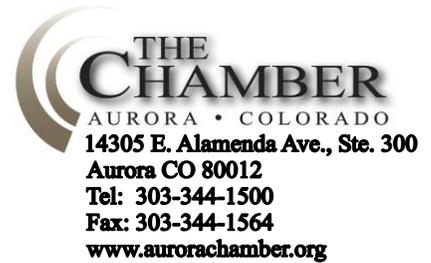




Legislative Newsletter

Sept. 4, 2013



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*An up-to-date review of Colorado government and politics especially for the Aurora Chamber of Commerce.
Compiled and edited by Axiom Strategies, Inc.*

"We in America do not have government by the majority. We have government by the majority who participate."

— Thomas Jefferson

Gov. Hickenlooper Urges Voter Turnout in Recall Elections

Last Friday Gov. John Hickenlooper issued a statement about the two recall elections scheduled for Sept. 10, 2013:

"Recall elections by their nature are divisive. That's all the more reason why voters should be given as much opportunity as possible to cast ballots in the coming days.

"We urge all eligible voters in Senate District 3 in Pueblo County and in Senate District 11 in El Paso County to go vote before or on Sept. 10. The more people who vote the better. Voting is, after all, one of the pillars of our democracy."

"When the elections are over, voters in these two senate districts should be able to agree that there was an open, fair process – and that everyone was heard."

New Executive Director Named for the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

Gov. John Hickenlooper announced on Thursday, August 22, Dr. Larry Wolk will be the next Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE).

Wolk is a successful entrepreneur who has two decades of leadership experience in various aspects of public health and healthcare. He currently works as the CEO of the Colorado Regional Health Information Organization (CORHIO) in Denver.

In his new role, Wolk will also serve as the state's Chief Medical Officer.

"Larry has an impressive background and unique leadership skills," Hickenlooper said. "He has a proven track record of creating change and tackling difficult issues. His experience in running large organizations, delivering results and balancing the needs of multiple stakeholders will serve the Department of Public Health and Environment and our state well. We are pleased he is joining our team and our efforts to make Colorado the healthiest and safest state in the country."

In addition to his work at CORHIO, Wolk is the founder and Executive Director of the Rocky Mountain Youth Clinics and is a clinical professor in the Department of Pediatrics with the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center.

The Rocky Mountain Youth Clinics is one of the largest safety-net clinics in Colorado, providing more than 50,000 patients visits each year at more than 40 clinic sites. Wolk plans to continue his volunteer work with Rocky Mountain Youth Clinics after joining CDPHE.

Wolk earned a medical degree from the University of Vermont College of a Medicine and a master's degree in public health from the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center. He recently worked nearly five years as

president and chief operating officer at Correctional Healthcare Companies, which provides services to corrections agencies in 27 states and employs more than 2,500 people.

Wolk earlier worked as the senior medical director of both Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Colorado and Prudential Healthcare of Colorado, and he served in a regional and national role as senior health care executive at CIGNA HealthCare. He was the medical director of ambulatory pediatrics and adolescent medicine at Presbyterian St. Luke's Medical Center for five years.

Wolk has worked the last year at CORHIO and will continue to serve as an adviser to the organization. CORHIO is dedicated to improving healthcare quality for all Coloradans through health information exchange. As the state designated entity for health information exchange, CORHIO collaborates with health care stakeholders including physicians, hospitals, clinics, public health, long-term care, laboratories, health plans and patients to improve care collaboration through secure systems and processes for sharing clinical information.

Wolk will start work at CDPHE on Sept. 16.

Mark Sirangelo Appointed as State's New Chief Innovation Officer

Gov. John Hickenlooper announced last month the appointment of Mark Sirangelo, head of Sierra Nevada Corporation Space Systems, as the Chairman of the Colorado Innovation Network (COIN) and as the state's new Chief Innovation Officer. He will begin work Aug. 30.

"Mark's experience in aerospace, a heavily innovative and important industry in Colorado, will serve him well as he leads the state's efforts to increase our innovative competitiveness," Hickenlooper said. "He is a well respected business executive and understands the necessity of collaboration in building this type of ecosystem. We are proud he is joining our team."

Sirangelo will oversee COIN, which was created to provide a roadmap for making Colorado the best state for innovation. The initiative is promoting a business environment that supports innovative practices through collaboration among government, business and civil society, with the ultimate goal of job creation and growth of the Colorado economy.

Sirangelo will replace Colorado State University's College of Business Dean Ajay Menon, whose term expired last month. Menon, who joined the Governor's Cabinet in September 2012, laid the foundation for the mission of making Colorado the most innovative state in the nation.

Currently, Sirangelo is the head of Sierra Nevada Corporation's Space Systems (SNC), a producer of satellites, space transportation systems and advanced electronics. During its 25-year history, SNC Space Systems has been engaged in more than 400 space missions ranging from earth orbit to planetary missions including the Mars Science Laboratory, Curiosity.

Division of Insurance Approves Final 2014 Health Insurance Rates

What Individuals and Small Business Owners Should Know About Coverage Starting January 1, 2014

Last month The Colorado Division of Insurance (DOI) has reviewed and approved 541 new health insurance plans from 18 carriers to offer coverage to consumers and small businesses starting January 1, 2014. These health plans, which by law must provide a set of essential benefits to consumers, offer individuals and small businesses a variety of choices for health insurance.

DOI began reviewing these health plans in May, to ensure the plans meet state and federal requirements for benefits, coverage and premiums, as outlined in the Patient Protection & Affordable Care Act. For each carrier and health plan, DOI reviewed proposed rates, the justification for those rates, marketing materials, and each carrier's network of doctors and other providers. DOI actuaries made sure that the new plans met the federally defined coverage levels: bronze (60% of costs paid by the plan), silver (70%), gold (80%) and platinum (90%).

"We're pleased to see that as Colorado consumers and small businesses shop for insurance this fall, they will be able to choose from a great variety of health plans," said Colorado Interim Insurance Commissioner Doug Dean.

“Consumers will be able to make better decisions and be better prepared. While it is tempting to compare the costs for the new plans to current ones, it is important to remember that these are new plans with new benefits and new requirements, so it is not an ‘apples to apples’ comparison. We encourage every purchaser to shop around and consider what’s best for their particular needs.”

Monthly premiums for the approved 2014 plans vary widely. For example, a bronze plan could cost an individual about \$150 - \$250 per month, depending on where one lives in the state. Consumers looking for lower copays or deductibles could choose gold or platinum plans, which would have higher premiums. Plans for small businesses also show a similar variation in premiums.

These monthly costs do not reflect additional out-of-pocket expenses or deductibles, and may be offset by federal tax credits or other financial assistance for some individuals and businesses if they purchase coverage through Connect for Health Colorado, the state’s health insurance exchange.

The next step is for DOI to send the approved plans and rates to Connect for Health Colorado and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

For more information about the approved rates visit www.dora.colorado.gov/healthinsurance.

CACI: What Does Health Reform Mean for Your Business?

In this article, the Colorado Association of Commerce and Industry’s Health Care Council Chair Cindy Sovine-Miller outlines the benefits and costs of the Affordable Care Act, and what it means to you.

There has been a lot of rhetoric about how the President’s Affordable Care Act (ACA) will play out from both sides of the aisle. Views of the ACA remain hyper-partisan leaving balanced and constructive communication around the law’s requirements difficult to decipher. As the health care reform law implementation deadline approaches, many businesses are finding themselves with more questions than answers.

Individuals who receive coverage from a large employer are unlikely to see any big changes, but many who purchase coverage on their own or get it through a small employer are likely to see changes to their benefits and costs. The impact of those changes in dollars and cents are still uncertain for year one, let alone year two, three and so forth; making it difficult to predict the long-term affect on employers’ ability to offer coverage to employees and their families.

New Benefits. New Costs. What it means for your bottom line.

The ACA guarantees access to health insurance, even to those with pre-existing medical conditions. It also broadens the benefits that must be covered by insurance companies. These changes bring new costs. These cost drivers include:

Covering the Uninsured and those with Pre-Existing Conditions:

The health care reform law will expand access to insurance and broaden insurance benefits for Americans who would otherwise be uninsured. These individuals can be more costly to cover because they have often delayed treatment leading to more chronic issues. These additional costs are absorbed by increasing rates for everyone else in the insurance pool.

Requiring Broader Benefits:

Beginning January 2014, every health insurance policy sold must include an expansion of required services. For most people purchasing coverage on their own this benefits package will be more costly than their current policy. High deductible plans, which have become increasingly popular as a less costly insurance option, are no longer allowed.

Limiting Premium Differences:

There are big changes to how premiums will be calculated for people who purchase coverage. For example, older and less healthy individuals will have new protections against premium increases associated with their age. The use of an applicant’s age as a factor has now been strictly limited. These changes will likely result in increased

premiums for younger and healthier individuals and small group customers with a younger workforce. Geography and whether or not an individual smokes will also be factors in setting premiums.

Taxing Health Insurance:

To help pay for the new health care reform law, a health insurance tax was enacted. The Congressional Budget Office estimates the impact of this tax exceeds \$102 Billion by 2022, which will be passed along to employers, individuals and families in the form of higher premiums. According to an analysis by the actuarial firm Oliver Wyman, this tax will mean that next year an individual purchasing coverage on his or her own will pay \$110 in higher premiums and small businesses will pay an additional \$360 for each family they cover. Congress's bipartisan Joint Committee on Taxation estimates that the tax will add an additional \$350-\$400 a year to family premiums in 2016.

Financial Assistance:

Tax credits will be available to assist individuals purchasing health insurance in the individual market only. The tax credit is intended to help people afford coverage. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that more than 40% of currently insured individuals will not be eligible for them. Certain small businesses with fewer than 25 employees that have low- to moderate-wage workforces may also be eligible for tax credits that offset a portion of the cost of providing health insurance.

What happens now?

Regardless of which side of the political spectrum one finds themselves on this issue, the ACA is the law of the land and understanding these changes and how they will affect your bottom line is the best offense you have in planning for the future.

Colorado has chosen to take control of its own destiny in implementing health care reform by establishing a state based health insurance exchange, [Connect for Health Colorado](#), which is designed to be a one stop shop for small employers (50 or less) and individuals to compare health insurance plans that meet the new Federal requirements for coverage. The Exchange is currently training an army of health insurance brokers and health coverage guides who will be able to assist employers, families and individuals in understanding their options. They will be able to answer questions and help compare choices. Utilizing these resources will help companies make informed decisions about which options are right for them.

Cindy Sovine-Miller chairs CACI's Health Care Council, and in 2012 was appointed Co-Chair of Connect for Health Colorado's Business Committee.

Colorado Commits to Kids Launches its Statewide Campaign

On Thursday, August 15, Gov. John Hickenlooper joined state business, education and community leaders as the Colorado Commits to Kids Initiative launched its statewide campaign at Green Mountain High School in Jefferson County.

"Every kid deserves a great education, but that education should not depend on their hometown or their background," Hickenlooper said. "We can provide everything necessary for a Colorado student to succeed except the drive to do so. Drive, as we all know, is up to them."

The Colorado Commits to Kids Initiative is asking voters to fund education reforms with an increase in state income taxes.

Colorado Commits to Kids needed 86,105 signatures to qualify for this fall's ballot, and turned in more than 160,000 on Aug. 5. The Secretary of State's Office has 30 days to determine whether Colorado Commits to Kids collected the requisite number of signatures to qualify for the November ballot.

About the Colorado Commits to Kids Initiative (www.coloradocommitstokids.com.)

The Colorado Commits to Kids Initiative will ask voters to approve a two-step state income-tax rate increase to pay for reforms that would make Colorado a national model for P-12 education:

Step 1: On taxable income up to \$75,000, the rate would increase from 4.63% to 5%

Step 2: Any taxable income above \$75,000 would be taxed at a rate of 5.9%

NOTE: *Every taxpayer* would pay the 5% rate on their first \$75,000 of income

The Aurora Chamber Government Affairs, Education and Energy Committee is scheduled to discuss Amendment 66 at their Sept. 5 meeting. Speaking for the Amendment will be Colorado State Senator Mike Johnston, who authored the bill that put the amendment before the electorate. Speaking in opposition will be John Brackney, President of the South Metro Chamber of Commerce.

***Denver Post:* Federal Government Won't Block Colorado Marijuana Legalization**

In a decision with historic implications, the federal government announced late last month that it will not stand in the way of marijuana legalization in Colorado or Washington state.

But it will be watching closely.

Deputy U.S. Attorney General James Cole wrote in a memo sent Thursday, August 29, to federal prosecutors that it will not be a priority to block landmark marijuana-legalization laws in the two states. The federal government also will not make it a priority to close down recreational marijuana stores, so long as the stores abide by state regulations, according to the memo.

However, if the two states are unable to keep pot away from kids, keep criminal gangs out of the marijuana industry or keep marijuana from being trafficked into neighboring states, among other concerns, Cole wrote that the federal government would consider cracking down.

"A system ... must not only contain robust controls and procedures on paper; it must also be effective in practice," Cole wrote in the memo.

President Barack Obama and federal officials have previously said marijuana users would not be targets for prosecution. But Thursday's memo is the first time federal officials have ever offered state-legal marijuana businesses that follow strict rules explicit cover from prosecution. That means the first-of-their-kind — and federally illegal — recreational marijuana businesses scheduled to open in Colorado and Washington early next year will be able to operate at least initially without federal interference.

"Today's announcement shows the federal government is respecting the will of Colorado voters," Gov. John Hickenlooper said in a statement. "We share with the federal government its priorities going forward."

Hickenlooper learned about the memo Thursday morning in a phone call with U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder and the Governor of Washington.

Marijuana advocates generally hailed the memo as a substantial victory. Mason Tvert, one of the advocates behind Amendment 64, the measure that legalized pot in Colorado, said the memo is "a major and historic step toward ending marijuana prohibition." In addition to offering guidance for Colorado and Washington, the memo also offers a blueprint for other states considering marijuana legalization, advocates said.

"It sends a clear signal that states are free to determine their own policies when it comes to marijuana," Tvert said.

Anti-marijuana groups expressed alarm. Calvin Fay, the head of the group Save Our Society From Drugs, said the Justice Department "has surrendered to legalizing marijuana."

"(Holder) is essentially setting up a tsunami that will no doubt result in far too many of America's young people being subjected to chemical slavery," Fay said in a statement.

Robert Mikos, a Vanderbilt law professor who has studied the federal government's stance toward marijuana, said the memo signals a significant softening of its position on pot.

"This is a really big deal," Mikos said. "It's a major policy shift from the Department of Justice."

But, as some marijuana-policy experts warned, the memo is also limited in its application.

The memo does not change federal law regarding marijuana. Cannabis will remain a Schedule I controlled substance — the most tightly regulated type of drug under federal law — and people who use, grow or sell marijuana remain at risk for prosecution. The memo does not provide any defense against marijuana charges in federal court.

Because pot is still illegal federally, banks will likely continue to refuse marijuana business accounts, employers can continue to fire workers who smoke pot off-the-job and marijuana users who receive federal aid or live in federal housing will remain at risk.

"This is big; it's not everything," said Sam Kamin, a University of Denver law professor who studies marijuana laws. "It doesn't solve all the problems."

The policy articulated in the memo can also be revised at any time, and it could be scrapped under a different attorney general.

"All bets are off as to what will happen in the next administration," Mikos said.

Still, the memo represents nine months of work and contemplation by federal officials following Colorado and Washington's legalization of marijuana last November. As lawmakers and regulators in both states craft rules for the recreational marijuana industry, the memo shows federal officials realized something has fundamentally changed in marijuana enforcement.

As Cole wrote in the memo, federal and state law enforcement agencies were once partners in pot policing — with the feds taking the big crimes and the states handling the small ones. Colorado's and Washington's new laws severed that relationship, and the federal government doesn't have the muscle to pick up the slack.

"The Department is ... committed to using its limited investigative and prosecutorial resources to address the most significant threats in the most effective, consistent and rational way," Cole wrote.

As guidance to prosecutors, the memo lays out eight federal priorities when deciding whether to prosecute a marijuana case. They are:

- Preventing marijuana distribution to minors;
- Preventing money from sales from going to criminal groups;
- Preventing the diversion of marijuana from states where it is legal to states where it is illegal;
- Preventing criminal groups from using state laws as cover for trafficking of other illegal drugs;
- Preventing violence and the use of illegal firearms;
- Preventing drugged driving and marijuana-related public health problems;
- Preventing the growing of marijuana on public lands;
- Preventing marijuana possession or use on federal property.

Contrary to previous DOJ guidance, the size or profitability of legal marijuana businesses can no longer be the only factor in assessing whether they should be a target for prosecution.

Mike Elliott, the Executive Director of the Denver-based Medical Marijuana Industry Group, said lawmakers and regulators in Colorado have already been hard at work addressing the Justice Department's priorities. Lawmakers passed a bill on stoned driving last session. New rules for recreational marijuana stores are poised to require detailed inventory tracking and ban advertisements in places where kids can see them.

"We've all been working to comply with what we heard they care about," Elliott said. "But a lot of it is common sense, too."

Gov. Hickenlooper's Statement about Department of Justice Announcement

Gov. John Hickenlooper released this statement last Thursday in response to U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder's announcement regarding marijuana laws in Colorado and Washington:

"We recognize how difficult this issue has been for the Department of Justice and we appreciate the thoughtful approach it has taken. Amendment 64 put Colorado in conflict with federal law. Today's announcement shows the federal government is respecting the will of Colorado voters.

"We share with the federal government its priorities going forward. We are working to improve education and prevention efforts directed at young people and on enforcement tools to prevent access to marijuana by those under 21 years of age. We are also determined to keep marijuana businesses from being fronts for criminal enterprises or other illegal activity, and we are committed to preventing the exportation of marijuana out of Colorado while also enhancing efforts to keep state roads safer from impaired drivers."

Colorado Exports on Pace to Set Record High

Colorado's exports of manufactured, agricultural and mineral products increased 6 percent in the first half of 2013 compared to the same period in 2012, growing from \$3.9 billion to \$4.2 billion. At the current rate of growth, the state is projected to reach over \$8.6 billion in annual export sales revenue, which would be a record high.

Colorado's rate of growth topped the one percent national average for merchandise export growth for the same period.

"Exports continue to help strengthen Colorado's economy," said Ken Lund, Executive Director of the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT). "Selling more Colorado-made goods in international markets means more jobs in Colorado. We commend the hard work of our businesses and entrepreneurs and will continue to support them as together we strive for even greater growth."

Key merchandise export categories for Colorado include computer and electronic products, food and kindred products, machinery, and chemicals. Among Colorado's top ten exports, electronics (+24%), civilian aircraft (+45%) engines and motors (+1235%) and frozen beef (+33%) showed significant increases.

Canada retains its position as Colorado's top export market with first half 2013 exports to the market reaching \$975 million, up 6 percent over 2012. Key exports to Canada include beef, engine and motor parts, petroleum, pork and medical devices. Mexico retains its position as Colorado's second largest export market with \$410 million in sales in the first half of 2013, a 2 percent decline over 2012. Mainland China remained third with \$313 million in exports, a decrease of 6 percent. Japan moved up to fourth at \$223 million, followed by Switzerland, the Netherlands, the Republic of Korea, and Malaysia.

State Awards more than \$4 million in Grants for Wildfire Mitigation

On Monday, August 19, Governor John Hickenlooper announced more than \$4 million in wildfire risk reduction grants awarded for projects throughout Colorado. The recipients include 25 projects in 16 counties that will reduce hazardous forest fuels on more than 6,600 acres of non-federal wildland-urban interface.

"It is critical that we invest in projects that help prevent catastrophic wildfires from spreading into neighborhoods and communities," said Senator Jeanne Nicholson (D-Black Hawk), a sponsor of Senate Bill 269, which created the Wildfire Risk Reduction Grant Program. "The state and federal government can't do this work alone. These grants will allow local governments and community groups to make a real impact in their immediate areas."

Sen. Nicholson has been named chair of the Wildfire Matters Interim Committee. The committee will meet four more times before Oct. 31 to study past wildfires and craft necessary legislation for the 2014 legislative session.

This \$9.8 million competitive grant program also requires applicants to produce 100 percent matching funds or the value of in-kind contributions for the project. Eligible grant recipients include:

- local community groups, including HOAs
- local government entities

- public or private utilities, including water providers
- state agencies that own lands in areas of high risk for catastrophic wildfires
- nonprofit groups that promote hazardous forest fuel reduction projects in partnership with local, state or private entities

In 2012, more than 5,000 wildfires occurred in Colorado, burning more than 648 structures and claiming six lives. The Black Forest Fire, in June 2013, destroyed 486 homes and killed two residents.

For more information about statewide grantees, visit

<http://dnr.state.co.us/SiteCollectionDocuments/Resources/AwardSummaryWRRG.pdf>

For more information about the Wildfire Risk Reduction Grant Program administered by the Colorado Department of Natural Resources, visit <http://dnr.state.co.us/Media/Pages/PressReleases.aspx>.

3rd Annual Creative Industries Summit to be Held in Salida May 1 - 2, 2014

Gov. John Hickenlooper last month announced that the City of Salida was selected as host of the 2014 Creative Industries Summit, which will be held May 1 - May 2, 2014.

The third annual Summit will attract over 300 artist-entrepreneurs, owners of creative sector businesses, nonprofit and municipal cultural workers and emerging creatives and encourage creative engagement and further economic progress through the synergies of professional development, networking and community building. This two-day conference will highlight a range of topics, notably those that address the practical, nuts-and-bolts approaches to creative business and how-to's for working collectively with creatives, municipalities and businesses in the most meaningful ways.

"There are more than 186,000 jobs in Colorado's creative sector, making it the state's fifth largest industry cluster," said Margaret Hunt, Director of Colorado Creative Industries, a division of the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade. "The annual Summit supports these crucial members of Colorado's creative economy by offering professional development and networking opportunities and stimulating increased support for creatives by local governments and coalitions."

This event welcomes people to experience creative excellence in action within the Salida Creative District, a State Certified Creative District. Salida received the Certified Creative District award in 2012 and has seen further growth in economic impact and jobs in the year since the award. Sales and lodging are at an all-time high, with \$3.95 million in sales tax collection and this year is on track to set another record.

Online session proposals will be available in mid-September and registration will open in January. Visit coloradocreativeindustries.org for updates.

Gov. Hickenlooper Applauds Reopening of Fort Lyon as Innovative Homeless Recovery Opportunity

Fort Lyon reopened yesterday as home to a new collaborative and innovative project that will help end veteran homelessness, reduce chronic homelessness throughout the state and adds jobs in Bent County.

The 550-acre facility, which served as a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs hospital, sanatorium and prison before it closed in 2012, will offer participants supportive housing, health services, substance abuse treatment, counseling and job training to enable them to transition successfully into independent living in the community of their choice.

On Tuesday, the first 14 residents from Denver, Greeley and Pueblo moved in at Fort Lyon.

"This project will give homeless veterans and others new opportunities," Gov. John Hickenlooper said. "The men and women who go to Fort Lyon will learn the skills they need to get back on their feet. We are grateful for the General Assembly's support of this effort and applaud the work done by Bent County officials to help us transition this beautiful and historic facility into a place of recovery for some of our state's most vulnerable individuals."

Bipartisan legislation (SB 13-210) passed last spring designated the Fort Lyon property as a supportive residential community for the homeless. Fort Lyon will begin housing 80 clients by late fall; this will increase to 200 by July 2014, and could maintain a maximum capacity of 300 by July 2015.

The repurposing is part of Pathways Home Colorado's ongoing effort to replicate best practice models, support regional priorities and become more strategic in preventing and ending homelessness.

According to the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, taxpayers annually spend \$43,240 on individuals who live on the street without any effort to recover them. Whereas, for individuals who elect to participate in Fort Lyon's supportive housing program, the state will have to invest only \$16,813 to provide an effective recovery program.

After at least one-year of residency at Fort Lyon, clients will be eligible to receive a Section 8 housing voucher from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to return to permanent housing in another community.

USDA Renews Agricultural Air Quality Task Force, Appoints Members

U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack last month announced the renewal of USDA's Agricultural Air Quality Task Force and the selection of its members for the 2013-2015 term. The task force is composed of representatives from industry, agriculture, academia, government agencies, non-governmental organizations and other agricultural and environmental experts.

Recognizing the members for their service, Vilsack said, "We can only make good decisions on complex and emerging challenges like air quality with expert guidance from a cross-section of interests. Our goal is to minimize the public impact of air pollution that is associated with agricultural practices while preserving farming as a way of life. We're doing this by developing science-based climate solutions and cutting-edge technologies, and by working closely with farmers, ranchers, and land owners as well as our federal partners."

The Agricultural Air Quality Task Force promotes USDA research efforts and identifies cost-effective ways the agriculture industry can improve air quality. It also helps better coordinate activities and resources among USDA agencies and other federal partners such as the Environmental Protection Agency. The task force is charged with: 1) Advising the agriculture secretary on air quality and its relationship to agriculture based on sound scientific findings; 2) Reviewing research on agricultural air quality supported by federal agencies; 3) Promoting intergovernmental (federal, state, local and tribal) coordination in establishing agricultural air quality policy to avoid duplication of efforts; and 4) Ensuring that air quality conservation practices supported by USDA are based on peer reviewed research and are economically feasible for agricultural producers. The task force was formed in 1996 at the direction of Congress to address agricultural air quality issues. Chaired by Jason Weller, chief of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service, this is the eighth task force since the first was assembled in 1997. The members of the 2013-2015 task force are:

Arizona

Kevin G. Rogers, Producer/Arizona Farm Bureau Federation

California

Kevin Abernathy, Milk Producers Council

Paul Buttner, California Rice Commission

Cynthia Cory, California Farm Bureau Federation

Manuel F. Cunha, Jr., Nisei Farmers League

Richard McVaigh, San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District

Florida

Michael Abazinge, Florida A&M University

Idaho

April Leytem, USDA Agricultural Research Service

Iowa

Chris Petersen, Producer/National Farmers Union

Hongwei Xin, Iowa State University

Louisiana

Annette Sharp, Louisiana Dept. Environmental Quality

Maryland

D'Ann Williams, Johns Hopkins School of Public Health

Minnesota

Larry Jacobson, University of Minnesota

Missouri

Terry Spence, Producer

North Carolina

Lisa Greene, RTI International

Sally Shaver, Shaver Consulting Inc.

Lingjuan Wang Li, North Carolina State University

Pennsylvania

William Angstadt, Delaware-Maryland Agribusiness Association

Eileen Wheeler, Pennsylvania State University

Tennessee

Robert Burns, University of Tennessee

William Norman, National Cotton Council

Texas

Robert Avant, Jr., Texas A&M University

Brock Faulkner, Texas A&M University

Bryan Shaw, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

Virginia

William Herz, The Fertilizer Institute

Washington

Nichole Embertson, Whatcom Conservation District

Brenton Sharratt, USDA Agricultural Research Service

The Agricultural Air Quality Task Force is scheduled to meet later this fall.

***Denver Post:* Army: We have No Plans to Expand Piñon Canyon Training Site**

The Army said on Tuesday, August 13, it has no plans to expand its training footprint in the Piñon Canyon ranchlands, but a top official stopped short of promising that the Army would permanently drop a current provision granting it the right to take private land from landowners.

Assistant Secretary of the Army Katherine Hammack, who traveled from the Pentagon to meet with local officials with Democratic Sen. Mark Udall on Tuesday, described the Army in a "state of decline," given federal budget cuts.

Hammack said even if the Army wanted to provide more training area for the Fort Carson troops readying for battle, they don't have the money.

"The Army is in the era of limited resources," Hammack said to ranchers, environmentalists and local politicians. "We're downsizing. We're reducing the number of troops, reducing the number of brigade combat teams."

At issue is 235,000 acres of Army land in southeastern Colorado that buffers lucrative ranches and farms.

The Army has long used the land as a maneuver training site to recreate warlike battlefields. They take young soldiers stationed at Fort Carson with tanks and other training components to create conditions not dissimilar to what is found in Afghanistan or Iraq.

Adjacent to the site, however, are ranchers such as Kathy and Gary Hill, who have several hundred head of cattle on 20,000 acres they have owned for more than 40 years.

Udall is one in a long list of politicians who have strived for a resolution to the Piñon Canyon tension for years.

In a 2011 letter to Udall and Democratic Sen. Michael Bennet, the Army said it had no plans — and had made no budgetary requests to Congress — to expand the boundaries of the maneuver site.

Rep. Cory Gardner (R-Yuma) whose district includes Piñon Canyon, got a measure through the U.S. House of Representatives that requires an act of Congress for the Army to expand the site.

And even if Congress granted that approval, the House-approved measure requires the Army to complete an environmental impact study and receive federal money before it would happen.

"This is an important day," Udall said Tuesday. "We've come to some agreements that will strengthen our national security ... The (Piñon Canyon site) is important to many people for many reasons."

In 2006 and 2007, at the height of two big wars, the Army made attempts to acquire more land to expand the training site, including issuing a "waiver" that could have tripled the size of the current footprint.

In some of the maps released at the time, the Hills' ranch was in those plans and could have been taken by the government under eminent domain.

The Army told Gary Hill, when he traveled to Washington in protest several years ago, that it would give him \$300 an acre, and he wouldn't have a choice.

Hill was emotional with Hammack on Tuesday.

"We're not at war with our own country," he said. "We need land in production so we can feed the people of this nation. At some point in time, the government can't own it all, or we should just move to Russia or something."

Hammack did not say Tuesday that the Army was going to drop the waiver completely. She said, however, that with federal funding cuts under sequestration, "now is the right time to re-evaluate" the provision.

"I think there is a possibility to rescind it," she said. "I'm not guaranteeing that will happen, but there is a real chance of that occurring."

New Court of Appeals Judge Appointed

Gov. John Hickenlooper last month appointed Karen Ashby to serve as a judge for the Colorado Court of Appeals. The vacancy is a result of the retirement of Chief Judge Janice B. Davidson.

Ashby currently serves as the Presiding Judge of the Denver Juvenile Court. Prior to her appointment to the Juvenile Court, she served as a judge on the Aurora Municipal Court, as a Public Defender in the Denver Trial Office and as a solo practitioner.

Ashby earned a bachelor's degree from Williams College and a J.D. from the Sturm College of Law at the University of Denver.

The appointment is effective Oct. 1, 2013. Ashby will serve for a provisional term of two years and then until the next general election.

Boards and Commissions Appointments Announced

The **Public Employees Retirement Benefit Plans (PERA) Board of Trustees**, by state law, manages public employees' retirement funds. There are three Governor-appointed Trustees. The board will include the State Treasurer as an ex-officio member; four members from the School Division and three members from the State Division; one member from the Local Government Division; one Judicial Division member; and two PERA retirees. If a member resigns, a new member is appointed from the respective division until the next election. The member appointed for a term expiring July 10, 2017:

- Susan G. Murphy of Denver, to serve as a representative with experience and competence in investment, management, finance, banking, economics, accounting, pension administration, or actuarial analysis, and as a Democrat, reappointed.

The **State Board of Veterinary Medicine** conducts professional examinations and grants licenses for veterinarians. The member appointed for a term expiring June 30, 2017:

- Sue Ellen Frederick of Parker, to serve as a consumer, reappointed.

StudyColorado supports the international enrollment goals of the state's institutions of higher education; creates new economic opportunities for Colorado businesses through the influx of international students and their families; creates a more diverse learning environment to help Colorado students be more competitive in a global workplace; and fosters lasting relationships between international students and Colorado that will benefit international trade and investment. The members appointed for terms expiring Feb. 1, 2017:

- James G. Branscome of Montrose, to serve as a representative of the business community.
- Amy Ettinger Burkett of Golden, to serve as a representative of the business community.
- Steven James McCarthy of Longmont, to serve as a representative of the business community.

The **Transportation Commission** formulates general policy for the Colorado Department of Transportation with respect to the management, construction and maintenance of public highways and other transportation systems in the state. The commission also works to assure that the preservation and enhancement of Colorado's environment, safety, mobility and economics is considered in the planning of all transportation projects.

Appointments must be confirmed by the Colorado Senate. The member appointed for a term expiring July 1, 2017:

- William Thiebaut Jr. of Pueblo, to serve as a commissioner from the 10th Transportation District.

The **Arkansas River Compact Administration** was created to administer the provisions of the compact which was created with respect to the waters of the Arkansas river. The administration shall co-operate each state charged with the administration of water rights and with federal agencies in the systematic determination and correlation of the facts as to the flow and diversion of the waters of the Arkansas River. The member appointed for a term expiring Aug. 16, 2015:

- Colin Thompson of Holly, to serve as a resident of and water right owner, in Water District 67, reappointed.

The member appointed for a term to expire Aug. 16, 2017:

- Scott A. Brazil of Pueblo, to serve as a resident of and water right owner, in Water District 14 or 17.

The members appointed to serve at the Pleasure of the Governor:

- James L. Eklund of Denver, to serve as Executive Director, Water Conservation Board.

The **Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council** was created as an advisory committee to foster a healthy food supply available to all Colorado residents while enhancing the state's agricultural and natural resources, encouraging economic growth, expanding the viability of agriculture, and improving the health of our communities and residents. The members appointed for terms expiring Oct. 7, 2016:

- Summer Hope Gathercole of Denver, to serve as a Democrat representing anti-hunger and food assistance programs.
- Trudy L. Kareus of Boulder, to serve as a Democrat with knowledge of a local, state, or federal agency and who has expertise in rural community and regional development programs or community and economic development programs.

The members appointed for terms expiring Oct. 7, 2017:

- Jill Suzanne Litt of Denver, to serve as a Democrat representing an academic institution that specializes in economic systems, agriculture or health care.
- Louis Earl Swanson Jr. of Fort Collins, to serve as an Unaffiliated and as Director of the Colorado State University Extension Services Program.

The **Conservation Easement Oversight Commission** reviews applications for conservation easement holder certification and to review any other issues referred to the commission by any state entity. The Division of Real Estate shall convene the meetings of the commission and provide staff support as requested by the commission.

The members appointed for terms expiring July 1, 2016:

- Christopher MacLellan West of Denver, to serve as a representative from a statewide or national land trust, reappointed.
- Nancy Fishbein of Boulder, to serve as a representative of a local government open space or land conservation agency.
- John Anthony Carney of Montezuma, to serve as a representative of an historic preservation organization with experience in easements on properties of historical significance.

The **Energy Impact Assistance Advisory Committee** reviews the existing and potential impact of the development, processing or energy conversion of mineral and fuel resources on various areas of the state. The committee makes recommendations to the Colorado Department of Local Affairs to assist impacted areas.

Appointments must be confirmed by the Colorado Senate. The members appointed for terms expiring Aug. 24, 2017:

- Kelly Eugene Arnold of Windsor.

- Vicki L. Spencer of Gunnison, reappointed.
- George B. Shiohita of Alamosa, reappointed.

The **Financial Services Board** is the policy-making and rule-making authority for the Division of Financial Services. Appointments must be confirmed by the Colorado Senate. The members appointed for terms expiring July 1, 2017:

- Michael George Hurst of Del Norte, to serve as an executive officer of a state savings and loan association and a Democrat.
- Keith Marshall Cowling of Arvada, to serve as an executive officer of a state credit union and a Republican, reappointed.
- Nilsa Guerrero-Mahon of Brighton, to serve as a public member with expertise in finance and an Unaffiliated, reappointed.

The **STEMI Task Force** studies and makes recommendations for developing a statewide plan to improve the quality of care to STEMI patients. By Jan. 31, 2014, the STEMI Task Force shall submit an initial report and by July 31, 2015, it shall submit its final report, specifying its findings and recommendations to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and the corresponding committees in the State House and State Senate. The members appointed for terms expiring Aug. 1, 2015:

- Lee Alexander MacDonald of Highlands Ranch, to serve as a Colorado resident representing a national association whose goal is to eliminate cardiovascular disease and stroke.
- Thomas Anthony Haffey of Westminster, to serve as a cardiologist practicing in this state.
- Joseph Emory Barclay "Jeb" Burchenal of Golden, to serve as an interventional cardiologist practicing in the Front Range area.
- David A. Rosenbaum of Colorado Springs, to represent a statewide association of cardiologists.
- Ira Mitchell Dauber of Greenwood Village, to represent a statewide association of physicians.
- Janet Fox Stephens of Fort Collins, to represent a statewide hospital association.
- Fred Anthony Severyn of Littleton, to represent an emergency physician association.

The members appointed for terms expiring Aug. 1, 2016:

- James L. Richardson of Basalt, to serve as an emergency medical service provider.
- Julie J. Benz of Parker, to serve as a registered nurse involved in cardiac care.
- Konnie Lynette Martin of Alamosa, to serve as a hospital administrator from a rural hospital.
- Bain Joseph Farris of Denver to serve as a hospital administrator from an urban hospital.
- Scott D. Campbell of Colorado Springs, to serve as a member with expertise in cardiovascular data registries.
- Frederick A. Masoudi of Denver, to serve as a member with expertise in cardiovascular data registries who is a cardiologist.
- Alexander Eugene Fraley of Durango, to serve as an interventional cardiologist practicing in the Western Slope.
- Arthur Kanowitz of Littleton, to represent the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and to serve as an ex-officio member.

The **Stroke Advisory Board** evaluates potential strategies for stroke prevention and treatment and to develop a statewide needs assessment identifying relevant resources to improve quality of care for stroke patients. By Jan. 31, 2014, and by each January 1 thereafter, the Stroke Advisory Board shall submit a report specifying its findings and recommendations to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and the corresponding committees in the State House and State Senate. The members appointed for terms expiring Aug. 1, 2016:

- William Joseph Jones of Denver, to serve as a member who is board-certified in vascular neurology.
- Christina Louise Johnson of Denver, to serve as a physician representing a statewide chapter of emergency physicians.
- Michelle Renee Whaley of Castle Rock, to serve as an RN involved in stroke care.
- Michelle Lynn Joy of Greeley, to serve as a hospital administrator from a hospital located in a rural area.
- Mary M. White of Englewood, to serve as a hospital administrator from a hospital located in an urban area.
- Chris A. Wright of Conifer, to serve as an expert in stroke database management.
- Kevin James Burgess of Loveland, to serve as an emergency medical service provider.
- Michelle Marie Reese of Golden, to serve as the Executive Director's designee and as an ex officio member.