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SDA NEWS

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2026

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2026 SDA Annual Conference



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Designed by Emmett Jordan



Another Impressive Turnout for the **2026 SDA Annual Conference!**

We were thrilled to welcome another impressive number of people at this year's SDA Annual Conference, September 15-17 at the Keystone Conference Center! We had 1,069 people join us in Keystone, and there were another 172 people participating on our virtual platform!



Steve Spangler was a high-energy way to kick off Thursday morning, smoke rings and all!



SDA CEO Ann Terry was pleased to see everyone again this year!



Chief TJ Steck and Kara Gerczynski from Elizabeth Fire Protection District had lots of fun with their session attendees again this year!

This year we offered **45 breakout sessions** during the course of the three-day event, featuring over **85 different speakers!** These speakers were from both district members and associate members, and their

sessions covered a wide variety of topics, from technical subjects to overarching issues that apply to all district types.

Our **five keynote speakers** were both inspiring and thought-provoking (please see pages 8-9 for the full run-down of their presentations). The keynote speakers were all very well received, and they were a great complement to our breakout sessions.

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 made it possible for folks to participate remotely and 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!**

At the **Welcome Breakfast** on

Tuesday morning, we were 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.**

Continued on page 5



Tuesday's Welcome Breakfast included the Presentation of the Colors, the Pledge of Allegiance, and the singing of the National Anthem.



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At **Tuesday's Award Luncheon**, we had the honor of recognizing this year's **six very deserving districts, Board members, and managers** (please see pages 12-15 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.



Together with Allison Ulmer, Mac Clemmens from Streamline powered by CivicPlus provided the expertise for our AI Forum.



Our Forum focused on crisis communications was led by Tony Kovaleski and included a mock press conference.



Ann Terry greeted our large crowd every day in the ballroom during our keynote presentations.



Left to right: Sue Blair, Micki Mills, Sarah Luetjen, and Marcos Pacheco were part of our DEO expert group who led our DEO and election readiness Forum.

We offered our Discussion Forums again on Tuesday afternoon. Each Forum focused on a specific topic, including crisis communications, DEO and election readiness, and putting AI to work safely in districts. These discussions were once again led by experts in each of these areas, and we were excited to offer this dedicated time to focus on these important issues.

Following the Forums and the last breakout sessions of the day, 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 busy, and the musical trivia was popular as well. There was even a drawing for prizes at the end of the night! And of course, lots of delicious food!

Continued on page 7



The casino tables were a hit again this year at the Opening Night Celebration on Tuesday night!

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 event. 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 pleased to report that this arrangement is still in place, and this year, over 130 pounds of unused food from our Conference was donated to Café Food Rescue, a local food bank. This included things such as beef brisket, chicken, 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.



We were delighted that over 130 pounds of untouched food was donated to a local food bank.



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Brad Johnson from Parker Water & Sanitation District provided an informative presentation on understanding and managing safety in special districts at the CSD Pool Annual Membership Meeting.

On Wednesday afternoon, the **Colorado Special Districts Property and Liability Pool's Annual Membership Meeting** featured a keynote presentation from Brad Johnson from Parker Water & Sanitation District.

Wednesday evening once again featured the popular Boots and 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.

In addition, we once again had tremendous support from all of our sponsors and exhibitors (please see page 16 for the full listing). In addition to our **15 Platinum Sponsors**, we had a total of **20 Gold, 15 Silver, and 11 Bronze Sponsors** as well as **21 booth exhibitors!**



Randall McKinnon's live music on Wednesday evening matched perfectly with our Boots and BBQ event.



Our sponsors and exhibitors gave away some amazing prizes this year, including this loaded package of fishing equipment from Western Alliance Bank.

All in all it was a fantastic event, jam-packed with tons of beneficial training and plenty of opportunities to catch up with special district leaders from around the state.

Now we can't wait to do it all again next year! **Mark your calendars and plan to join us September 14-16 back up in Keystone!** 🍷

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

127

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

1,341

Granola bars

1,188

Cans of soft drinks

726

Pieces of whole fruit



This Year's Conference Keynote Speakers Were Inspiring and Thought-Provoking!

The keynote speakers at this year's Annual Conference were the perfect complement to the 45 breakout sessions that were offered over the course of the event!

Cam Awesome kicked off this year's Conference on Tuesday morning with his captivating presentation, **"Becoming Awesome."** Cam shared the triumphs and tribulations he has faced, from struggles with bullying as a child to boxing greatness, and his unwavering perseverance (despite the setbacks he has encountered) was fascinating to hear. Cam's message that failure is not the opposite of success but rather an essential part of the journey towards it resonated well with the audience. In fact, there was a very long line of attendees who came to visit with Cam following his presentation!



At Tuesday's Awards Luncheon, we not only honored this year's annual award winners, but we also heard from Dr. Robyne Hanley-Dafoe and her thought-provoking presentation, **"The Hope Forward Advantage: A Framework for Stability, Agility, and Possibility."** Dr. Robyne discussed a number of research-driven strategies to move through challenges and stress with clarity and confidence. She also shared her own powerful story of hope and survival, which had the audience hanging on her every word (you could hear a pin drop in the ballroom during her story!).



Wednesday morning started off with **Manley Feinberg's** informative presentation, **"Exponential Commitment™ Build Breakthrough Momentum in the Storm of Change and Uncertainty."** With stories from his time as a leader at Build-a-Bear Workshop as well as climbing El Capitan in Yosemite National Park, Manley shared essential Vertical Lessons for deepening commitment and building momentum. And his rendition of the National Anthem (on his guitar) was amazing!





Wednesday's lunch featured **Ben Whiting** and his magical presentation, **"Creating A Limitless Culture™ Better Results, Better Relationships, Limitless Possibilities."** Not only did Ben provide insight and actionable strategies for better communication, increased productivity, and maintaining quality relationships in the workplace, but he also performed draw-dropping magic. From cards that disappeared from under one person and ended up under another person to a Rubik's Cube that, after random spinning by people in the audience, matched the exact patterns of a cube in a glass bottle, Ben was spectacular!



Our last day of Conference began with **Steve Spangler** and his high energy, hilarious presentation, **"The Engagement Effect: Cultivating Experiences That Ignite Connection, Build Trust, and Inspire Action."** Steve started out with a bang and a lot of toilet paper with SDA's own, Megan Lippard. From there, he continued to demonstrate his relatable message of the power of engagement with help from Megan Wagner from SDA. With "top secret" energy sticks on each table, attendees were able to see in real-time how engagement and connection can work. Steve ended his presentation in top-tier style: using smoke rings to knock cups off people's heads, including SDA CEO Ann Terry. Steve's dynamic keynote set the perfect tone for the last day of our event! 🍌

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Left to right: Kristen Kubiak, Terry Rook, and Micayla Jorgensen from CEBT enjoyed seeing everyone between sessions.



Rebecca Zisch and Dillon Sena manned the Collins Cole Winn & Ulmer table in the Platinum hallway.



CPS HR Consulting enjoyed visiting with attendees in the Exhibitor Hall. Left to right are Vicki Quintero Brashear, Geralyn Gorshing, and Deanna Heyn.



Left to right: Brennan Mendus and Hunter Freeman from the Colorado Special Districts Property and Liability Pool were all smiles at their booth.



The team from Fromm & Company chatted with folks each day in the Platinum hallway.



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



Congratulations to the 2026 SDA Annual Award Winners!

The 2026 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.



Pool Board Member Chief Brad White from Grand Fire Protection District No. 1 was happy to receive the District Safety award on behalf of Beulah Fire Protection and Ambulance District. SDA Board President Sue Blair presented the award.

The first award was presented to **Beulah Fire Protection and Ambulance District** as the winner of the Colorado Special Districts Property and Liability Pool's **2026 Safety District of the Year Award**.

Beulah was chosen in recognition of its sustained commitment to safety and risk management over the past several years.

Although it is a small, largely volunteer district with fewer than five full-time employees, Beulah Fire Protection and Ambulance District consistently makes safety a priority through the use of their Captain's dual-role as district safety

coordinator; through frequently held safety talks, which utilize CSD Pool resources during demonstrations; and by completing annual safety walkthroughs of their facilities. The staff has also led the way as the first fire district to implement Flagger training for traffic-response safety. The District also supports broader safety efforts across the community by helping coordinate SKIDTRUCK driver training courses in the Pueblo area and by staying engaged in community education, outreach, and emergency management as well as a supplies-sharing program.



Several representatives from Northern Water were on hand to receive their award, including Sander Blackburn, Todd Klimkowsky, and James Graham.

On behalf of the CSD Pool, we were also pleased to present the **2026 Risk Management Leadership Award** to **Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District**.

Northern Water was selected in recognition of its strong stewardship of risk and proactive approach to protecting employees, operations, and the community.

The District goes well beyond core safety requirements by conducting risk assessments, contracting for targeted training on workplace hazards, and providing ergonomic evaluations and equipment to support office staff. It also makes excellent use of the available loss control resources from the CSD Pool, maintains a highly effective safety committee, and demonstrates disciplined risk management through its extensive fire mitigation plan.

Northern Water's risk management leadership also excels through its hands-on safety fair, which helps employees better understand how safety equipment works, and through its broad community outreach efforts.



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

This year we also had the opportunity to recognize **Jim Heckman from the Fountain Sanitation District** for his **years of dedicated service**.

Jim retired after more than four decades of dedicated service as District Manager of the Fountain Sanitation District, leaving a legacy of stability, fiscal responsibility, and operational excellence. This year, we proudly recognized Jim for his extraordinary commitment to the District and Colorado's special district community.

Beginning his tenure in August 1984, Jim guided the district through 41 years of growth, regulatory change, and infrastructure modernization, becoming one of Colorado's longest serving special district administrators.

Under Jim's leadership, the Fountain Sanitation District fulfilled its mission of protecting public health and the environment while providing reliable, cost-effective wastewater services to the growing Fountain community. He oversaw all operational, financial, and strategic functions, championing long term planning through the District's 10 year Capital Improvement Plan and Financial Model. His leadership ensured aging infrastructure was systematically rehabilitated while maintaining rate stability and strong financial reserves.

Jim also served as the District's Designated Election Official, ensuring compliance with Colorado election laws. In 2026, he joined the Fountain Sanitation District Board of Directors, reflecting his

continued commitment to public service.

Beyond Fountain, Jim has been an exceptional leader within the Colorado Special Districts Property and Liability Pool. A Pool Board member since 2007 and Board President since 2023, he has helped guide governance, claims management, and membership policies while strengthening risk management services for special districts across Colorado.

Having called the Fountain area home since 1972, Jim's career reflects integrity, vision, and an unwavering commitment to public service. His leadership has strengthened both his local community and Colorado's special district community, leaving a lasting impact that will benefit special districts for years to come.



Sue Blair congratulates Abigail Wagner as she accepts her Manager of the Year award.

Next we were pleased to honor this year's **Manager of the Year Award** winner, **Abigail Wagner from the Upper Blue Sanitation District**.

We were proud to recognize Abigail for her outstanding leadership, dedication, and commitment to Upper Blue Sanitation District. In just 11 years with the District, Abigail has built a distinguished career marked by steady advancement, dependable leadership, and a genuine investment in both her team and the community she serves.

Abigail's path within the District reflects both hard work and earned trust. She began her career at Upper Blue as a Lab/Office Assistant and advanced through the ranks

earning the highest "A" Wastewater Operator Certification to become Lab Supervisor, Assistant District Manager, and ultimately District Manager. Her growth within the organization demonstrates her technical knowledge, strong work ethic, and ability to lead with confidence while remaining approachable and grounded. Even at a relatively young age, she earned the respect and confidence of her coworkers, demonstrating a level of professionalism and leadership that set her apart.

As District Manager, Abigail has helped guide the District through significant transition and growth. She worked with the UBSD Administrative team to bring the Blue River region under the District's umbrella, expanding service and strengthening the District's operational reach. She also played an important role during one of the most challenging periods the District has faced: the retirement of both the District Manager and Administrative Manager in the same year. Her steady leadership helped ensure continuity, stability, and confidence during that transition.

Abigail's accomplishments also include her contribution to the completion of an eight-year project that brought the local plant back online, a major milestone that required persistence, coordination, and long-term focus. Throughout these efforts, she has remained committed to education, training, and promotion from within, helping foster a strong team culture and continuing the legacy of collaboration established by her predecessor.

Her leadership extends beyond District operations. Abigail has collaborated with fellow operators to organize facility tours for local schools, creating meaningful opportunities to educate students about the District's work and services. She has also built a productive relationship with the county manager to help ensure customers are connecting to sewers appropriately, reflecting her commitment to both public

Continued on page 14

service and strong intergovernmental communication.

What makes Abigail especially effective as a manager is the combination of her character and her leadership style. She is known as a consistent leader who carefully weighs options and information before making decisions. Operators feel comfortable approaching her, and that trust has helped create a positive and collaborative workplace. Her emphasis on teamwork, communication, and continuous growth has strengthened the District from within and positioned it well for the future.

Abigail embodies the qualities that matter most in district leadership: integrity, adaptability, vision, and respect for the people she leads. Her record of accomplishment, her ability to navigate change, and her commitment to both staff and community make her a truly deserving honoree.



Brandon Daruna, CEO of Eagle County Paramedic Services, proudly accepted the Board Member of the Year award on behalf of Dan Smith.

Turning to our **Board Member of the Year Award**, we were proud to honor **Dan Smith from Eagle County Paramedic Services** as this year's winner.

Dan is exceptionally deserving of recognition as Board Member of the Year for his steadfast leadership, deep institutional knowledge, and unwavering commitment to Eagle County Paramedic Services and the community it serves. Over

the course of 18 years of service on the Board, he has helped guide the District through significant growth, organizational change, and moments of profound challenge, always with a steady hand and a clear focus on mission.

Dan began serving on the Eagle County Health Service District Board in May 2006 and was present during the construction of the third station at Traer Creek in Avon in 2008. He played an important role in helping usher in the merger between Western Eagle County Health Service District and Eagle County Ambulance District, offering valuable support and insight throughout the process. His continued service through the transition to Eagle County Paramedic Services reflected both his loyalty to the organization and his understanding of the broader needs of the community. Since that time, the District has expanded significantly, with revenue growth of more than 50% and fund balance growth of more than 30%, while building a strong and responsive system of care.

As Board President, Dan has helped lead the District through a period of remarkable development and growth. Under the Board's leadership, Eagle County Paramedic Services now operates five response stations and up to 11 ambulance crews serving communities from Gypsum to Vail. The organization has also expanded into innovative services that reflect real community needs, including a robust community paramedicine program, a critical care paramedicine program, a wildland fire medic program established in 2020, and a home health program created in response to the closure of the county's only home health agency in 2023. Dan's leadership has helped ensure that the District remains not only responsive, but forward-thinking in how it serves residents, seasonal visitors, and the broader Eagle County community.

One of Dan's most important

contributions has been his role in guiding the District through major financial and operational decisions. He was a member of the Board when the District brought forth the vote to opt out of the Gallagher Amendment in November 2019, preserving the value of the 2016 mill levy and strengthening long-term financial stability. This decision proved especially important during the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic, when the District faced declining call volumes, increased demand for community paramedicine, and significant budget pressure. His leadership helped the District maintain staffing without pay or benefit cuts and supported the development of new revenue-generating services, including wildland fire response.

Dan's impact is also evident in how he leads with both wisdom and humility. He brings a long view to Board service, grounded in experience but open to new ideas. He understands the importance of consistency in emergency medical services, yet he also recognizes the need for growth, adaptation, and innovation. His ability to balance tradition with progress has made him a trusted leader and a stabilizing force during times of uncertainty.

Beyond his Board service, Dan has been a powerful force for public safety and community support throughout Eagle County. His dedication to service, his calm presence, and his willingness to step up whenever needed have made him an invaluable asset not only to Eagle County Paramedic Services, but to the community as a whole. His years of service reflect the very best of Board leadership: commitment, foresight, integrity, and an enduring belief in public service.

Dan exemplifies what it means to serve with distinction. His leadership has helped shape the District's growth, strengthen its mission, and expand its ability to meet the evolving needs of the community.



Sue Blair was thrilled to present Edgemont Ranch Metropolitan District Board President Marlena deCarion with the District of the Year award.

We were pleased to present our final award to **Edgemont Ranch Metropolitan District** as the **2026 J. Evan Goulding District of the Year**.

Just seven miles outside of Durango, Edgemont Ranch Metro District stands as a remarkable example of how a small district can deliver big results through vision, stewardship, and innovation. Established as a Colorado special district in 1983, Edgemont Ranch serves a diverse landscape that includes ranch land, waterways, and mountain terrain, providing water and wastewater services, road maintenance, and snow removal to roughly 1,800 to 2,500 residents. With a staff of only eight employees and one of the lowest mill levies in the county, the District has built its reputation on efficiency, transparency, and an unwavering commitment to public service.

From its earliest days, Edgemont Ranch was shaped by the realities of West Slope living and the need for reliable local infrastructure. The District's history reflects

a community that understood the importance of planning for the long term, especially in a setting where water, roads, and sanitation are essential to daily life. Over time, that practical foundation evolved into a model of resourcefulness, with the District steadily investing in systems that would serve residents well into the future. That history matters because it shows Edgemont Ranch has never simply maintained services; it has built a durable community framework.

What makes Edgemont Ranch especially deserving of District of the Year recognition is its extraordinary innovation in water infrastructure. The District completed construction of the first Austrian-style wastewater treatment plant in the United States, a groundbreaking achievement that brought proven European technology to Colorado's mountain environment. Led by Utilities Manager Robert Ludwig and supported by a committed team, the District studied world-class facilities abroad before

implementing a system designed to deliver cleaner effluent at about half the electrical cost of traditional lagoon-based treatment. The result is not only a technical success, but also a clear demonstration of leadership and courage.

Edgemont Ranch also extended that innovation through solar technology at both of its plants, helping to offset energy demand and keep service costs equitable for residents. At a time when many districts are struggling to balance affordability with sustainability, Edgemont Ranch has found a way to do both. The District's work has drawn attention from utilities across the country, further confirming that its approach is not only effective but also replicable. This kind of forward-thinking approach to problem solving is what truly distinguishes an outstanding district.

Equally important is the District's culture of stewardship. Edgemont Ranch treats public trust as a core responsibility, emphasizing safety, training, and careful operations in everything it does. Its staff are trained in confined space rescue and emergency response, and the District's environmental practices support the Florida River watershed through conservation-minded water management, drainage controls, and partnerships with organizations such as Trout Unlimited, the Animas Water Partnership, and the Mountain Studies Institute. These efforts reflect an understanding of infrastructure and that it is about more than pipes and pumps; it is about protecting a place and the people who call it home.

Edgemont Ranch Metro District reflects the best of local governance through its combined history, innovation, and accountability in a way that is both inspiring and practical. It is a small district with a big vision, and its success proves that excellence in local government is measured not by size, but by impact. 🍃

The SDA Board of Directors and staff would like to congratulate all the 2026 award winners!

Our Sponsors and Exhibitors Play a Key Role in the Success of the 2026 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 dedicated organizations were a huge part of this year's success.

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Congratulations to the 2026 James T. Walker Leadership Scholarship Winner!

SDA is pleased to congratulate Mike Golden from the Board of Directors of the Three Lakes Water & Sanitation District as the 2026 James T. Walker Leadership Scholarship winner! Mike 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.

Mike has been on the Board of Three Lakes Water & Sanitation for six years and currently serves as the Vice Chairman. He is also a 2026 Leadership Academy Fellow.

"Mike exemplifies what it means to be an engaged Board member. Through his longtime Board service and active participation in SDA activities, he has demonstrated a genuine commitment to serving others and strengthening the special district community," said Anthoney Sandoval, Program Director for the Leadership Academy. "His dedication, collaborative spirit, and willingness to contribute set an example for fellow Board members. We are proud to recognize his service and the meaningful impact of his involvement with this well-deserved award."

Congratulations, Mike!

Get to Know the Grant Funding Available for Special Districts Through SIPA

The Statewide Internet Portal Authority (SIPA) has been helping Colorado governments use technology to better serve their communities for more than two decades. Today, SIPA works with state agencies, local governments, special districts, public K-12 schools, and public institutions of higher education to provide access to technology solutions, digital services, and funding opportunities.

SIPA's services have evolved considerably since its creation. What began with a focus on helping government entities establish websites and provide online payment options and other basic digital services has grown into a much broader technology resource for Colorado governments.

Today, SIPA helps public entities address needs ranging from website development and online services to cybersecurity, technology modernization, and other digital tools that improve how government interacts with the public.

SDA CEO Ann Terry helped educate and lobby members of the Colorado General Assembly on Senate Bill 04-244, the 2004 legislation that created SIPA.

"When we were working with the General Assembly on SB 04-244, one of the important considerations was making sure that technology resources were available to all levels of Colorado government, including



smaller local governments," Ann said. "It has been exciting to watch SIPA evolve over the past 20-plus years and expand the services it makes available to local government. Special districts might want to look at SIPA, particularly the grant opportunities, because there may be resources available that can help districts undertake technology projects that otherwise would be difficult to fund."

Grant Opportunities for Special Districts

Two SIPA grant programs may be particularly valuable to Colorado special districts.

SIPA Micro Grant Program

The SIPA Micro Grant Program provides funding to help eligible government entities modernize mobile and online technologies. Funds can be used toward the implementation of new technology but not ongoing subscription costs.

In 2026, SIPA funded 38 requests totaling \$247,465.74. Several Colorado special districts received funding for projects that demonstrate the variety of ways these grants can be used.

Grand Lake Metropolitan Recreation District received a SIPA Micro Grant to develop a new website. The district's existing website contained extensive information about recreational activities, but information

Continued on page 18

SIPA's GovGrants program supports projects designed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of government service delivery for Coloradans.

Since 2024, the program has awarded more than 25 grants totaling more than \$10 million.

about district administration, including elections and Board activities, was more difficult for the public to navigate. The district used its grant and worked with a SIPA vendor to create a new website dedicated to its administrative functions.

Alison Gantt, District Administrator for Grand Lake Metropolitan Recreation District, said, "At Grand Lake, we wanted to ensure that our district information was easily accessible by the public, and this grant assisted with not only the financial resources to do so, but the technical expertise to ensure the project would be successful. I would highly encourage other districts to explore the SIPA Micro Grant Program."

Carbon Valley Parks and Recreation District (CVPRD) currently operates under a .com internet domain and is in the process of applying for a .gov domain. Although obtaining a .gov domain is free, transitioning to the new domain requires the district to migrate its email system and files from its existing Microsoft 365 environment. The district applied for and received a SIPA Micro Grant to help offset migration costs.

"At CVPRD, we wanted to transition from a .com domain to a .gov domain because of the enhanced security and credibility it provides," said Bryan Hostetler, Deputy Director of Carbon Valley Parks and Recreation District. "A .gov domain offers a higher level of protection and reassures our community that our website and communications are official and trustworthy. This grant provides the financial resources needed to support migrating our email system and files once our .gov domain is approved. I would encourage other special districts to explore the SIPA Micro Grant Program as a valuable resource for technology and cybersecurity projects."

West Metro Fire Rescue received a SIPA Micro Grant to develop a story map for the district, beginning with its Annual Family Fire Muster. The project also created a foundation for West Metro to develop story maps for other community events and major public-facing documents.

Story maps can transform information from lengthy or complex documents into a more accessible visual format. West Metro partnered with the University of Colorado Denver's Geospatial Analysis & Mapping Lab (GAMLAB), using Micro Grant funding to support development services.

Eric Bates, Information Technology Director for

West Metro Fire Rescue, was excited about the opportunities the project presented in multiple ways. "Our community-facing documents represent a lot of important work, but they aren't always easy for the public to digest. Story maps give our community a clear, visual way to understand where we are and where we're headed, and partnering with the UCD GAMLAB gave their students real-world geospatial development experience along the way," he said.

SIPA GovGrants

SIPA's GovGrants program supports projects designed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of government service delivery for Coloradans. Since 2024, the program has awarded more than 25 grants totaling more than \$10 million.

West Metro Fire Rescue received funding through GovGrants to support a Drone as a First Responder initiative. Under the program, drones can be dispatched to reported fires and other major incidents to provide a real-time aerial assessment before crews arrive.

That early information can help emergency responders determine what resources are needed, improve situational awareness, and provide firefighters with additional information before they enter an incident.

"The drone gives us eyes on an incident before our crews even arrive," Bates said. "That early information helps us send the right resources, improves situational awareness, and keeps our firefighters better informed and safer when they get there."

Could SIPA Help Your District?

Technology needs look very different from one special district to another. For some districts, the priority may be improving a website or making public information easier to find. For others, it may be strengthening cybersecurity, transitioning to a .gov domain, modernizing technology, or finding a new way to deliver services to their community.

SIPA's programs have continued to evolve along with those needs. SDA encourages members to become familiar with the resources available through SIPA and to consider whether one of its grant programs could help support a project their district is considering.

For information about SIPA and the 2027 grant cycles, visit the SIPA website at <https://sipa.colorado.gov/> or contact SIPA at sipa@cosipa.gov. 📍

Making the Most of Your CSD Pool Membership With...

Incident Trend Analysis

The Colorado Special Districts Property and Liability Pool remains committed to our more than 2,500 public entities as *Your Risk Management Partner*. Each month, we are focusing on a different program or service we offer our membership, either at no cost or at a discounted rate. This month, we're highlighting our Incident Trend Analysis.

Complimentary Incident Trend Analysis

Our expert Safety & Loss Prevention team helps members turn claims data into actionable insights through Incident Trend Analysis, which includes Loss Runs and Stewardship Reports.

- » **Loss Runs** identify where losses are occurring in your district, helping you pinpoint trends and take corrective action. Reports also provide industry benchmarks, so you can see how your loss experience compares with similar districts.
- » **Stewardship Reports** take the analysis a step further, showing how losses impact your district's financial performance. We compare your loss experience with your peers and provide an EMOD-based ranking to help put your results in context.

Our team is available to answer questions, discuss your specific workplace challenges, and tailor training to meet your organization's needs.

Request your complimentary Incident Trend Analysis at csdpool.org/request-a-safety-consultation.

To learn more, visit our website at csdpool.org/safety-consulting.

As *Your Risk Management Partner*, we remain committed to providing specialized coverages tailored for public entities, exemplary claims support, and safety and loss prevention services to ensure everyone within the organization—from Board members to supervisors and staff—has the tools they need to succeed. If you have any questions about the resources mentioned here, please visit csdpool.org or message us at csdpool.org/connect.

Our expert Safety & Loss Prevention team helps members turn claims data into actionable insights through Incident Trend Analysis.



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2027 SDA Membership Renewal

Opening Soon...*Online Only!*

It's that time of year again! The 2027 SDA membership renewals will open in November so watch your emails and the SDA website for all the information. (Don't forget, the entire renewal process is done online; we won't send paper invoices.)

Did we mention the best part? If you are already a member district and you renew by March 1, 2027 (and pay by July 1, 2027), you will receive a 25% discount! It's as simple 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 (if you're a district, make sure you

have your 2027 budget information handy as you go through the process).

And remember, if it is your first time logging in to our new website, you will need to reset your password in order to access your membership profile and renew your district(s) or company.

This process takes just a minute and can be accessed right from the front page of our website.

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

Have You Ever Thought About Joining the SDA Leadership Academy?



SDA 🍌 Leadership Academy

The planning process is well underway for the **2027 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 700 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. For the last two years, our Leadership Fellows have also participated in community outreach projects with the Food Bank of the Rockies. On top of all of this, our Fellows are able to connect with other special district leaders from across the state, creating a strong network of support for one another.

Applications will be available beginning Monday, November 2 so please watch your emails and visit the SDA website at www.sdaco.org for all the details. All applications will be due by Friday, December 11 so don't delay if you are interested in applying!

The class will be limited to 50 people, which is an optimal 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 2027 Leadership Academy, which is sure to be another exciting year of education and growth. 🍌



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! 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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1. The ability to integrate with WA ConnectLive may depend on the accounting software used. Services and integration tools may differ by software. 2. Fees may be imposed for additional services related to online banking. Refer to Business Online Banking Setup and Authorization for more information. 3. Funds deposited through the Lockbox will follow Western Alliance Bank's funds availability policy as outlined in the Deposit Account Agreement Disclosure. 4. All offers of credit are subject to credit approval, satisfactory legal documentation and regulatory compliance.

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