

Special District Association of Colorado

SDA NEWS

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2023

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2023 SDA Annual Conference

Tuesday, September 12-Thursdays, September 14

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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

Inspire Excellence!

This Year's SDA Annual Conference is One You Don't Want to Miss!

We are so excited for the 2023 SDA Annual Conference,
Tuesday, September 12 through Thursday, September 14
at the Keystone Conference Center!

We are thrilled to bring back our hybrid format, with both an in-person and livestreaming option.

The entire Conference will be held in-person at the Keystone Conference Center, and just like the last two years, all of our keynote presentations and breakout sessions will be livestreamed to a convenient online platform that will provide access for those who would like to join us remotely.

What's more, the breakout sessions will all be recorded, and everyone who registers will have access to the virtual platform and recordings for a year, including everyone who attends in-person! Plus, **there will be CLE opportunities** not only for the **in-person sessions**, but also for the recorded sessions, which provide **home study** CLE options. We know this hybrid format provides huge benefits for all of our attendees, and we are happy to offer it again this year.

All together we have over 45 sessions planned, which will provide an opportunity for participants to hear from a variety of experts on pertinent issues for special districts. Our lineup of breakout sessions this year is stellar, and **the sessions start early on Tuesday morning**. All three days of Conference are jam-packed, with a wide variety of universally applicable topics for all district types as well as sessions that are more technical in nature.

On top of all of this, **our entertaining and informative keynote speakers** will offer their unique insight and perspective into big picture ideas that apply to all of us (see below for more details!).

New this year on Tuesday afternoon, we are very excited to offer **three different Forums which will each focus on a specific discussion topic**. This will be a perfect opportunity for you to meet other attendees from your district type and/or who are facing similar challenges. This new feature in the schedule will be very valuable, and we are delighted to dedicate time to these beneficial conversations. We are finalizing the details of the topics and our discussion leaders so keep an eye out for more details to come!

We are also bringing back **the outdoor event tent space that will be set up on the Conference Center patio**. This additional space will be a perfect place to relax during the breaks between sessions or even as a place to **set up your laptop and headphones to tune into any sessions that might fill up**. Since we will be livestreaming the presentations to our virtual platform, if you find a meeting room that's full, but you would still like to listen in, you will be able to access the livestream right on your laptop!

During the registration process, you will be able to choose the in-person option or the livestream only option. Both of these include access to the virtual platform and all the recordings for one year.

As you are making your plans to join us, the following is a general outline of how each day of Conference is shaping up.

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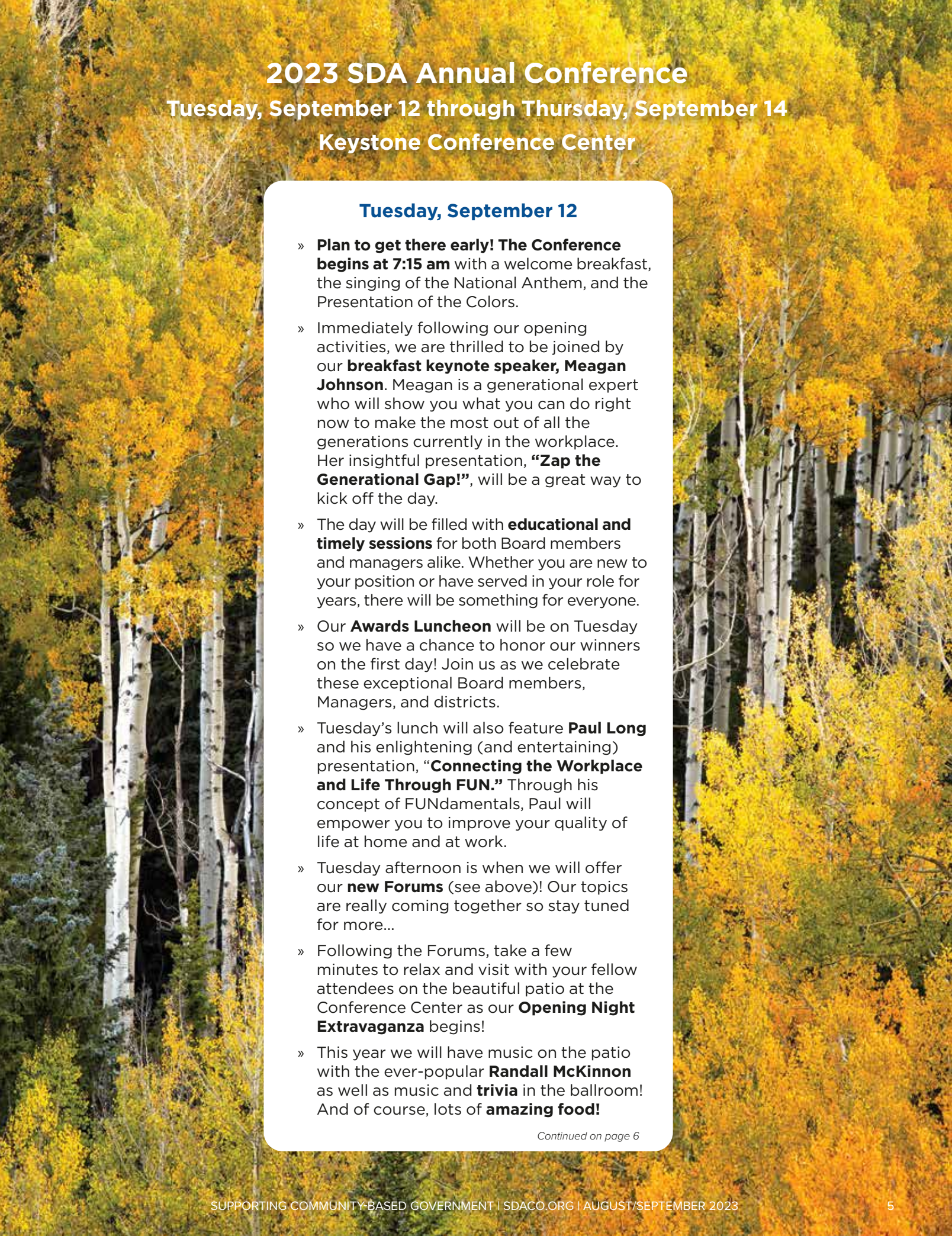
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2023 SDA Annual Conference

Tuesday, September 12 through Thursday, September 14

Keystone Conference Center

Tuesday, September 12

- » **Plan to get there early! The Conference begins at 7:15 am** with a welcome breakfast, the singing of the National Anthem, and the Presentation of the Colors.
- » Immediately following our opening activities, we are thrilled to be joined by our **breakfast keynote speaker, Meagan Johnson**. Meagan is a generational expert who will show you what you can do right now to make the most out of all the generations currently in the workplace. Her insightful presentation, **“Zap the Generational Gap!”**, will be a great way to kick off the day.
- » The day will be filled with **educational and timely sessions** for both Board members and managers alike. Whether you are new to your position or have served in your role for years, there will be something for everyone.
- » Our **Awards Luncheon** will be on Tuesday so we have a chance to honor our winners on the first day! Join us as we celebrate these exceptional Board members, Managers, and districts.
- » Tuesday’s lunch will also feature **Paul Long** and his enlightening (and entertaining) presentation, **“Connecting the Workplace and Life Through FUN.”** Through his concept of FUNdamentals, Paul will empower you to improve your quality of life at home and at work.
- » Tuesday afternoon is when we will offer our **new Forums** (see above)! Our topics are really coming together so stay tuned for more...
- » Following the Forums, take a few minutes to relax and visit with your fellow attendees on the beautiful patio at the Conference Center as our **Opening Night Extravaganza** begins!
- » This year we will have music on the patio with the ever-popular **Randall McKinnon** as well as music and **trivia** in the ballroom! And of course, lots of **amazing food!**

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2023 SDA Annual Conference

Tuesday, September 12 through Thursday, September 14

Keystone Conference Center

Wednesday, September 13

- » **Colette Carlson** will kick off the day with her engaging and researched-based program **“The Connected Leader.”** Colette is a human behavior expert who will show you how to transform relationships through the power of connected conversations.
- » Pertinent and informative sessions will take place all morning, with a **goodie break** in between.
- » Our lunchtime keynote speaker, **Christine Porath**, will discuss the importance of civility in the workplace and creating thriving workplace communities in her insightful presentation **“Mastering Civility.”**
- » Along with additional educational sessions, the **Colorado Special Districts Property and Liability Pool Annual Membership Meeting** will take place on Wednesday afternoon. This meeting will feature a keynote presentation from the Pool’s very own Safety and Loss Prevention team!
- » If you missed the first goodie break in the morning, you can catch another one in the afternoon!
- » Back by popular demand is our **Boots and BBQ event on Wednesday evening!** Wear your favorite pair of boots as you enjoy delicious BBQ with all the fixings right on the Conference Center patio. And, we will once again feature music from the **Beau Thomas Band!**

Register Today!

www.sdaco.org



Thursday, September 14

- » At Thursday's keynote breakfast, we are thrilled to welcome back 6-time Emmy Award winning TV broadcaster and comedian, **Ross Shafer!** Ross joined us several years ago, and this year he is back with a whole new presentation entitled **"RATTLED...How to Go From Shook to... Solid."** In this interactive and impactful program, Ross will share his "blueprints for rallying" in every imaginable circumstance.
- » There will be **two tracks of sessions between breakfast and lunch.** This gives us almost 10 sessions on Thursday morning!
- » We are once again offering our **Grab-and-Go Lunch** that you can stay and enjoy before heading home or take with you in the car. This worked out well last year, and we are pleased to offer this flexible lunch option again.
- » Thursday will be a full day, and we will conclude at the perfect time to get you back on your way!

All of this and much, much more awaits you at the 2023 SDA Annual Conference, September 12-14 at the Keystone Conference Center!

For more information and to register today, please visit the SDA website at www.sdaco.org. We look forward to seeing you in September!



The SDA Annual Conference is Right Around the Corner!

Here's a Preview of the Breakout Sessions!

The 2023 SDA Annual Conference will be here before we know it! Here is a preview of the breakout sessions, which start first thing on Tuesday, September 12.

Please remember as you read through all these great classes, especially the sessions on overarching topics like employment law, executive sessions, and parliamentary procedure, **these aren't just for Title 32 districts, they apply to all types of districts!** And don't forget that **we will have plenty of CLE opportunities available**, including for in-person attendance and home study for the recorded sessions.

You won't want to miss this information-packed, three-day event so make your plans now to join us at the Keystone Conference Center, September 12-14!

Find out more and register online at www.sdaco.org.
We look forward to seeing you there!

Tuesday, September 12

Groundwater Regulation and Aquifer Sustainability: How the Rio Grande Water Conservation District is Assisting Groundwater Users with Compliance Through Groundwater Management Subdistricts

Amber Pacheco from the Rio Grande Water Conservation District

Since 2002, the Rio Grande Water Conservation District has worked with groundwater users to organize and implement six groundwater management subdistricts which support the majority of well owners in complying with the State's Groundwater Use Rules. Subdistricts cover agricultural, commercial, municipal, and other well uses in the San Luis Valley. These groundwater management subdistricts provide well owners the ability to mitigate injury to senior water rights on streams; achieve and maintain sustainable water supplies; and to ensure groundwater users in the subdistricts are not impacting the State's ability to meet its obligations to New Mexico and Texas under the Rio Grande Compact. Through these efforts, approximately 5,000 wells are allowed to continue groundwater withdrawals which help support and maintain the local economy.

10 Steps to Achieve and Maintain Website Accessibility

Mac Clemmens and Maria Lara from Streamline

Is your district's website accessible to all visitors, including the 15% of the population with a disability? If you have heard of website accessibility, or the Americans with Disabilities Act, and are ready to take the next steps to ensure your district website is fully accessible, this session is for you! Attendees will leave the session with the ability to check their website accessibility score; operational and technical strategies to reach a higher level of website accessibility; and an understanding of tools available to help maintain compliance.

Workplace Wellness for the Win!

Ron Redd, Rebecca Tejada, and Amy Schramm from Parker Water and Sanitation District

This enlightening discussion will help other organizations develop a wellness program that engages their team to take an active role in their overall well-being. The presentation will outline the steps Parker Water took to create a wellness program and how it has evolved over the years as well as to lay out the current program that spans from nutrition and financial health to employees working with an attorney to create a will or trust! We will also celebrate our success stories, lessons learned, and next steps.

Covenant Enforcement in Districts: Past, Present, and Future

***Peggy Ripko from Special District
Management Services, Inc.***

Join us for an in-depth look at covenant enforcement in special districts, including why it happened, when it started, and where it might be going!

Using GIS to Track Lead Line Inventory

Trip McLaughlin from IMEG

Water districts are required to have an inventory and replacement plan for lead service lines and connections. By using GIS, predictive analysis may be performed to identify suspect locations for further investigation. Using a suite of online applications and mobile applications, GIS may be used to monitor the detection and replacement of the lines.

Water Consumption and Interstate Cooperation on the Colorado River

Kevin Brown from Cherokee Metropolitan District

The Colorado River is a critical water source with a long history, contentious politics, and intense media attention. This session will separate fact from fiction in the current state of the river and provide insights on water management from this river's long history with applications to water systems in Colorado.

Rock of Ages: Leveraging the Talent of ALL Generations to Harmonize the Workplace

***Jen Volmer and Anne McCord from
ILG Strategic Services***

This fun and interactive program provides leaders with the tools to identify the right talent, leverage the multigenerational workforce, and build great teams to move forward in our dramatically changing work environment. Jen and Anne will use analogies of musicians, bands, and musical styles to illustrate the importance of tapping into individual strengths and teamwork to build a great workplace culture.

National Special Districts Coalition: Defining, Counting, and Advancing Special Districts

***Cole Arreola-Karr from the National
Special Districts Coalition***

The National Special Districts Coalition (NSDC) is advancing key policy priorities in Washington, D.C., including efforts to define "special district," enhance access to federally funded programs, and ensure the federal government recognizes special districts as a geographic entity. Join us as we break down what this means for special districts and how Colorado's special districts can engage and advocate. This session will also offer the latest news out of DC through a special district lens and updates on what the Coalition is tracking for the nation's special districts.

Cyber-SECURE: Why Cybersecurity is Important and Things You Can Do to Lower Risk

Duane Tucker and Beth Justice from Colorado SIPA

Do you think your small special district will go unnoticed by cybercriminals or are the budget costs too significant? Think again. Wouldn't it be great to win the billion-dollar lottery, but you are pretty happy with a scratch-off ticket win, right? Cybercriminals often would rather hit an array of easier targets than pursue bigger payouts from larger more sophisticated governments. In this session, you will come away with resources to lower your cyber risk and learn who to call should a cyber attack occur.

Parliamentary Procedure and Other Tips for Keeping the Peace in Board Meetings

***Linda Glesne and Madison Phillips from Cockrel
Ela Glesne Greher & Ruhland, PC (CEGR Law); and
Patti Owen-DeLay from Douglas County Libraries***

Parliamentary procedure (whether Robert's Rules of Order, Sturgis', or some other standard) shows up in many special district bylaws and Board codes of conduct as an adopted form of conducting a Board meeting. But most Boards only informally follow established parliamentary procedures. The purpose of having any formalized set of procedures is to create an orderly process for representative governance, and common sense is frequently, if not always, the best guide for how to conduct a good public meeting where business can be effectively and efficiently conducted. But what happens when each Board member is operating on a different knowledge level--or appreciation of--these common rules of procedure? And how can a Board effectively navigate the business needs of the district while also providing opportunity for public participation? This topic will speak both to some common parliamentary processes that work to keep the peace when there is not consensus on a topic on the agenda as well as some public meeting strategies to allow for the public to see your Board operating at its best.

Special District Litigation in Colorado

Kevin Walsh from Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck, LLP

This in-depth presentation will be a survey of recent lawsuits filed in Colorado involving special districts, including any caselaw resulting from those lawsuits, as well as a discussion on the implications of those lawsuits/caselaw. For instance, numerous lawsuits have recently been filed in Colorado questioning the legality of developer-controlled metropolitan districts and challenging the financing mechanism for these districts. These cases are striking because the residents are seeking to ignore or alter existing debt repayment agreements.

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DOLA: Who Are They and What Can They Do for You?

Chantal Unfug from the Colorado Department of Local Affairs

Come meet the DOLA team and learn more about how they can help your district!

Safety and Asset Protection: How Board Members and Management Can Lead Their District

Josh Barkley, Kyle Brown, and Ana Holdren from the Colorado Special Districts Property and Liability Pool

District management and Board members have a fiduciary responsibility to their organization to protect assets—both physical property and the lives of their staff. In this interactive session, we will discuss the tools you need and the questions to ask in order to make sure your organization is curbing losses and employees are heading home at the end of their shift each day. We'll show you how you can prioritize employee safety, build a positive safety culture, identify your current risk exposures, and offer solutions on how to take your current operations to the next level—all while enhancing the communication between Board members and district management. You are the leaders of your organization, and the buck stops with you!

Don't Make it Personnel! Employment Law Update

John Chmil from Lyons Gaddis

Hiring and managing personnel is one of the largest responsibilities for special districts in providing services to the community. From leave policies and compensation to accommodations and injuries, there are a number of legal considerations that come along with managing personnel. This discussion will highlight some of the recent legal changes in this area and provide real life examples of how to apply these legal concepts in your day-to-day operations.

How to Prepare Your Budget

Christina Griggs from Gemsbok Consulting, Inc.

The budgeting process is a critical component of ensuring district fiscal health and sustainability. In this session, we'll dig into the specific mechanics of the budgeting process such as transfers between funds; grants; capital expenses; operating surpluses and deficits; and how to budget for individual funds. All of this will be tied together with other key elements that weave into the longer-term financial strategies of a district that support decision making and long-term planning.

Best Practices in Financial Reporting and Analytics

Christina Griggs from Gemsbok Consulting, Inc.

In today's world, there is so much data available. What data is the most effective for your district? What should leaders be looking at to make the most informed decisions? This session will discuss how to develop your district's key performance indicators (KPIs); how these KPIs tie into long-term planning; and how to best track the data needed to report on them consistently. In addition, forecasting and non-standard reports will be weaved into the discussion to provide a comprehensive understanding of all the aspects of special district accounting, budgeting, and reporting to most effectively lead the district forward.

Tracing Property Taxes from the Inception of a Special District to Your Most Recent Residential Property Tax Statement

*Katie James from Folkestad Fazekas
Barrick & Patoile, PC*

Property taxes and how they change over time confuse a lot of people--Board members and attorneys included. This educational session will review how a district is created and the tax revenue that is used to support operations and debt repayment. We will also look at the statutory process for budgeting and setting mill levies and how that ultimately translates to a residential tax bill. Our discussion will focus on the 3-prong interplay of 1) valuation/revaluation cycle every two years; 2) assessment rate changes; and 3) mill levy changes annually to understand why taxes go up and down and that higher taxes overall are not always due to "increased taxes" by a district.

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**Registration
is open!**
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Wednesday, September 13

Fighting (Cybersecurity) Fire with Fire

Brian Sugrue from Public Trust Advisors, LLC

As cybersecurity risk continues to proliferate in the technical landscape, user education and training continue to be an integral piece in defending against attacks. However, the utilization of technical user interfaces (UIs) is a growing and evolving risk mitigation strategy. By bolstering security measures and empowering users to make informed decisions, user interfaces (UIs) are instrumental in the fight against cybersecurity.

The Workforce Housing Crunch: Challenges and Solutions for Special Districts

Allison Ulmer from Collins Cole Flynn Winn & Ulmer, PLLC; and Dick Cleveland and David Norris from Eagle River Water and Sanitation District

Join us for a discussion about the workforce housing shortage in Colorado, the impact it is having on special districts, and the robust housing program developed by Eagle River Water and Sanitation District in Eagle County. Allison Ulmer will provide an overview of how we got here and how special districts are responding to the housing shortage. Board Chair, Dick Cleveland, will share how the District got its housing program off the ground over 10 years ago, and David Norris, the Director of Business Administration, will discuss the program's successes and challenges and how he sees it evolving in the future.

Going to the Voters for Funding: Best Practices and Successful Strategies

David Flaherty from Magellan Strategies

Nearly all special districts in Colorado sooner or later need to place a ballot measure before voters to approve funding increases for their operations, capital projects, or other needs. Asking voters to approve a ballot measure that raises their own taxes is never easy. However, there are ballot measure best practices and fundamentals that can help a special district ballot measure be in a position to achieve voter approval. This session will walk through those fundamentals and share insights from 15 years of successful ballot measure projects.

Give Us the Money: Bond Issuance from Election to Closing

Kim Crawford and Dalton Kelley from Butler Snow LLP

In this session we will discuss the requirements for a TABOR election for debt and tax increases (among other things); when and if a district needs to have an election; when a district needs to start planning for an election; the parties/partners who may need to be involved; ballot questions; election deadlines; and fair campaign practices matters. After a successful election, the district will issue its bonds! This session will also cover what happens after the successful election, from the types of financing options available (public sale, private placement); the parties involved and their roles; and ongoing obligations that a district needs to be aware of "post-closing."

Legislating Transparency and Best Practices for Metro Districts: 2022 and 2023 Legislation Affecting Special Districts

MaryAnn McGeady and Jay Morse from McGeady Becher PC

The Colorado State Legislature considered many bills regarding metropolitan districts during the 2022 and 2023 Legislative Sessions. This presentation will provide an update on recent legislation affecting special districts, focusing on what passed and touching on what did not. Special districts continue to pave the way for development and redevelopment in Colorado and assist with providing vital residential and commercial infrastructure. Accordingly, it is imperative that those working in this space stay up to date on the constantly evolving legal landscape.

The Ship is Sinking: Top Ten Reasons that a Ship Sinks and How to Fix the Leaks Before It is Too Late

Chief TJ Steck and Kara Gerczynski from Elizabeth Fire Protection District

This enlightening discussion will identify the obvious and not so obvious signs of a failing organization including the infrastructure, culture, strategies, and leadership needed to keep the ship from sinking. This class will also use interactive discussions to solve problems that any of us could have or have already experienced. Attendees will learn tools to see the iceberg and steer around it before it is too late.

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Rumors and Reputation: How to Combat Misinformation and Build Community Trust

Mac Clemmens and Maria Lara from Streamline

Planning ahead is your best defense against people spreading false rumors about your district, but that's only sometimes possible. In this talk, we'll go over a variety of methods you can use to get the word out. Whether you need to justify a rate increase or set the facts straight on a decision your Board has made on a contentious subject, our tips can help ensure your voice is the authority, and the one your community trusts.

No GIS Experience Required! Mapping and Managing Your District's Infrastructure Made Easy

Tim McCarthy, Scott Enriquez, and Rachel Castro from MyAssetMap

With today's technology, mapping and managing your district's assets is easier and more affordable than ever. This presentation will show districts how to create data, import/export data, attribute data, organize data, and associate documents to data. No previous GIS knowledge or training required.

Boundary Adjustments: The In's and Out's

Bob Cole and Crystal Schott from Collins Cole Flynn Winn & Ulmer, PLLC

Do you find boundary adjustments daunting? Then come join us for a discussion on inclusions and exclusions. We will explain the general process for inclusions and exclusions and the different types of boundary adjustments you may encounter. We will also address issues that have arisen for special districts and property owners when an inclusion or exclusion is not processed properly, and what the Board should do (and not do) when considering a petition for inclusion or exclusion.

No Money? Creative Financing Solutions for Rural Water Districts Integrating Colorado Programs to Fund and Implement Water Infrastructure Projects

Dave Schneider from Round Mountain Water and Sanitation District and Carl Hurst from Iconergy, Ltd

Learn how the Round Mountain Water and Sanitation District (RMWSD) was able to accomplish a major upgrade of their water metering system to Automated Metering Infrastructure (AMI), the replacement of a failing well and water treatment facility, along with installing a solar PV array, through integrating programs from the Colorado Energy Office (CEO), the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA), and the Colorado Department of Health and Environment State (CDPHE), resulting in zero upfront cost to the district. The project has resulted in the district saving water, improving energy efficiency, reducing operational costs, and increasing revenues. RMWSD's AMI, Well and Water Treatment project is a great example for other districts that are considering initiating their own AMI and infrastructure upgrade projects by using Colorado programs to fund improved water infrastructure. Districts will learn the do's and don'ts; get to know how the CEO's EPC program works; how to apply for DOLA grants; incorporate CDPHE funding; and more.

Meet Your Cast and Crew: Maximizing Your Special District's Consultant Team

Anna Jones from CliftonLarsonAllen; Tom George from Spencer Fane LLP; and District Representatives

Special districts primarily rely on consultants instead of staff to carry out their operations, maintenance, and special projects. This presentation will showcase the various roles for consultants including the district manager, district lawyer, accountant, and engineer and articulate the most effective ways to utilize the team to both educate the district's Board as well as carry out the daily tasks. We will also discuss the primary functions of each consultant role and how individual and team styles and philosophies are a critical ingredient for success.

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Is AI Going to Take My Job? Artificial Intelligence, ChatGPT, and the Future of Work for Special Districts

Mac Clemmens from Streamline

Goldman Sachs has said that artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning will have 100x more of an impact than the personal computer in terms of productivity and GDP growth. Special districts—who are pressed for time and are looking for ways to be more efficient—are carefully starting to adopt this new technology. In this session, we'll look at examples of how AI can save time for general managers, Board secretaries, Board members, fire chiefs, and district staff at all levels and how these roles will change in the next three to five years. Whether it's helping you to write a press release, analyze a budget, summarize a document, or write a poem about your district in less than 30 seconds, the capabilities are jaw-dropping. We'll also explore some of the risks and legal challenges associated with AI—the new kinds of scams, dangers, “bots,” pitfalls, and the policies you need to have in place to protect your district. You'll leave with five tips to make sure you and your district are ready to manage the risks and harness the benefits of this once-in-a-lifetime innovation.

How Annual Reviews and Updates of Your Rules and Regulations Will Strengthen Your District While Supporting Customers

Chris Bieker, Suzanne Jurgens, and Matt Allen from Upper Thompson Sanitation District; and Steve Ravel from Merrick & Company

The Upper Thompson Sanitation District provides wastewater collection and treatment to the Estes Valley, including Rocky Mountain National Park and the YMCA of the Rockies. The district completed an overhaul of its Rules and Regulations (R&R) in 2007. The R&R provide for the construction, administration, and operation of the wastewater collection system within the district. District administration staff understands that each person in the district has a unique perspective regarding the use, applicability, and fairness of the R&R. Beginning in 2009/2010, the district began to gather input from district staff members throughout the year for consideration of improvements to the R&R for the following year. Attendees will learn about the district's Rules and Regulations (what's included/what's not included); how the district staff develops annual updates; how updates are evaluated and incorporated; and how regular review and updates strengthen the district and support district customers.

Workplace Investigations

Ashley Hernandez-Schlagel from Nathan Dumm & Mayer PC and Kathryn Winn from Collins Cole Flynn Winn & Ulmer, PLLC

It is really important to get it right when conducting a workplace investigation. Many times the decision to go forward with an investigation falls to the Board when there is a complaint against the CEO, Fire Chief, or District Manager.

Your District's Investments and the Interest Rate Environment

Glenn Scott from Morgan Stanley

Want to figure out what to do with investments for your district? Where can your district invest cash reserves? Most special districts have cash, funds, and reserves to manage and invest. This presentation will cover options to consider for investing and how they are impacted by the interest rate environment.

The History and Potential Future of Tax Increment Financing

Matt Gray, Attorney and tax increment expert

Join us for an in-depth discussion of the past and future of tax increment financing. We will briefly look at the basics of how tax increment financing works and its history, and then we will review current issues in the area and potential new developments to come.

Election Debriefing...Discuss Your Election Nightmares or Dreams

Micki Mills and Sarah Luetjen from Cockrel Ela Glesne Greher & Ruhland, PC (CEGR Law); and Sarah Shepherd from Circuit Rider of Colorado

The May elections may be over, but our election nightmares may still haunt us. Do you want to talk about it, share your experience, or just ask some questions? Now is your chance to discuss your issues with DEO Experts and find help to ensure your next election experience is more favorable and positive.

Continued on page 17

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Getting Your Water Projects Off the Ground: Filtering Through Funding Options to Meet Your Growing Water Needs

Bailey Leppek and Mark Harris from SGM

SGM has been supporting the municipal, industrial, and agricultural sectors (including special districts, drainage districts, and irrigation districts) with the development of funding plans to support their water projects. A great approach for initiating this process is “idea engineering” which typically answers the questions “What funding can I qualify for?”; “What funding will align with my project needs?”; and “Who is a potential partner that has similar needs?”. SGM will share some case studies of how it worked with special districts to plan out their projects and align potential funding grants and loans to construct them.

Senate Bill 23-244: The Amendments to House Bill 21-1110 and Implications for Districts to Comply by 2024

Maria Lara from Streamline

Before next year’s Conference, your district’s website and documents will have to be ADA-compliant, per Senate Bill 23-244. In this session, we’ll cover what website accessibility means in light of House Bill 21-1110 and the latest bill to amend it—Senate Bill 23-244. Attendees will leave with the ability to check their website accessibility score; operational and technical strategies to reach accessibility; and an understanding of tools available to cost-effectively maintain compliance.

How to Manage Your District’s Assets Using In-House Resources

Julie Koehler, PE from Merrick & Company

Asset management using in-house resources, Excel spreadsheets, industry standards, and bid tabulations allows a utility to take control of the asset management process. When utility staff from operations, engineering, water resources, and other departments work together to create an asset database it saves money, improves the quality of information about the assets, increases shared understanding about the utility, and leads to a sustainable asset management process. Julie will discuss her experience developing and using an asset database at the City of Westminster, applying the process to her current work for small and medium size utilities, and how the same processes can be used in special districts.

Don’t Let Your District Fall Out of Compliance with Statutory Requirements: Plan Ahead and Be Ready! Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance

Micki Mills and Sarah Luetjen from Cockrel Ela Glesne Greher & Ruhland, PC (CEGR Law)

This information-packed program will discuss annual statutory compliance deadlines and filing requirements. This will include (but not be limited to) the new annual report requirement in addition to all other statutory requirements for Transparency Notices; map filings; budgetary process and mill levy certification; audit and audit exemptions; websites; Posting Resolutions; meeting notices postings; 2024 special elections; and more.

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Developing an Incident Response Plan for Cyber Attacks

Jonah Wisch from the National Cybersecurity Center

Local governments of all sizes in Colorado are faced with the threat of cyber attacks that can impact operations for hours, days, or weeks at a time. All aspects of a quality cyber program (identification, protection, detection, response, recovery) need attention, but no matter how much time and effort you put into the proactive measures, no one is completely secure. Having an incident response plan and treating cyber attacks like other emergencies we face in Colorado (wildfires, avalanches, etc.) will give organizations more control over the situation and can save time and money. Attend this presentation to hear the National Cybersecurity Center speak on their experience with local governments in Colorado and how you can prepare a response plan that fits your organization.

Nuts and Bolts of Property Tax Credits

Ken Marchetti from Marchetti & Weaver, LLC

What are property tax credits? How do you implement them? When would you use them? Why are they particularly important now? Join us as we look at this important topic and how it can apply to your district.

What Happens in Executive Session Stays in Executive Session

Emily Powell from Ireland Stapleton Pryor & Pascoe, PC

Special districts and other local governments have been making the news, and not for the reason they want to. Throughout the state, special districts have come under scrutiny for violating the Colorado Open Meetings Law by holding improperly convened executive sessions, sometimes resulting in expensive litigation or settlements. And even without significant financial repercussions, no agency wants to be viewed by its constituents as engaging in secretive or illegitimate conduct. This presentation will provide a clear explanation of the rules for calling, conducting, and concluding an executive session, and an examination of some real-world executive sessions gone wrong.

Taxes, Tax Changes, and Proposition HH

Gini Pingnot from Colorado Counties, Inc. and Dianne Criswell from the Special District Association of Colorado

The past three years have been a twisting and turning roller coaster of change in the property tax arena by the state legislature. Join this presentation to hear from the experts on property tax and the future changes and complexities if Proposition HH passes in November.

Firefighter Behavioral Health

Division Chief Steve Johnston from West Metro Fire Protection District

Behavioral health is an important ingredient for the success of any district, especially in the fire service. Join us for a deep dive discussion on the topic of behavioral health as it pertains to firefighters and the fire service and the resources and tools available to help.

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Metro Districts Score a Win During the 2023 Legislative Session

Guest article by the Metro District Education Coalition

The 2023 Legislative Session was critically important for the Metro District Education Coalition (MDEC). Playing both offense and defense, the Metro District Education Coalition scored wins for current and future metro districts by increasing transparency and accountability in the market while protecting Colorado's ability to provide more affordable housing through metro district financing tools.

With bipartisan sponsors—Sens. Janice Marchman and Rachel Zenzinger and Reps. Cathy Kipp and Rick Taggart—MDEC helped draft Senate Bill 23-110, dubbed the Transparency for Metro Districts bill, to proactively create more transparency and accountability within districts and codify industry best practices. With great stakeholder help and support, including that of SDA, we are pleased that this bill was signed into law on April 3, 2023.

The following is a quick rundown of the bill:

- » Cities and counties must impose a mill levy AND a debt limit cap in their service plans so residents and property owners are assured their metro district mill levies won't go above a certain level and that the overall debt is limited.
- » Annual town hall meetings are required for metro district Boards and the community residents. During the meeting, the Board must include a presentation on the status of the public infrastructure projects within the district, any outstanding debt, and a review of the unaudited financial statements showing year-to-date revenues and expenditures.

- » A mandated public comment period during the annual budget meeting.
- » A check and balance on developer debt that ensures the debt issued is at the same or lower rates as those issued to the public market, and those rates and terms must be certified by a municipal advisor.
- » Finally, a new real estate disclosure—the metro district website must be provided to potential buyers during the early due diligence process prior to escrow monies going hard. This will allow potential buyers the ability to make an informed decision about their purchase by having access to the metro district's service plan; mill levy and debt limitations; budget; audit; election information; and contact information for Directors.

We are pleased with the passage of Senate Bill 23-110 and the alternative it provided to the Rep. Weissman bill, House Bill 23-1090, that would have prohibited developer held debt. We are grateful for the support of the very diverse stakeholders that came to the table during the process to make this the best bill possible.

MDEC looks forward to working with each of you as we continue to educate Coloradans on the role that metro districts play in creating the amenities we love and the infrastructure we need while keeping the cost of housing more affordable. To learn more about MDEC's efforts go to www.MetroDistrictEducation.com. 🍌



October 15 Budget Deadline Quickly Approaching!

Don't forget that your Board must designate a qualified person to prepare the budget and submit it to the Board on or before October 15 of each year. §29-1-105, C.R.S.

There are no specific criteria for how detailed a budget should be nor how much it is based upon line items, although the district's accounting or financial advisors will likely have some input on the level of line item designation. Generally speaking,

expenditures need not be laid out in great detail, but spending should be confined to the line items.

In addition, as part of the adoption of the budget is the adoption of a resolution which adopts the budget and makes appropriations for the budget year. The amounts appropriated shall not exceed the budgeted expenditures, and the district is limited in making expenditures to the amounts that are appropriated. 🍂

Don't Forget to Check Out the New 2023 SDA Board Member Manual!

Just a quick reminder that as part of your membership benefits, complimentary copies of the 2023 SDA Board Member Manual have been sent to districts as well as to management companies to share with their clients!

We were proud to partner with the law firm of Collins Cockrel Cole Flynn Winn & Ulmer, PLLC to produce this year's manual.

In addition to the hard copies that were sent out, a PDF of the manual is always available under the Publications section of the SDA website at www.sdaco.org (you do need to be logged into our website to access this section so please call our office if you need assistance). This is an easy and convenient way to download a copy of the manual and/or to reference it electronically.

If you have any questions, need any additional assistance, or need another hard copy of the manual

please feel free to call the SDA office at 303-863-1733.

We hope you will consider this convenient guide a valuable resource! 🍂

Editor's note: The Board Member Manual is intended to be a general survey of statutory responsibilities for Board members of Colorado special districts, and it is not meant to replace a district's general counsel. The reader is strongly encouraged to seek the advice and assistance of legal counsel experienced in special district matters with any legal issues that may arise.





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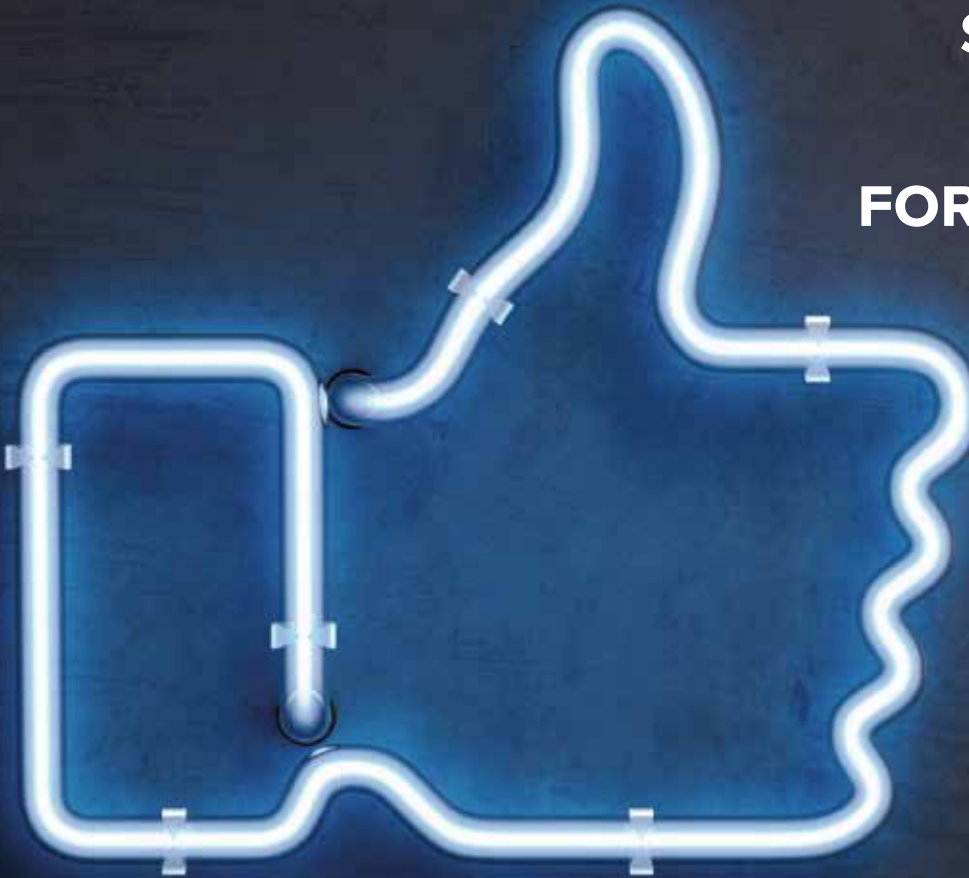
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