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SDA NEWS

APRIL 2022

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Designed by Emmett Jordan

2022 SDA Annual Regional Workshops Headed to a Town Near You!

We are looking forward to going back on the road in June for this year's Annual Regional Workshops so make your plans now to join us!

These workshops apply to all types of districts and are sure to provide a wealth of valuable information for your district. We will cover a wide variety of important topics such as conflicts of interests, TABOR, notice of meetings, and district powers, just to name a few. On top of all this, we will give you the scoop on this year's legislative changes and how they affect your district. And, there will of course be plenty of time to answer all your questions, big or small.

SDA and the law firm of Collins Cole Flynn Winn & Ulmer, PLLC are pleased to be hitting the road once again to bring you these lively and educational trainings in person.

Whether you are a Board member or district employee, a seasoned professional or brand new to your position, we will have something for everyone (don't forget these workshops are for all district types, not just Title 32 districts). And this is a great way for any newly elected or appointed Board members to dive right into the special district world! **Did we mention that every attendee will also receive a copy of the 2022 SDA Board Member Manual and the legislative update for 2022?**

Having this many pertinent and timely issues discussed all in one place is an opportunity you can't afford to miss! **Plus, all attendees will receive a coupon code for \$30 off the registration fee for the SDA Annual Conference.**

Registration will be opening soon so make sure to watch your emails and the SDA website at www.sdaco.org for all the details. The cost is \$30 per person.

We can't wait to see you in June!

Evergreen

Friday, June 10

8:00 am-12:30 pm

Evergreen Fire Protection District
1802 Bergen Parkway
Evergreen (80439)

Salida

Monday, June 13

8:00 am-12:30 pm

The Scout Hut
210 East Sackett Avenue
Salida (81201)

Montrose

Tuesday, June 14

8:00 am-12:30 pm

Montrose Recreation District
Field House, 25 Colorado Avenue
Montrose (81401)

Avon

Wednesday, June 15

8:00 am-12:30 pm

EagleVail Pavilion
538 Eagle Road
Avon (81620)

Granby

Thursday, June 16

8:00 am-12:30 pm

Grand Fire Protection District
60500 US Highway 40
Granby (80446)

Fountain

Monday, June 20

8:00 am-12:30 pm

Fountain Sanitation District
11545 Link Road
Fountain (80817)

Windsor

Tuesday, June 21

8:00 am-12:30 pm

Windsor Severance Fire Rescue
100 7th Street
Windsor (80550)

Fort Morgan

Wednesday, June 22

8:00 am-12:30 pm

Morgan Community College
920 Barlow Road
Fort Morgan (80701)

Denver

Thursday, June 23

8:00 am-12:30 pm

South Suburban Sports Complex
4810 East County Line Road
Littleton (80126)

This one will be recorded and available afterwards—more details to come!

Durango

Monday, June 27

11:30 am-4:00 pm

Durango Fire Protection District
142 Sheppard Drive
Durango (81303)



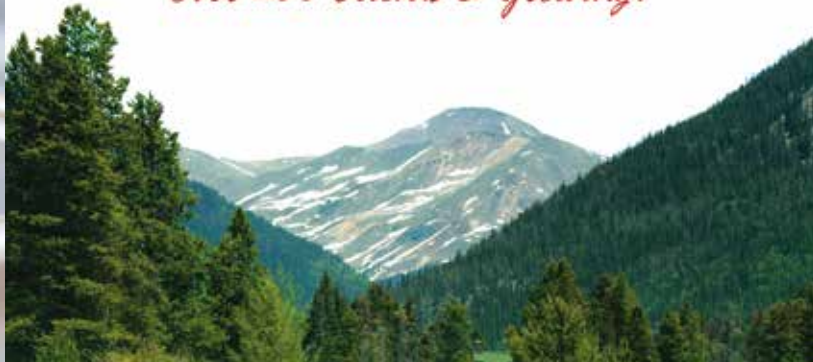
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? Ask Evan

Q • We are aware of the requirement to have an annual audit done and to file the audit report with the Office of the State Auditor. But we are not exactly sure what is included in that audit and if there is a need to have a broader audit done?

A • The audit required by law in Colorado would be categorized as a financial audit. It consists of a thorough examination of the financial books and records of the district and writing a detailed report of the steps taken and the findings of the audit. An audit provides independent third-party assurance to the Board and public that the subject matter is free from misstatement or error. It seeks to provide only reasonable assurance that the statements are free from material error. In the case of financial audits, a set of financial statements are said to be true and fair when they are free of material misstatements.

A couple of caveats:

1. While a financial audit is a legal and practical necessity to identify and guard against either mistakes in accounting or intentional misstatements, it is not an absolute guarantee against embezzlement or theft. A shady employee can find ways to embezzle or steal without the theft ever reaching the financial statements. A sharp-eyed auditor may notice inconsistencies that can be traced, but such theft is more likely to be discovered by a diligent examination of internal controls.
2. While a financial auditor will carefully examine the internal controls of the district and make suggestions for improvements, unless the audit engagement calls for it, the auditor is not a guarantor of the effectiveness of your internal controls.

In addition to the mandatory financial audit, the Board may wish to have

a performance audit more specifically geared to examine other functions of the district. Performance audit refers to an independent examination of a program, function, operation, or the management systems and procedures of a governmental or non-profit entity to assess whether the entity is achieving economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in the employment of available resources. Safety, security, information systems performance, and environmental concerns are increasingly the subject of audits.

In general, a performance audit may be engaged to look into a variety of functions, including:

- » **Management:** This will examine the effectiveness of management systems and functions, particularly looking for waste; failure to perform expected and needed functions; HR processes; sufficiency or excess of personnel contingent; compliance with internal rules and regulations; etc.
- » **Legal or Regulatory Audit:** The district's legal counsel should be performing this function annually, seeking to make sure that all of the filings and other legal and regulatory duties are fulfilled. Occasionally, however, certain functions are overlooked. It falls to the Board to call in an independent examiner to verify that the district has met all legal and regulatory functions. Incidentally, if a district is contemplating a bond issue, bond counsel will comb the records with a fine-tooth comb to make sure that there won't be a challenge to the bonds due to a failure to perform a function.



Evan Goulding, Consultant and former SDA Executive Director.

...a set of financial statements are said to be true and fair when they are free of material misstatements.

- » **Forensic Audit:** When there is any suspicion that there may be missing money, embezzlement, or other irregularities, an investigative audit in which accountants that specialize in both accounting and investigation may be called for, seeking to uncover frauds, missing money, or negligence. Forensic accountants may also be called on to gather evidence in case of a prosecution, dismissal, or settlement.
- » **Safety or risk management:** A safety or risk management audit will observe and analyze the district facilities, procedures, and policies that can prevent accidents and/or injuries as well as repetitive practices that will lead to staff or public harm. The Colorado Special Districts Property and Liability Pool (CSD Pool) is qualified to perform these examinations, and CSD Pool members can contact the CSD Pool to schedule an audit. 🟡

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Election Corner

From now through the May election, please look here for reminders of important dates to keep in mind for election items for the month. Below are the items to keep in mind for April. And, don't forget to watch your emails and the SDA website at www.sdaco.org for information on additional election training webinars and resources.

May 3, 2022 Regular Mail Ballot Election Calendar

Date	Action	Authority
4-1-22	Last day for County Clerk and Recorder to certify initial list of registered voters and County Assessor shall certify initial list of property owners (no later than 30 days prior to election). NOTE: These lists should be requested to be received prior to this date since the TABOR Notice must also be mailed this date. Designated Election Official shall have available printed ballots (at least 30 days prior to election). Mail TABOR Notice to each household where an active registered elector of the District resides (at least 30 days before the election)	1-13.5-203(1)(a) 1-13.5-204(2) 1-13.5-1105(2)(a) 1-13.5-902(1)(a) Article X, Section 20(3) (b), Colorado Constitution
4-11-22	Designated Election Official may begin mailing to each eligible elector, who is an active registered elector, a mail ballot package, including property owners who are active registered electors, but may not reside within the District. Mail ballots shall be made available at the office of the Designated Election Official, or the office designated in the mail ballot plan, for eligible electors who are not listed on the voter registration or property owners lists, but who are authorized to vote (not sooner than 22 days prior to election).	1-13.5-1105(4)(a) 1-13.5-1105(4)(d)
4-12-22	FCPA NOTE: File Candidate Committee or Issues Committee Report of Contributions and Expenditures pursuant to the Fair Campaign Practices Act with the Secretary of State (21 st day before the election).	1-45-108(2)(a)(II)
4-13-22	Last day to publish Notice of the election once (at least 20 days before the election). Post Notice in the office of the Designated Election Official. Mail a copy of the Notice to the County Clerk and Recorder of each county in which the special district is located. DEBT OR OTHER FINANCIAL OBLIGATION election. Post notice of additional financial information on District's website, or if no website, in the chief administrative office of the District (no later than 20 days before the election). County Clerk and Recorder shall supply supplemental list of registered voters and County Assessor shall supply supplemental list of property owners (no later than 20 days prior to election).	1-13.5-502(1) 1-13.5-502(2) 1-13.5-1105(2)(d) 1-13.5-503(2) 1-7-908(1)(a) 1-13.5-203(1)(a) 1-13.5-204(2) 1-13.5-1105(2)(b)
4-18-22	Last day to mail the ballot packages (no later than 15 days before the election).	1-13.5-1105(4)(a)
4-18-22	Designated Election Official shall appoint election judges (at least 15 days prior to election). Designated Election Official shall mail certificates of appointment and acceptance forms to each person appointed. Each election judge shall file an acceptance of appointment with the Designated Election Official within seven (7) days after certificate of appointment and acceptance forms were mailed. Designated Election Official shall appoint at least one member of the special district Board and at least one eligible elector of the special district who is not a member of such Board to serve with the Designated Election Official as the Canvass Board for the election (at least 15 days prior to election). Election Judges may receive and prepare mail ballots for tabulation. Counting of the mail ballots may begin fifteen (15) days prior to the election and continue until counting is completed.	1-13.5-401(1) 1-13.5-403 1-13.5-404 1-13.5-1301(1) 1-13.5-1107
4-29-22	FCPA NOTE: File Candidate Committee or Issues Committee Report of Contributions and Expenditures pursuant to the Fair Campaign Practices Act with the Secretary of State (Friday before the election).	1-45-108(2)(a)(II)

Continued on page 9



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May 3, 2022 Regular Polling Place Election Calendar		
Date	Action	Authority
4-1-22	If requested, County Clerk and Recorder shall certify initial list of registered voters and County Assessor shall certify initial list of property owners (no later than 30 days prior to election). Designated Election Official shall have available printed ballots (at least 30 days prior to election).	1-13.5-203(1)(a) 1-13.5-204(2) 1-13.5-902(1)(a)
4-4-22	Mail absentee voter's ballot to each of those eligible electors on the list of permanent absentee voters or those eligible electors who have applied for an absentee ballot (not more than 72 hours after the blank ballots have been received).	1-13.5-1002(2)(b)
4-12-22	FCPA NOTE: File Candidate Committee or Issues Committee Report of Contributions and Expenditures pursuant to the Fair Campaign Practices Act with the Secretary of State (21 st day before the election).	1-45-108(2)(a)(II)
4-13-22	Last day to publish Notice of the election once (at least 20 days before the election). Post Notice in the office of the Designated Election Official. Mail a copy of the Notice to the County Clerk and Recorder of each county in which the special district is located. Post Notice of Polling Place at each polling place (at least 20 days prior to election). If requested, County Clerk and Recorder shall supply supplemental list of registered voters and County Assessor shall supply supplemental list of property owners (no later than 20 days prior to election).	1-13.5-502(1) 1-13.5-502(2) 1-13.5-502(3) 1-13.5-203(1)(a) 1-13.5-204(2)
4-18-22	Designated Election Official shall appoint election judges (at least 15 days prior to election). Designated Election Official shall mail certificates of appointment and acceptance forms to each person appointed. Each election judge shall file an acceptance of appointment with the Designated Election Official within seven (7) days after certificate of appointment and acceptance forms were mailed. Designated Election Official shall appoint at least one member of the special district Board and at least one eligible elector of the special district who is not a member of such Board to serve with the Designated Election Official as the Canvass Board for the election (at least 15 days prior to election).	1-13.5-401(1) 1-13.5-403 1-13.5-404 1-13.5-1301(1)
4-21-22	If special district is using voting machines or an electronic voting system for the use of absentee voters, such voting machines or electronic voting system must be available from 12 days prior to the election until the close of business on the Friday preceding the election.	1-13.5-1007(1) 1-13.5-1007(2)
4-26-22	Last day to request an absentee ballot (close of business on Tuesday preceding election).	1-13.5-1002(1)(b)
4-27-22	If requested, County Clerk and Recorder shall supply complete list of registered voters and County Assessor shall supply complete list of property owners (as of the 6 th day prior to the election).	1-13.5-203(1)(a) 1-13.5-204(2)
4-29-22	FCPA NOTE: File Candidate Committee or Issues Committee Report of Contributions and Expenditures pursuant to the Fair Campaign Practices Act with the Secretary of State (Friday before the election).	1-45-108(2)(a)(II)

Election Judge Training is Coming Soon!

Please watch your emails and our website at www.sdaco.org for Election Judge Training for both polling place and mail ballot elections. This training will be pre-recorded and available for you to listen to at any time that is convenient for you!

Mile High Flood District Works to Mitigate Damage from the Marshall Fire

By Susan M. Thornton, MS

The Mile High Flood District, formerly known as Urban Drainage and Flood Control District, has a new Executive Director as of March 1.

Laura Kroeger, Engineering Director for the District for 17 years, has been selected to lead the District following the retirement of its longtime and highly regarded Executive Director, Ken MacKenzie.

Kroeger says she is very excited about the position, noting that MacKenzie mentored her for several months so she “feels as prepared as she can be.” An added benefit, she says with a smile, is that MacKenzie is only a phone call away if a serious question comes up.

With Kroeger’s appointment, the District has women in three of its four top leadership positions: Kroeger as Executive Director, Amelia Deleon as Human Resources Director, and Terri Schafer as Finance Director. Chad Kudym is the District’s IT Director.

Metro Wide Partnerships

The District was founded by the Colorado General Assembly in 1969 after the great South Platte River Flood of 1965 swept through the Denver metro area, resulting in \$500 million in damages and several deaths.

Today, with approximately 46 employees, the District protects a population of 2.8 million residents and covers more than 1,600 miles of major streams. Its mission and vision is to protect people, property, and the environment from flood risks through preservation, mitigation, and education.

It provides watershed master planning, floodplain management, design, construction, stream management activities, flood warning, development services, and research and development.

The District’s business model is to



Laura Kroeger, MHFD Executive Director

provide its services by utilizing the private sector for planning, design, and construction. This approach keeps the staff small while it greatly expands the District’s ability to provide services to the 41 cities and seven counties in the metro area.

The District’s Board of Directors consists of 21 locally elected officials including mayors, county commissioners, city council members, and two registered professional engineers. Each of the seven counties has a representative, and cities with a population over 100,000 are each entitled to a seat on the District’s Board. Smaller communities have representatives nominated to the Board by the Governor.

Kroeger says the District views the cities and counties within its boundaries as partners. “They identify and prioritize flood mitigation projects they want us to work on,” she says, adding that the District works closely with the planning, engineering, and development staff of those local governments.

With a property taxing authority of 1 mill, the District has an annual operating budget of \$66 million. Another \$20 to \$40 million per year comes from developers who pay the District to manage their required regional training and improvements. “It’s often more efficient and effective for us to manage that for them” than to do it themselves, Kroeger says.

Moreover, in 2018, district voters voted to “de-Bruce” — lifting TABOR restrictions — so now the District can retain revenues to protect people, property, and the metro area’s environment from flood risks.

Flood Monitoring and Warning

One of the many important services provided by the District is the Flash Flood Prediction Program (known as F2P2) in the Denver metro area.

Kroeger says the District has approximately 320 weather monitoring sites collecting real-time data in the seven-county area so that the District “knows what’s going on and can notify local governments of potential and imminent flood threats in time,” allowing defensive actions to be taken. Kroeger notes that the systems are able to provide “a little more specificity” about flooding than national weather sites.

All of the District’s partners are signed up for the flash flood warnings, she says, and residents can sign up for alerts via text or Twitter messages.

Recovery, Preventive Work Following the Marshall Fire

The District is also involved in recovery work following the Marshall Fire in Boulder County, which could have ongoing consequences for Coal Creek and Rock Creek if not properly addressed and treated.



The District is involved in recovery work following the Marshall Fire in Boulder County, which could have ongoing consequences for Coal Creek and Rock Creek if not properly addressed and treated.

Kroeger says that depending on the intensity of the heat produced, wildfires can burn the vegetation, roots, and organic matter in the soil, altering its properties and negatively impacting the system's ability to manage flood flows. Without a healthy top layer, the system is vulnerable to erosive forces in subsequent rainstorms and can add to the danger of flooding along streams and creeks.

If the District, which is working with the Colorado Water Conservancy Board and other agencies, finds that the fire burned that fiercely along Coal and Rock Creeks, it will take steps to remediate future flood danger by hydro mulching, soil amendments, and revegetation efforts to help restore the soil.

Continued on page 13



The Mile High Flood District has crews taking down large burned trees along the stream that could fall, block the creeks, and cause flooding.



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Kroeger says that progress toward remediation has been affected by snow that has fallen since the Marshall Fire. However, experts are working around the snowfall to get into the burned area to learn how the fire affected its hydrology. The District is also focused on identifying risks and developing plans to prevent flooding.

In addition, the District has crews taking down large burned trees along the stream that could fall, block the creeks, and cause flooding.

Another factor in the Marshall Fire is the destruction of so many homes and other structures as well as their contents. These burned remains are of potential water quality concern if they enter into the nearby streams.

Kroeger notes that the District doesn't have a water quality mandate. "That falls to the cities and counties," she says. Nevertheless, the District is talking to experts who have worked on major fires in California and elsewhere to learn what can be done to protect water quality in the creeks.

Staffing is Biggest Challenge, Opportunity

Kroeger believes that the biggest challenge the District will face in both the near future and long-term is staffing, both internally and externally. Not only is it facing challenges in the hiring of its own staff, but staffing is an issue for the consultants and contractors the District partners with as well. Everyone, Kroeger observes, is struggling to find and retain workers.

As the COVID pandemic wore on, Kroeger says, workers across Colorado began to re-think their futures and were deciding if and how they wish to continue working.

Kroeger calls staffing issues a challenge, but also an opportunity.

"There is now, and will be in the future, increasing demand for workers on all projects," she says. She believes that the District needs to find new ways to conduct its operations. "We will have to find ways to streamline our services," she says. "We will have to do more with fewer people."

Value of SDA to MHFD

Kroeger believes that SDA is especially valuable to special districts across Colorado in part because local governments have to work together to solve issues.

As she says, "We are all interested in enhancing the quality of life for everyone, and even though we have different focuses like flood control, transportation, or utilities, all of these services are needed to make our community strong. SDA helps bring us together to work effectively together."

Kroeger also has high praise for SDA's work as it represents Colorado special districts at the state and national policy-making level. "SDA gives us a voice," she says. "We don't have the time or expertise" for lobbying, she notes. "We are grateful that SDA does it so well for us." 🍌

Colorado Special Districts Property and Liability Pool Welcomes New Board Member

By Susan M. Thornton, MS

Mile High Flood District's Human Resources Director Amelia Deleon has been appointed to the Board of Directors of the Colorado Special Districts Property and Liability Pool (CSD Pool).

Deleon, who has been with the District since 2012, was named its Human Resources Director in 2021. She says she first learned about the work of SDA and the CSD Pool at SDA's Annual Conferences. "I was so impressed," she says. "I had no idea how many resources SDA and the CSD Pool offer, from safety inspections and insurance resources to legal and human resources assistance."

Deleon says she wanted to be part of the Board of the CSD Pool because "Both organizations really tap into the needs of member districts and find ways to make their lives easier. I wanted to be part of that."

Larry Moore, President of the CSD



Amelia Deleon

Pool Board, says he is pleased that Deleon will be on the Board.

"I got to know Amelia through SDA

Annual Conferences over the last few years," he says. "Amelia is delightful, engaging, and energetic. I found her to be an excellent listener and eager to know about the people she meets. There is no doubt Amelia will be an outstanding Board member and will bring her enthusiastic personality along as well."

The CSD Pool was formed in 1988 as a stable, high-quality alternative to traditional insurance markets for special districts, and it continues to focus on the unique needs of special districts across Colorado.

Beginning with just 107 members, it currently serves more than 1,980 special districts with property, liability, and workers' compensation coverage. The CSD Pool also provides risk management and loss prevention services; human resources consulting; pre-loss legal services; and cyber risk assessment tools for members. 🍌



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USDA-Rural Development

A Strong Partner for Rural Colorado

Guest article by Armando Valdez, State Director for USDA-Rural Development in Colorado

In November, I was honored to be appointed as the new State Director for USDA-Rural Development in Colorado. I am very excited about my new role and the positive impact our agency makes in improving and enhancing the lives of people who reside and work in Colorado's rural communities.

As a farmer and rancher in rural Colorado, I was born, raised, and currently live in the beautiful San Luis Valley. I love rural living, and making rural communities a better place to live and work is our mission. The staff at USDA-Rural Development are a team of dedicated professionals who work hard every day to make impactful contributions in areas where people can sometimes feel neglected and overlooked.

USDA-Rural Development is a strong partner to help rural Colorado achieve greater levels of success and sustainability. Through our funding assistance, rural communities create prosperity, become self-sustaining, maintain population, and thrive economically.

Our staff works to renew rural small-town America by improving housing; creating businesses and job opportunities; investing in schools, libraries, hospitals, and other public spaces; and supporting rural utilities infrastructure—including water and sewer service, electric, phone, and broadband—all things that contribute to making rural communities great places to live.

We strive to be the catalyst for rural prosperity. We are focusing on ensuring that rural America comes out of the pandemic stronger than before, enabling fair access to resources through the myriad of programs we offer; reducing climate pollution; and fostering resilience to climate change. We are also building upon our continuing commitment to serve traditionally underserved and economically challenged rural areas, such as Persistent Poverty Counties.

So, how do we accomplish this? Through the 40+ programs USDA-Rural Development offers, one of which is sure to fit the needs of your district.

Rural communities are served through



our Community Facilities Programs that build or improve essential community facilities. Loans, grants, and loan guarantees are available for fire and police stations, hospitals, libraries, schools, emergency equipment, and more. These amenities help increase the competitiveness of rural communities in attracting and retaining businesses that provide employment and services for residents. Public bodies, non-profit organizations, and federally recognized American Indian Tribes are eligible to apply for these funds.

For example, the La Junta Health Service District is utilizing a \$15,900,000 Direct Loan and Loan Guarantee to construct a non-traditional skilled nursing facility in the City of La Junta. In 2020, the former facility closed, forcing residents to relocate across the state. This new hybrid skilled nursing facility will bring back an option for quality, skilled nursing care for residents to stay in their community.

We also have funding available for rural infrastructure improvements and construction, such as water, wastewater treatment, electric power, and telecommunications (including broadband expansion). Safe drinking water and sanitary waste disposal systems are vital not only to public health, but also to the economic vitality of rural America. USDA-Rural Development is the only federal program exclusively focused on rural water and waste infrastructure needs of rural communities with populations of 10,000 or less. We also provide funding to organizations that provide technical assistance and training to rural communities in relation to their water and waste activities.

For example, the Morrison Creek Metro Water & Sanitation District in Oak Creek is replacing the district's wastewater treatment plant using a

\$7,999,000 loan and grant. The current plant was built in 1973 and cannot be serviced. The new facility will allow for redundancy and have the capacity for future growth.

Our housing programs offer loan and grant funding for single-family and multi-family housing to ensure rural Americans have safe and affordable places to call home. A key component of our single-family housing loans is that there is no down payment required, and we can provide payment assistance to increase an applicant's repayment ability. Payment assistance is a type of subsidy that reduces the mortgage payment for a short time. The amount of assistance is determined by the adjusted family income. Programs are also available for housing preservation, renovation, and farm worker housing.

Our Rural Business programs support business development and job training opportunities for rural residents. Our programs help provide capital, technical support, educational opportunities, and promote entrepreneurial skills that can help rural residents start and grow businesses and find quality employment. Loans, loan guarantees, and grants are available to individuals, businesses, cooperatives, farmers and ranchers, public bodies, non-profit corporations, Native American Tribes, and private companies in rural communities.

With a loan portfolio of more than \$300 billion nationwide, USDA-Rural Development brings enhanced economic opportunity to rural communities. Last year in Colorado we invested over \$600 million statewide through all our programs. Deploying these resources is crucial to our success.

Staff is available to assist you in any of our six local field offices (Alamosa, Cortez, Craig, Delta, Las Animas, and Wray) and the Denver State Office (Lakewood).

You and/or your community could be next in line to receive funding from USDA-Rural Development. Please reach out to a member of our Colorado Team at www.rd.usda.gov/co for more assistance. 🌱



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Master of Public Administration Program at Adams State University Recruiting a New Cohort

Guest article by Michael Mumper, Director of the Master of Public Administration program at Adams State University

Have you ever wanted to earn a graduate degree in public administration, but thought it would take too long, be too expensive, or would not fit into your busy schedule? Then you should take a look at the Master of Public Administration (MPA) program at Adams State University. It is a practical, flexible, and affordable program designed to meet the needs of working professionals.

The MPA program at Adams State is working to develop the next generation of leaders in state and local government throughout Colorado. We are currently enrolling two new cohorts of students, one in May and another in August, and we would be thrilled to have you join the talented and ambitious students starting the program this year.

Curriculum

The MPA program at Adams State blends applied academic work with hands-on practical experiences. Many of the courses are taught by practicing administrators who are currently working in the field. The online delivery format allows students to work at their own pace and never requires them to come to campus. Each semester students take two classes and one practical experience, which allows them to complete the degree in two years. All of the students in the program are working full-time while taking classes.

The MPA courses include:

- » Human Resources and Leadership Development
- » Public Budgeting and Finance
- » Public Policy Analysis
- » Public Law, Policy, and the Regulatory Environment
- » Planning in the Real World
- » Emergency Management
- » Economic and Community Development

Students who begin in May will earn their degrees in April 2024. Those who start in August will graduate in July 2024.

Practical Hands-On Experiences

In addition to the more conventional coursework, students will complete five Practicums over the course of the programs. These Practicums are designed to give students the opportunity to develop skills and experience in areas that interest them or will help them move up in their careers.

Working with the MPA Director, students will identify a Practicum project each semester that will give them the opportunity to both develop a new skill and to document that



skill in a deliverable. By the end of the program, MPA graduates are prepared to do their current jobs better and to advance in their careers.

Flexible Format

Finding the time to devote to entering and completing a graduate degree

program is always a challenge. But the MPA program at Adams State was built with this challenge in mind.

Students choose when they want to do their coursework. With no regularly scheduled class times, you can study in the morning or evenings – or on your breaks – and never worry about when the class will meet. As long as you get your work completed on time, you can move on to the next assignment. The online delivery allows students to take their classwork with them when they travel or whenever they want to study.

This flexible schedule has helped students stay on track and complete the program. More than 90% of students who have entered the MPA program since its inception have either graduated or are still enrolled in the program.

Affordable

The MPA at Adams State is among the most affordable programs in the state (or in the nation). It is a 36 credit hour program, and the tuition and fees are \$452/credit hour. That makes the full price of the program \$16,272 (compare that to other programs in the state that charge between \$25,000 and \$30,000). The office of Financial Aid at Adams State will work with students to help them identify potential scholarships and facilitate student loans to cover the costs.

Streamlined Admissions Process

There is no need to worry about taking the GRE or any other standardized test with the MPA's streamlined admission process. After you have completed the online application, we require you to submit a resume, a statement of interest, transcripts from your previous colleges, and two letters of recommendation. Nothing more. After we receive those materials, you can be admitted to the program and are ready to enroll in classes.

Classes Begin Soon

Summer classes begin on May 23 and fall classes start on August 29. If you have questions, or would like to learn more about the program, we would be glad to schedule a video call. You can reach us at MPA@adams.edu or contact the MPA Director, Michael Mumper, at mmumper@adams.edu. 🍌

New Civil Liability Per Senate Bill 21-088

Last year, the Colorado General Assembly passed Senate Bill 21-088 (SB21-088), which took effect on January 1, 2022, to address the damage that sexual abuse and misconduct/molestation has on children. This bill created a statutory tort allowing survivors to bring a civil action against the actor who committed the misconduct. However, if the misconduct occurred at a managing organization operating youth-related activities or programs (including public entities, like special districts), the victim may also bring a civil claim against the managing organization of the youth program or activity.

For SB21-088, civil tort liability is extended when a managing organization knew or should have known that the actor, or associated youth-related activity or program, posed a risk of sexual misconduct. (For detailed information on the bill, please visit <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb21-088>.)

There are several aspects of SB21-088 which special districts offering youth-related activities should be aware of (please note the statutory definition of those activities is very broad). These include:

- » The new statutory tort is incorporated as a very broad waiver of governmental immunity. While the damages caps of the Colorado Governmental Immunity Act apply, the 182-day notice period does not.
- » The new statutory tort applies retroactively, and victims whose assault occurred between January 1, 1960 and January 1, 2022 may bring a cause of action before January 1, 2025. Please note this may be challenged on constitutional grounds.
- » The liability of managing organizations, including special districts, includes employees and volunteers.

Special districts offering kids' programs and activities are already working to keep children safe. Nevertheless, in conjunction with their leadership and legal counsel, these districts should give careful consideration to SB21-088 as they continue to operate these programs and update their processes as needed. These updates to practices or policies may include, but are not limited to:

- » Taking a fresh look at the kids' activities or programs your district offers, using some critical perspective to assess whether more supervision or training is needed;
- » Ensuring that the district's policies related to working with children apply both to employees and volunteers;
- » Updating training for your district's employees and volunteers working with kids;
- » Maintaining documents and records of your district's training; and
- » Having procedures in place to report and take action on any safety concerns that are raised by children, families, employees, or volunteers.

Special districts providing children's programs, activities, and events are serving a very important public service. SDA is planning additional information and training on this topic to help support these members, including the development of a best practices curriculum. If you have any questions, please contact Ann Terry or Dianne Criswell at the SDA office at 303-863-1733. We also encourage you to work with your district leadership and legal counsel to discuss this law and any changes that are appropriate and advisable for your district.

It's Almost Time to Submit Your Nominations for the 2022 SDA Annual Awards!

Do you know a District Manager or Board member who has made extraordinary contributions in his or her role? If so, now is your chance to nominate an exceptional person for a 2022 SDA Annual Award!

Each year at the SDA Annual Conference, we have the pleasure of honoring outstanding individuals with awards and recognitions in the following categories:

- » Manager of the Year
- » Board Member of the Year

This year the awards will be presented at the Annual

Awards Luncheon on Tuesday, September 13 during the SDA Annual Conference in Keystone.

The nominations will open in early April so please watch your emails and the SDA website at www.sdaco.org for more details and the link to complete the easy online form.

If you have any questions about the awards, please contact Anthoney Sandoval at 303-863-1733 or anthoney@sdaco.org.

SDA is pleased for the opportunity to recognize the people who demonstrate remarkable dedication to serving the citizens of our state. We look forward to receiving your nominations!



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