the successes of CCI's Counties Helping Counties program and expressed their gratitude to Douglas and Garfield counties who donated equipment and support to their counties.

The President also reported on the activities of the National Association of Counties (NACo) Board of Directors on which she serves as Colorado's representative. The Board is in the process of reorganizing the structure and make-up of the board, as well as developing new regional representation.

Western District Meeting Continued

Western District cont. from page 7

The district then turned its attention to the new oil and gas rules. Rule 201 in the new rules specifically states "Nothing in these rules shall establish, alter, impair, or negate the authority of local and county governments to regulate land use related to oil and gas operations, so long as such local regulation is not in operational conflict with the Act or regulations promulgated there under." Commissioner Trési Houpt, Garfield County, who sits on the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission, recommended that counties: (1) set their zoning and land use regulations to accommodate oil and gas drilling, and (2) designate a county person to liaise with COGCC and the oil companies to prevent abuse of land use codes within the county.

Landon Gates, director of public policy, Colorado Farm Bureau, made a presentation articulating the Farm Bureau's position in opposition to S.787, the Clean Water Restoration Act, currently before Congress. The Farm Bureau maintains that by eliminating the word "navigable river" from the current act and replacing it with "waters of the United States," the EPA's jurisdiction will extend to all water within the country's borders. It removes a key role of states in partnering with the EPA to manage water quality.

Finally, August Western District meeting agenda items were suggested: (a) Revisit CWA so that commissioners could more adequately debate pros and cons. (b) Colorado Dept of Revenue sales tax collection problems – lack of accuracy and timeliness of reimbursement to counties. The district also asked that CCI further investigates video conferencing for its Steering Committee meetings.

HCPF Update from Executive Director Henneberry

On Wednesday morning, Executive Director Joan Henneberry, Colorado Department of Health Care Policy & Financing (HCPF), gave a detailed presentation on the Department’s ongoing programs, legislative goals and various work groups.

The passage of HB 1293, which creates new eligibility populations under Medicaid, will serve up to 100,000 more residents and was a great accomplishment for the administration and the Governor. The program receives fees from hospitals that are then matched with additional Medicaid funds, returning a dollar for dollar increase to the state. The Director recognizes that counties will have new eligibility workloads as the program rolls out. It is for this reason that the legislation specifically includes county administrative costs as a part of the program’s overall anticipated costs.

One of the new populations is the disabled community, which will be eligible for a buy-in program that permits those in the disabled community whose income is up to 450% of the federal poverty level to be able to “buy-in” to Medicaid coverage. This will permit many more disabled to work while receiving their critically necessary Medicaid payments. Director Henneberry acknowledged that this is a new group for counties, and HCPF is looking to counties for feedback on issues that arise in direct connection with this new population.

Another new population in this program is childless adults, who are expected to be served in 2011 and 2012. This group still requires a waiver from CMS before Colorado can begin these services.

Mark Tandberg, Adams County, asked what the projected caseload is for the entire program. Director Henneberry responded that the expectation is 100,000 to 150,000 total, but that the first full year will only be around 25% to 30% of that total projection. Mark stated that the county administration projected in the state’s fiscal note on HB 1293 appeared to be insufficient for this caseload increase. Director Henneberry indicated her intention to work with the counties and stay informed on the county impacts. She stated that the counties are doing a good job on the health care program eligibility and that the Governor specifically transferred ARRA funds from his office to cover the county administration costs.

Mary Baydarian, Park County, asked about smaller counties that don’t have hospitals, and as a result are seeing more applicants at the county offices. She expressed the need for strong assistance from the state to aid counties in these areas.

Director Henneberry agreed, going on to say that the state is working on a joint-effort to see if current data meets the CMS test for public expenditures. Further, she believes that Medicaid Application (MA) sites have to do their own accountability, not the counties in which the MA sites reside. This is an area of particular interest and the Department will be closely watching the MA process.

Director Henneberry continued with a discussion of the 2010-11 budget request and policy cycle. All the departments have been told to expect a flat budget growth figure, based on the current revenues, so no new money or programs are anticipated at this point. She expects to see cuts instead. Any legislation that HCPF runs next year will have to be budget neutral to pass muster with the administration. Finally, there are no public program expansions expected in the coming year or two. Any new programs will be those that come from the Federal government, not the state.

In the coming year, the department will be working on program efficiencies, especially in terms of making Medicaid the payer of last resort. There are concerns that veterans may be receiving care under Medicaid instead of VA programs and that is an area that needs attention, as well as any insured population incorrectly or fraudulently receiving Medicaid.

There will be stepped up efforts to move Medicaid populations into managed care systems, resulting in greater efficiencies.

Director Henneberry indicated that the department is continuing the CBMS modernization process, as an efficiency matter, as well as for the purpose of assisting clients.

The next topic of discussion was the Colorado Regional Health Organization (CoREO) and their program to move the state to electronic medical records, with its complex conversion process. Director Henneberry indicated that this is ongoing and needs more discussion, especially with health care providers and other impacted organizations. There will be a great deal of provider training in order to get this up and running properly, but will be a great benefit once it is fully operational. CoREO will partner with many groups in this process, including training providers, to use the computer equipment for meaningful purposes.

There was a lively question and answer session during which the overwhelming response by the Director to questions was that she fully intends to work with the counties as we go forward with the various programs and issues that the state is facing.

Forest Health Workshop

This issue session was designed to educate counties and communities about the latest funding and mitigation projects for forest health in Colorado. Tony Dixon, Deputy Regional Forester, U.S. Forest Service Rocky Mountain Region, gave a quick overview of the funding scenario for the fiscal year. Money coming directly to the state for fire work includes \$6.7 million for the Colorado State Forest Service and \$250,000 for the Colorado Department of Agriculture. The 2009 energy supplemental funds equal \$8 million in hazardous fuels reduction for state and private lands, \$13.2 million for national forests and \$208,000 for rehabilitation post fire. There are also Secure Rural Schools and PILT dollars coming for habitat, noxious weeds and soil productivity programs. These amounts depend on each county. Finally, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding includes \$8 million for capital improvement and maintenance, \$5 million for national forests and \$1.52 million for state and private land fuels projects. Colorado is the only state in the Rocky Mountain Region to receive ARRA funds for forest health.

Two County Commissioners, Jim Ignatius, Teller County, and Ben Pearlman, Boulder County, spoke about successful forest health and fuel reduction projects in their counties. Commissioner Ignatius spoke about the Woodland

Park Forest Initiative and Commissioner Pearlman spoke about the work Boulder County has done. Both County Commissioners stressed that collaboration and outreach were essential parts of successful large scale mitigation efforts. For example, 13 tons of biomass generated from the projects in Teller County is bought by the Colorado Springs Utilities for use in the co-firing coal plant and, in Boulder, the biomass heats a 125,000 square foot county building.

Dave Farmer, North Area Forester, Colorado State Forest Service, spoke specifically about what the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) is doing for fuel reduction projects throughout the state. Dave quickly summed up the problem facing Colorado. There are seventeen forest districts in Colorado. In these districts, the state faces a lodge pole pine beetle that killed two million trees and increases annually, 540,000 acres of sudden aspen decline and 220,000 acres of spruce beetle kill. Within the land the CSFS manages, 2.1 million acres are in the wildland urban interface. Solutions include long term planning, increasing industry in the state to utilize wood products, increasing the number of community wildfire protection plans and increasing the amount of money dedicated to Colorado for fuel mitigation projects from the federal and state government.

Public Relations: Reputation Management through Community Engagement

Commissioner Sallie Clark (El Paso) moderated this communication session that emphasized the utilization of simple but highly effective tools that would help commissioners and counties build positive relationships with constituents, organizations and the media. A team of county communication professionals designed a workshop, and after a very brief introduction on a few public relations principles and examples, participants were put to work immediately. Thank you to Wendy Holmes, Douglas County Director of Public Affairs, Ana Mostaccero, Montrose County Director of Public Affairs and Dave Rose, El Paso County Public Information Officer, for their invaluable contributions to this session.

Four groups of people were given an intentionally open ended but obfuscating “press question” that was grounded in a typical county problem. The group had to develop a four point guided strategy to respond to the press. Each question was designed in such a way that to answer the news reporter, action by the commissioners/county would be necessary in order to have a positive outcome. The four elements that needed to be addressed were:

- What is the problem you are trying to solve through community engagement?
- Who is the target audience? (a list of 15 items were supplied as prompts)
- What is the message to communicate? (three talking points were required)
- What is the desired result?

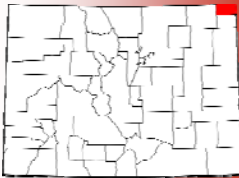
Aside from the conversation in the workshop, the most valuable tools were handouts: the “Communications Toolbox” and the “Media Training Manual” (the copyrighted manual in 2006 is by Douglas County’s Director of Public Affairs, Wendy Holmes) both of which will be posted online at CCI’s website under **Conferences** on the right side of CCI’s homepage under **CCI Short Cuts**.

Sedgwick County



Sedgwick County with a population of 2,340 and is located in the northeast corner of Colorado. It is bordered on both the north and east sides by Nebraska. Interstate 76 runs east/west through the county. Interstate 80 is in very close proximity. The South Platte River meanders through the county. The Jumbo Reservoir located on the Sedgwick and Logan county line is a source of both recreation and irrigation.

The county is basically agricultural. Major crops are dry land wheat and irrigated corn. Sugar beets, pinto beans and alfalfa are the other irrigated crops. On dry land corn, millet and sunflowers are produced.



CCI District: Eastern

Commissioners:
Gene Bauerle
James Beck
Glen Sandquist

Location: Northeast corner of Colorado on the Nebraska border.

Square Miles: 549

Population: 2,340

Assessed Value:
32,752,650

Sedgwick County is rich in history. The only Pony Express route in Colorado was in Sedgwick County. The saga of Jules Beni and Jack Slade are among the many stories about the county. The movie "Dancing with Wolves" is also taken from this history. There have been three locations for the county seat of Julesburg. The Union Pacific Railroad brought pioneers to the county. The main line of this railroad still goes through on its route from Chicago to Los Angeles and a spur line runs to Denver. No passenger service is available on

either line, but lots of freight is hauled.

For many years, Great Western Sugar Company was the county's largest employer. In addition to their year round employees, many local farmers were hired during the winter when the sugar campaign was in full progress. The closing of this factory had a huge impact on the economy.



Sedgwick County Courthouse.

In 2006, a major renovation was completed on the Sedgwick County Health Center, making it one of the very best facilities in the area. In addition to the hospital, there is a nursing home and the Jacob & Anna Walter assisted living center.

There are two school systems in the County, Julesburg and Revere. Both schools are graded in the top categories in the Colorado Student Assessment Program.

In 2007, a large gas pipeline was completed. This line will be used to take gas from NW Colorado and ultimately to the east coast.

The county is in the very first stages of what is hoped will be a viable production of electricity through large turbine wind farms.

Recognizing participants' need for access "off hours," Nationwide extends call-center hours into late evening



As the uncertainty of the investment markets, as well as the economy in general, continues to concern workers trying to prepare financially for their retirement, many find themselves dealing with questions or worries about their retirement accounts well after business hours. Nationwide recognizes this need and has responded by extending its hours of service to the retirement-plan participants of the cities, counties and other governmental entities it serves.

Effective May 18, 2009, Nationwide's call centers will remain open until 11 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday. In addition, Nationwide is reinforcing its commitment to processing requests received by 4 p.m. ET on the same day, every day.

'This is no time to pull back'

"Our country has often faced uncertain economic times in the past," Louie Watson, Vice President of Strategic Relationships for Nationwide Retirement Solutions, said, "but the current situation has brought together a particularly volatile set of conditions and events that have led to a severe market downturn and a global economy that's in crisis. Many organizations have been forced to curtail services.

"At Nationwide, we believe times like these are not for pulling back. We've seen an upward trend in calls from public employees who are looking for answers about what to do next. In announcing these extended hours, we're telling participants 'Someone is here, ready to help you put things into context and help you review your strategy and risk tolerance,' " Watson added.

CCI POLICY DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE 2009-2010

Action	Date	Time
▪ First Round of Steering Committee Meetings		
Tourism, Resorts and Economic Development	Jul. 10	9 a.m.
General Government	Jul. 10	10:30 a.m.
Taxation and Finance	Jul. 10	12:30 p.m.
Transportation and Telecommunications	Jul. 10	2 p.m.
Public Lands	Jul. 17	9 a.m.
Agriculture, Wildlife and Rural Affairs	Jul. 17	10:30 a.m.
Land Use and Natural Resources	Jul. 17	12:30 p.m.
Health and Human Services	Jul. 17	2 p.m.
▪ Regional District Meetings		
WESTERN	AUG. 7	10A.M. –2 P.M
EASTERN	AUG. 13	10A.M. –2 P.M
MOUNTAIN	AUG. 14	10A.M. –2 P.M
FRONT RANGE	AUG. 20	10A.M. –2 P.M
SOUTHERN	AUG. 21	10A.M. –2 P.M
▪ Second Round of Steering Committee Meetings		
Tourism, Resorts and Economic Development	Sep. 18	9 a.m.
General Government	Sep. 18	10:30 a.m.
Taxation and Finance	Sep. 18	12:30 p.m.
Transportation and Telecommunications	Sep. 18	2 p.m.
Public Lands	Sep. 25	9 a.m.
Agriculture, Wildlife and Rural Affairs	Sep. 25	10:30 a.m.
Land Use and Natural Resources	Sep. 25	12:30 p.m.
Health and Human Services	Sep. 25	2 p.m.

Legislative Committee Meeting: Oct. 9, 2009 10 a.m-1 p.m.
 -Review and adopt 2010 Policy Statement
 -Review steering committee recommendations for potential legislative issues for 2010
 -Set 2010 legislative priorities and agenda

NOTE: Only county commissioners designated in advance by their boards may vote at the Legislative Committee meeting. (Please see CCI Bylaws, Article V, Sec. 5, Page 9, and Article XI, Sec. 6, Page 24.)

- **CCI Annual Winter Conference in Colorado Springs** Nov 30-Dec 2, 2009
- **2010 Legislative Session Begins** Jan. 13, 2010
- **Steering Committees Begin Monthly Meetings** Jan/Feb. 2010