April 1, 2013

***Bill Tracking: http://www.coloradocapitolwatch.com/bill-tracker-votes/0/391/2013/0/***

*"Divide and rule, a sound motto. Unite and lead, a better one.”*

 *Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*

 ***Days Until Sine Die:  30***

**State Budget Gets Bipartisan House OK**

With a strong bipartisan majority, the House voted 45-18 on Friday morning to approve the fiscal year 2013-14 state budget.

All 36 of the House Democrats who were present, and a third of the 27 present Republicans (one member from each party was excused), supported Senate Bill 230, which was sponsored in the House by its Joint Budget Committee members, Reps. Claire Levy (D-Boulder), Crisanta Duran (D-Denver), and Rep. Cheri Gerou (R-Evergreen).

“We have worked across the aisle to achieve every goal that was articulated by Speaker [Mark] Ferrandino and Minority Leader [Mark] Waller in their speeches that first day of session,” Rep. Duran said.  “Almost every budget decision coming out of the JBC this year was made unanimously.”

Democrats say the budget will accelerate job creation, funding a variety of economic development initiatives including $194 million for capital construction and maintenance projects.

The House added $3 million in new funds to diversify the economies of rural communities and an additional $2 million investment in tourism promotion.  The bill  also gives Colorado state employees a 2 percent raise across the board.  Many of them have not seen a raise in four years.

The budget increases K-12 funding by $127 million and it puts an additional $31 million into higher education operating funds and $5.3 million for financial aid for college students.

The proposed buget invests $19 million in Colorado’s mental health system, expanding hospital capacity, enhancing Colorado’s crisis response system, establishing a single statewide mental health crisis hotline and improving community care services.  And it gives the state's child welfare system $10 million for in-home support and prevention services.

The budget also pays off loans and draws down debt obligations while increasing Colorado’s general fund reserve to 5 percent, from 4 percent, to rebuild the state’s rainy day fund and protect critical state services from future economic downturns.

House Minority Mark Waller (R-Colorado Springs) offered the following statement regarding the budget’s passage:

“Budget negotiations this year revealed many things to be proud of and many things that raise concern.  I’m glad Democrats were willing to compromise with Republicans and agree to pay down our $142 million debt to Colorado’s firefighters and police officers, and for agreeing to help restore vital water construction funds lawmakers had to tap into during difficult economic times.  Shrinking our debt is an investment in our economic recovery."

The bill now goes back to the Senate for consideration of House amendments.

**Future School Finance Bill Passes Senate**

On Tuesday the Senate moved forward a rewrite of the school finance policy that would entirely reform K through 12 education in Colorado.   The revamped funding formula in Senate Bill 213 has three goals: (1) improve the adequacy of our education system; (2) equitably distribute state funding; and (3) achieve financial stability for K-12 education in Colorado.

The sponsors of the measure, Senators Michael Johnston (D-Denver) and Rollie Heath (D-Boulder) and Representative Millie Hamner (D-Dillon), say it will foster economic development through proven education programs and reforms.  Notably, it allows for full-day kindergarten for all kids in Colorado, and early childhood education for at-risk three and four year olds.

Nearly four decades of data prove that early education programs help kids achieve academically and socially, particularly disadvantaged kids who may otherwise lag behind.  Graduates of the Colorado Preschool Program, for example, test 10 percentage points higher on reading, math, and writing tests through seventh grade than their at-risk peers.  That program had a wait list of 8,016 kids this past year, a list that may grow as the number of young children living in poverty has increased by 136 percent since 2000, and the number of kids living in concentrated poverty has increased 360 percent during that same timeframe.

Data also shows that full-day kindergarten works as well.  The additional hours offered through a full-day program provide children with more instructional time to learn and understand basic concepts, resulting in more academic progress and larger gains in reading and math.   Today, 70 percent of Colorado kindergarteners attend full-day programs, up 40 percent in five years.  Even so, numerous Colorado families cannot afford full-day kindergarten, as the state only funds half-day kindergarten.  The revamped school finance policies included in SB 213 change that.

“This generation is waiting on us to reform education.   They’re waiting for a state of the art, 21st century education system, and they urgently need it.  This bill is a path to get the job done,” said Sen. Mike Johnston (D-Denver).

In addition to early childhood education and full-day kindergarten, the rewrite of the school finance policy (SB 213) can be explained through the following five steps:

1. Base funding:  is to provide base per-pupil funding for grades K-12, as in the previous school finance formula.  However, under the new formula, base funding will also be given for 8,000 additional three-year-olds and 17,000 additional four-year-olds to attend half-day early childhood education.  In addition, it will provide base funding for full-day kindergarten, and restore the funding for online/ASCENT students.

2. Weights:  is to add funding for small districts, at-risk students, and English language learners.

3. State and local share:  is to determine how much revenue local districts are able to raise, and the state backfills the difference.

4. Categoricals:  is to increase state funding for special education, gifted and talented education, and continue to fund the other categoricals.

5. Additional support: is to offer additional state support for mill levy match, innovation, and teaching and leadership investment

The bill now moves to the House for consideration.

**Bill to Increase Renewable Energy Standard Introduced**

Senate Bill 252 by Senate President John Morse (D-Colorado Springs) and Senator Gail Schwartz (D-Snowmass Village) and Speaker of the House Mark Ferrandino (D-Denver) and Representative Crisanta Duran (D-Denver) was introduced in the Senate on Wednesday.  The measure aims to:

·      Raise the renewable electricity standard for rural electric cooperatives that  serve more than 100,000 customers from 10% to 25%, starting in 2020.  Inter-Mountain Rural Electric Cooperative is currently the only electric cooperative serving more than 100,000 customers.

·      Implement a new eligible energy standard of 25% for Tri-State Generation and Transmission.  The standard applies only to sales to its members in Colorado.

·       Expand the definition of "eligible energy resources" that can be used to meet the standards to include coal mine methane and synthetic gas produced by pyrolysis of municipal solid waste so long as the production and use of these gases does not cause a net increase in greenhouse gas emissions.

The state's Renewable Energy Standard was approved by Colorado voters in 2004.  At that time the ballot measure was the first time in the Nation's history that a renewable energy portfolio standard was put directly before voters rather than processed through a state's legislature.

The original initiative required the state's largest utilities to obtain 3 percent of their electricity from renewable energy resources by 2007 and 10 percent by 2015 as well as establish a standard net metering system for homeowners and ranchers with small photovoltaic (PV) systems to connect to the power grid.  The measure also called for 4 percent of the mandated amount of renewable energy to come from solar resources.

In 2007, state legislation passed and signed into law under then Governor Bill Ritter increased the requirement to 20% and extended a separate renewable energy requirement of 10% to electric cooperatives and municipally-owned utilities serving more than 40,000 customers.  The 2007 legislation also extended the compliance date to 2020.

House Bill 1001 passed in 2010 (also signed into law by Ritter) further increased the renewable standard from 20% to 30% for investor-owned utilities (Xcel Energy and Black Hills Corp.)

This year's SB 252 is scheduled to be considered by the Senate State, Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee on Monday, April 8.

**Sen. Aguilar's Universal Health Care Proposal Advances**

The Senate Health and Human Services Committee on Thursday by a vote of 4-3 advanced Senate Concurrent Resolution 2 sponsored by Senator Irene Aguilar (D-Denver) who proposes a constitutional amendment to create a single-payer government-run health care system.  Sen. Aguilar's Colorado Health Care Cooperative, if approved by voters, is estimated to cost $16 billion annually.

“This bill is Obamacare on steroids,” said Senator Kevin Lundberg (R-Berthoud), a member of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee.  “Not only did Senate Democrats pass a bill last week tied to an annual 1 billion dollar tax increase, now they are foisting another extreme bill that raises taxes on Colorado families and small businesses by almost 300 percent.”

As Ed Sealover, from the Denver Business Journal, noted: “Aguilar, a Denver Democrat and a physician, proposes in Senate Concurrent Resolution 2, to assess a 6 percent payroll tax on employers, a 3 percent payroll tax on workers and a 9 percent income-tax hike to pay for what would be the first publicly run universal system in America. “ (State-run health care proposal arrives at Capitol; March 28, 2013)

The measure now moves to the full Senate for consideration.

The measure is sponsored by freshman Representative Joann Ginal (D-Ft. Collins) in the House but the measure's fate appears to be certain death.

**Heavy-Duty Diesel Emissions Testing Bill Signed into Law**

Governor John Hickenlooper on Thursday signed into law House Bill 1091.  The measure, sponsored by Representative Dave Young (D-Greeley) and Senator John Kefalas (D-Ft. Collins) allows the Department of Public Health and Environment to promulgate rules to establish an alternative method to the current testing for heavy-duty diesel vehicles to demonstrate compliance with emissions opacity standards.  Owners of these vehicles currently self-certify that they are in compliance, which does not change under the bill.  Under the new law fleet owners will still be able to self-certify but will be required to submit proof of exemplary maintenance practices.  The new law also states the rules required to be promulgated must contain eligibility requirements for enrollment of these vehicles in the alternative method, including when the vehicles must be discontinued from enrollment.

**Senate Opts to End Inefficient Immigration Policy**

On Friday, the Senate voted to repeal an immigration statute, which Democrats say has been inefficient and a drain on local law enforcement.  Current statute directs local police and county sheriffs to duplicate what the federal government does, and go even further to evaluate people who are not necessarily arrested for a crime.  Specifically, it requires law enforcement to report people who they suspect are in the country without documentation.

“The law relies on racial profiling and that is wrong.  I serve Aurora, a diverse district with people of all races and immigration statuses and this policy has negatively affected my community.  By eliminating ineffective immigration policy, we are readying Colorado for effective and comprehensive immigration reform,” said Sen. Morgan Carroll (D-Aurora), the bill sponsor.

The federal government is responsible for immigration enforcement.  The federal Secure Communities policy targets criminals who are actually arrested for a criminal offense.  Under the Secure Communities policy, the FBI automatically sends the fingerprints of people who are arrested for a criminal offense to the Department of Homeland Security.  The department checks the fingerprints for immigration status, and takes action if deemed necessary.  Colorado started using the Secure Communities policy in May 2012.

House Bill 1258 passed the House late last month.  It is expected to pass third reading in the Senate Today.

**Colorado to Offer Health Insurance Choices to Small Employers**

The Colorado Health Benefit Exchange announced this week it is on track to open a new health insurance marketplace in October that will help small employers provide increased choice of health insurance options for employees for 2014, despite a decision by the federal exchange to delay choice in their program for at least a year.

Colorado lawmakers established the Colorado Health Benefit Exchange in 2011 to increase access, affordability and choice for Coloradans seeking health insurance.  Officials with the federal exchange, which will manage new online health insurance marketplaces in more than 30 states, recently announced plans to delay choice in the federal program until 2015.  States building their own health insurance marketplaces were given the choice to provide small employers with one health plan or with a choice of plans for their employees.

Colorado’s health insurance marketplace, soon to be called Connect for Health Colorado, will offer choice for small businesses and non-profit organizations, including the ability for small employers to offer dozens of health plan options to employees.  Employers will be able to set their benefit budget and other parameters of their small group insurance program, and will also have access to a new statewide support network that includes Customer Service Center Representatives, licensed brokers and certified Health Coverage Guides.  Health plans take effect Jan. 1 2014.

“Colorado is on track to help small employers provide a range of health plan options to employees through our new online health insurance marketplace that will open in October,” said Patty Fontneau, Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer of COHBE.  “We are committed to fulfilling the vision established by state lawmakers in Senate Bill 11-200 and helping businesses across Colorado support their employees and thrive.”

*Background*

The Colorado Health Benefit Exchange will become Connect for Health Colorado this spring to better serve Coloradans.  As Connect for Health Colorado, we will launch a new health insurance marketplace and support network in October that will allow individuals, families and small employers to compare and purchase health plans from companies including the major providers in the state in a convenient way.  We will provide high quality customer assistance by phone and in person, as well as access to new financial assistance to reduce costs.  Learn more at <http://www.getcoveredco.org>.

***Denver Post*:  Colorado Seniors will Benefit from Biosimilars Bill**

By Eileen Doherty

Guest Commentary

The Colorado House recently passed a House Bill 1121, which will allow patients across our state — many seniors among them — to obtain sophisticated medicines known as “biosimilars.”  This legislation focuses on patient safety, and the patient-doctor relationship.  While important for all, these two things are critical when it comes to the health of our seniors.

New biological treatments, which are made from living organisms, are often very beneficial for chronically ill patients, especially older adults whose condition has not responded to traditional chemical-based drugs.  Thus, the benefit of developing biosimilars can be both humanitarian as well as a cost-saver to the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

Patients may want access to biosimilars because these drugs are generally less expensive than their brand name counterparts.  Colorado senators are now considering the legislation that would establish access to biosimilars while also including some patient protections.

To save money, many older adults regularly take generic drugs rather than traditional brand name drugs.  However, exchanging an original biologic drug for a biosimilar requires a balanced approach that furthers consumer protections, without inhibiting access to these treatments.

Unlike traditional chemical drugs, a brand-name biologic cannot be precisely replicated by generic competitors.  Only the original innovator can create exact copies.  Other drug companies can only hope to develop a rough version that is very similar to the original biologic.

For many patients, swapping out a biologic for a biosimilar won’t have any effect on their treatment.  When such a swap is done safely, seniors should have the option for a lower cost alternative.  However, individuals can at times experience different reactions to a biosimilar drug.

That’s why the proposed legislation establishing the rules for biosimilar substitutions contains some essential safeguards.

Pharmacists should only be allowed to make a substitution if the FDA has deemed that specific biosimilar interchangeable with the prescribed biologic.  HB 1121 provides this important guidance.

When it comes to managing the health of Colorado’s seniors — many of whom take multiple medications for a variety of chronic diseases — it’s important that both patients and their doctors are advised when a biosimilar has been substituted.

As the number of options for interchangeable biosimilars increases, this notification becomes even more critical.  Physicians and patients need access to this information in order to carefully manage complex chronic illnesses and the multiple medications a patient may be taking.

Both doctors and pharmacists should be required to keep detailed records of all biosimilar substitutions for at least five years.  If there is an unexpected adverse reaction over the course of treatment, caregivers need to have this information to track down the cause.

It’s important for our legislators, health care providers, and local patient population to know that this new bill establishes a safe way for substitution of interchangeable biosimilars for those who can benefit from these treatments.

The Colorado Senate should follow suit and send this important legislation to Gov. John Hickenlooper for signature into law.

*Eileen Doherty is Executive Director of the Colorado Gerontological Society.*

**Department of Corrections Review Ordered**

Gov. John Hickenlooper on Thursday announced the Colorado Department of Corrections will review records to ensure offenders are serving appropriate sentences.  Also, the National Institute of Corrections will conduct a review of the department’s parole operations.

"We asked the Department of Corrections to review its internal procedures and initiate an audit of the time and release records,” Hickenlooper said.  “The department will prioritize the review of cases with the greatest level of risk, going back 10 years and reviewing required consecutive sentencing.  The department will work with the Attorney General’s office on any issues that may need further action.”

Hickenlooper ordered the review on Tuesday, April 2.  The Governor's Office and Department of Corrections have worked this week and will work through the weekend to put together a plan to request additional resources for the department to complete the review.

This review and audit will help ensure resources are appropriately prioritized and utilized to maximize public safety.

**Ward:  Ballot Measure Should Focus on Specific Education Reforms**

President and CEO of Colorado Concern, Tamra Ward announced that March 22 was the last day for individuals interested in placing a measure on the 3013 statewide ballot to file their proposal with the Title Board.  Thirty-seven measures have been submitted for consideration, 27 of which are related to the funding of the public education system.

In recent weeks she said she had shared discussions regarding ways around SB 213 (Johnston-Hamner), which is a comprehensive rewrite of Colorado’s early childhood and K-12 education funding system.  “The policy components of the measure - which is moving through the legislative process - would not go into effect without a statewide voter-approved tax to finance the changes,” she said. Estimates for the plan in its current form total approximately $940 million in new spending.

The majority of the measures filed with the Title Board last Friday are focused on serving as the financial model for this piece of legislation.  However, 25 of the 27 proposals do not specify that they are related to SB 213 and its reforms.  Ward said that these proposals trouble Colorado Concern because “should the legislation not pass the General Assembly and the proponents of any of these tax measures choose to go forward in November, taxes could be raised to finance the current education funding system, not one that looks to the future and which is based on the reforms we have worked so diligently over the last three years to put in place,” she said. “Measures such as SB11-191, which changes the teacher tenure system, and HB12-1238, which puts in place third-grade literacy requirements, would be in jeopardy of full implementation.”

With that concern in mind, Ward said Colorado Concern chose to strategically file a proposed ballot title that states if an education-focused tax measure is adopted by voters in 2013, the funds raised will be allocated based on the language of Senator Johnston's bill.  “This action does not require us to support a tax measure - it simply ensures that resources are allocated according to a formula that aligns with our reform-focused activities,” she stated. She also pointed out that the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce has joined them in the effort, as two proponents are required when filing a statewide ballot measure.

The first hearing before the Title Board is scheduled for April 17.  At that time Ward said her organization would have a better idea where SB 213 is in the legislative process, as well as the motivations of others who have filed ballot titles for consideration.  “As is always the case this time of year, “ she pointed out, “the actions at the Capitol - as well as preparations for the ballot - are fluid and ever-changing.”

“Rest assured, our deep concern around Colorado moving to a graduated income tax system - to fund education or any other public service - continues to be the focus of my discussion with elected leaders and those interested in a 2013 election,” Ward concluded.

**Gun Group Pushing Ballot Measure to Repeal Magazine Limits**

A non-profit group, Save our Shotguns, has begun a campaign to raise funds to place a measure on Colorado’s 2014 state-wide ballot to repeal House Bill 1224 which was signed into law by Governor John Hickenlooper last month.

The group says that as originally written, HB 1224 would have banned the most commonly used shotguns in Colorado.  The Legislature amended the bill as it made its way through the legislative process but Save our Shotguns says the measure will still ban some shotguns.

The group will need to gather more than 86,105 valid signatures from registered voters in Colorado in order to get the measure on the ballot.  To begin this effort, they are asking for donations to help pay for the signature gathering effort.  For more information visit Save our Shotguns’ website at [www.saveourshotguns.org](http://www.saveourshotguns.org).

**Colorado Governor’s Office of Information Technology Recognized as 2013 Computerworld Honors Laureate**

International Data Group’s (IDG) Computerworld Honors Program has selected the Governor’s Office of Information Technology (OIT) as a Laureate for 2013 in the Collaboration category. The annual award program honors visionary applications of information technology to promote positive social, economic and educational change.

OIT was selected for its implementation of the Colorado Information Marketplace (CIM) in 2012.  CIM is a platform for data sharing and the transparency and accessibility of public information.  It allows for the integration of information between and across government agencies; fosters innovation and engagement in the public sector; and helps policymakers effectively evaluate existing programs, reduce waste and increase government efficiency.  State agencies and the public alike can post datasets on the Colorado Information Marketplace at [data.colorado.gov](http://data.colorado.gov/).  CIM provides out-of-the-box web-enabled APIs which allows users the ability to create apps to push datasets to their mobile devices, thus making government even more accessible.  Further, it allows developers the flexibility to create mashups of data and researchers the ability to coalesce data in ways never before available.

“This reusable framework will ultimately reshape how data is captured and shared and ultimately reduce costs and streamline services.  Although not yet a year old, we are already receiving inquiries from other public sector agencies who want to build something similar,” stated Sherri Hammons, Chief Technology Officer at OIT.

“Technology continues to play a pivotal role in transforming how business and society functions. For the past 25 years the Computerworld Honors Program has had the privilege of celebrating innovative IT achievements,” said John Amato, vice president & publisher, Computerworld. “Computerworld is honored to recognize the outstanding accomplishments of the 2013 class of Laureates and to share their work. These projects demonstrate how IT can advance organizations' ability to compete, innovate, communicate and prosper.”

The Computerworld Honors Program awards will be presented at the Gala Evening and Awards Ceremony on June 3, 2013 at the Andrew W. Mellon Auditorium in Washington, D.C.

**What Makes Colorado Colorado?  State Launches Inclusive Branding Initiative**

On Tuesday the state of Colorado introduced Making Colorado, the most inclusive, collaborative and ambitious branding effort ever undertaken by a state.  Commissioned by Gov. John Hickenlooper and led by Colorado's Chief Marketing Officer Aaron Kennedy, founder of Noodles & Company, Making Colorado aims to uncover and showcase the best talent, ideas and creativity from every corner of Colorado.

A multimedia version of this press release can be found at:  <http://www.multivu.com/mnr/60974-making-colorado-statewide-inclusive-tourism-travel-campaign>.

Rather than hiring a single "place branding" design firm, the state is tapping into the energy and expertise of multiple agencies and Coloradans across this state, to build a brand for Colorado, by Colorado.  Making Colorado will capture the spirit and energy that exists in Colorado today to stimulate the economy, unite statewide programs and showcase Colorado to the rest of the world.  Five months from now, at the Colorado Innovation Network Summit in August, Hickenlooper will reveal the results of this one-of-a-kind initiative.

"Colorado has a heart and soul like no other state," said Hickenlooper.  "We launched the Making Colorado initiative to create and market a stronger Colorado brand.  Together, we will define what Colorado stands for and how to convey that to the world to help ensure our communities, culture and environment are strong and vibrant for decades to come."

"After examining a broad array of branding programs - good and bad - we built Making Colorado around the most successful practices that felt right for Colorado," said Kennedy, a former director for global brand design firm Brandimage.  "Colorado is a diverse and vibrant state, but we've been fairly quiet about it. It's time to bring our compelling voice to life in a manner that balances the needs, priorities and perspectives of all Coloradans.  We've gone to great lengths to create an inclusive and collaborative process, and our success will rely on the participation and support of our fellow Coloradans."

At <http://www.makingcolorado.gov>, all Coloradans will have the opportunity to submit thoughts, opinions and creative ideas throughout the five-month process.  This input will then be filtered into a core group of collaborative teams, including a Making Colorado Creative Team, comprised of 10-12 of Colorado's top creative talent - including designers, copywriters and technologists - who will be selected and led by Dave Schiff, founder of marketing agency Made Movement.  Using the public's input, this creative team will bring Colorado's unique qualities to life and share their concepts with the public for feedback.  Applications for the Creative Agency will be accepted beginning April 15.

**Additional Elements**

A Making Colorado Brand Council — A group of state's most influential individuals and representatives from companies and organizations that rely on the Colorado brand will provide input and recommendations on key decisions.  Brand Council Members include Hikmet Ersek (Chief Executive Officer, Western Union), Steve Hughes (Founder, Boulder Brands), Kim Jordan (President, New Belgium Brewery), Lynne Valencia (Vice President Community Relations, 9News) Larry Drury (Chief Marketing Officer, First Data) and many others.  A Making Colorado Youth Ambassador Council — One high school senior from each of Colorado's 64 counties will also be selected to contribute content from their hometowns and keep local residents updated on project milestones.  A couple of the Youth Ambassadors will be selected to serve on the Making Colorado Brand Council.  Applications for the Youth Ambassador Council will be accepted beginning May 15.

The Networks of 9NEWS and Entravision Communications are playing instrumental roles as official media sponsors of Making Colorado, helping to promote the initiative state-wide.

Follow Making Colorado on the Making Colorado blog, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest.

*About Making Colorado*

Making Colorado is the most inclusive, collaborative and ambitious branding effort ever undertaken by a state.  Commissioned by Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper and led by Colorado Chief Marketing Officer Aaron Kennedy, Making Colorado is built to fulfill one of the six core objectives in the Colorado Blueprint (the state's framework for economic development):  "Create and market a stronger Colorado brand."  Making Colorado is a year-long effort that began in August 2012 and will conclude in August 2013 at the Colorado Innovation Network Summit in August, where Hickenlooper will reveal the results of this statewide collaboration.  Making Colorado will capture the spirit and energy that exists in Colorado today to stimulate the economy, unify statewide programs and showcase Colorado to the rest of the world. Visit <http://www.MakingColorado.gov> to participate.

**Gov. Hickenlooper Welcomes TriZetto as Healthcare IT Firm Opens World-Class Facility to Clients and Hundreds of New, Local Workers**

Gov. John Hickenlooper on Tuesday joined Trace Devanny, Chairman and CEO of TriZetto Corporation, in a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new worldwide headquarters of the healthcare IT company.  Located in the Meridian International Business Center in Douglas County, Colo., the headquarters project generated about 500 construction jobs and accommodates the more than 150 additional local jobs created by TriZetto during the past year.  TriZetto expects to bring as many as 750 new jobs to its Colorado offices between 2012 and 2017.

"Congratulations to TriZetto on opening a new headquarters and bringing hundreds of new jobs to Colorado," said Hickenlooper.  "TriZetto's expansion reflects on how our business-friendly climate, vibrant healthcare and technology sectors and highly educated workforce attracts and create jobs.  TriZetto is one of many companies that recognize Colorado is a great place to do business and have chosen to open or expand business here."

In addition to TriZetto, recent economic-development wins for Colorado include Fidelity Investments, which will open an office employing up to 500 people, as well as Visa and mortgage-lending company Redwood Trust, adding 406 and 550 local jobs, respectively.  In 2012, Hitachi Data Systems announced a new office that will bring 200 new jobs, while Children's Hospital Colorado unveiled plans for a campus that will employ 300 people.

"TriZetto's dramatic job growth has come as we've expanded to enable healthcare payer and provider organizations to collaborate more efficiently and effectively and drive a healthier consumer population," said Devanny.  "With unprecedented change in the U.S. healthcare industry comes an unprecedented opportunity for TriZetto to help improve the system and simplify healthcare for everyone.  We approach this challenge with humility, with accountability and now with a truly world-class headquarters in Colorado that is conducive to the important work we do."

***Denver Post*:  DIA Guards to Vote to Unionize, Denver Council at Odds over Labor**

About 400 security guards at Denver International Airport will vote on whether to unionize, and Denver City Council members are at odds over whether a council discussion may have influenced the organizing effort.

On Monday, the entire council will have a private executive session with Assistant City Attorney David Broadwell, who will explain federal labor laws and city contracts.

Council members are embroiled in a heated controversy over whether a $5 million contract for HSS Inc. to provide 34 DIA security officers was being threatened with denial by a pro-union faction of the council unless the company acquiesced to the union's demands.

The council's vote to renew the contract was occurring at the same time the Service Employees International Union was trying to organize the workforce.

"I've never seen anything like this," said Councilman Charlie Brown.  "This is an aggressive push by unions aligned with council members to organize workers. I was not elected to do that."

But Councilwoman Robin Kniech, who was the most vocal opponent of the HSS contract, said she was merely raising issues of concern brought by employees before giving a company millions of dollars to do contract work for the city.

At a Jan. 22 meeting, Kniech questioned an HSS official over allegations that employees had not been treated fairly.

SEIU also had filed three claims against HSS with the National Labor Relations Board — including one allegation of disciplining an employee for wearing a union pin.

The company has contended it was working with employees on the issues.

Several other council members agreed with Kniech, saying they also had concerns about the company and would vote against the contract if the problems weren't addressed.

But the weekend before the final Jan. 28 council vote on the contract, the company and the union came to an agreement.  The employees would be allowed to have a secret ballot election on whether to organize.

Other parts of the agreement were confidential, including the details about the union vote.

Council members dropped their concerns and the contract was unanimously approved.

Brown accused Kniech and others of threatening to kill the contract to force the company to bend to the union's demands.  He said, in effect, they were "putting a gun to the head" of the company.

Councilwoman Jeanne Faatz, who asked Broadwell to talk to the council about labor issues, said she is convinced the union is trying to influence the council.

She pointed to an agenda item for a meeting of [MoveOn.org](http://MoveOn.org) that called for solidarity with SEIU's efforts to organize the security guards and "put pressure on City Council not to renew" the HSS contract.

"I don't like the fact that this was held hostage to get the union agenda before the contract was moved," she said.  "That was used as leverage. That concerns me.  You can't blame the union for trying.  I think it will discourage nonunion companies from doing business with the city.  I am disappointed that tactic worked."

Kniech disagreed and said she was not doing the union's bidding.

"It is not a choice between businesses and companies and workers," she said .  "The two are intricately linked.  The two depend on each other."

Councilman Chris Nevitt, who said he would vote against the contract, also said that was not the intention.

"To help them organize would be going beyond the scope of our responsibilities," he said.  "Whether employers embrace a union or fight it is entirely up to them.  Whether unions are successful organizing or unsuccessful is their business.  What is our business is to ensure the smooth and effective functioning of city facilities."

Cynthia Fukami, professor at the University of Denver's Daniels College of Business, said the issue is really a power struggle between management and workers that is also playing out in the council.

"This is a power game," she said.  "You have two council people trying to protect the interest of those who they are representing.  They just don't agree with each other."

**CWCB Launches Central Website for Watering Restrictions**

*Searchable database gives specifics on local watering rules*

The Colorado Water Conservation Board launched a new website April 8 where residents across Colorado can quickly link to information about watering restrictions affecting their local community.

The new website, <http://www.COH2O.co>, will provide search features that allow visitors to quickly link to their water utility and learn of any local water restrictions that may be in place because of below-average precipitation and reservoir storage in many areas of Colorado.  Many water providers, including Fort Collins, Denver Water, Aurora, Thornton and Colorado Springs, have already announced intent to implement outdoor watering restrictions taking effect as soon as April 1.

The site will serve as a landing page and enable users to search by zip code to determine their water provider and be directed to relevant web pages outlining what restrictions specific water providers may have in place.  The site will also contain quick links to other important state and regional resources that provide updated water supply and drought-related data.

“During a drought everyone can do their part to reduce water use.  Even small actions conserve water in our streams and reservoirs and help Colorado as a whole respond to abnormally dry conditions,” said John Stulp, the Governor’s water policy advisor.  “This website will enable families to quickly determine exactly which restrictions apply to them, reducing confusion and making conservation easier.”

[www.COH2O.co](http://www.COH2O.co) was developed by the Colorado Department of Natural Resources and the Colorado Water Conservation Board in collaboration with water providers across the state.

**The Watercooler**

The Colorado Water Congress did not meet this week.

**The Calculator**

House Bills Introduced:  292

Senate Bills Introduced:  252

Number of Bills PI'd:  107 (20%)