January 20, 2015

*“If a man hasn’t discovered something that he will die for, he isn’t fit to live.”*

*-* Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

**Days until Sine Die:** 108

**State of the State: Hickenlooper emphasizes Colorado’s workforce development**

*The Denver Business Journal*

Seemingly reflecting the difficulty of getting controversial bills through a split Legislature this year, Gov. [John Hickenlooper](http://pubads.g.doubleclick.net/pagead/adview?ai=BLsjwV329VIzrKLKDwQHU_4GwD6GgkpAGAAAAEAEgqZbaHzgAWKGd6qriAWDJtomHzKPAF7IBE3d3dy5iaXpqb3VybmFscy5jb226AQlnZnBfaW1hZ2XIAQnaAWFodHRwOi8vd3d3LmJpempvdXJuYWxzLmNvbS9kZW52ZXIvbmV3cy8yMDE1LzAxLzE1L3N0YXRlLW9mLXRoZS1zdGF0ZS1oaWNrZW5sb29wZXItZW1waGFzaXplcy5odG1smAKgnAHAAgLgAgDqAhQvNDYzNS9iemouZGVudmVyL29vcPgC9NEekAOsApgDpAOoAwHgBAGSBQsIBxABGAcggZSRGZIFCwgHEAEYASDhraEZkgULCAcQARgBIJmd6higBiA&sigh=cmMB7dOUjyg&adurl=http://pagead2.googlesyndication.com/pagead/imgad?id=CICAgKCTxpD5OxABGAEyCIYHRNlKD4Ey%26t%3D10%26cT%3Dhttp%253A//bizjournals.com%26l%3Dhttp%253A//www.bizjournals.com/denver/search/results%253Fq%253DJohn%252520Hickenlooper) offered a State of the State Address at the beginning of his second term Thursday that emphasized collaboration heavily, but was light on major policy proposals.

**Gov. Hickenlooper and Lt. Gov. Garcia Sworn in for Second Term**

*Office of the Governor*

On Tuesday, January 13, 2015Gov. John Hickenlooper delivered the inaugural address at a ceremony on the west steps of the state Capitol as he and Lt. Gov. Joe Garcia were sworn in for a second term.  Hickenlooper delivered a 13-minute inauguration speech, surrounded by family, friends and joined by his son Teddy.

**Lawmakers Hit the Ground Running**

*Durango Herald*

Lawmakers introduced a flurry of bills at the start of the legislative session this week, ranging from measures cracking down on medical marijuana to rolling back gun-control laws and renewable-energy mandates.  Several controversial measures were introduced by Republicans in an attempt to spark a conversation. With Republicans now controlling the Senate, those bills are likely to pass floor debate in that chamber. But Democrats still control the House, where many of the measures are unlikely to pass.

**Hickenlooper's State of the State Speech Calls for New Look at TABOR**

*Denver Post*

In arguably his most forceful critique yet, Gov. John Hickenlooper took aim at the state's constitutional spending cap in a speech Thursday to a joint session of the General Assembly, but he avoided taking a stance on how to address what he calls Colorado's "fiscal thicket."  The Democrat capped his State of the State address by underscoring the impasse created by the state's constitutional mandates for taxpayer refunds of excess revenues under the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights and annual spending increases for education.

**Despite Colorado Rebound, Hickenlooper Faces Challenges in Second Term**

*Denver Post*

Gov. John Hickenlooper starts his second term Tuesday looking at a much different Colorado than the one he inherited four years ago.Instead of a sputtering economy with unemployment at 8.8 percent, the state's outlook is rebounding and joblessness is down to 4.1 percent. And instead of a billion-dollar budget shortfall, economists are projecting tax surpluses.

**Rep. Libby Szabo Leaving to Become a Jeffco Commissioner**

*Denver Post*

State Rep. Libby Szabo, who has been frustrated at the Colorado Legislature, has been tapped to fill a vacancy on the Jefferson County board of commissioners. She will be one of two Republicans on the three-member commission.  She will join Republican Don Rosier, who was re-elected in November, and Democrat Casey Tighe, who was elected in 2012.

**An Assertive Start**

*Pueblo Chieftan*

Colorado’s newly elected State Board of Education certainly got off to — well — an assertive start.  By a 4-3 vote last Thursday, the board opted to change state law regarding standardized testing. The surprise decision would let school districts seek waivers, essentially allowing them to opt out of the first wave of the new Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers tests.

**Tabor May Put Roadblock in Front of I-70 Fix**

*Denver Post Editorial Board*

Thanks to constraints of the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights, the funding for the reconstruction of Interstate 70 through north Denver has fallen apart, outgoing state transportation director Don Hunt told us the other day.The [state is expected to give back at least $137 million](http://www.denverpost.com/news/ci_26856988/hickenloopers-budget-plan-endorses-tax-rebates-new-state) to Coloradans for fiscal year 2015-16 in the form of a TABOR rebate, and for complicated reasons that rebate will seriously impact transportation and capital construction funds.

**Water Conservation Bill Moves Forward**

*Durango Herald*

Sen. Ellen Roberts of Durango on Wednesday found herself at odds with fellow Republicans who opposed a water-conservation bill she is sponsoring.  The measure - which would offer free training to local governments on water-conservation practices - still made it out of the Republican-controlled Senate Agriculture, Natural Resources and Energy Committee, thanks to Democrats who joined Roberts in supporting the bill. Roberts is a member of the committee.

**Colorado Film Commission Pledging Money it Doesn’t Have**

*Denver Post*

Colorado's film commission can point to some big "gets" in promoting the effectiveness of its incentive program, but it should not overextend itself.  The [film incentive program is out of money](http://www.denverpost.com/business/ci_27284525/colorado-out-film-incentives) and pledging rebates to projects in advance of its next round of funding in July.  That's never a good idea, as was pointed out by Colorado Economic Commission Director Denise Brown in a meeting last week.

**Gas, Oil Political Spending Detailed**

*Durango Herald*

A report released Monday highlights big spending on political outreach by the natural-gas and oil industry in Colorado, compared with previous election cycles.  Released by the left-leaning group Colorado Ethics Watch, the report shows that gas and oil spent nearly $12 million on the 2014 election for state offices. A similar report in 2013 showed about $800,000 spent on elections in Colorado for state offices during the 2010 and 2012 election cycles.  The large jump reflects proposed ballot initiatives around local control that the industry had lined up to fight. At least $13.6 million was raised by various energy and business interests to fight the proposals.

**Examining Hickenlooper’s First Term Record on Economic Development**

*Denver Business journal*

When then-Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper ran to become Colorado governor in 2010, one of the first policy documents he issued was an ambitious six-page road map outlining his economic-development strategy. He said at the time that it demonstrated his commitment to job creation as a top priority.  As Hickenlooper prepared this week to give his fifth State of the State address - scheduled for 11 a.m. MST today - the Denver Business Journal asked business and economic-development leaders to re-examine the plan and determine how much of his goals the Democrat has accomplished.

**Colorado Hospitals hit by Medicare Penalty for High Readmission Rates***Denver Post*

More than half of Colorado hospitals receiving Medicare payments will lose a portion of those reimbursements this year as penalty for having relatively high rates of readmissions.  Hospital readmissions deemed avoidable - unplanned and occurring within 30 days of discharge - happen 2 million times a year at a cost estimated by the government of $26 billion a year.

**Former Gov. Roy Romer tells Hickenlooper to Lead a 'Movement' to Repeal TABOR***Denver Post*

Gov. John Hickenlooper invited three former Democratic governors to offer advice for his second term at his inaugural celebration Tuesday evening.  It started lighthearted with former Gov. Dick Lamm. But then former Gov. Roy Romer gave him an earful.

**State Rep. Tim Dore's Wife Now a County Commissioner**
*Denver Post*

State Rep. Tim Dore missed out on Tuesday's inaugural ceremonies, but the Elizabeth Republican had a good reason: he was watching his wife Kelly getting sworn in as an Elbert County commissioner

**Obama Moves to Create First Methane Limits for Gas Drilling**

*Denver Post*

The Obama administration laid out designs Wednesday to issue the first regulations to cut down on methane emissions from new natural gas wells, aiming to curb the discharge of a potent greenhouse gas by roughly half.  Relying once again on the Clean Air Act, the rules join a host of others that President Barack Obama has ordered in an effort to slow global warming despite opposition to new laws in Congress that has only hardened since the midterm elections. Although just a sliver of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions, methane is far more powerful than carbon dioxide at trapping heat in the atmosphere.

**Statewide Preschool through 12th-grade Student Enrollment Continues to Grow**

*CDE Communications News Release*

The Colorado Department of Education announced last week that the statewide preschool through 12th-grade pupil count for the 2014-2015 school year increased by 12,007 over the previous year, bringing the total to 889,006 public school students. This number represents the total number of students served.  This change represents an increase of 1.4 percent, lower than the 1.6 percent growth rate in the 2013-2014 school year and lower than the median and mean (average) growth rate of 1.7 in the past 20 years.

**Colorado's Health-insurance Exchange Faces State Lawmakers after Critical Audit**

*Denver Business Journal*

Facing legislators for the first time since getting an audit last month, Connect for Health Colorado officials received some criticism at a hearing Thursday, but also a modicum of support, particularly from Democrats, for their efforts to build a first-of-its-kind health insurance exchange.  Leaders of the online insurance marketplace told a joint meeting of the House and Senate health care committees they are working through kinks that delayed some Coloradans from signing up for insurance on the exchange but believe they are getting the system up to speed.

**Republican National Colorado President Announces Retirement**

Republic National Distributing Company Colorado President, Jim Smith, has announced his retirement as President effective April 01, 2015.  Over the 40 successful years in the beverage alcohol industry, Jim has held numerous leadership roles.  His career began in 1973 as a merchandiser in Tampa. His career path led to sales executive positions in Sarasota, Tampa, and South Florida before relocation to Colorado in 1990 with his family.  In 2000, Jim returned to Florida as State President.  In 2004, he resumed his leadership role in Colorado. Jim has created a professional and personal legacy which embodies the values of the Company - a culture of family, professionalism, and accountability.

**Gov. Hickenlooper Announces Western State Colorado University Board of Trustees Appointments**

*Office of the Governor*

On Monday, January 12, 2015 Gov. John Hickenlooper today announced the Western State Colorado University Board of Trustees appointments.  The Board of Trustees for Western State Colorado University makes policy for the school and oversees its operation.

·         Erich Marshall Ferchau of Gunnison, a Republican. Appointed for a term expiring December 31, 2018;

·         Todd M. Wheeler of Castle Rock, a Republican. Reappointed for a term expiring December 31, 2018.

**Gov. Hickenlooper announces Boards and Commission appointments**

*Office of the Governor*

On Monday, January 12, 2015Gov. John Hickenlooper announced several Boards and Commissions appointments. The appointments were to the Colorado State Child Fatality Review Team, the Colorado Historical Records Advisory Board, the Executive Clemency Advisory Board, the Private Activity Bond Allocations Committee, the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Advisory Council, and the Radiation Advisory Committee.

**The Calculator**

House Bills Introduced:  128

Senate Bills Introduced:  98

Number of Bills PI’d:  1