Save the DATES

JANUARY 4
Legislative Breakfast
7:30 am
Community College of Aurora—
Student Centre Rotunda
16000 E. Centretech Pkwy.
Aurora, CO 80011

FEBRUARY 12
Women in Business —
Unsung Hero Luncheon
11:30 am - 1 pm
DoubleTree by Hilton - Southeast
13696 E. Iliff Pl.,
Aurora, CO 80014

MARCH 25
Annual Awards Dinner
5 - 10 pm
DoubleTree by Hilton - Denver -
Stapleton North
4040 Quebec St.,
Denver, CO 80216

MAY 13
Armed Forces
Recognition Luncheon
11 am - 1:30 pm
DoubleTree by Hilton - Denver -
3203 Quebec St.,
Denver, CO 80207

JUNE 2
Leadership Aurora
Graduation
5 pm
Aurora Municipal Center
1515 E. Alameda Pkwy.
Aurora, CO 80012

JUNE 16
Leadership Aurora
Golf Tournament
7 am: Registration
8 am: Shotgun
Heritage Eagle Bend
23155 E. Heritage Pkwy.
Aurora, CO 80016

Did you know?
The Chamber has a way to keep you safe — and save you money

If your business qualifies for The Chamber’s Safety Group Program through Pinnacol Assurance, you can reduce workplace injuries; save 4 percent on your workers’ compensation insurance, an additional 5 percent for becoming cost contained; and receive a dividend return if the Safety Group is under a 55 percent loss ratio. The Safety Group Program is currently at 23 percent loss ratio – and holding! Historically, Program members have qualified to receive dividend checks 18 of the last 20 years, and just last year, member dividends totaled more than $550,000.00.

Members of The Chamber’s Safety Group Program are provided at no additional charge all of the services and tools necessary to maintain a safe working environment, including personalized service, comprehensive safety training, creative return-to-work programs, cost containment certification assistance, and fraud prevention services.

If your business meets the following requirements, you can provide a safer working environment, save money, and possibly get dividend returns:

• Has been in operation at least three years
• Has maintained a 55 percent (or less) workers’ compensation loss ratio
• Will have a representative attend, or complete online, two safety trainings within a policy year
• Maintains effective hiring, safety, and claim management programs
• Demonstrates management commitment to maintaining and enhancing a safe workplace
• Implements a return-to-work program
• Maintains four SelectNet designated providers

For more information about the Aurora Chamber Safety Group Program, contact Mitzi.schindler@aurorachamber.org.

Let The Chamber help bring wellness to your worksite

The Aurora Chamber of Commerce has partnered with Tri-County Health Department and other health professional organizations for the Worksite Wellness Initiative — and Chamber member businesses are encouraged to join. There is no cost to employers or employees to be part of the Initiative.

The goal of the Worksite Wellness Initiative is to engage organizations to adopt best practices and policies to provide a healthy workplace environment. The initiative encourages employers and employees to practice healthy behaviors during the work day – as part of a national strategy to decrease obesity and chronic disease in our communities.

Members of the Initiative will receive wellness resources, wellness program assistance, trainings, workshops, and much more. There’s also funding $$$ opportunities available along the way to support you organizations’ personalized worksite wellness goals!

For more information, or to join The Chamber’s Worksite Wellness Coalition, contact Mitzi.Schindler@aurorachamber.org.

“Our Metro Board greatly appreciates the valuable resource that the Chamber offers from transportation issues to the local governmental process. Your support has been key to the continued success of the District! The information we glean from the Chamber allows us to keep our constituents informed and the access to local bureaucratic and elected leaders is paramount to the overall process of our local governance.”

— Tom Coker, President Eagle Bend Metropolitan District #2

Jobs, jobs, jobs
At the November 25 Chamber Board of Directors meeting, Mayor Steve Hogan announced that Aurora has a 3.7% unemployment rate.

A great way to start 2016!
The amazing story of growth and pride!

Kevin Hougen
President & CEO

Each time we have the opportunity to give our “Eco-Devo” presentation about the Economic Development growth in our communities, there is always one word used to react to the information: AMAZING! And most people say that they didn’t know or realize all the incredible economic development projects currently in the works in these growing communities.

There are many success stories that illustrate our thriving economy, workforce, and quality of life. From our legacy of leadership in aerospace and agriculture, to our emerging recognition as a hub for all healthcare in the Rocky Mountain West - we boast a wealth of opportunity for both people and businesses.

As the President/CEO of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce - the largest Chamber and economic development agency in Adams/Arapahoe/Douglas counties - I have the privilege of witnessing firsthand the tremendous intellect and innovation that weaves across all of our major industry clusters. This is a community where game-changing research and technological advancements are transforming the world’s products and processes, from how we detect and eventually cure cancer to the revolutionary developments in the aerospace industry. It’s all happening right here, and we should all be so PROUD, of the hard work and dedication that so many of our Chamber members have contributed to this AMAZING period of growth and prosperity.

Recent indicators suggest that Colorado’s economy is doing fairly well. The State has recovered and surpassed the jobs it lost during the Great Recession, and unemployment has dropped to pre-recession levels. (As noted by Aurora Mayor Steve Hogan on page 1 of this newsletter.)

We have contributed to this AMAZING period right here, and we should all be so PROUD, of the hard work and dedication that so many of our Chamber members have contributed to this AMAZING period of growth and prosperity.

In 2016 your Chamber will continue to foster a business climate that encourages innovation, and to work on smarter tax and regulatory systems that preserve economic freedom. Our cooperative spirit, strong network of state and local partners, and the positive business climate creates a culture built to sustain growth…a growth we welcome you to be part of.

Happy New Year and to a Prosperous 2016!
Ribbon cuttings mean business: Nine businesses; 120 new jobs.

Something BIG just opened in Aurora - Big Liquor Warehouse owners, Vamsee Amara and Asha Chinni, accompanied by Aurora Mayor Steve, cut the ribbon to the new Big Liquor Warehouse in Aurora City Place, at 100 S. Abilene St., Aurora, CO 80012. Big Liquor Warehouse has a friendly staff, a welcoming atmosphere, and one of the largest assortments of beer, wine, and spirits in Aurora. 303-360-0359. (11/23/15)

First-class service for first-class customers – Welcome to Aurora, First Class Car & Truck Repair! Owner Rachael Gregoire and general manager Dillon Gregoire cut the ribbon for their new business, located at 19201 E. Colfax Ave., Aurora, CO 80011. First Class Car & Truck Repair is a family-owned and operated automotive repair and service shop, providing complete auto care and honest customer service, at an affordable price. They offer special discounts to military and veterans, members of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, and employees of Aurora Public Schools. Services include brakes, starting and charging systems, cv axles, steering and suspension, check engine lights, emissions, electrical, belts, hoses, tune-ups, oil changes, and flushes (coolant, transmission, brake, power steering, and fuel injection. (303) 366-1199 www.aurorautocare.com (11/23/15).

“You’re in good hands” – Danielle Lammon, surrounded by family members and friends, proudly cuts the ribbon for the grand opening of Allstate Insurance - The Danielle Shannon Agency, at 6820 S. Liverpool St. Unit D, Aurora, CO 80016. Danielle is active in the Aurora community and has worked with many local families. She understands the importance of helping clients and finding solutions to their needs. She specializes in commercial insurance, life, and motorcycle insurance - and also offers services for auto, car, flood, home, and business. (303) 676-8071 agents.allstate.com/danielle-shannon-lammon-aurora-co.html. (12/7/15)

Quality service, honoring the experience of aging – Niki Gewirtz, administrator of the Belleview Heights - Alzheimer’s Special Care Center, opens the doors to the new facility. Located at 14500 E. Belleview Ave., Aurora, CO 80015, Belleview Heights - Alzheimer’s Special Care Center is a part of JEA Senior Living’s family of memory care facilities, which span from coast to coast and into Canada. With more than 30 years of caring for families experiencing the challenges of having a loved one with Alzheimer’s, they are leaders in the industry, partnering with top local physicians and experts, in the communities they serve in. (303) 900-0993 www.jeaseniorliving.com. (11/17/15)

Fresh floral arrangements, gifts for any occasion – Tricia Fillingim, owner of The Fresh Flower Market, celebrates with her family as she cuts the ribbon for the business’ new location at 6616 S. Parker Rd., Suites 102 & 103, Aurora, CO 80016. The Fresh Flower Market is locally owned and operated and is committed to offering only the finest floral arrangements and gifts, backed by friendly and prompt service. Tricia has been in the floral industry for 13 years and is internationally certified as a member of AIFD. Tricia has been awarded Designer of the Year for Colorado, and first place in many bridal design competitions. (303) 617-9596 www.thefreshflowermarket.com (11/17/15).

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[continued on page 4]
Communication, consistency and certified instructors! –

Congratulations to Ozlem Idil, owner of Colorado STEAM Academy, on her Grand Opening! Ozlem’s goal is to help students increase self-confidence and achieve Success! She uses different techniques to provide the best education such as customized instruction, monthly assessments to follow up academic growth, frequent communication, and certified instructors! Colorado STEAM Academy is located at 6820 S. Liverpool St. Suite E, Aurora, CO 80016 and provides a safe, nurturing place of supervision for school age children where there are opportunities to reinforce learning from school, teach social skills, encourage good citizenship, and enable them to make positive life choices with STEM career. www.steamacademyco.com or 303-699-6381. (12/12/15).

Plan your financial goals for the new year! –

Congratulations to Loan Officer, Pete Elsby on the grand opening of his new office Land Home Financial, located at 24107 E. Commons Ave., P102. Land Home Financial is committed to helping clients reach their home financial goals. The office specializes in mortgage tools including buying a home, loan programs, and a variety of calculator tools, including owning and renting, qualifying ratio, annual ownership, and monthly payments. Pete also works with loan pre-approvals and applications. 925-338-8229 mortgage.lhfs.com/peteelsby. (12/9/15)

RIBBON CUTTINGS (con’t)

Stay longer in Aurora - Area Manager, Jason Ates and Senior Vice President, Danny Meaux cut the ribbon celebrating the grand opening of a new Extended Stay WoodSpring Suites Aurora Denver Airport. Located at 15105 E. 38th Ave. Aurora, CO 80016, WoodSpring Suites is conveniently located minutes from downtown Denver and from Denver International Airport. WoodSpring Suites offers guests three suite types to choose from, and all suites include living and bedroom furnishings, a fully modified kitchen, cable TV, table and chairs, free wireless internet, and onsite laundry facilities. (303) 574-0840 http://www.woodspring.com (10/15/15).

Wings, drinks, and entertainment – Fowl Line owner Roger Hurst, accompanied by Aurora Mayor Steve Hogan, cut the ribbon to Fowl Line’s second restaurant at 7450 S. Gartrell Rd. Unit B7, Aurora, CO 80016. Fowl Line – Aurora is a family-friendly restaurant and sports bar with the option to dine in or take out. Their menu includes wings, pizza, calzones, burgers, salads, entrees, desserts, and more! All wings sauces are homemade by Roger himself, including one of the hottest - a ghost pepper wing sauce! (303) 731-1134 www.fowlilineexpress.com (11/17/15).

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**Member News**

**A-Town makes the New York Times**

William Harris, owner of A-Town Pizza in Aurora, made the cover of the *New York Times* on December 13. But, the article isn’t about the fresh ingredients or the fact that his Neapolitan pizzas cook in less than two minutes at 700 degrees; it’s about the possible effect of the Federal Reserve rate hike on small businesses.

Three years ago, Harris used his retirement savings to open A-Town Pizza. He borrowed $200,000 to open a second location, and now employs 60 people. On a good Friday, he sells 1,200 pies.

In one aspect of the article, Harris’ story is used to demonstrate that the Federal Reserves’ seven-year campaign to reboot the American economy is succeeding. So, now that short-term interest rates are expected to start rising, a concern for businesses like A-Town Pizza is that if rates increase too quickly, people will have less money to spend. The *New York Times* asked Harris, along with a number of other business owners in the Metro Area, for their comments.

“We live on people’s extra money. That’s the money they spend on pizza. And it still feels very fragile,” said Harris.

The first rate increase will be small, then the Fed expects to raise rates about one percentage point a year for the next few years.

**Check out “Explore Centennial”**

The City of Centennial has recently launched a new online tool for connecting the community with local businesses. You can search for local businesses on the City’s new online business directory portal (http://explore.centennialco.gov/), dubbed “Explore Centennial” and discover all Centennial has to offer.

**Falck Rocky Mountain wins Aurora ambulance contract**

The City of Aurora welcomed a new 911 ambulance provider to serve its residents on Sept. 1, 2015. Falck Rocky Mountain, based in Aurora, earned the citywide ambulance contract following a unanimous vote by Aurora City Council.

The city conducted a competitive bid process to select the contractor for the 911 emergency medical ambulance transport. A panel of industry professionals and the city council selected the new provider based on city requirements set forth to ensure smooth transition of services, high quality of care, strict clinical standards, and protection of rights for all Aurora residents and visitors.

The five-year partnership with the city brings significant technology and equipment upgrades to the city’s emergency medical services system.

“We feel like we’re coming home,” said David Patterson, chief executive officer of Falck Rocky Mountain. “Aurora is a community that our local leadership has been a part of for decades. We are also excited about working on innovative healthcare initiatives with the Aurora Fire Department and local hospitals, as well as injury prevention and health and safety education programs.”

**Barela honored with 2015 Workforce Legend Award**

Joseph Barela, Regional Workforce Director for Arapahoe and Douglas Counties and the Division Manager of Arapahoe/Douglas Works!, was recently recognized with the 2015 Rocky Mountain Workforce Development Association Inc. Workforce Legend Award at the Fall 2015 Colorado Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Convening.

Barela received this award, in part, for being a true leader and driving force within the Workforce Development realm locally, regionally, and nationally.

In addition, under Barela’s leadership as the executive director, the Arapahoe/Douglas Workforce Development Board was recognized in 2015 with the National Association of Workforce Boards WIB Excellence Award.

He serves as president of the Rocky Mountain Workforce Development Association, is a member of the Colorado Workforce Development Council, and a board of director for the Aurora Chamber of Commerce.

**CTU promotes John Adams**

Colorado Technical University’s John Adams was recently promoted to Vice Chancellor - Aurora Campus. Formerly Director of Finance for the Colorado campuses, Adams arrived at CTU in 2013, bringing more than 20 years of finance and operations experience in the for-profit education industry.

As Vice Chancellor, Adams aims to lead the campus by developing business relationships in the community. He will also work with the local military population, oversee campus enhancements for students, and focus on retention for continued growth.

Adams serves on the Board of Directors for the Aurora Chamber of Commerce and is currently in the Chamber’s Leadership Aurora program, a 10-month community engagement program that generates awareness of the Aurora community, fosters a network of informed leaders, and encourages greater community involvement.

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**Advantage Security recognized by City of Aurora**

Advantage Security, Inc., was recognized by the City of Aurora as an outstanding business at the 2015 Business Recognition Awards Dinner in early December.

After 20 years in the security industry, Vic Evans decided that he could no longer work in an environment that put the company’s profit margin ahead of customer service and employee satisfaction. So, in 1995, with just four employees, Vic started Advantage Security, Inc., in Aurora, CO, with the goal of providing quality security services to customers, and a rewarding career for employees – without compromising customer service.

Two decades later, Advantage Security, Inc., is Aurora’s 111th largest private employer, with 600 employees and $10 million in revenue. Even with their tremendous growth and success, the company still prides itself on a small family atmosphere, where employees are appreciated and rewarded for the quality service they provide.

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**Excerpted from the 2015 Business Recognition Awards Dinner program**
The Leadership Aurora class began Community Day in October with inspirational stories, and concluded the day by coming together for an eye-opening poverty simulation.

The Leadership Aurora Class collected 747 pairs of socks to donate to local homeless shelters on their Community Day in October.

Class members also visited a number of organizations, to get a better idea of the services available in the community:

- **The Aurora Strong Resilience Center**
  - A safe place for the victims and survivors of the 7/20 movie theater shooting, as well as a healing community center for all those in need.

- **The Providers Resource Clearinghouse**
  - A big box-style store designed to provide household items (e.g. furniture, paper products, linens, etc.) to nonprofits and their clients.

- **Colfax Community Network**
  - Services, information, and programs for the transient motel population along Colfax Avenue.

- **The Bennie Goodwin School**
  - An afterschool program helping children, 3-5 years old that are behind grade level with literacy and math.

- **The Vintage Theater**
  - A community theater, that also provides youth classes, coaching, workshops and its own children’s theater.

- **Downtown Aurora Visual Adults (DAVA)**
  - An afterschool and summer arts education programs for urban youth ages 3 to 17 in Original Aurora, with the mission of strengthening the community through the visual arts with youth engagement as the primary focus.

- **The Restoration Outreach Project**
  - A faith-based organization, meeting needs, building relationships, and restoring lives on East Colfax Avenue, including refugee and immigrants that may have been removed from their faith.

- **The Asian Pacific Development Center**
  - An organization supporting the Asian American Pacific Islander community, by providing interpretation, adult education, behavioral health, victim assistance, and legal aid.

- **Adams Workforce & Business Center**
  - Work and career training, including assisting with resumes, instruction for interviews, and giving comprehensive help for people to complete the entire interview/work process (e.g. transportation and clothing).

- **The Aurora Animal Shelter**
  - A shelter for lost and abandoned animals, that also gets them ready for adoption.

- **Brent's Place**
  - The only Safe Clean housing authority approved by Children's Hospital Colorado for patients and their families, providing a living environment that is essential to healing and recovery.

- **Aurora Warms the Night**
  - A homeless shelter, offering comprehensive services, including food, warm clothing, hygiene items, laundry vouchers, bus passes, partner agency referrals, and advocacy.

  Let’s do our part to help these amazing organizations thrive, so that they may help their clients survive.

- **Aurora’s warms the night**
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Member Contributions

Small business owners: consider retirement investing options

By Kris Tower, managing director of American Portfolios Financial Services

As 2015 has come to an end, small business owners across Colorado and the U.S. face the uncertain future of retirement. A national survey by Sharebuilder 401k shows that 76 percent of small-business owners offer no 401(k) plan. This is a top reason why 35 percent of small-business owners are not confident about their own retirement savings.

Some business owners rely on building a profitable (and attractive) business with the hopes of eventually selling. Don’t count on it, says The New York Times: “For many reasons, saving for retirement is difficult for (business) owners, but perhaps the biggest mistake many make is assuming that they do not need to save — that one day they will sell their business and live off the proceeds.”

When it comes to small-business owners saving for retirement, there are four basic employer investment plans: Solo 401(k), Simple IRA, SEP IRA, and Payroll-deduction IRA. Whether you’re a one-person shop or have a handful of staff members, there are myriad financial investment plans available today. ■

The IMPACT is published for the members of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce. Subscription rate to nonmembers: $50/year.

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