

SDA NEWS

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2025

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Celebrating 50 Years of Service

Thank You, SDA Team



Above, left to right: Michael Valdez, Karla Boughey, Megan Lippard, Ann Terry, Jamille Andres, Anthony Sandoval, Meredith Smith Quarles



AS WE CELEBRATE

the 50th anniversary of the Special District Association of Colorado, it's impossible not to reflect with deep gratitude on the people who made this milestone possible—our extraordinary SDA staff.

For five decades, SDA has been the trusted voice and partner for Colorado's special districts, helping communities deliver essential services and thrive. But behind every success, every program, and every Conference stands a team of dedicated professionals who pour their heart and soul into making it all happen.

The SDA staff work tirelessly throughout the year, answering calls, providing resources, developing trainings, guiding districts through complex challenges, and ensuring that our members have the tools and support they need to serve their communities. Their commitment to excellence, collaboration, and service is what has sustained SDA for 50 years and what will carry us forward for decades to come.

This year's 50th Anniversary Conference was a perfect example of that dedication. From early morning preparations to late-night coordination, our team worked with creativity, professionalism, and a shared passion for delivering an unforgettable experience. Their efforts turned a milestone celebration into something truly memorable.

On behalf of the SDA Board of Directors and our entire membership, **thank you** Meredith, Michael, Karla, Jamille, Megan, and Anthony for your vision, your teamwork, and your unwavering commitment to SDA's mission. We simply would not be celebrating 50 years without you.

Here's to the next 50 years of leadership, learning, and community—made possible by an incredible team.

With heartfelt appreciation,

Ann Terry

Ann Terry
CEO

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A Record Number of Attendees Were on Hand to Help Us Celebrate Our Golden Jubilee at the 2025 SDA Annual Conference!



We were thrilled to be joined by a record number of people at this year's SDA Annual Conference as we celebrated our 50th anniversary and our Golden Jubilee! We had 1,153 people with us in Keystone, and there were another 149 people participating on our virtual platform!



To help mark this special milestone, we decked out the Conference Center with a number of festive decorations, including a huge welcome sign outside, a beautiful light up display with a balloon arch, and even signs for



each table in the ballroom. We also had signs on the windows, special cocktail napkins, and even matching shirts for the SDA Board, staff, and Platinum Sponsors. And of course, a cake!

As part of our celebrations, we also created a video highlighting the history and achievements over the last 50 years as well as a very catchy song with lyrics all related to SDA. These were both shown during the day on Wednesday, and they were a unique way to celebrate.



Left to right: Jamille, Karla, and Anthoney from the SDA team and Molly Couture from CRS were the friendly faces at the registration desk on Tuesday.

This year we offered close to 40 breakout sessions during the course of the three-day event, featuring 63 different speakers! These speakers were from both district members and associate members, and their sessions covered a wide variety of topics,

Continued on page 6



Chief TJ Steck from the Elizabeth Fire Protection District (center) had lots of fun with his session attendees!



Mac Clemmens from Streamline led three valuable breakout sessions on a variety of topics.



Emily Powell from Ireland Stapleton Pryor & Pascoe, PC was one of our many expert breakout session speakers.



Left to right: Ann Terry, Chief TJ Steck, and Megan Lippard smile in the halls between sessions.



Eric Bergman from the Division of Local Government shared insights on how the Division can assist districts.



Lonnie Mayne's message resonated well at Tuesday's lunch.



Lauren Sisler captivated the audience with her story on Wednesday morning.



James Robilotta and Ann Terry share a smile after his keynote on Tuesday morning.



Kara Gerczynski from the Elizabeth Fire Protection District spoke about signs it's time for a fire district to grow.

from very technical subjects to overarching issues that apply to all district types.

Our **keynote speakers** were both compelling and thought-provoking (please see pages 12-13 for the full run-down of their presentations). The keynote speakers were all very well received, and they were a great balance to our breakout sessions.

In honor of our 50th anniversary, we offered a special twist to our Forums on Tuesday afternoon. This year we held three Forums, and we featured a keynote-level speaker at each one, including Jamie Notter who discussed preparing your culture for the AI revolution; Kristin Scroggin who discussed how to navigate a multi-generational workforce; and Jill Christensen who discussed

Continued on page 8

Exhibitor Hall



Left to right: Rose Vallesio and Rebecca Zisch manned the Collins Cole Winn & Ulmer table in the Platinum hallway.



Left to right: Sharon Trilk and Beth Justice from Colorado SIPA greeted attendees in the Exhibitor Hall.



David Ricketts from BuyBoard National Purchasing Cooperative was also on hand to visit with attendees in the Exhibitor Hall.



The CSD Pool staff were all smiles at their booth. From left to right are Brennan Mendus, Alex Terlecky, Kinsey Bailey-Barkley, and Chère Phillips.



CRS's booth featured a custom coaster engraving, which was a huge hit. From left to right are Sue Blair, Ashly Dorey, and Marcos Pacheco.



The team from Streamline enjoyed chatting with everyone between sessions. From left to right are Lee Smith, Lindsee Green, Annelise Spargo, and Tanner Smith.



Our record crowd was on display at Tuesday morning's Welcome Breakfast.



SDA CEO Ann Terry was pleased to welcome everyone at Tuesday's breakfast.



Lane Melott sang a beautiful rendition of the National Anthem.



Brandon Young and Blayne Smith signed dozens of their books after their keynote on Thursday morning.



Ann Terry thanked Brandon Young (left) and Blayne Smith for their highly impactful presentation at Thursday's breakfast.



Mark Meuschke provided a unique greeting on Tuesday morning with his alpine horn!

how to ignite exceptional effort from employees. What's more, we ran each Forum twice so everyone had the opportunity to attend two of these high-level presentations! The speakers not only presented on their topics, but they also led interactive conversations and question and answer times.

With our hybrid event, we were able to livestream not only our keynote speakers, but also all of our breakout sessions right to our virtual platform. This was a convenient way for folks to participate remotely, and it even made it possible for attendees in Keystone to sit outside or in a quiet place and still follow along with the sessions. And with everything being recorded, **everyone who registered for Conference can now go back and access the recordings of the breakout sessions for a full year!**

We once again had tremendous support from all of our sponsors and exhibitors (please see page 21 for the full listing). In addition to our **15 Platinum Sponsors**, we had a total of **19 Gold, 12 Silver, and 14 Bronze Sponsors** as well as **25 booth exhibitors!**

At the **Welcome Breakfast** on Tuesday morning, we had a very special guest, Mark Meuschke, who serenaded us with a few songs on his alpine horn to kick off the festivities. We were then joined by members of the local **Honor Guard for the Presentation of the Colors**. We also enjoyed a beautiful rendition of the **National Anthem** sung by Lane Melott from Advance HOA Management.

At Tuesday's Award Luncheon, we had the honor of recognizing



The casino tables and musical trivia on Tuesday night were a huge hit again this year!



Team members from the CSD Pool enjoyed the game night festivities!



The blackjack tables were a popular option.



Many people tried their luck at hitting 21 while visiting with their colleagues from the special district world.



Other people went for the lucky picks at the roulette tables!

this year's **five very deserving districts, Board members, and managers** (please see pages 15-19 for the full write-up on each winner). Holding the Awards Luncheon on the first day of Conference is a perfect way for everyone to celebrate and recognize the winners throughout our time together, and we were thrilled to do that again this year.

Following the Forums, our **Opening Night Celebration and game night began!** We had a **full casino set up, with poker, blackjack, roulette, and craps tables plus a complete musical trivia bingo game!** The casino tables

were packed, and the musical trivia was very popular as well. There was even a drawing for prizes at the end of the night! And of course, lots of delicious food!

On Wednesday afternoon, **the Colorado Special Districts Property and Liability Pool's Annual Membership Meeting featured** a keynote presentation from Kyle Brown, Senior Risk Control Consultant for the CSD Pool, who discussed business continuity and how to protect daily operations in order to bounce back quickly from disruptions.

Wednesday evening once again featured the popular Boots and

Continued on page 11



Over the course of three days, the Keystone chefs used some pretty amazing amounts of food to feed our huge group:

115

Gallons of Coffee
(and that was just for the coffee breaks!)

1,619

Granola Bars

1,170

Cans of Soft Drinks

881

Pieces of Whole Fruit



We would like to extend a sincere thank you to Kelly Shroads for her many years of providing the incredible Conference photos!

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Jim Heckman from the Fountain Sanitation District led the CSD Pool Annual Membership Meeting on Wednesday afternoon.



Kyle Brown from the CSD Pool provided the keynote presentation at the Annual Membership Meeting.



The beautiful patio was a popular gathering spot throughout the Conference.

BBQ event. Perennial favorite **Randall McKinnon** was on hand with his ever-popular live music, and there were prize drawings with our sponsors and exhibitors!

The Grab-and-Go lunch on Thursday was also back this year, and it was a convenient way for everyone to pick out their lunch and take it with them.

All in all it was a fantastic event, jam-packed with tons of beneficial



We welcomed Randall McKinnon once again on Wednesday evening for live music during the Boots and BBQ event.



Ann Terry shares a laugh with Danaly Howe and Jesse Flageolle from Westwind Management Group during the sponsor and exhibitor prize drawings on Wednesday evening.



training and plenty of opportunities to catch up with special district leaders from around the state.

This was an amazing year celebrating our 50 years of serving districts

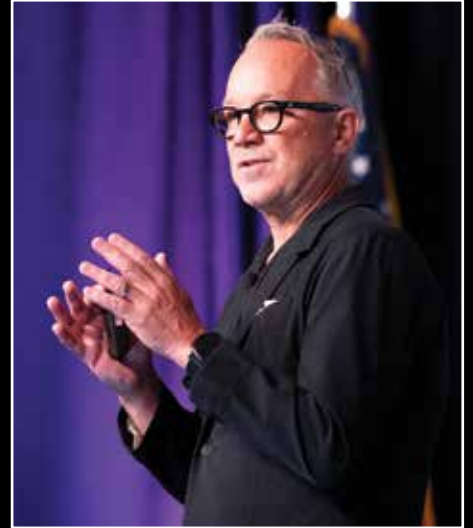
across Colorado! And now we're already looking forward to next year's Conference! **Mark your calendars and plan to join us September 15-17 back up in Keystone!** 🍷

2025 CONFERENCE KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

INSIGHTFUL & THOUGHT-PROVOKING



James Robilotta



Lonnie Mayne



Lauren Sisler

The keynote speakers at this year's Annual Conference were the perfect complement to the almost 40 breakout sessions that were offered over the course of the event!

James Robilotta kicked off this year's Conference on Tuesday morning with his thoughtful presentation, **"Leading Imperfectly: The Value of Being Authentic for Leaders, Professionals, and Human Beings."** James discussed the idea of how we don't learn from individuals who are perfect but rather from people who are imperfect, and this universal message resonated well with the audience. He even spent quite a bit of time walking the halls of the Conference Center after his presentation and visiting with attendees. James's friendly demeanor was a great way to get this year's Conference going!





Joe Mull

At Tuesday's Awards Luncheon, we not only honored this year's annual award winners, but we also heard from **Lonnie Mayne** and his insightful presentation, **"Red Shoes Living: Standing Out for the Positive in How You Work and How You Live."** Lonnie shared five steps to make a more positive impact in all aspects of life, and he discussed how these can be applied on both a professional and personal level.

Wednesday morning started off with **Lauren Sisler's** riveting presentation, **"Shatterproof Leadership: Forging Resilience, Bravery, and Purpose in the Workplace."** You could hear a pin drop in the ballroom as Lauren told the story of the life-changing tragedy she faced as a young woman and how she overcame and eventually used the adversity and challenges as fuel for resilience. Lauren's story touched nearly every member of the audience in one way or another, and she spent a great deal of time visiting one-on-one with attendees afterwards.

Wednesday's lunch featured **Joe Mull** and his relatable presentation, **"Becoming a Boss Hero™: Answering the Noble Call of Leading Others."** Joe provided pertinent and valuable tips and tools that help set transformational leaders apart and help them build cultures of commitment and workplace engagement.

Our last day of Conference began with **Brandon Young and Blayne Smith** and their compelling presentation, **"Perseverance > Endurance."** Utilizing stories from their time serving as a US Army Ranger and a Green Beret (respectively), they shared the five factors of perseverance that have been fundamental in their decades of leadership in the military and beyond. Brandon and Blayne's impactful stories moved the audience to a standing ovation, and dozens of people lined up afterwards to meet them. 🍌



Brandon Young and Blayne Smith



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Congratulations to the 2025 SDA Annual Award Winners!

The 2025 SDA Annual Awards Luncheon took place during the recent Annual Conference, and it was once again a wonderful opportunity to honor outstanding districts, Board members, and Managers.



Several staff members from Carbon Valley Parks and Recreation District were on hand to accept their award, including Whitney Wilmes, Ally Flanagan, Scott Hickman, and Bryan Hostetler.

The first award was presented to **Carbon Valley Parks and Recreation District** as the winner of the Colorado Special Districts Property and Liability Pool's **2025 Safety District of the Year Award**.

Carbon Valley was chosen due to their commitment to asset preservation and staff and guest safety.

From performing regular ergonomic assessments targeting chronic injury to training on best practices for emergency preparedness, first aid, and bloodborne pathogen safety, Carbon Valley goes to great lengths to protect their staff and the public. And through regular meetings of their high-performing Safety Committee, safety remains the top focus for all their district and guest activities.

Carbon Valley is no stranger to collaboration and making the most of available safety resources. They are heavily involved with the Colorado Parks & Recreation Association and communicate frequently with other districts to share knowledge and best practices. They also work closely with the CSD Pool to perform annual facility and site walkthroughs and utilize their risk management programs, ensuring the longevity of district equipment.



SDA Board President Sue Blair was honored to recognize Jim Borland for his decades of dedicated service.

This year we also had the opportunity to recognize **Jim Borland from the Fort Collins-Loveland Water District** for his **years of dedicated service**.

Jim Borland's exceptional commitment to the Fort Collins-Loveland Water District spans over four decades, positioning him among the district's most tenured and respected members. Since joining the Board of Directors in 1982, Jim has demonstrated steadfast leadership and a strong dedication to delivering the highest quality water services to the community. His involvement began soon after relocating to Northern Colorado in 1976, motivated by a profound sense of civic duty and responsibility.

In addition to his role with the Fort Collins-Loveland Water District, Jim has been an active and longtime member of the SDA Board of Directors, where he served as President for many years. He has also served as a member of the Colorado Special Districts Property and Liability Pool Board of Directors for over 30 years.

Throughout his tenure, Jim has played a pivotal role in shaping the direction and policies of the district,

Continued on page 16

ensuring safe, reliable, and sustainable water for over 60,000 residents across parts of Fort Collins, Loveland, and surrounding areas. He is particularly known for emphasizing water quality, advocating for clean storage of snowmelt sources, and supporting sustainable growth practices that ensure development pays its own way.

Jim possesses decades of experience and institutional knowledge, guiding the district through technological, regulatory, and community challenges with a long-term vision that benefits present and future generations. His leadership reflects a dedication not only to operational excellence but also to transparency and community engagement, helping to secure a sustainable water future for Northern Colorado.

Jim's legacy is a testament to purposeful governance and unwavering service, deeply rooted in the values of stewardship, integrity, and commitment to the people he serves.



Sue Blair congratulates Mitch Terry as he accepts his Manager of the Year award.

Next we were pleased to honor this year's **Manager of the Year Award** winner, **Mitch Terry from the Crestview Water & Sanitation District.**

Mitch's distinguished career, spanning 42 years, stands as a testament to enduring professional dedication, adaptive leadership, and unwavering stewardship within the special district sector.

Mitch's tenure began in 1983 under circumstances that immediately showcased his initiative and work ethic. Even before his official start date, he volunteered to assist during a critical water main break, an early demonstration of his instinct to serve and his ability to confront challenges head-on. From this defining moment forward, Mitch's reputation for problem-solving, reliability, and hands-on leadership took root, setting the foundation for a distinguished career.

His advancement through Crestview's organizational ranks reflects both deep technical knowledge and a commitment to personal and team development. As a maintenance team member from 1983 to 1987, Mitch acquired essential skills in water and sanitation operations. Elevated to Leadman in Maintenance from 1987 to 2001, he assumed greater responsibility for overseeing crews and ensuring service continuity. His promotion to Maintenance Foreman in 2001 further honed his leadership and project management abilities, as he successfully guided teams through increasingly complex operational demands.

The culmination of Mitch's expertise and commitment was realized in 2011 when he was appointed Manager of the district. In this executive role, Mitch has overseen all facets of district operations, guiding strategic initiatives and effectively responding to shifts in technical requirements and regulatory landscapes. His leadership is evident not only in the smooth daily functioning of Crestview, but also in the district's continuous advancement in service quality, fiscal responsibility, and operational adaptability.

Mitch's impact is consistently recognized by the Board and staff, who point to his exceptional organizational skills and painstaking attention to detail. Throughout his decades of service, Mitch's enthusiasm for his work has remained steadfast. He embraces each new challenge as an opportunity for

growth and innovation, always seeking solutions that serve the best interests of both the district and the broader community. Mitch is known for championing a collaborative workplace, valuing and mentoring his staff to foster a culture defined by shared dedication and high standards.

A defining characteristic of Mitch's leadership is his disciplined and ethical approach to navigating complexity and change. Even Board members with only limited tenure immediately notice his steadiness, professionalism, and grace in the face of uncertainty. The faith the Board places in Mitch underscores his deep well of organizational competence and his adherence to principle-driven management.

Mitch's contributions extend beyond operational excellence. He is recognized for championing community engagement and fostering partnerships. Last year, he coordinated the district's 75th anniversary celebration, an event that not only commemorated Crestview's history but also reinforced community bonds. He enjoys building strong collaborative relationships with Denver Water, Metro Water Recovery, Adams County, and numerous water and sanitation districts in the Denver area, leveraging his nuanced diplomatic skills to achieve results that reflect the district's mission and values.

Core to Mitch's effectiveness are his personal qualities: integrity, transparency, and truthfulness. He is forthright and honest, willing to acknowledge mistakes and steadfast in his convictions. His strong communication skills instill mutual respect and foster trust among staff, the Board, and the public. In a field where public health and safety hinge on robust governance, Mitch's approach ensures the district remains accountable and transparent in all matters.

Mitch's enduring legacy at Crestview Water & Sanitation District is rooted in longevity, adaptability, and a steadfast commitment to both organizational and

community advancement. His journey from the maintenance department to District Manager embodies exemplary leadership in service, deep-rooted expertise, and genuine connection. Mitch's achievements are reflected in improved infrastructure, effective management practices, and vibrant community relationships, but perhaps most enduring is the culture of integrity and professionalism he has nurtured, an example that will continue to inspire all who work alongside him.



Jeni Reilly proudly accepts her Board Member of the Year award.

Turning to our **Board Member of the Year Award**, we were proud to honor **Jeni Reilly from Stonegate North Villages Metropolitan District** as this year's winner.

This honor recognizes more than a decade of transformative, strategic leadership that has shaped the district into a dynamic, cohesive, and groundbreaking community.

Fourteen years ago, Jeni joined the Board at a time when the district operated under a different name and faced uncertainty regarding its future independence. While plans for potential consolidation lingered and the community sought a distinct identity, Jeni distinguished herself by viewing these challenges as opportunities for growth and service. Her leadership journey began in supporting roles as Treasurer and Secretary before she was elected President, each step marked by a commitment

to learning, consensus-building, and an unwavering focus on serving the needs of over 1,200 households.

Jeni's leadership style is characterized by strategic intent and steadiness, seldom seeking the spotlight but consistently driving progress. Rather than dramatic gestures, she delivered lasting results through vision, collaboration, and a relentless dedication to the district's mission: to improve the quality of life for every resident.

A defining moment in Jeni's tenure came in 2020, amidst the global pandemic and profound change throughout the world. She spearheaded a fundamental reorganization of the district's management. This comprehensive transformation included implementing competitive contracting for legal, accounting, management, and communications services, ensuring performance accountability and operational transparency. The result was not just administrative efficiency, but a recalibration of the district's culture: innovation replaced routine, and proactive stewardship replaced reactive management.

Jeni introduced annual resident surveys as a standard practice, actively listening to community feedback before guiding strategic investments. This data-driven approach directed resources towards what residents most valued, including safer facilities, enhanced parks, streamlined services, and improved communication. In five years, the district emerged with a distinctly modern identity: fiscal discipline and efficient management similar to a private enterprise, yet with the welcoming spirit of a neighborhood association.

Under her leadership, communications underwent a dramatic revitalization. Jeni led the transition from a static website to an interactive, metrics-based platform, ensuring residents could easily access information and engage with district news. She developed a sophisticated multichannel communication strategy, blending digital newsletters, targeted

signage, and consistent branding so every resident, regardless of age or technological comfort, could remain connected and informed.

Jeni championed technology integration far beyond communications. Recognizing the need for sustainable, remote management, she oversaw the adoption of a cloud-based asset management system and GIS tracking. These advances empowered staff to manage the district's 75 acres of landscapes and amenities efficiently from anywhere. Her leadership was equally pivotal in modernizing facility access, guiding an eight-week transition to a secure, app-based entry system that now serves over 4,000 residents, a process requiring meticulous coordination and a resident-focused approach.

The impact of her work is tangible throughout the community. The construction and launch of a new 3,800-square-foot Community Center, championed by Jeni, quickly made it the focal point of district life by hosting over 100 events in its first year. Complementing this achievement, the development of a year-round adult pool and spa area, together with sustainable, water-wise landscaping, highlighted her dual commitment to resident enjoyment and environmental responsibility.

Jeni's steady, decisive leadership proved invaluable during the challenging early months of the COVID-19 pandemic. She navigated evolving state mandates, championed public health, and maintained access to recreational facilities, always prioritizing transparency in her communication with residents.

Beyond infrastructure and operations, Jeni is renowned for her hands-on approach to community engagement. She tirelessly recruited volunteers, formed advisory committees, and held listening sessions to guide district development. Routinely visible on district grounds, she fostered personal relationships with residents, ensuring local governance was both responsive and rooted in

Continued on page 18

the community's true interests.

Today, Stonegate North Villages Metropolitan District is recognized as a model of operational excellence and innovation, a testament to the culture of trust, vision, and accountability that Jeni has established. Her legacy is evident in every improvement, every engaged resident, and every collaborative effort that has defined the district's modern era. As Jeni continues to guide and inspire, her service stands as a lasting example of what steadfast, forward-thinking leadership can accomplish.



Sue Blair was thrilled to present Highlands Ranch Metro District Board Chair Renee Anderson (center) and General Manager Stephanie Stanley (right) with their District of the Year award.

We were pleased to present our final award to **Highlands Ranch Metro District** as the **2025 J. Evan Goulding District of the Year**.

Highlands Ranch Metro District, established in 1981, stands as a hallmark of visionary planning and community service in Douglas County. Spanning 22,000 acres and home to over 103,000 residents, Highlands Ranch offers an exceptional quality of life rooted in thoughtful infrastructure development, comprehensive services, and a close-knit community spirit.

From its inception, Highlands Ranch Metro District was designed as a master-planned community, an ambitious venture spearheaded by the developer Mission Viejo Company, which acquired the land in 1978. The district's enduring success is deeply tied to this foundation, where the close collaboration between the Mission Viejo Company

and the Metro District leadership established a robust master plan emphasizing sustainable growth, well-maintained infrastructure, and quality municipal services.

The Highlands Ranch Metro District Board of Directors, consisting of seven elected members, remains committed to responsible resource management while providing a comprehensive array of vital community services. Under the leadership of General Manager Stephanie Stanley, who brings 19 years of dedicated experience to the role, the Metro District oversees the construction and maintenance of major arterial roads as well as the installation of traffic signals and streetlights. Additional responsibilities include the ongoing upkeep of landscaping and fencing along key corridors. The Metro District also owns and manages an extensive network of parks, trails, natural open spaces, and stormwater drainage systems, ensuring both recreational amenities and environmental stewardship for the community.

Youth and adult outdoor recreation and sports programs serve diverse populations, fostering wellness and community engagement across different age groups. Additionally, the district manages water and wastewater services through a contract with Highlands Ranch Water, ensuring essential utilities are reliably provided to residents.

In its early years, Highlands Ranch Metro District's foremost challenge was managing rapid growth and associated debt while maintaining affordable property taxes. Impact fees collected in collaboration with the developer funded approximately \$185 million in vital infrastructure, allowing the district to build foundational elements such as roads, drainage systems, parks, and recreational facilities without overburdening homeowners financially. This strategic financial stewardship facilitated steady development while ensuring long-term fiscal health.

More recently, with the community nearing buildout, the Highlands

Ranch Metro District has transitioned its focus toward maintaining and renewing its infrastructure and managing increasing operations and maintenance costs despite limited avenues for new revenue generation. The ability to retire debt early has positioned the district to meet these evolving needs prudently.

The district's resilience was notably tested in 2023 when a tornado swept through Highlands Ranch, causing widespread damage to parks, parkways, and residential properties. Highlands Ranch Metro District responded swiftly and efficiently, coordinating cleanup and repairs with the help of community partners and volunteer organizations. This event reinforced the significance of established collaboration networks and the community's shared commitment to recovery and renewal.

A defining development in recent years has been the retirement of several long-serving leaders who had been instrumental in shaping Highlands Ranch's growth and programs over multiple decades. The departure of foundational figures in finance, public works and engineering, recreation, and general management has created challenges and opportunities. This generational leadership transition invites new perspectives while honoring the legacy of strong stewardship that brought the district to its current position.

Complementing this leadership evolution is the opening of the Highlands Ranch Senior Center in January 2025, the district's first public indoor facility dedicated to senior programs and services. The center has quickly become a vibrant hub, with over 1,800 members in its first months, signaling strong community demand and engagement. Expansion of operating hours is planned to further accommodate and serve the district's older adult population.

At the heart of Highlands Ranch's identity is the Highlands Ranch Mansion, a beautiful and historically significant estate that dates back

over a century. Initially built by early settlers such as Samuel Allen Long and later owned by notable Denver families, the Mansion was acquired by the Metro District in 2010 and renovated by 2012. It stands today as an elegant venue for private celebrations and a cultural landmark hosting community events and tours without relying on taxpayer funds. Private event fees sustain its operations, preserving this historic gem as both a functional asset and a connection to the region's heritage.

Highlands Ranch Metro District consistently ranks above national and regional benchmarks on quality of life and service delivery, reflected in multiple community surveys conducted over the past decade. For example, 95% of surveyed residents have rated their

quality of life as excellent or good, while 88-89% expressed satisfaction with municipal services. Respondents also report high feelings of safety and ease in accessing essential destinations, signaling effective public works and community planning.

Guided by a mission to provide innovative and quality services while managing resources wisely, the Metro District's vision emphasizes cooperative efforts to lead in parks and recreation, open space management, public works, and cultural activities. This vision is carried out with commitment to respectful, responsive, innovative, collaborative, and honest governance, encouraging citizen involvement and public-private partnerships.

The Highlands Ranch Metro District's history is a rich tapestry

of thoughtful planning, strategic financial management, and adaptive leadership. From its roots as a forward thinking planned community to its current role as a vital local government entity serving over 100,000 residents, the district exemplifies how foresight and collaboration can enhance community well-being. Through challenges such as rapid growth, leadership transitions, and natural disasters, Highlands Ranch Metro District has demonstrated resilience and a commitment to service excellence. Its well-maintained infrastructure, diverse recreational programs, strong community engagement, and preservation of historic assets create a legacy of quality, stability, and livability that continues to define this thriving Colorado community. 🍷

The SDA Board of Directors and staff would like to congratulate all the 2025 award winners!

Congratulations to the 2025 James T. Walker Leadership Scholarship Winner!

SDA is pleased to congratulate Catrena Rosentreader from the Board of Directors of the Beebe Draw Metro District as the 2025 James T. Walker Leadership Scholarship winner! Catrena was recognized as this year's winner during the recent SDA Annual Conference.

This leadership scholarship is presented in honor of James T. Walker, one of SDA's earliest and longest serving Board members.

Catrena has been on the Board of Beebe Draw for four years and currently serves as the Board

Secretary. She is also a 2025 Leadership Fellow.

"Catrena has exemplified what true leadership growth looks like. Through her journey in the Leadership Academy, she has shown remarkable dedication, self-awareness, and courage to stretch beyond her comfort zone," said Anthoney Sandoval, Program Director for the Leadership Academy. "We are pleased with her ability to inspire others and lead with clarity and compassion for which she is deeply deserving of this award."

Congratulations, Catrena! 🍷

50
YEARS
1975-2025





A Big Thank You to the SDA Annual Conference Volunteers!

Each year at Conference we are joined at the registration desk by a fantastic group of volunteers who all lend a hand to check people in, answer questions, and anything else that comes up. And this year was no different!

SDA's CEO, Ann Terry, was thrilled to see our volunteers again this year. "We are always grateful for this group of helpful and friendly folks who assist our attendees in any way they can."

We would like to take a moment to say thank you to the 2025 Conference volunteers:

- » Molly Couture from CRS (Community Resource Services of Colorado)
- » Steve Ravel from Advanced Engineering and Environmental Services, LLC (AE2S)
- » Daniel Rubin from Dietze and Davis, PC

Unused Food from SDA Annual Conference Donated to Local Community

As everyone who attends our Annual Conference knows, we work hard to provide plenty of delicious food for our attendees throughout the day. But do you know what happens to the food that we don't utilize?

In 2023 we first told you about a special partnership in place at the Keystone Conference Center where our untouched food is donated to the local community. We are thrilled to report that this

arrangement is still in place, and this year, over 111 pounds of unused food from our event was donated to Café Food Rescue, a local food bank. This included things such as chicken, trout, vegetables, and even salad.

"We are thrilled that the Keystone Conference Center was once again able to donate the food that we did not use to help those in need," said Ann Terry, SDA's CEO. 🍌

Sponsors and Exhibitors Play a Key Role in the Success of the 2025 SDA Annual Conference!

SDA would like to extend a sincere thank you to all of this year's sponsors and exhibitors! From the 15 Platinum Sponsors to the numerous Gold, Silver, and Bronze Sponsors as well as all of our exhibitors, these fantastic organizations were a huge part of this year's success.

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Our Bronze Were:

- » AllPaid
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- » Davey Tree Expert Company
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- » GTC (Golden Triangle Construction)
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- » iamGIS
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Have You Ever Thought About Joining the SDA Leadership Academy?

The planning process is well underway for the 2026 SDA Leadership Academy, which will kick-off early next year! And we are pleased to announce that you will soon be able to apply to join this unique group!

SDA believes that leadership development can be fostered throughout every level of an organization, and it was this idea which led to the creation of the SDA Leadership Academy in 2012. Today, over 610 Leadership Fellows have graduated from this year-long program that features a variety of speakers discussing issues centered around personal and professional development.

As a Leadership Academy Fellow, you will participate in at least four events throughout the year plus the SDA Annual Conference in Keystone in September if you



are able to join us. We will also host a series of online meetups to discuss leadership hot topics, and you'll receive weekly emails which offer keen insights and real-world lessons from a wide variety of sources. Moreover, our Fellows are able to connect with other special district leaders from across the state, creating a strong network of support for each other.

Applications will be available beginning Monday, November 3 so please watch your emails and visit the SDA website at www.sdaco.org for all the details. All applications will be due by Wednesday, December 10 so don't delay if you are interested in applying!

The class will be limited to 50 people, which is a great size for group conversations and interactions.

"This popular training fills up quickly so don't miss this remarkable opportunity," said Ann Terry, SDA's CEO. "We look forward to receiving your applications and welcoming our next class of Leadership Fellows!"

We would like to thank COLOTRUST for sponsoring the 2026 Leadership Academy, which is sure to be another exciting year of education and growth.

2026 SDA Membership Renewal Opening Soon...*Online Only!*

It's that time of year again! The 2026 SDA membership renewals will open in mid-November so watch your emails and the SDA website for all the information. (Remember, the entire renewal process is done online; we won't send paper invoices.)

And here's the best part: if you are a district and you renew by March 1, 2026 (and pay by July 1, 2026), you will receive a 25% discount! It's as easy as that!

Don't miss out! Renewing is quick and easy. Once the renewals open, simply go to the SDA website at www.sdaco.org (and

if you're a district, remember to have your 2026 budget information handy as you go through the process).

If you have any questions or need any assistance, please feel free to contact Karla Boughey, Membership Services Coordinator, at 303-863-1733.

Lonnie Mayne

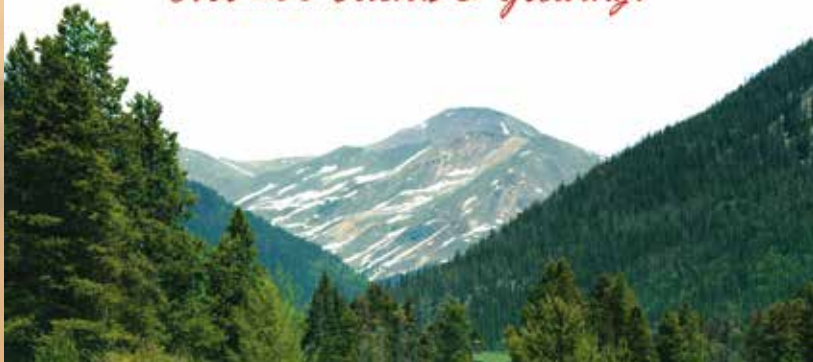
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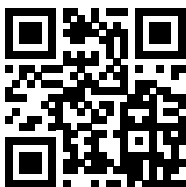
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Fall is a special time of year, and we hope your days are filled with celebration, fun, and treats!

We would also like to wish you and your loved ones a very Happy Thanksgiving! It has been an honor to serve all of our members over the last 50 years, and we are grateful for the continued opportunity to work with you as you provide the best possible services to your local communities.



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