

Special District Association of Colorado

SDA NEWS

FEBRUARY 2026



Supporting Community-Based Government



Save 25% on Your SDA Membership!

ABOUT US

Since 1995, the Colorado Employer Benefit Trust has partnered with the Special District Association of Colorado to provide benefit solutions that are superior and affordable. With more than 240 Special Districts participating in the Trust, CEBT is recognized for its comprehensive benefit offerings, exceptional customer service and consistently low rate increases.

MEDICAL - DENTAL - VISION - LIFE - LTD/STD



WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

By joining CEBT's self-insured pool you can enjoy:

- ✓ Lower Risk
- ✓ Reduced Administrative Costs
- ✓ A Long-term Stable Solution for Your District

OUR MISSION

"To provide quality health benefit options at a competitive cost with superior service to eligible employer groups."

For more information contact:

☎ 303-345-7730
✉ Terry.Rook@wtwco.com
🌐 www.cebt.org
[REQUEST A QUOTE NOW](#)

CEBT
Benefit by Trust
*A Higher Standard of
Quality*



Board of Directors

President
Sue Blair
Independence Metropolitan District No. 4

Vice President
Bill Simmons
Eagle River Fire Protection District

Secretary/Treasurer
Ronda Lobato
Costilla County Conservancy District

Executive Vice President
Allison Ulmer
Collins Cole Winn & Ulmer, PLLC



Ross Blackmer
Thompson Crossing Metropolitan District
Nos. 3 and 5

James Borland
Fort Collins/Loveland Water District

Kent Bosch
Upper Thompson Sanitation District

Bill Clayton
West Metro Fire Protection District

Dick Cleveland
Eagle River Water & Sanitation District

Jim Kullhem
Prospect Recreation & Park District

Fredrick Quintana
Pueblo City-County Library District

Phil Thomas
Fountain Sanitation District

Staff

Ann Terry
Chief Executive Officer

Meredith Smith Quarles
Chief Operating Officer

Michael Valdez
Chief Governmental Affairs Officer

Megan Wagner
Governmental Affairs Specialist

Megan Lippard
Editor and Communications Manager

Anthony Sandoval
Senior Program Manager/Legislative &
Policy Advocate

Karla Boughy
Membership Services Coordinator

Jamille Andres
Office and Project Manager

Evan Goulding
In Memoriam

SDA

225 East 16th Avenue
Suite 1000
Denver, CO 80203
(303) 863-1733
Toll Free (800) 886-1733
sdaco@sdaco.org
www.sdaco.org

Designed by Emmett Jordan



LIMITED-TIME OFFER

You Only Have Until March 1 to Receive a **25% Discount on Your SDA Membership!**

Did you know that you can receive a 25% discount on your SDA membership for this year? All you have to do is renew by March 1!

If you are a district and you renew your membership by March 1, 2026 (and pay by July 1, 2026), you will receive a 25% discount! It's that easy!

If you are an associate member and are interested in a booth at this year's SDA Annual Conference, make sure you renew by mid-February so that you are all set before the exhibitor sign-up opens in a few weeks (please see page 12 for the exact date).

Plus, don't forget that your SDA membership comes with an added benefit: access to the National Special Districts Association. This national membership provides additional resources, support, and networking opportunities at a national level. NSDA also has grant funding options (please refer to <https://www.nationalspecialdistricts.org> for more information).

To begin the quick renewal process, simply go online to the SDA website at www.sdaco.org (if you are 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. (And if you don't remember your login and/or password, please don't create a new account; just give us a call and we can get you all squared away.)

Don't delay; go online and renew today!

DON'T DELAY!

Spencer Fane is the law firm where your leaders work with our leaders. With over 120 combined years of special district experience in Colorado, we can handle all of your district's legal needs. Advancing the interests of your district is our priority.



... contributing to a cleaner, safer Colorado through low-cost loans to governmental entities for all types of water infrastructure projects.

Call 303-830-1550 or e-mail info@cwrpda.com | www.cwrpda.com

Finance & Accounting | Capital Infrastructure & Facilities Maintenance | District Management & Administration



From shaping communities to building futures, we guide special districts through every stage.

Discover your custom solution with us today.

Colorado & Utah | 970.669.3611 | www.PCGI.com

MAKING A DIFFERENCE
in People's Lives & Their Environment

TST Infrastructure
CONSULTING ENGINEERS

www.TSTInfrastructure.com
303-799-5197
Greenwood Village, CO 80111

PLANNING. ENGINEERING. CONSTRUCTION. MANAGEMENT. OPERATIONS.

The Future of Passenger Rail Service on the Front Range

By Susan M. Thornton, MS

One topic of discussion at the December 2025 Colorado Cooperation meeting (see page 6 for more details) was the future of passenger rail service on the Front Range. The Front Range Passenger Rail District (FRPRD), which was established by the General Assembly in 2021, is the successor to the Southwest Chief and Front Range Passenger Rail Commission.

Sal Pace, General Manager of the district who was hired by the district's Board, noted that five million people now live along Colorado's Front Range. With three million more expected by 2050, he asked rhetorically, "Will Colorado's roads become impassable? Will air quality further deteriorate? Or is there a viable alternative on the horizon?"

Pace says that alternative could be the FRPRD.

Fort Collins to Pueblo—with Seven Stops In-Between

The project would bring roundtrip rail service from Fort Collins to Pueblo six times each day by 2035, Pace said, using Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) rail's right of way. Passenger trains would travel at up to 79 miles per hour without delays from weather, vehicle crashes, or road repairs.

Stops are planned at stations in Fort Collins, Loveland, Longmont, Boulder, Denver, Littleton, Douglas County, Colorado Springs, and Pueblo. Castle Rock has said "no" to having a stop in its community, but Sterling Ranch wants one and the Denver Broncos also want one for their stadium.

Advantages of a Passenger Rail Line

Pace told participants at the conference that the district would bring several advantages to Colorado. Among these, it would reduce travel



New Mexico is one of 30 states that has already established passenger rail service similar to the project proposed by the Front Range Passenger Rail District.

times from northern to southern Colorado. Currently, on an average workday, I-25 experiences eight or more hours of congestion and is closed every three to four days.

The passenger rail service will also provide new workforce opportunities and will boost local economies along the Front Range, Pace said.

In addition, Pace noted that transportation is the largest contributor to air pollution in Colorado. The FRPRD will reduce auto congestion and road repair costs, while lowering pollution levels, he said, promising that the service would be "affordable, reliable, and efficient."

Three Phases for the Project

Pace observed that the project is currently in Phase 1, which includes planning with BNSF, the Colorado Department of Transportation, the Regional Transportation District, regional planning organizations, the 13 counties along I-25, and local communities.

Pace said that passenger service would be expanded in Phase 2 to Winter Park, and then in Phase 3, it would take passengers to and from Steamboat Springs. Ultimately, the service would go from Wyoming to New Mexico, he said.

"Our goal is to prove that each step works and then go to the

voters for a sales tax" to operate the system, Pace said.

The estimated cost of Phase 1, Pace said, is \$1.3 million. For Phase 2, it is \$600,000, and for Phase 3, it is \$1.1 million. The sales tax—which is anticipated to be 0.4 percent—would be applied only in the special district that would run along its route.

Chris Nevitt, Chairman of the FRPRD Board, says he anticipates that there will be opposition in some quarters to the sales tax.

However, Nevitt also states that discussions with constituents along the proposed passenger service line show that "people are hungry to have alternative ways to get up and down the Front Range without taking their cars." He believes the passenger service is something voters will be very excited to support.

Some 30 states have already established passenger rail service, according to Pace, including New Mexico; Virginia, where passenger ridership is "at an all-time high;" and Michigan, where Pace said the passenger rail service is growing "faster than anticipated."

Pace estimates that a special district taxing vote will come no later than 2026, with passenger rail becoming operational no later than January of 2029. ▶



The Colorado Cooperation Conference

A Unique Gathering of Statewide Thought Leaders

By Donna Alengi and Susan M. Thornton, MS

Editor's Note: The most recent Colorado Cooperation Conference was held in December at CSU Pueblo, and SDA was thrilled to once again sponsor this exceptional event. SDA has been involved with Colorado Cooperation for many years, including during the time when Evan Goulding was SDA's Executive Director and Donna Alengi was the Deputy Executive Director.

In fact, Donna wrote an interesting story about Colorado Cooperation's history in the January 2014 issue of SDA News which we wanted to share again this year (sadly, a few people who are referenced in this story have since passed away, including Tom Clark and Jerry Groszold). The following article includes Donna's original story followed by an update on the most recent meeting from Susan Thornton, who has participated in the meetings for several years as well.

Here is a riddle for you: "Can regional cooperation occur when a large group of community leaders come together without expecting solutions?" Well, before we give you the answer to the riddle it might be helpful to give you a little background.

Since the mid-1990s, Colorado business leaders, legislators, and local government leaders have met twice a year to discuss some of the largest issues that Colorado has faced, including:

- » Water
- » Tax reform
- » Public policy
- » Tourism
- » Education
- » Transportation
- » Economic development
- » Fiscal responsibility

However, the group's focus has been on learning about what these issues mean to people from all across Colorado. As the dialogue at each meeting progresses, they hear different perspectives and points of view, and each person who attends has a chance to discuss what is happening in their communities.

No one area of the state has more influence; no one issue has more importance than the other as agendas were, and are, created with a broad overview to include rural and metro representation.

Sounds intriguing doesn't it? It is, mostly because of an organization, or as it is defined by some who attend, the unorganized Colorado Cooperation. It has no Board of Directors, no membership requirement, and is nonpartisan. Those attending pay a modest fee, with sponsorship support from participating individuals and

organizations. And the meetings are put together by volunteers.

The group was the brainchild of then Pueblo City Council President Mel Takaki. He ran the idea past his childhood friend from Pueblo, Bill Hybl at the El Pomar Foundation, and subsequently John Lay at the Denver Chamber, [then] Senator Tillie Bishop, and then Denver Mayor Wellington Webb.

"I wasn't at the first Colorado Cooperation meeting, but I did attend the second and because I value the conversations and participation, I've been attending almost every year since," said Tom Clark, [former] CEO of the Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation. "It has always been a mystery how things come together with just the right mix of people, and an even bigger mystery is the give and take that happens at these get-togethers. The discussions have always considered 'what is best for Colorado.' Many of the people involved have had changes in careers and positions (including me), but their devotion to Colorado never changes or waivers."

Donna Alengi, SDA's [former] Deputy Executive Director said, "Dave Ferrill, Tom Clark, and I worked together at the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce many years ago, and I felt honored when I was invited to my first Colorado Cooperation nineteen years ago. I in turn invited my boss at the time, Evan Goulding, who made presentations on TABOR and tax policy."

Alengi continued, "I understand the unique set of circumstances that Colorado has because of the mountains and the way development occurred. Colorado Cooperation represents all of Colorado; early in my career with SDA, I thought of Vail as the western slope. Club 20 and Action 22 (regional advocacy groups) were quick to set me straight as was Tillie Bishop. With 38 years of service in elected office, 28 in the Colorado Legislature, and four as a Mesa County Commissioner, he was definitely a person who

understood the issues that Colorado faced. Tillie was critical to the process, as was Jerry Groszold, Colorado Tourism Hall of Fame inductee and an inductee in the Colorado Business Hall of Fame and the U.S. Ski Hall of Fame. Jerry was also one of the fathers of Colorado's tourism industry. The strength of the group is the level of equality...the uniting factor is each participant is a link, neither more nor less important than all the rest."

According to Jerry Groszold, "Colorado Cooperation provides a lively forum and while no formal action is taken, collaboration and regionalism prevail. Each meeting moves forward with critical thinking while recognizing that Colorado is diverse; there are many different perspectives, sometimes tied to which side of the mountain you are on."

John Lay noted that regionalism, education, and quality of life are always first and foremost as the agendas are created and conversations are elevated to discussions.

Some of Colorado's most difficult issues have been examined at Colorado Cooperation. For example, early conversations about a proposed regional airport were seen by some as a way to kill off smaller airports in Colorado and Wyoming. Through the phenomenal direct and healthy discussions at Colorado Cooperation, Denver International Airport was seen as a way to bring tourism and business to Colorado without harming our neighboring transportation centers. The 'Brown Cloud' and the development of FASTRACKS and E470 all surfaced as discussion items before they made their way to the ballot.

SDA's Executive Director [now CEO] Ann Terry said, "SDA attends Colorado Cooperation as a way to foster collaboration and regionalism, and to spread the word that local governments work. Special districts contribute to Colorado as no other group can through local representation."

Therefore, the answer to the

Continued on page 9



SDA attends Colorado Cooperation as a way to foster collaboration and regionalism, and to spread the word that local governments work.

—Ann Terry, SDA CEO



COMMUNITY RESOURCE SERVICES



(303) 381-4960 • www.crsocolorado.com

Providing cost-effective, customized
management and accounting services

Over 200 Clients & Growing!



ICENOGLE SEAVER POGUE

A Professional Corporation
Attorneys at Law

Serving Colorado Special Districts & Other Political Subdivisions

4725 South Monaco Street, Suite 360, Denver, Colorado 80237
www.isp-law.com | 303.292.9100

GMS
INC
CONSULTING
ENGINEERS

Water

Supply
Treatment
Storage
Distribution

Wastewater

Collection
Lift Stations
Force Mains
Treatment

Funding Assistance

Grant & Funding Assistance
Feasibility Studies

Drainage

Hydrology
Detention
Conveyance Systems

Facilities Management

GIS Mapping
Operations Consultation

Utility Consultants

Municipalities
Special Districts
Non-Profits

Utilities

Planning
Permitting

GMS Inc.

Serving Colorado and Kansas

(719) 475-2935

Colorado Springs, CO

jmeyer@gmsengr.com

riddle is: “Can regional cooperation occur when a large group of community leaders come together without expecting solutions? Yes, if you have dedicated people who are willing to put personalities aside for principles, passion, and integrity to provide a better way of life for Coloradans.”

The Original Work of the Group Continues

Colorado Cooperation has continued to host gatherings in different parts of the state twice a year, with the most recent event being held in December of 2025 at CSU Pueblo (in fact, this was the group’s 53rd meeting). SDA has long been a sponsor of the conference, and in December, other sponsors included the El Pomar Foundation, the Boettcher Foundation, Common Spirit, the Greater Pueblo Chamber of Commerce, and the Pueblo Community Health Center.

Topics discussed at the most recent conference included:

- » Rural economic development
- » The impact of AI on education
- » Energy production and transmission
- » Rank choice voting
- » A legislative update
- » Suicide prevention
- » Transportation

Dave Ferrill, former Regional Affairs Director for Mayor John Hickenlooper and Governor Hickenlooper’s Economic Development Office, was one of the original organizers of the conference. He says that while the conference still does not pursue specific outcomes, the social and professional networking the event has encouraged among thought leaders has “resulted in several worthwhile projects.” These include the Colorado Economic Futures Panel issue series hosted by the University of Denver as well as the statewide Building a Better Colorado (BBCO) conversations, which have led to several

amendments to Colorado’s constitution.

The BBCO initiative was organized by Reeves Brown, former Governor John Hickenlooper Cabinet member and a longtime active leader of Colorado Cooperation.

Wide Range of Diverse Interests

Brown says that conference participants continue to include representatives with a wide range of diverse interests and backgrounds. What they all have in common, he states, is “a passion for a positive future for Colorado.”

Attendees generally include representatives of the Governor’s Office; Cabinet members; local and county elected officials; leaders of regional organizations like Club 20, Action Colorado, Pro 15, and the Metro Mayors Caucus; chambers of commerce and economic development organizations; the State Transportation Commission; higher education and nonprofit communities; and water, transportation and agricultural interests.

Attendance Encouraged

Ann Terry has been delighted to continue SDA’s involvement with Colorado Cooperation through the years. “The Colorado Cooperation Conference has been a unique and valuable gathering of thought leaders for decades, and we are pleased to represent special districts as these conversations develop and evolve. We are especially excited that the events are now open to everyone who shares the same desire for positive dialogue for the success of our state.”

People who care about and are interested in the future of Colorado are encouraged to attend the next Colorado Cooperation Conference which will be held on the afternoon of Friday, May 8 and the morning of Saturday, May 9, 2026 at Colorado Mesa University in Grand Junction.

To learn more or to reserve a spot, contact Coordinator Dianne Brown at coloradocooperation@gmail.com. 🍷



Meet a bank that
customizes
special district
banking solutions
for your unique
needs.



**Western Alliance
Bank®**

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.

westernalliancebank.com/associations

Western Alliance Bank, Member FDIC.



Discover a bank that knows your industry as well as you do and experience the white-glove service you deserve.

**Explore our high-touch service,
backed by powerful technology
and banking solutions.**

WA ConnectLive¹ Software Integration

ePay Portal for Homeowners

Connect Portal with SSO Access

Deposit & Investment Solutions²

No-Fee Lockbox Services³

Lending Solutions⁴



David Ford-Coates

Vice President,
HOA & Special District Banking
(720) 885-1444
dfordcoates@westernalliancebank.com



Tim Bryan

Vice President,
Special District Banking
(720) 987-3945
timothy.bryan@westernalliancebank.com

**We have the tools to
help you...**

Engineering & Mapping
Facility Development
District Management
Accounting & Finance Services
Planning
Administrative Support



**Mulhern
MRE, Inc.**

Managing Resources thru Engineering

Mulhern MRE, Inc. | 303.649.9857
Visit our website at www.mulhernmre.com



We Want to Hear from You...

Submit Your Ideas for Speakers and Topics for the 2026 SDA Annual Conference!

The Call for Speakers and Topics for the 2026 SDA Annual Conference opened at the end of January, and it's the perfect time to send us all your ideas!

Planning for the 2026 SDA Annual Conference is well underway, and now we need your help! As always, one of the most important pieces of the planning process is laying out the schedule of break-out sessions. And this is where you come in!

As you are thinking about what should be included in this year's breakout sessions, here are a few things that might help get those ideas flowing:

- » What are the hot topics that districts need to know more about?
- » Is there a general subject that you could use a refresher course on (and maybe others could, too)?
- » Are you an expert who has suggestions on important topics to present?
- » Are there successful projects or case studies from which others could learn?

Whatever ideas you have, big or small, we want to hear from you!

The process is super easy. Simply go to the SDA website at www.sdaco.org and fill out the online form to share your suggestions for a breakout session, recommend a great speaker, or both!

Please remember that the more details you can provide with your suggestion, the better. We strive to bring you topics that are the most pertinent and relevant to the special district world so the more information we have about your idea, the easier it is to see if it might work for the Conference.

As always, please call our office at 303-863-1733 if you have any questions. **And make sure to mark your calendars to join us at the Keystone Conference Center, September 15-17!**

We look forward to receiving your submissions! 🍌



STREAMLINE

Shatterproof Leadership

Lauren Sisler



Attention, Associate Members!

Exhibitor Space for the 2026 SDA Annual Conference Opens February 18!

Do you want to be an exhibitor at this year's SDA Annual Conference, September 15-17 at the Keystone Conference Center?

Then make sure you mark your calendar and watch your emails on **Wednesday, February 18!** That's the day registration opens for exhibitor space, and you won't want to miss it!

But, don't forget the most important piece: make

sure you renew your SDA membership by mid-February so that you are all set before the exhibitor sign-up opens.

This annual event is always an incredible opportunity to interact with SDA members from across the state, and the exhibitor space typically sells out in less than two weeks. So, you will need to act fast if you would like a space! 🍌

We'll See You in June at the SDA Annual Regional Workshops!

We will once again be traveling across the state during the month of June to bring you our ever-popular Regional Workshops!

We are finalizing our dates and locations, but much like last year, we are planning to hold the workshops in a variety of locations

over the course of several weeks.

This lively and educational training applies to all types of districts and is sure to provide a wealth of beneficial information for your district. We will cover a wide variety of important topics such as minutes, meeting formats, conflicts of interest,

public records, and much more.

Whether you are a Board member or district employee, a seasoned professional or brand new to your position, we will have something for everyone.

We are working on all the details so stay tuned for more!

Grants Now Available for ADA Accessible Website Compliance and PDF Remediation!

We are thrilled to announce that we are rolling out a brand new grant program to support small districts in creating ADA accessible websites!

Our program offers a one-time reimbursement of up to \$300 in costs for website accessibility services, including PDF

conversions and/or remediations. Districts with operating budgets of \$250,000 or less are eligible, and one reimbursement is allowed per district.

“We know the hard work that has been dedicated to bringing websites and documents into compliance, and we are pleased

to be able to assist with this process in any way we can,” said Ann Terry, SDA’s CEO.

For more information, including the reimbursement form, please visit our website at www.sdaco.org.

Standard IRS Mileage Rate Increases for 2026

The Internal Revenue Service has issued the 2026 optional standard mileage rates used to calculate the deductible costs of operating vehicles for business, charitable, or medical purposes. As units of local government, special districts do not need to calculate deductions for income tax purposes. However, many districts follow the standard IRS business mileage rate to reimburse Board members and employees for miles driven for district business.

Additionally, the optional standard mileage rate may be used to calculate the deductible costs of operating vehicles for moving purposes for certain active-duty members of the Armed Forces, and now, under the One, Big, Beautiful Bill, certain members of the intelligence community.

Beginning January 1, 2026, the standard mileage rates for the use of a car, van, pickup, or panel truck are:

- » 72.5 cents per mile driven for business use (up 2.5 cents from 2025)
- » 20.5 cents per mile driven for medical purposes (down .5 cents from 2025)
- » 20.5 cents per mile driven for moving purposes for certain active-duty members of the Armed Forces (and now certain members of the intelligence community) (down .5 cents from 2025)
- » 14 cents per mile driven in service of charitable organizations (the same as in 2025)

These rates apply to fully electric and hybrid automobiles as well as gasoline and diesel-powered vehicles.

While the mileage rate for charitable use is set by statute, the mileage rate for business use is based on an annual study of the fixed and variable costs of operating an automobile. The rate for medical and moving purposes, meanwhile, is based on only the variable costs from the annual study.

Under the law, taxpayers cannot claim a miscellaneous itemized deduction for unreimbursed employee travel expenses, except for certain educator expenses. However, deductions for expenses that are deductible in determining adjusted gross income remain allowable, such as for certain members of a reserve component of the Armed Forces, certain state and local government officials, certain performing artists, and eligible educators. Alternatively, eligible educators may claim an itemized deduction for certain unreimbursed employee travel expenses. In addition, only taxpayers who are members of the military on active duty or certain members of the intelligence community may claim a deduction for moving expenses incurred while relocating under orders to a permanent change of station.

Use of the standard mileage rates is optional. Taxpayers may instead choose to calculate the actual costs of using their vehicle.

Taxpayers using the standard mileage rate for a vehicle they own and use for business must choose to use the rate in the first year the automobile is available for business use. Then, in later years, they can choose to use the standard mileage rate or actual expenses.

For a leased vehicle, taxpayers using the standard mileage rate must employ that method for the entire lease period, including renewals.

Notice-2026-10, posted on irs.gov, contains the optional 2026 standard mileage rates as well as the maximum automobile cost used to calculate mileage reimbursement allowances under a fixed-and variable rate plan. The notice also provides the maximum fair market value of employer-provided automobiles first made available to employees for personal use in 2026 for which employers may calculate mileage allowances using a cents-per-mile valuation rule or the fleet-average-valuation rule.

—Internal Revenue Service



Cash Management for Colorado's Special Districts Since 1988

Colorado Surplus Asset Fund Trust

Keeping the 'Local' in Local Government Investment Pool

- **AAAmf-rated** CSAFE Cash: Daily Liquidity
- **AAAf/S1-rated** CSAFE Core: Next-Day Liquidity

This is not an offer to sell or the solicitation of an offer to buy shares in CSAFE. Investments in CSAFE are not FDIC-insured. CSAFE is not a bank. Shares of CSAFE are distributed by Pidgeon Public Advisors, LLC, member FINRA.



www.csafe.org
brent.turner@csafe.org
720.879.1318

BUILDING AND PROTECTING COLORADO COMMUNITIES.



Providing general and specialized legal services for special district formation, board governance, public infrastructure development, contracting and finance, elections, employment matters, water law, and general operation of metropolitan, water, sanitation, fire protection, emergency and hospital, and recreation districts and other public service entities.

Shareholders

Paul R. Cockrel
Evan D. Ela
Linda M. Glesne
David A. Greher
Matthew P. Ruhland
Joseph W. Norris

Associates

Madison P. Plasencia
Dakota C. Spence-Zurek
Glory S. Schmidt

Paralegals

Micki Mills
Sarah Luetjen
Kristin Herndon
Angela de la Garza Eckle

44 Cook Street, Suite 620, Denver, CO 80206
www.cegrlaw.com • 303-218-7200

Experience • Integrity • Commitment

**Seter, Vander Wall
& Mielke, P.C.**

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

Representing and
advocating for
local governments

303.770.2700 | www.svwpc.com | svw@svwpc.com

7400 E. Orchard Road, Suite 3300, Greenwood Village Colorado 80111

**PROVIDING WATER AND WASTEWATER SERVICES
FOR SPECIAL DISTRICTS IN COLORADO,
NATIONWIDE, AND INTERNATIONALLY**

303.431.6100

MARTIN/MARTIN
CONSULTING ENGINEERS

martinmartin.com

Districts Make the Difference Video Contest is Back!

It's once again time for students to get out in the community, learn about their local special districts, and create an engaging and informative video highlighting those districts! And did we mention there are cash prizes available for the winners?

This annual student video contest is operated through the National Special Districts Association's public awareness campaign called "Districts Make the Difference." The contest is geared towards high school students and is designed to encourage young people to engage with local government and enhance their civics education.

For the competition, high school students (grades 9-12) are asked to submit a fun, educational, and short video (60 seconds max) that provides a glimpse into the essential services provided by districts and highlights the ways special districts "Make the Difference" in their local communities.

The top ten finalists will be chosen by a panel of judges from Districts Make the Difference. From there,

public voting will determine the final winners who will be awarded the following scholarships:

- » \$2,000 for the first-place winner
- » \$1,000 for the second-place winner
- » \$500 for the third-place winner

In addition, \$500 will be awarded to each winning student's teacher of choice!

"This video contest fosters an awareness of local government at a young age and encourages students to gain an understanding of the vital role special districts play in their communities," said SDA CEO and NSDA Board Chair Ann Terry.

To watch past years' video submissions and learn more about the guidelines for this year's contest, please visit:

<https://www.districtsmakethedifference.org/video-contest>.

The deadline to submit videos is March 31, 2026.



1st Place: \$2,000 Scholarship
2nd Place: \$1,000 Scholarship
3rd Place: \$500 Scholarship

win \$2000
VIDEO
contest



Providing Special District Management and Accounting Services for Over 30 Years
Evergreen, CO | **303.674.3379** | SimonsonAndAssociates.com | mail@jsimonson.com



450 E. 17th Avenue, Suite 400
Denver, CO 80203
303-592-4380
www.SpecialDistrictLaw.com

RELIABILITY. EFFICIENCY. CREATIVITY. DELIVERY.

Blending Innovation & Tradition **Since 1955**

Sustainable water/wastewater engineering , management, and operations & maintenance solutions for future generations.



Wade Wheatlake, Project Manager
wade.wheatlake@merrick.com

www.merrick.com



County
Health Pool



A Better Healthcare Choice for *all local governments*



Medical



Dental



Vision



Life



COBRA



HIPAA

Take control of rising health care costs by pooling with fellow entities. This proven, cost-saving solution has been meeting the insurance needs of local governments since 1984.

For more information or a quote, contact:

Marissa Gaertner
CHP Benefits Manager
(303) 861-0507
mgaertner@ctsi.org

County Technical Services Inc.
800 Grant Street, Suite 400
Denver, Colorado 80203



Making the Most of Your CSD Pool Membership With... **Safety Consultations and Trainings**

Guest article by the Colorado Special Districts Property and Liability Pool

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 safety consultation and training services, which allow us to help members evaluate potential losses and make recommendations that provide security and knowledge where it's needed most—all at no cost.

Our safety experts are passionate about **helping members develop policies, practices, and implementation procedures** on site, through email, or over the phone. The best part? It's ***all included*** in your membership.

Safety Consultations

Our on-site consultations focus on areas of liability, property, workers' compensation, health and safety, regulatory agencies, and process controls including the following:

- » Incident trending data
- » Updated information on rules, regulations, and requirements
- » Audits, loss analysis, and written reports
- » Playground inspections

Trainings and Inspections

We offer an extensive catalog of onsite training, including CDOT flagger training, confined space training, drug and alcohol recognition, excavation safety, hazard recognition, lock out/tag out demonstrations, trenching and shoring, ergonomics assessments, fall protection training, and much more.

Make sure you and your staff know what to do in order to prevent the next emergency or workplace crisis.

If you are interested in a safety consultation or training, send us a request at **csdpool.org/connect**. To learn more, visit our website at **www.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**. 🍷

Stay Ahead with the 2026 SDA Legislative Briefings!

Are you looking for an easy and convenient way to stay up to date on the latest legislative issues for special districts? Then make sure to mark your calendars to join us for the SDA Legislative Briefings!

The 2026 Legislative Session officially convened on Wednesday, January 14, and our Legislative Briefings are in full swing.

These briefings take place via Zoom, and all SDA members are welcome to listen in as we review the current hot topics and issues we have been working on at the Capitol. Plus, we will also include updates on federal legislation.

The schedule of briefings for the entire Session is as follows:

- » Tuesday, February 10 at 12:00 pm
- » Tuesday, February 24 at 12:00 pm
- » Tuesday, March 10 at 12:00 pm
- » Tuesday, March 24 at 12:00 pm
- » Tuesday, April 7 at 12:00 pm
- » Tuesday, April 21 at 12:00 pm
- » Tuesday, May 5 at 12:00 pm

Please visit the SDA website at www.sdaco.org for more information and for the Zoom links to register for each meeting.

Whether you would like to listen every time or just once in a while, this is an easy way to stay informed on all the current issues (please note that we will not be recording the briefings).

In addition, you will also be able to access a wide variety of legislative information on the SDA website. Here you will find the full Legislative Briefing schedule, the bill tracker, and any other pertinent legislative update or reports, all in one easy-to-find place. This added convenience is a quick and helpful way for members to stay up to date with the Legislative Session.

As always, please contact the SDA office at 303-863-1733 and ask for Ann Terry or Michael Valdez if you have general legislative questions. If you have questions about the Legislative Briefings, please ask for Anthony Sandoval.



SDA member benefit! No charge to attend!

COLLINS | COLE WINN | ULMER



COLORADO'S LOCAL GOVERNMENT ATTORNEYS
Statewide Experience. Local Knowledge.

📞 720.617.0080 ✉ info@cogovlaw.com 🌐 www.cogovlaw.com

Innovation ~ Creativity ~ Fiscal Responsibility ~ Integrity



Water & Wastewater Treatment Solutions



Serving Colorado & Wyoming

Maintenance ~ Operations ~ Management

Special Services ~ Problem Solving

Call 866-333-9383 or visit www.RECinc.net



Scan this QR Code with your 'smart' phone to visit us on the Web

Enroll your district in a safety training.

Led by our safety experts. All included in your CSD Pool membership.

**CDOT
FLAGGER
TRAINING**

**SAFETY
COMMITTEE
SUPPORT**

**FALL
PROTECTION
TRAINING**

**EXCAVATION
SAFETY**

**ERGONOMICS
ASSESSMENT**

**CONFINED
SPACE
TRAINING**

**LOCK OUT/
TAG OUT
DEMOS**

**TRENCHING
AND SHORING**



csdpool.org/safety-consulting



**Colorado Special Districts
Property and Liability Pool**