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Designed by Emmett Jordan



*We would like to wish you
and your loved ones a very Happy
Thanksgiving! We are thankful for
your ongoing support and for the
opportunity to work with all of you as
you continue to provide the best possible
services to your local communities.*

2022 SDA Membership Renewal Opening Soon!

The 2022 SDA membership renewals will open in mid-November so watch your email and the SDA website for all the information.

Did you know that if you are a district and you renew by March 1, 2022 (and pay by July 1, 2022), you will receive a 25% discount?

Don't miss out! Renewing is quick and easy. Once

the renewals open, simply go online to the SDA website at www.sdaco.org (and remember to have your 2022 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.



THRILLED TO BE BACK IN-PERSON FOR THE 2021 SDA ANNUAL CONFERENCE!

SDA's Executive Director, Ann Terry, welcomes everyone on Tuesday morning.



The Honor Guard from Summit Fire & EMS Authority conducted the Presentation of the Colors.



Tuesday's Welcome Breakfast included the singing of the National Anthem.



Kenyon Salo incorporated a ladder (carefully!) into his opening keynote presentation on Tuesday.

We were thrilled to be back in-person again for this year's SDA Annual Conference, September 14-16 at the Keystone Conference Center! We had over **700 people** join us in **Keystone** with another **250 people** participating on our virtual platform!

This year we offered **45 breakout sessions** during the course of the three-day event, featuring over **60 different speakers!** These speakers were from both district members and associate members, and their sessions covered a wide-variety of topics, from very technical subjects to overarching issues that apply to all district types.

Our **four keynote speakers** were both educational and thought-provoking (please see page 10-11 for the full run-down of their presentations). **Kenyon Salo** kicked off the whole event with his upbeat and energetic presentation, "**The Bucket List Life**" (some of which he even gave from atop a ladder!). He set the perfect tone for the rest of Conference!

With our new hybrid event this year, 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



Tuesday's lunch included a surprise singing and dancing performance to celebrate SDA's 46th anniversary!



The surprise performance highlighted this year's Platinum Sponsors in a very unique way!



SDA Executive Director Ann Terry joins in the fun with the dancers at Tuesday's lunch!



We were excited to once again welcome the local Honor Guard for the Presentation of the Colors at Tuesday's breakfast.

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 for a full year!**

We once again had tremendous support from all of our sponsors and exhibitors (please see page 19 for the full listing). In addition to our **17 Platinum Sponsors**, we had a total of **11 Gold, 10 Silver, and 5 Bronze Sponsors** as well as **23 booth exhibitors!**

At the **Welcome Breakfast** on Tuesday morning we were joined by members of the **Honor Guard from Summit Fire & EMS Authority for the Presentation of the Colors**. We also enjoyed a beautiful rendition of the **National Anthem**.

At **Tuesday's Award Luncheon**, we had the honor of recognizing this year's **seven very deserving districts, Board members, and managers** (please see page 13-17 for the full

write-up on each winner). We moved the Awards Luncheon to the first day of Conference this year so that everyone could celebrate and recognize the winners throughout our time together.

To celebrate SDA's 46th anniversary, we also had a special surprise performance from the **Imprint Group at Tuesday's lunch!** This highly entertaining group of singers and dancers took popular songs and adapted the lyrics to highlight the services of all of our Platinum Sponsors. This was a unique treat to mark our anniversary, and a fun time was had by everyone!

On Tuesday afternoon, attendees enjoyed the nice, autumn weather on the beautiful patio at the Conference Center before the Opening Night Extravaganza. It was the perfect way to unwind after the busy day and even get in a few rounds of cornhole and Battleship on the oversized, outdoor games!

This year's Opening Night Extravaganza featured a DJ, an emcee, and

Continued on page 7

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The Afternoon Break on Tuesday featured oversized, outdoor games, like Battleship!



One of the hilarious audience challenges at the Opening Night Extravaganza was "do your best catwalk strut," and this one was perfect!

two rounds of trivia bingo.

Mixed in with the trivia questions were chances for audience "challenges" on the stage in front of everyone! These ranged from "do your best catwalk strut" to "perform the Nutcracker ballet." Everyone who participated did an amazing job with their challenges, and the audience was rolling with laughter throughout the night! Combined with the witty banter of the DJ and emcee, the Extravaganza was a huge hit!

On Wednesday afternoon, the Colorado Special Districts Property and Liability Pool's Annual Membership Meeting featured guest speakers Dave Chatfield from NetDiligence and Barbara Biggs from Roxborough Water and Sanitation District. Dave and Barbara discussed the real life ransomware attack that affected Roxborough's operations in 2020.

Continued on page 9



Adam Johnsen from the Colorado Special Districts Property and Liability Pool presented two beneficial breakout sessions.



Another audience challenge was to "perform the Nutcracker ballet," and once again our lucky participant delivered!



Dave Chatfield from NetDiligence was one of the keynote speakers at the Colorado Special Districts Property and Liability Pool's Annual Membership Meeting.



Wednesday morning's keynote speaker, Dave Mitchell, was witty and informative.



Perennial favorite Randall McKinnon provided the perfect live entertainment for Wednesday's Boots and BBQ event.



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Navy SEAL Commander Rorke Denver was a huge hit at Wednesday's lunch.



Bingo trivia was just part of the fun at the Opening Night Extravaganza!

New this year was the **Boots and BBQ event on Wednesday evening**. It was a stunning evening on the patio with **delicious BBQ and fantastic live entertainment** with perennial favorite, **Randall McKinnon**. The smell of the BBQ had everyone's mouths watering all afternoon. This was another perfect way to enjoy the sunshine, fresh air, and time reconnecting with colleagues from the special district world.

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

the **handy lunch bags that were a parting gift from SDA**. Many people also sat outside with their new friends and relaxed before leaving Keystone.

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

And now we can't wait to do it all again in 2022! Our shift in days of the week worked well so **mark your calendars and plan to join us Tuesday, September 13-Thursday, September 15 back up in Keystone!** 🍌



Each attendee received an SDA lunch bag at Thursday's Grab-and-Go lunch.



Alex Terlecky and Ana Holdren were among the staff on hand to answer questions at the Colorado Special Districts Property and Liability Pool's booth.



2021 Conference Keynote Speakers Are Perfect Complement to Breakout Sessions!

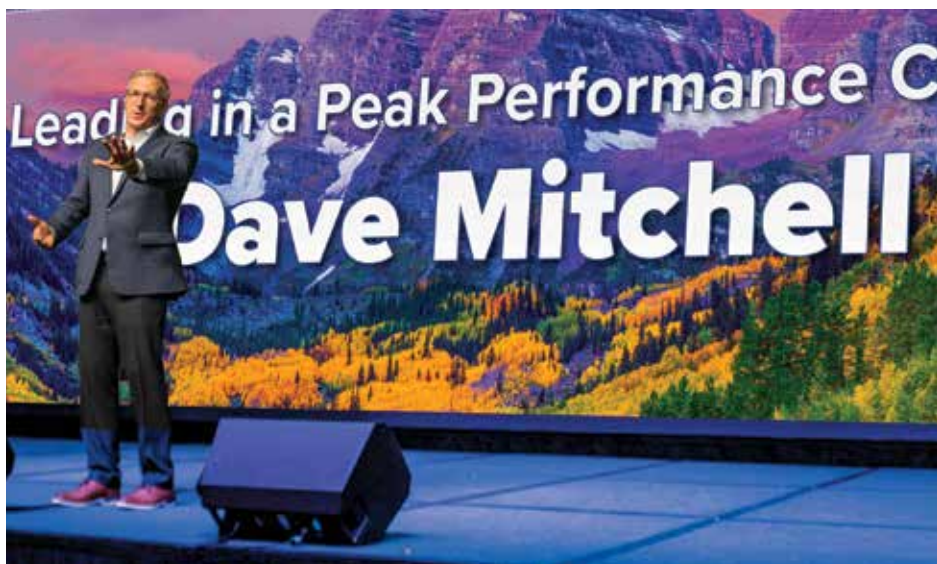
The keynote speakers at this year's Annual Conference were both inspiring and educational. Combined with the 45 breakout sessions that were offered over the course of the three days, these speakers rounded out the Conference perfectly.

Kenyon Salo (above and below) kicked off this year's Conference on Tuesday morning with his high energy and thought-provoking presentation, "**The Bucket List Life.**" With his own fascinating stories and dedicated time for audience members to connect with each other, Kenyon's engaging discussion was the perfect way to get this year's Conference going and celebrate being together in-person again!





At Tuesday's Awards Luncheon, we not only honored this year's annual award winners, but we were also treated to a singing and dancing performance by the Imprint Group! This special surprise was a unique way to celebrate SDA's 46th anniversary and to recognize all of this year's Platinum Sponsors. Everyone had a great time hearing the lyrics to popular songs adapted to highlight the services of each sponsor!



Wednesday morning started off on a high note with **Dave Mitchell's** witty and informative presentation, **"Leading in a Peak Performance Culture."** Dave discussed a variety of tools and strategies that can be implemented to help districts succeed with both their employees and their citizens.

On Thursday morning, **Carol Hedges's** presentation, **"More Cuts in Property Tax Funding: Is this a Trend?,"** examined the ballot measure that proposes to reduce assessment rates for all property tax supported districts. Drawing from her wealth of knowledge and astute understanding of the complex issues involved, Carol also discussed the legislative action to address the potential impact of such a measure and if we can expect more of these state ballot measures in the future.



Navy SEAL Commander Rorke Denver's insightful discussion at Wednesday's lunch provided attendees a first-hand look into the valuable leadership lessons that can be learned from combat patrols and applied in everyday life. **"Call to Lead"** was both entertaining and powerful, including the movie clips from "Act of Valor," which starred Rorke and fellow Navy SEALs. Rorke received a standing ovation, a sure sign of how well he resonated with the audience.



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Congratulations to the 2021 SDA Annual Award Winners!

The 2021 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.



The first award was presented to the **Evergreen Metropolitan District** as the winner of the Colorado Special Districts Property and Liability Pool's **2021 Safety District of the Year Award**. This award highlights the District's dedication to risk management and safety and loss prevention. Throughout their time as a CSD Pool member, Evergreen Metropolitan's consistent progress and commitment to life safety has shown that this recognition is timely and well-deserved.



Next we were pleased to honor this year's two **Collaboration Award** winners, **Grand Fire Protection District No. 1** and **Estes Valley Fire Protection District**.

In late summer and early fall of 2020, two of the largest wildfires in Colorado history roared to life. The Cameron Peak Fire started on August 13 in Larimer County and would grow to a final size of 208,913 acres, making it the largest wildfire in state his-

tory. It destroyed 472 structures, including 231 residences, before finally being contained on December 2. On October 14, the East Troublesome Fire started in Grand County and eventually became Colorado's second largest wildfire at a final size of 193,812 acres. East Troublesome was contained on November 30, destroying 550 structures, including 336 residences, in its wake. Grand Fire Protection District No. 1 and Estes Valley Fire Protection District both played integral roles in their communities during these unprecedented disasters. The sheer size and nature of these mega fires necessitated a large-scale collaboration by a multitude of agencies, resources, and personnel. Even beyond the immediate response to the fires, through previously established successful working relationships and a collaborative approach to planning years before, both of these Districts helped their local communities survive the worst disasters they had ever experienced.

Continued on page 15



SDA Executive Director Ann Terry greets Michael Levy from the Evergreen Metropolitan District as he accepts the 2021 Safety District of the Year award on behalf of the District.



Chief Brad White was thrilled to accept the Collaboration Award on behalf of Grand Fire Protection District No. 1.

Congratulations to the 2021 James T. Walker Leadership Scholarship Winner!

SDA is pleased to congratulate Polly Gallagher, Executive Director of the Grand County Library District, as the 2021 James T. Walker Leadership Scholarship winner! Polly was recognized as this year's winner during the recent SDA Annual Conference.

This leadership scholarship is presented in honor of founding SDA Board Member James T. Walker to an SDA member who demonstrates the Association's high standard of leadership.

Congratulations, Polly!



Ann Terry congratulates Chief David Wolf from Estes Valley Fire Protection District as he accepts the District's Collaboration Award.



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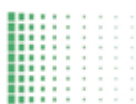
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Carol Plock was all smiles as she accepted her Manager of the Year award.



For this year's **Manager of the Year Award**, we were thrilled to name **Carol Plock from the Health District of Northern Larimer County** as our winner.

Carol has been the Executive Director of the Health District of Northern Larimer County for 27 years. Under Carol's leadership, the Health District has grown from Carol and two employees to over 125 employees, and it is now looked to not only for its high quality and often ground-breaking services, but also for leadership and critical information on the state of health-care in the community.

The Health District currently provides a range of diverse health services, including often unique approaches to dental care, mental health, access to health insurance, and community organization around those complex health issues that no one group can solve alone. When the Health District transitioned from its historic role as a hospital operator to a provider of diverse community health services, Carol helped ensure the agency would always be responding to current unmet community needs by engaging in a continual process of outcome improvement. Under her stewardship, the Health District has conducted a triennial community health assessment to guide program development, a process which includes discussion sessions with local stakeholders and one of the largest ongoing health surveys for a community of its size. Over the years, Health District services have been created, modified, and even eliminated as a result of community health assessment results, pro-



Jeff Babb proudly receives his Board Member of the Year award.

gram evaluation findings, and ongoing conversations with partners about changing local needs.

As unmet needs have been identified, Carol has spearheaded a number of successful collaborative grant applications, as well as community partnerships and alliances, the majority of which have resulted in sustainable programming. Since 1999, the work of one such partnership, the Mental Health and Substance Use Alliance of Larimer County, has resulted in members pooling resources and influence to create a range of new services across the community, and in the dedication of millions of dollars to improve access to behavioral health care across Larimer County.

In addition, Carol has positioned the Health District to be a flexible resource for the community in times of need as has happened during several local crises over the past 25 years. These disasters have included historic and deadly flooding in 1997, where she deployed the agency's mobile health unit to administer tetanus shots, and in 2009 when she entered into a partnership with the local health department to organize mass vaccination clinics for H1N1 and later, meningitis. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Carol worked closely with community partners and Health District staff to identify needs and existing resources for people experiencing homelessness, and then assigned Health District staff to work with local partners to provide isolation, recovery, and quarantine (IRQ) services to those individuals. Throughout these crises, Carol was adept in identify-

ing unmet needs where the Health District could contribute and creating strong relationships with other community leaders.

Carol has boundless faith in the power of cooperative problem solving, both among staff and local stakeholders. She doesn't easily conclude that something can't be done, only that a way to do it has not yet been found.



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

Jeff, who is currently the President of the Board of Directors of Eagle County Health Service District (Eagle County Paramedic Services), has served on the Board for nine years. In May 2013, Western Eagle County Health Service District and Eagle County Ambulance District merged to form Eagle County Paramedic Services. In his role on the Board, Jeff assisted in ushering in this merger and provided valued support and insight during the process. Since that time, the District's revenue budget has increased more than 50% and the fund balance has increased more than 30%. The District now has five response stations and seven 24-hour paramedic crews from Gypsum to Vail to ensure that the community receives efficient and high-quality out-of-hospital care. Jeff was also at the forefront of establishing the District's Capital Projects Fund to plan for the long-term investment in renovating, building, and purchasing new facilities, vehicles, and equipment. In addition, Jeff played a key role in the District's successful de-Gallagherization election and passage of a mill levy increase.

Moreover, Jeff has been a forward-thinking leader for the District. His ability to see the big picture has allowed the District to continue to look for new and better ways to deliver healthcare to the residents of Eagle County through alternative healthcare models, including Community Paramedics and the new ET3 (Emergency Triage, Treat, and Transport) program. Jeff's innovative thinking also assisted the District as they navigated the

Continued on page 16



John Hildebrandt from the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District was honored for his years of dedicated service.

challenges of the COVID pandemic in 2020. Through his working relationship with Vail Resorts, the District was able to hire a COVID surge crew of ski patrol paramedics and EMTs who had been furloughed from the resort and secure discounts on reusable PPE for field staff. Furthermore, thanks to financial foresight, the District was able to tap into reserves and maintain all employees without any pay or benefit cuts. Jeff also encouraged all District employees to think creatively during this unprecedented time which led to the creation of new revenue streams and cost-cutting initiatives.

By fostering a culture of collaboration, listening, and encouraging new ideas, Jeff embodies the same characteristics as the field of EMS, which relies on consistency and experience while at the same time evolving and progressing as new innovations are realized.



This year we also had the opportunity to recognize an individual who has dedicated over two decades of service to his district. We were honored to present a **Years of Dedicated Service Award** to **John Hildebrandt from the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District** in recognition of his ongoing commitment to his district and his community.

John has served on the Board of Directors of the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District for nearly 23 years and is currently the Board President. During his tenure, John has facilitated the consolidation of Tri-Lakes and Woodmoor Fire Protection Districts, and his expertise was instrumental in the successful passage of

two mill levy increases. John's financial leadership has also helped guide the District through challenging fiscal times. Moreover, John's leadership has played a key role in the remodel of a fire station, the purchase of two new fire engines, and in acquiring a second set of personal protective equipment for every firefighter. His passion for budgeting and finance has also helped the District set its finances in order for years to come. John is engaged, supportive, and cares deeply not only for the district, but also for the entire community.



We were pleased to present our final award to the **West Metro Fire Protection District** as the **2021 J. Evan Goulding District of the Year**.

The J. Evan Goulding District of the Year Award was established by the SDA Board of Directors to recognize a district's major accomplishments, series of outstanding efforts, and a steady determination to serve its constituency. This year's winner, the West Metro Fire Protection District, truly exemplifies these qualities.

The West Metro Fire Protection District is a full-service fire district providing structure and wildland fire protection, emergency medical services, advanced life support (ALS) transportation, and special team response (including hazardous materials, water rescue, technical rescue, and wildland firefighting) to over 300,000 people across 108 square miles in both Jefferson and Douglas Counties. In 2020, West Metro responded to 35,356 calls for emergency services.

The District was consolidated from the Lakewood and Bancroft Fire Protection Districts on January 1, 1995. These two fire protection districts were previously managed as the Lakewood/Bancroft Combined Fire Authority from 1990 to 1995. In 1995, the Authority became the West Metro Fire Protection District. The Roxborough Fire Protection District was added to the District in 1998, and in 2016, the District merged with the Wheat Ridge Fire Protection District.

West Metro currently employs 437 people staffing 17 stations, fleet services, facilities maintenance, admin-

istration, a training center, and urban search and rescue. It is governed by a seven-member Board of Directors. Each Board member is elected at large, but represents a specific geographical area within the District.

The District is an accredited agency through the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) and is designated as a Public Protection Class (PPC) 01/1X agency through the Insurance Services Office (ISO). West Metro is one of only 106 fire response agencies in the United States with the distinction of being an accredited agency through CPSE with an ISO Class 1 rating.

The fire service community reaches well beyond District borders, and District staff provide resources to multiple incidents throughout Colorado and the rest of the United States through the deployment of both wildfire and urban search and rescue resources. West Metro is also the sponsoring agency for Colorado Task Force One, one of 28 Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) sponsored urban and search and rescue task forces in the United States.

Moreover, West Metro is committed to bringing more women into the fire rescue service. Together with the Arvada Fire Protection District and Red Rocks Community College, West Metro hosts Camp Ember, which provides training and mentorship from female firefighters to young women interested in the fire service.

One unique element of the District is the multiple platforms for input and feedback. District leadership understands that people are the District's greatest asset and that the District's strength and resilience comes from each individual at the District. In fact, the first strategic priority in West Metro's strategic plan is to "Invest in Our Human Capital."

Through the establishment of multiple strategic planning teams (SPTs), West Metro champions a culture of belonging where everyone has a voice. SPTs cover a range of initiatives such as benefits, apparatus replacement, wellness, and safety. Each SPT is a true collaboration between labor and management with one administrative representative and one union representative co-



Left to right: Members of the Board of Directors of the West Metro Fire Protection District were joined by attorney, Adele Reester; Division Chief Jeremy Metz; and Chief Don Lombardi to accept the District of the Year award.

chairing each team. Every SPT meeting is open to any employee and individuals are encouraged to provide input and perspective. This program has provided a platform for District leadership to actively listen to staff in a nontraditional setting. This leads to continual improvement throughout many District programs, an affirmation of District values, and increased levels of ownership and responsibility in District initiatives.

Due to the nature of emergency service delivery and the extreme environments to which personnel are exposed, the District has made several investments into programs supporting the physical and mental wellness of staff. The District understands that healthy employees are vital in order to

maintain a consistent response capability that continually meets community needs. Because of this understanding, and the District's desire to continually improve, District leadership took a leading role in the creation of the Colorado Firefighter Heart and Cancer Benefits Trust. The Trust helps firefighters and fire agencies contain financial burdens while providing support to firefighters when they face serious health issues.

The District also provides community risk reduction by conducting plan reviews, enforcing code compliance, offering community education programs, and completing fire investigations. The District also hosts a large Family Fire Muster event for citizens which normally draws more than 5,000 people each year.

From its community programs and wildfire assistance to its focus on District firefighters and staff, West Metro demonstrates an ongoing dedication to its vision to be a high quality, responsive, adaptive, learning organization, anticipating and responding to evolving community needs.

The SDA Board of Directors and staff would like to congratulate all of the 2021 award winners! 🏆

*Mark your calendar for the
2022 SDA Annual Conference,
Keystone, September 13-15!*

A Big Thank You to the SDA Annual Conference Volunteers!

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

We would like to take a moment to say thank you to the 2021 Conference volunteers:

- » Rick Chase from Colorado Retirement Association
- » Jim Cox from Summit Fire & EMS Authority
- » Maggie Cox from Summit Fire & EMS Authority
- » Kara Finch from Colorado SIPA
- » Whitney Miller from Park Meadows Business Improvement District
- » Steve Ravel from Merrick & Company



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SDA would like to extend a sincere thank you to all of this year's sponsors and exhibitors! From the 17 Platinum Sponsors to the numerous Gold, Silver, and Bronze Sponsors as well all of our exhibitors, these fantastic organizations were a huge part of this year's success.

Our Platinum Sponsors Were:

Thank you!



Our Gold Sponsors Were:

- » CliftonLarsonAllen
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- » County Technical Services Inc. (CTSI)
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? Ask Evan

Editor's Note: This question and answer first appeared in the March 2017 issue of SDA News, but we have received this question many times recently so we wanted to provide this information again. It's an oldie, but a goodie!

Q: If a district wants to have an educational retreat for Board members, is that a public meeting?

A: All meetings of a quorum, or three or more members (whichever is fewer), of the Board of Directors at which public business is discussed or formal Board action may be taken must be open to the public.

"Meeting" means any kind of gathering convened to discuss public business in person, by telephone, electronically, or by other means of communication. §24-6-402(2)(b), C.R.S.

Open meeting requirements apply to formal meetings of the Board and study sessions. Such requirements do not apply to staff meetings where a quorum of the Board is not present, chance meetings, or social gatherings at which discussion of public business is not the central purpose.

Open meetings must be open to all members of the public, including reporters, attorneys, and any other representatives.

The use of recording devices at open meetings is neither prohibited

nor permitted by the Colorado statutes. Many attorneys believe that the Board must allow for video and audio recording of its meetings, but may prescribe rules for the use of recording devices, such as specifying the location where recorders must be positioned and restricting recordings which interrupt or interfere with the conduct of the meeting.

This information can also be found on page 12 of SDA's *Board Member Manual*. This manual is an invaluable resource for our members and contains a wealth of information on a wide variety of topics.

To download a PDF version of the manual, please visit SDA's website at www.sdaco.org. Please log in to the website and then click on "Publications." From there, please click on "Board Member Manual" and then click on "Download 2021 Board Member Manual."

As always, please call the SDA office at 303-863-1733 with any questions. 🍌



Evan Goulding, Consultant and former SDA Executive Director.

Open meetings must be open to all members of the public, including reporters, attorneys, and any other representatives.





SDA Leadership Academy

2022 SDA Leadership Academy Applications Available Soon

The planning process is well underway for the 2022 SDA Leadership Academy, and we are getting ready to welcome a new class! This popular training fills up quickly so don't miss your chance to be a part of this year-long program that is scheduled to kick-off in early 2022.

We would like to thank COLOTRUST for sponsoring the 2022 Leadership Academy, which is sure to be another exciting year of education and growth.

Since the SDA Leadership Academy began in 2012, close to 470 Leadership Fellows have graduated from this unique leadership 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. Over the past two years we have offered the program predominantly in a virtual format, and next year we will be prepared for

in-person or virtual (whichever comes our way). In either format, you will benefit from these valuable sessions!

You will also receive weekly leadership themed emails which offer keen insights and lessons on leadership from a wide variety of sources.

Applications will be available soon so please watch your emails and visit the SDA website at www.sdaco.org if you are interested in applying. The class size will be limited to 45 people, which is a great size for group conversations and interactions.

This is a remarkable opportunity you won't want to miss! 🍌

Update on the Implementation of Family Leave (FAMLI) and Local Government Opt-Out

In the November 2020 statewide general election, 57.75% of voters approved Proposition 118, a statutory change to Colorado's laws which created a paid Family Medical Leave Insurance program (FAMLI). FAMLI requires employers and employees to pay payroll premiums, starting January 1, 2023, to provide up to 12 weeks of paid FAMLI leave beginning January 1, 2024.

Unlike the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), the new Colorado FAMLI requirement applies to employers of any size with the following exceptions: (1) employers may apply to the Division of Family Medical Leave Insurance (the "Division") to provide leave through a private plan that meets the requirements of FAMLI; or (2) local governments, including special districts, may decline to participate (the "Local Government Opt-Out").

This fall, the Division began its rulemaking to implement FAMLI, including a meeting with SDA and our sister local government associations, the Colorado Municipal League (CML) and Colorado Counties, Inc. (CCI), on a preliminary draft for the Local Government Opt-Out. This preliminary draft included a concept about which all the local government associations had serious concerns: a temporary opt-

out that the governing body would have to take repeated action to renew.

Further, the preliminary draft Local Government Opt-Out seemed designed to place onerous policy-making processes upon each action to opt-out or to renew the opt-out as a punitive measure to encourage local government participation in the FAMLI program.

SDA led the drafting of the shared concerns of the local government associations on this early Local Government Opt-Out approach, submitting these concerns in writing to the Division in early September.

Thankfully, the revised preliminary draft Local Government Opt-Out rule, received in early October, removes the temporary opt-out concept.

The Division has not indicated when it may begin formal rulemaking on the Local Government Opt-Out, instead focusing its efforts in the near term on setting the definitions and calculations of the premium.

Looking forward, SDA will continue to advocate, along with CML and CCI, that local governments must have the flexibility to determine leave benefits—and to decide when and how to pay for those benefits. 🍌



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