

Special District Association of Colorado

SDA NEWS

JULY 2025

Supporting Community-Based Government

**2025 SDA
Legislative
Review**

**50
YEARS**

1975-2025



- Safe & Liquid Investment Options
- The Benefit of Two Funds
- Rated AAAm / AAaf S-1
- Online Access
- Check Writing & Treasury Features

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Designed by Emmett Jordan

The SDA Annual Conference

Will Be Here Before We Know It...

NOW'S THE TIME TO START MAKING YOUR PLANS TO JOIN US!

It's hard to believe, but the 2025 SDA Annual Conference, September 16-18, will be here before we know it! And, we are thrilled to be celebrating our 50th anniversary this year!

For starters, our hybrid format will once again be available, 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 few years, 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! This offers the chance to go back and watch sessions again, either as a refresher or to catch up on anything that was missed. We know this format provides huge benefits for all our attendees, and we are very excited to offer it again this year.

Our lineup of breakout sessions this year is stellar, and the sessions start early on Tuesday morning. Altogether we have a plethora of sessions planned, which will provide an opportunity for participants to hear from a variety of experts on pertinent issues for special districts. On top of all of this, our entertaining and informative keynote speakers will offer their unique insight and perspective into big picture ideas that affect all of us (please see pages 6-7 for all the details on their presentations).

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. Stay tuned for more information on all the sessions we have planned!

In addition, we will once again feature our Forums on Tuesday afternoon, but this year we have a twist! In honor of our special Golden Jubilee celebration, we are excited to feature a keynote level speaker in the smaller Forum format. Plus, we have designed the schedule to allow everyone the possibility of attending more than one of these unique sessions. Make sure to check out pages 9-11 for all the details!

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!

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

Continued on page 4

Tuesday, September 16

- » **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, James Robilotta** who will have you laughing and learning at the same time!
- » 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 **Lonnie Mayne** and his impactful message that will move you towards making a positive impact in all that you do.
- » Tuesday afternoon is when we will offer our **Forums** (see above)! We are thrilled for this special feature in the schedule.
- » 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 Celebration** begins!
- » The casino tables and trivia were so popular last year that we'll have them both available again this year! We'll of course also have lots of **amazing food and time to unwind** and visit with your fellow attendees.



Wednesday, September 17

- » **Lauren Sisler**, sports broadcaster and ESPN sideline reporter, will kick off the day with her gritty and insightful program which will show you how to lead with courage and authenticity.
- » Pertinent and informative sessions will take place all morning, with a **goodie break** in between.
- » Our lunchtime keynote speaker, **Joe Mull**, will reveal the proven habits and routines that set transformational leaders apart on their journey to being a Boss Hero™.
- » Along with additional educational sessions, the **Colorado Special Districts Property and Liability Pool Annual Membership Meeting** will take place on Wednesday afternoon and will feature an educational keynote presentation on business continuity.
- » 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 perennial favorite, **Randall McKinnon**.

Thursday, September 18

- » Thursday will be brimming with sessions and valuable information!
- » Then 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 has worked well the past few years, 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 2025 SDA Annual Conference, September 16-18 at the Keystone Conference Center! Registration opens in early July so watch your emails and visit the SDA website at www.sdaco.org for more information.

Mark your calendars, get ready to register, and we will see you in Keystone in September!





James Robilotta



Lonnie Mayne

DON'T MISS THESE **KEYNOTE SPEAKERS** WHO WILL BE JOINING US AT THE **2025 SDA ANNUAL CONFERENCE!**

We have an amazing lineup of keynote speakers for this year's Annual Conference! This enlightening group of experts will provide the perfect complement to the information-packed breakout sessions we will be offering. Their keynote presentations will round out our event perfectly!

Read on to find out more...

TUESDAY KEYNOTE BREAKFAST

James Robilotta

Leading Imperfectly: The Value of Being Authentic for Leaders, Professionals, and Human Beings

Hey Superwoman, take off your cape. Hey Batman, take off your mask. Hey decision makers, put away your ego. Let's talk about who you are personally as a leader and as a partner. As humans, we can't learn things from people who are perfect, we can only learn things from people who are imperfect. So, it is time to own who you are so you can be real to others and lead through your faults. This deep but hysterical session will leave you feeling introspective about the person you show to others and recognize the rapport and trust building power of authenticity in your communication and relationships. If you're looking to master the art of courageous feedback and authentic relationship building, this is the session for you.

TUESDAY AWARDS LUNCHEON AND KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Lonnie Mayne

Red Shoes Living: Standing Out for the Positive in How You Work and How You Live

The simple ideas are the best...they are the ones you remember and use every day. Red Shoes Living offers five steps that move you towards making a much bigger and more positive impact in everything you do. It's a way of life that works equally well across all the things that you care about: work, play, family, friends, and community. Lonnie will show how we can apply the five steps of Red Shoes Living, so we can create cultures that people want to be a part of, become the leaders we want to be, and build better lives for ourselves and the people we care about.

WEDNESDAY KEYNOTE BREAKFAST

Lauren Sisler

Shatterproof Leadership: Forging Resilience, Bravery, and Purpose in the Workplace

Attendees will stay engaged, empowered, and excited during this insightful talk with Emmy Award-winning sports broadcaster and ESPN sideline reporter, Lauren Sisler. Lauren will show you how to lead with courage and authenticity and how to harness adversity as fuel for resilience in the face of all your challenges. Lauren will also share how to embrace vulnerability and purpose to make your workplace culture more joyful, satisfying, and successful.



Lauren Sisler

WEDNESDAY KEYNOTE LUNCH

Joe Mull

Becoming a Boss Hero™: Answering the Noble Call of Leading Others

Amid shifting employee values, hybrid work, and the emergence of AI, a leader's job has never been more challenging. Bosses shoulder the weight of managing competing personalities, navigating difficult conversations, building team cohesion, driving productivity, and so much more. What does it take to succeed in such a challenging work landscape?

The secret is embracing a higher standard of leadership—one that invokes the science of workplace engagement while placing the humanity of people at the center of everything. To thrive in this new age of work, leaders must evolve, from being bosses...to being Boss Heroes.

Drawing from two decades of experience, workforce engagement expert Joe Mull—author of the award-winning book *Employalty™*—reveals the proven habits and routines that set transformational leaders apart. Through powerful storytelling and evidence-based insights, Joe celebrates bosses everywhere while equipping them with specific practices to build cultures of genuine commitment in today's complex work environment. Leaders leave this powerful session feeling seen, supported, and ready to answer the higher calling of being a Boss Hero™.



Joe Mull

SDA ANNUAL CONFERENCE SEPTEMBER 16-18, 2025

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New Conference Forum Format for Our 50th Anniversary Celebration!

AS WE HAVE MENTIONED, WE HAVE A NEW FORMAT FOR THIS YEAR'S FORUMS IN HONOR OF OUR GOLDEN JUBILEE AND 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION AT THE UPCOMING ANNUAL CONFERENCE!

We will once again hold three Forums on Tuesday afternoon, but this year we will feature a keynote level speaker at each Forum! These speakers will not only present, but they will also lead thoughtful discussions around each of their topics. And, to make sure everyone has a chance to attend more than one of these unique sessions, we are offering the same three Forums twice.

So, in the first track of the afternoon you can choose one of the three Forums to attend. Then in the next track you can pick another one of the three. Or, if you like the first one so much you want to see it again, you can do that, too!

With the exceptional speakers who will be leading each Forum, we are thrilled to provide this new format in the schedule for maximum flexibility and the opportunity to hear from and engage with these experts.

Keep reading for more information on each Forum speaker...



JILL CHRISTENSEN

From Average to Amazing

How to Ignite Exceptional Effort from Employees

Leaders and managers have a major problem: 77% of employees say they are uninspired and only do the bare minimum at work. In this presentation, we'll tackle one of the most enduring and elusive management challenges—how to inspire employees to execute. Attendees will learn a proven strategy, which Jill used in her successful Fortune

500 career, to ignite exceptional effort and realize increased retention, productivity, and profitability. Whether you're an executive striving to differentiate your organization from the competition or a manager focused on retaining talent, Jill's solutions will prove invaluable.

Continued on page 11

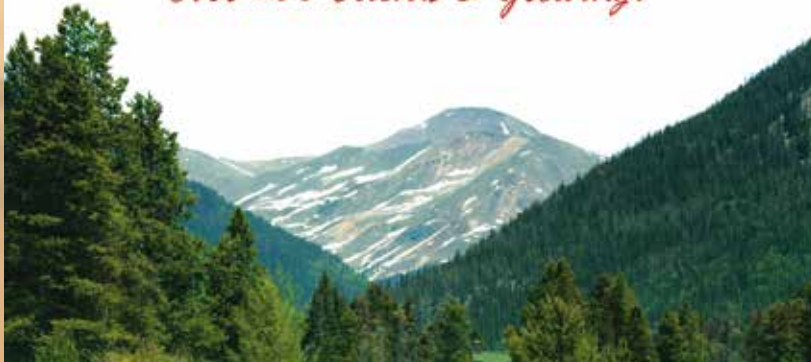
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New Conference Forum Format for Our 50th Anniversary Celebration!



KRISTIN SCROGGIN

Generation “THEM”

Navigating a Multi-Generational Workforce

Embark on a journey with Generation “THEM,” a captivating exploration into the ‘WHY’ behind each American generation’s unique perspectives. Discover the key to fostering understanding, strengthening teamwork, and ensuring workplace cohesion. This presentation provides a solid grasp of generational norms. It emphasizes the critical need to attract and retain top young talent for long-term sustainability, all while offering a light-hearted look at the quirks that make us uniquely human. Among many other things, attendees will master the art of articulating feedback for employees across different generations, maximizing acceptance, and catalyzing positive change. Attendees will also discover effective communication mediums tailored to each generation, enhancing workplace productivity and collaboration.



JAMIE NOTTER

Preparing Your Culture for the AI Revolution

Artificial Intelligence is clearly a game changer, and it feels like we’ve only scratched the surface. But many organizations will miss out on AI’s potential, because their workplace cultures aren’t ready for it. Leveraging AI will require new ways of working, with a heavy focus on innovation and agility, but new research shows hidden culture patterns that can prevent that from happening. Sharing findings from his new book, *Culture Change Made Easy*, author Jamie Notter will show you how to fix those patterns and generate the specific behaviors and approaches that help you maximize the impact of AI at your organization. 🍌

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A Special Thanks to SDA's Platinum Sponsors!

We are thrilled to be working with our 15 Platinum Sponsors throughout the course of this year and for our upcoming Annual Conference! Below is a brief background on each company, many written directly from their perspectives. Please take a minute to learn more about the great services they provide and how they might be able to help your district. And stop by and visit them while you're at Conference in September!



The Colorado Special Districts Property and Liability Pool is Your Risk Management Partner.

We are not your typical insurance company. Because we are member-owned, we don't report to shareholders — we report to our members. Everything we do focuses on life safety, preventing debilitating injury, and the preservation of district property. Our staff of dedicated industry professionals has pulled together comprehensive coverage products and mission-critical services tailored specifically for special districts. Working with members, our staff's mission is to ensure every district employee returns home at the end of his or her shift.

Visit csdpool.org to discover why more than 2,500 organizations trust the Colorado Special Districts Property and Liability Pool with their risk management.

Special districts are our focus and helping them is our passion. Each year, we are amazed by their dedication to their organization and their community; how kind and

respectful they are when we meet with them; and how they always want to make their district better. Even if members have been with us for a long time, they are always willing to hear suggestions and recommendations to help them manage both current and future risks. Whether we're assisting with safety and loss prevention or discussing coverage options to make sure no risk goes unaddressed, our team comes to work every day to look out for special districts and make sure they have the support they need to continue being the best they can be.



Colorado Employer Benefit Trust (CEBC): A Trusted Partner in Public Sector Benefits

For over 30 years, the Special District Association of Colorado (SDA) has endorsed the Colorado Employer Benefit Trust (CEBC) as its preferred health benefits provider. CEBC is a not-for-profit, self-funded governmental health benefit trust that has delivered high-quality medical, dental, vision, life, and disability coverage to Colorado's public sector for over 45 years. Today, CEBC serves approximately 37,000 members across 450 public employers, including 250 special districts. Its longstanding commitment is to provide comprehensive, affordable benefits and exceptional service tailored to the needs of Colorado's governmental entities.

To honor its enduring partnership with SDA and reaffirm its commitment to supporting special districts, CEBC is proud to serve as a Platinum Sponsor. This sponsorship underscores CEBC's dedication to helping special districts offer competitive

employee benefits that attract and retain top talent.

Founded in 1980, CEBC operates with a dedicated team of 43 professionals focused exclusively on serving public sector employers. Bobby Otte is a Senior Director for WTW, which serves as the administrator for CEBC. "CEBC has partnered with the Special District Association of Colorado since 1995," says Otte. "Special districts play a vital role in serving communities across the state. By offering sustainable, high-quality benefits, we help make one aspect of their responsibilities easier—adding value and meaning to the work we do. It's truly an honor to support these organizations, and we look forward to strengthening this relationship for years to come."

For a quote or more information, please contact Terry Rook, Director, Employee Benefit Trust, at 303-345-7730 or terry.rook@wtwco.com.



COLOTRUST (Colorado Local Government Liquid Asset Trust) is Colorado's original and largest pooled investment trust in the state. Designed specifically for Colorado's local governments, COLOTRUST's pools seek to provide a convenient method for investing in a range of high-quality, short- to medium-term securities carefully chosen to provide for prioritizing safety, and liquidity and yield.

Founded in 1985, COLOTRUST has since experienced rapid growth in both assets and participation. Continually striving to meet the evolving needs of local governments, COLOTRUST proudly offers three investment options that fit into a variety of fixed-income

Continued on page 15

ABOUT US

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

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investment strategies, together creating a comprehensive approach to investing.

COLOTRUST is a Platinum Sponsor because it recognizes the importance of SDA when it comes to the support and education of special districts across the state. Currently, special districts make up more than half of the valued participants of COLOTRUST.



Community Resource Services of Colorado (CRS) proudly delivers high-quality, cost-effective, and customized services to a broad and steadily growing network of special district clients across Colorado. With nearly two decades of experience, CRS has earned the trust of districts of all sizes by listening closely to their unique needs and delivering tailored, results-driven solutions.

As your trusted, full-service partner, CRS offers expert support in:

- » District Management
- » Accounting & Financial Consulting
- » Elections Administration
- » Billing Services
- » Project Management
- » Field Supervision

Clients depend on our ethical, experienced, and highly skilled team of over 30 professionals, all dedicated to helping districts operate efficiently and effectively.

A long-time Platinum Sponsor of the Special District Association of Colorado (SDA), CRS is proud to support SDA's mission of advancing special districts through legislative advocacy, research, education, and resources that strengthen communities across Colorado.

Founded in 2005, CRS has built a reputation for excellence with a team that brings together more than 250 years of combined industry experience. Our CEO, Sue Blair, has served on the SDA Board since 2013,

continuing our deep commitment to the special district community.

Community Resource Services of Colorado—Local Experts. Trusted Partners. Proven Results.



Collins Cole Winn & Ulmer is a local government law firm powered by experience, innovation, and collaboration.

Together, we bring unparalleled experience in special district law, and we implement a team-oriented approach to deliver high quality and cost-effective legal services to our clients.

Our attorneys and paralegals have deep and longstanding involvement with the Special District Association of Colorado. Jim Collins co-founded SDA in 1975, and Allison Ulmer is now the Executive Vice President.

We work closely with SDA to provide seminars, publications, and other educational materials relating to the legal needs of special districts throughout the year, such as:

- » Updating the Board Member Manual
- » Traveling throughout Colorado to provide the SDA Annual Regional Workshops for Board Members and employees
- » Speaking at the SDA Annual Conference
- » Supporting SDA's legislative activities

Our clients trust our guidance and advocacy. We strive to help our clients both solve their current legal problems and prevent future ones by providing proactive and pragmatic legal representation based on our decades of experience.

We take pride in the respectful long-term working relationships we have developed with our clients. Working collaboratively with local governments allows us to understand the needs of the

communities our clients serve, and to help serve those needs effectively. You can learn more about us at www.cogovlaw.com, or you can contact us at 720.617.0080 or info@cogovlaw.com.



CSAFE is a local government investment pool established in 1988, celebrating many years of service. We offer two investment funds for cash and investment dollars. Our focus is to provide Colorado's special districts safety of principal, liquidity of funds, and competitive yields through our funds.

The "CSAFE Cash" fund is for overnight and weekly cash demands. The "Colorado Core" fund is for your district's savings and core funds. Both funds provide a stable NAV (Net Asset Value) and professional money management.

CSAFE is proud to be a member of SDA for over 34 years and a Platinum Sponsor for over 15 years. CSAFE treasures its relationship with SDA and many hundreds of special districts.

We look forward to visiting with you at the conference. Please refer to our website www.csafe.org for more information.



CEGR Law is a team of dedicated local government and public utility attorneys and paralegals working for more than 40 years serving Colorado's communities as general counsel, and providing specialized services, including conducting public elections and water rights administration and litigation.

Our lawyers have worked in nearly all counties in Colorado to organize and advise local government entities engaged in multiple community services through metropolitan districts, and locally

Continued on page 16

managed government services of all types including water, sanitation, fire, EMS/ambulance, hospital, library, and park and recreation districts. We have experience advising on and solving our client's legal issues associated with water rights and litigation; real property transactions; construction contracting; local government elections and TABOR compliance; employment matters; water and wastewater system operations and permitting; bond financing; and intergovernmental contracting.

CEGR Law fosters community relationships and is skilled at working collaboratively with other agencies and their counsel to create partnerships that improve efficiencies through intergovernmental authorities and contacts for combined services. We support all types of special districts, from small rural special districts that rely on volunteer involvement, to large service districts with professional staffs providing services to hundreds of thousands of customers and property owners, and to metropolitan districts that enable the creation of new neighborhood communities and redevelopment of blighted areas.

Special districts are as unique as the communities in which they operate. While we have collectively been involved in legal services to special districts across Colorado for more than 40 years, the landscape is always evolving and each year presents a new challenge to tackle together with our clients. We could not imagine a more interesting and dynamic community of interest, or one with such ability to impact Colorado residents, than that created by local government.

We take pride in our clients and the valuable services they bring to their local communities and enjoy working collaboratively with elected and appointed public officials and Boards of Directors to address the unique needs of each project. That's why our motto is "Building and Protecting Colorado's Communities."

CEGR Law wholeheartedly

supports SDA and the public education and advocacy work that SDA advances on behalf of all special districts. We are thrilled to once again be a Platinum Sponsor of SDA and hope to see you all at this year's Annual Conference in Keystone!



STREAMLINE

Streamline is the only platform built specifically for special districts, offering powerful, easy-to-use tools that simplify communication, boost efficiency, and ensure compliance—even with limited budgets and small teams. Our all-in-one solution includes a website platform with built-in compliance checklists, professional mass communication tools, an intranet for secure internal operations, online payment processing, and now **DocAccess**—a game-changing tool that **instantly transforms PDFs into ADA-compliant versions**, helping districts meet accessibility requirements automatically and affordably.

At Streamline, **our mission is to help local governments serve their communities**. We're passionate about supporting special districts—not just for the staff who keep them running, but for the people and places they impact every day. With Streamline, districts can do more with less—and engage their communities like never before. Find out more at www.getstreamline.com



Ramey Environmental Compliance provides contract operational services for domestic drinking water, domestic wastewater, and industrial wastewater facilities for special districts, municipalities, and private owners. Ramey Environmental Compliance also provides consulting services in

many areas of the water/wastewater industry along with an Equipment Services Division, which provides service and maintenance on existing and new equipment used in the industry.

Ramey Environmental has chosen to be a passionate part of SDA, as a lot of our clients are special districts that are associated with SDA. SDA provides education, leadership, and training opportunities that aren't offered by other associations. SDA also keeps its members informed on legislative and regulatory alerts that affect the costs associated with providing water and wastewater services. This is truly beneficial to Ramey Environmental because when clients are informed on the current status of regulations, it makes Ramey Environmental's job easier to assist.

The company was founded in 1992, incorporated in 1997, and currently has 54 employees. R. Wayne Ramey is now retired from the company, and Linda Ramey has also retired. The new leader of Ramey Environmental is Mr. Mike Murphy, CWP. Mike will carry on the legacy that Linda and Wayne started so many years ago.

REC joined the PERC Water family in November of 2023. Established in 1998, PERC Water is an innovative water infrastructure company that develops, designs, builds, operates, and manages water infrastructure throughout the United States. Their unique project approach results in certainty of cost, schedule, and water quality for their clients. PERC Water can uniquely provide such certainty at an early stage of a project by leveraging their Customized Design Report. Their trademarked and award-winning designs allow for an efficient and environmentally sensitive solution(s) to water recycling. We look forward to the future of this new journey.



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Spencer Fane LLP serves as general counsel and special counsel to scores of Colorado's special districts and municipalities, including cities, fire protection districts, water and sanitation districts, metropolitan districts, business improvement districts, intergovernmental authorities, and others. It provides services regarding the formation and representation of these entities in the areas of municipal law, election law, TABOR issues, finance, environmental law, land use, eminent domain, litigation, and other related areas. In addition, the firm serves as bond counsel to numerous political subdivisions throughout the state.

Spencer Fane has been a Platinum Sponsor for years because the firm recognizes that SDA provides essential guidance, education, and legislative representative services to all special districts in the state, and those efforts need to be supported, not only financially, but with the firm's active presence and cooperation.

Founded in 1952, Spencer Fane is a full-service law firm with more than 600 attorneys across

50 practice areas and industry specialties in 29 offices throughout the U.S. It notes that its attorneys were instrumental in writing the Colorado legislation establishing special districts, as well as the laws governing the electoral process for not only special districts but Colorado municipalities generally. The firm says, "Special districts and municipalities require special knowledge. Let us put our experience to work for you." Denver-based Partner Tom George chairs the Spencer Fane Special Districts group, which is comprised of 10 attorneys and 7 experienced paralegals and support staff.

Spencer Fane attorneys and business professionals enjoy supporting the dedicated and hard-working individuals who serve on Boards, work as staff, and volunteer their time and energy to help their local governments and communities thrive.



Shaping Communities. Building Futures.

Founded in 2004, Pinnacle Consulting Group, Inc. has become

a trusted partner to special districts across Colorado and Utah. With over 20 years in business and a team of more than 50 professionals, Pinnacle brings deep institutional knowledge and hands-on experience to the complex challenges our clients face — from compliance and budget constraints to growth and governance.

Our structure allows us to deliver specialized yet integrated support across four core service areas: Finance & Accounting, Management & Administration, Capital Project Management, and Facility Operations. Whether your district needs help in a single area or comprehensive support, our collaborative teams ensure dependable service and tailored solutions.

At Pinnacle, we believe strong relationships are the foundation of successful communities. That's why our commitment extends beyond our clients to the people they serve—through community sponsorships, food and goods drives, and volunteerism.

We're proud to support today's needs while helping shape tomorrow's communities. Discover the Pinnacle difference your district deserves at PCGI.com or connect with us at our booth during the SDA Conference.

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FUN FACTS

1975

This month's fun facts feature some of the most popular toys in the U.S. in 1975. Were you trying to find these for your kids or did you have them on your gift wish list?

- » **Baby Alive**
- » **Matchbox Steer & Go car set**
- » **The board game Mouse Trap**
- » **G.I. Joe with action vehicles**
- » **Barbie's VW camper**
- » **A basic LEGO set**
- » **And the most popular...the Pet Rock!**



Gregory & Associates has partnered with SDA since its inception in 1975. We supply special districts and fire protection districts with 401(a)/ 457(b) and LOSAP Defined Benefit/ Defined Contribution Retirement plans while offering individual financial advice from Registered, tenured professionals. Gregory & Associates believes that long-term client relationships are more important than short-term gains and will never sacrifice the former for the latter.

We are a Platinum Sponsor to say, "Thank you, and we owe you our gratitude." We've enjoyed the partnership through the years and are proud that we continue to serve this very special market.

Gregory & Associates specializes in helping special districts build employer-sponsored retirement plans to help districts attract and retain talented employees. We're proud to serve any special district no matter the size, and we take responsibility for our service. Gregory & Associates currently services over 40 retirement plans for SDA members and enjoys working with countless individuals currently or previously employed by a special district. We enjoy taking care of those that are there to take care of us and our community.

The company was founded in 1969 in Denver and has three dedicated staff members to support its President, Chad M. Alevras, CRPC®.

Cetera Investors is a marketing name of Cetera Investment Services, located at 400 First St. South, Suite 300, St. Cloud, MN 56301. Chad Alevras is a Registered Representative offering Securities and insurance products are offered through Cetera Investment Services LLC member FINRA/SIPC. Advisory services are offered through Cetera Investment Advisers LLC. Cetera is under separate ownership from any other named entity. 5299 DTC BLVD Suite 800 Greenwood Village, CO 80111.



Expert Banking Focused on You.* Look to Alliance Association Bank for expert banking built for the special district and community association industries. Tech-forward solutions, including our industry-leading ConnectLive™ interface, deliver greater efficiency and ease. That's all in addition to our customer-first ethos that leads to superior service.

Alliance Association Bank is part of Western Alliance Bank, one of the country's top-performing financial institutions.

We offer our clients the sizable resources and sophisticated services and solutions of a national bank, along with the focus and expertise to deliver thoughtful, sector-specific banking for the special district and community association industries.



GovDeals is your trusted partner in surplus! As the world's largest online auction marketplace for government surplus, we have nearly 25 years of experience maximizing value for our clients. With over \$4 billion in revenue returned to more than 15,000 government entities across North America, the GovDeals marketplace offers a fully transparent, simple, and fast solution for surplus disposition. The marketplace regularly features asset sales in every category and condition, from vehicles and equipment to computers and real estate.

GovDeals enjoys working with special districts to bring the power of over five million bidders to the agency auctions and increase the revenue returned to the budget. GovDeals is proud to be a sponsor of SDA. We look forward to a long relationship helping your membership maximize surplus revenues.

Gain access to GovDeals through your SDA membership at no extra cost to your agency.



Fromm & Company is a family-owned firm providing accounting, management, billing, budgeting, auditing, and compliance services to special districts across the state. Our firm is comprised of individuals with vast experience in the special district world. This experience provides Board members the ability to govern their district while Fromm & Company takes care of the necessary duties to ensure the district is operating smoothly and in compliance with state regulations.

The firm is led by Cathy Fromm, CPA, who has been in the local government finance arena for over 40 years, including ten years as a municipal Finance Director. Cathy has also served as President, Vice-President, and Treasurer for the Colorado Government Finance Officers Association (CGFOA). Other team members' experience encompasses over 25 years in administration, accounting, compliance, management, election, and paralegal services to special districts, in addition to Big 4 CPA auditing experience. Another service Fromm & Company can offer our clients is construction management, with over 40 years of experience amongst our team members.

SDA provides a wealth of information and guidance to its members. These members are our clients. Fromm & Company values this resource and is honored to be a Platinum Sponsor. 🍷

A note from SDA CEO Ann Terry: For this month's stroll down memory lane feature, we have included an interesting article about the origin of management companies in Colorado which was originally published in the December 2015 issue of SDA News. While we realize that some of the people in this article have retired, firm names have changed, and more organizations have been created, management companies provide such important services to their clients that we wanted to take this opportunity to highlight their origins and the valuable role they play for special districts across the state.

The Origin of Special District Management Companies in Colorado

By Susan M. Thornton

Life often takes you in unexpected directions.

Just ask Jim Collins, Principal with Collins Cockrel & Cole, and long-time SDA Executive Vice President, who some call "the God-father" of special district management companies in Colorado.

Career Began in Municipal Government



Jim Collins

When he graduated from college in 1967, Mr. Collins took a job in Michigan with the City of Kalamazoo's personnel department, and over the next two years he earned his MBA at night. In 1969, he and his wife moved to Colorado, where he began night law school at the University of Denver.

At the same time, Mr. Collins took the position of Personnel Director (and later Community Development Director and Assistant City Manager) for the City of Littleton.

The job, he remembers, paid "the then magnificent sum" of \$7,600 per year.

When the City Manager resigned in November of 1971, the Littleton City Council appointed Mr. Collins as Acting City Manager.

"I was 26 years old," Mr. Collins says, "and I was very surprised [to be appointed]. I think the city staff was even more surprised. I suppose my head swelled up a bit."

About four months later, the Council appointed a new City Manager, Gale Christy. "I remember turning over the keys to the City Manager's office to Gale and thinking, 'Boy, that was brief—but fun,'" Mr. Collins quips.

Financial Consulting Firm Formed

In the spring of 1973, the former manager of Summit County, Steve Lyon, approached Mr. Collins about forming a consulting firm to manage the finances of local governments, and the two established Lyon Collins and Co.

The firm's first client was a four-year-old sewer district in Vail, the Upper Eagle Valley Sanitation District (UEVSD). "The District had a lot of problems with pipes and billings, and the collections certified to the county were all screwed up," Mr. Collins says. The UEVSD hired Lyon Collins and Co. to fix the problems, prepare a management study, and complete a rate study.

Tom Grimshaw was UEVSD's attorney and the attorney for a number of other water districts in the Vail area. Mr. Grimshaw and Mr. Collins worked together for the next five years, while Mr. Collins was finishing the management study for UEVSD; picking up other clients for management, billing, and accounting work; still going to law school at night; and raising a family.

Lyon Collins and Co. eventually became Local Government Management Consultants (LGMC); then Mr. Lyon was elected to the Legislature and "pretty much disappeared," Mr. Collins says.

He recalls that LGMC contracted to do operations work for several of the water districts in the Vail area, so he hired a certified operator, who proved unreliable. That's when Mr. Collins says he found himself "testing chlorine levels, throwing chlorine into water storage tanks, fixing chlorine levels, picking leaves out of intake ponds, etc., etc." Ultimately the sewer district contracted to take over the operations, while Mr. Collins did the management and accounting.

SDA Formed to Protect Special Districts

At the same time, the Legislature had been focusing on "wiping out" special districts in Colorado, Mr. Collins states.

On one of their trips together, Mr. Grimshaw suggested that the two friends form a nonprofit organization similar to the Colorado Municipal League (CML) or Colorado Counties, Inc. (CCI) to oppose those efforts and provide training and information to special districts. "There weren't nearly as many special districts in the state then," Mr. Collins remembers. "Mostly park and rec, fire, and water and san districts."

A story that circulates among special district management companies has it that Mr. Grimshaw proposed that the name of the new organization representing special districts should be the "League of Special Districts." Mr. Collins replied, "Wait, that would be LSD! We can't do that!" As a result, the Special District Association of Colorado got its much more sedate name.

So, in 1975, Mr. Collins took over running the newly formed SDA, while Mr. Grimshaw's firm did the lobbying. "I was running SDA out of the bottom left drawer of my desk," Mr. Collins says.

Collins and Cockrel

By 1978, Mr. Collins had finished law school, passed the bar, and come to believe that he knew more special district law than most attorneys, he says. Mr. Grimshaw invited him to join the Grimshaw firm, but Mr. Collins says he wanted to "do his own thing."

So in April of 1978, he and Paul Cockrel formed the law firm of Collins and Cockrel (now known as Collins Cockrel & Cole).

Other Firms Followed

Mr. Collins remembers that his firm's first colleague in the management business was Ray Wells, who formed RS Wells.

Others followed, until today there are 12 district management consulting firms in Colorado known to Mr. Collins. The companies' services range widely and include management, accounting, billing, project management, budgeting, elections, and more.

Special District Management Services

Debbie McCoy, now President of Special District Management Services (SDMS), began working at Collins and Cockrel as a legal assistant in 1978, then went to work for RS Wells in 1987.

Ms. McCoy was at RS Wells for about two years before founding her own full-service firm, SDMS. There she worked with Sue Blair and hired and trained Kammy Tinney and several others who

Continued on page 20



have since gone on to work for other management companies.

She says management services companies provide special district Board members with invaluable advice and assistance. "Board members are everyday people with other things to do [than run a district]," she says. "They rarely come with expertise in all the areas they will face."

"It takes two solid years for new Board members to gather all the statutory information needed by special districts," she observes.

In addition, it takes time and expertise to know how to interpret legislative changes that affect special districts, she says. Elections are one example: management firms seek the best legal advice on election law, and then a common goal is for all the firms to treat election law in a similar manner.

Community Resource Services

Sue Blair of Community Resource Services (CRS) worked with both Mr. Collins and Ms. McCoy at Collins and Cockrel. She says, "I started with Jim in 1980, at a time when he was just moving SDA from his 'desk drawer' to a proper office."

Then when Ms. McCoy left RS Wells in 1987, Ms. Blair says, "Debbie called and said Ray needed me. So I interviewed, and RS Wells hired me on the spot. I had planned to take a year off, but [going with RS Wells] was a good decision."

Ms. Blair's next professional career change came in February of 2007 when she started with Community Resource Services, where she works today.

CliftonLarsonAllen

Bob Blodgett, with a background in planning and city management, went to work for RS Wells in 1995.

"Ray Wells formed one of the earliest management consulting firms specifically focused on providing professional management services on a contract basis to special and metropolitan districts," Mr. Blodgett says. "Up until that time, it was mostly law firms managing special districts."

CliftonGunderson acquired RS Wells in 1999, then merged a year later with the accounting firm of LarsonAllen. Today Mr. Blodgett is part of a team representing approximately 150 special districts and 20 cities with management services or contract work at CliftonLarsonAllen.

Pinnacle Consulting Group

Kammy Tinney, Director of District Management with Pinnacle Consulting Group, went to work with Ms. McCoy at SDMS in 1997, worked with Ms. Blair and Mr. Blodgett for several years at RS Wells, and then joined Pinnacle in 2010.

Pinnacle had been formed in 2004 by Chad Walker and Peggy Dowsnell. Although the two Principals had not worked for Mr. Collins, Ms. Tinney says he was instrumental in Pinnacle's formation, suggesting to the two that they form the new firm—which they did.

"Jim Collins has been very influential in all of our careers, whether we know it or not," she says. "He's a wonderful man."

Competitive but Collegial

All of the companies in this story are highly competitive. But as Ms. McCoy points out, "We have a gentleman's agreement that we don't deliberately try to poach a competitor's clients. If someone else's client comes to me, for example, I give the competing firm a heads-up call."

Ms. Tinney echoes her comments, saying, "While we all take different approaches to our services, we share a goal of providing excellent services to special districts to help their Boards meet challenges and see their visions come to fruition."

The Future of Special Districts

Ms. McCoy believes there will always be a need for special districts in Colorado. "We will continue to see development occur through special districts," she predicts. "They are about the only way communities have to develop and to revive older infrastructure."

In addition, legislative changes make governing a special district ever more complicated and expensive, she says, which means there will always be a need for expert advice provided by management firms. 🍷

Praise for SDA

Sue Blair, an SDA Board Member since 2013 and elected in September to a second two-year term, says she "can't say enough good things" about SDA. "What SDA produces with a small staff is amazing," she says. "They do an excellent job."

A story that circulates among special district management companies has it that Mr. Grimshaw proposed that the name of the new organization representing special districts should be the "League of Special Districts." Mr. Collins replied, "Wait, that would be LSD! We can't do that!" As a result, the Special District Association of Colorado got its much more sedate name.

Reflecting on the 2025 Legislative Session

The 2025 Colorado Legislative Session has officially wrapped, and the ink is dry (or not) on a slew of new laws, with several bills putting special districts in the spotlight. With the Governor's deadline to sign, let become law, or veto bills in the rearview mirror, the off-season will provide time to digest what passed and what will return in 2026 after some additional seasoning. For Colorado's special districts, this Session brought more attention and a lot more paperwork, but as always at the Capitol, the beat goes on.

Here's your whirlwind tour of this year's Legislative Session. From fresh twists in audit thresholds to new spins on workers' comp, lawmakers managed to sprinkle, stir, and sometimes shake up nearly every corner of the special district universe. This recap delivers a quick hit overview of the bills that made waves, sparked debates, or just added a little extra work for special districts across the state.

The SDA bill tracker with all the bills SDA tracked and lobbied can be found on the SDA website at www.sdaco.org.

BY THE NUMBERS

	House	Senate	Total
Bills Introduced	335	322	657
Bills Pl'd/Lost	119	51	170
Bills Passed	216	271	487
Signed by the Governor	208	268	476
Vetoed by the Governor	8	3	11
Total	216	271	487

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Elections

House Bill 25-1225

Freedom from Intimidation in Election Act

HB25-1225 creates the “Freedom from Intimidation in Elections Act,” which prohibits any individual from intimidating, threatening, or coercing or attempting to intimidate, threaten, or coerce any individual for:

- » Voting or attempting to vote;
- » Urging or aiding any individual to vote or attempt to vote;
- » Exercising any powers or duties to administer elections, including vote counting, canvassing, and election certification; or
- » The individual’s status as a past or present participant in the administration of elections.

HB25-1225 presumes that anyone carrying a visible firearm, imitation firearm, or toy firearm while interacting with or observing election activities is engaging in intimidation, unless they can prove otherwise. Enforcement can be pursued by individuals, election officials, the Secretary of State, or the Attorney General, and multiple suits can proceed at the same time. Courts may order broader firearm restrictions, and plaintiffs do not need to prove intent to intimidate, except in cases of attempted intimidation.

Position: Support

Sponsors: House: S. Woodrow, E. Velasco; Senate: L. Daugherty, N. Hinrichsen

Effective: May 12, 2025

Final Status: Governor signed on May 12, 2025

House Bill 25-1327

Modify Statewide Ballot Measure Processes

HB25-1327 makes several changes to Colorado’s statewide ballot measure process to increase transparency, improve fiscal reporting, and streamline procedures.

The bill requires proponents who submit five or more drafts of an initiative on the same subject within a single cycle to provide a comparison chart highlighting the differences between drafts. For measures proposing tax increases, fiscal summaries and ballot materials must now include estimates of the maximum dollar amount of state and local revenue changes for both

the first and, if applicable, final full fiscal years.

The Title Board must indicate in ballot titles whether a measure modifies, extends, repeals, or creates law, and must use the new fiscal estimates for tax measures. The timeline for submitting drafts and holding Title Board meetings is adjusted, moving the final meeting to the first Wednesday in April and setting new deadlines for rehearing motions.

Proponents must notify the Secretary of State when a petition reaches 25%, 50%, and 75% of required signatures, as well as when circulation stops. The Secretary of State will post this information online and may fine proponents up to \$1,500 for noncompliance.

These changes apply to both citizen-initiated and legislatively referred measures, with the goal of providing voters with clearer information and ensuring a more transparent and accountable ballot measure process.

Position: Monitor

Sponsors: House: M. Froelich, E. Sirota; Senate: C. Kipp

Effective: Upon signature of the Governor

Final Status: Governor signed on June 4, 2025

Senate Bill 25-172

Uncontested Special Director District Election Cancellation

If a special district is divided into director districts, SB25-172 clarifies that a district may cancel an election in a director district if the election of the director is uncontested and that is the only question on the ballot.

Position: Support

Sponsors: House: C. Clifford; Senate: T. Sullivan, J. Carson

Effective: 90 days following adjournment of the General Assembly sine die, assuming no referendum petition is filed (August 6, 2025)

Final Status: Governor signed on April 18, 2025



Fire/EMS

House Bill 25-1009

Vegetative Fuel Mitigation

The bill allows a fire protection district or a metropolitan district that provides fire prevention services to establish a program requiring the removal of dead

or dry plant material from private property that can burn and contribute to a fire, including leaves, grass, shrubs, ground litter, dead leaves, and fallen pine needles. The program must adopt policies consistent with the 2024 International Wildland-Urban Interface Code or a subsequent code, or the standards and codes adopted by the Colorado Wildfire Resiliency Code Board.

A district may assess a fine for owners and occupiers of private property that fail to remove vegetative fuel from the property at least ten days after a second written notice. The fine must be approximately equal to the cost of removing the vegetative fuel and must not exceed \$200 per property per incident. An owner occupier is not subject to more than one fine for the same incident. The sum of all fines assessed against a single property must not exceed \$1,200. Fine waivers are provided if certain conditions are met. Districts must use fine revenue only to remove vegetative fuel on private property and must prioritize use of the money to assist with vegetative-fuel removal for low-income, single, senior, or disabled owners and occupiers. Delinquent charges and levies may be certified to the County Treasurer and can be collected and paid by the Treasurer in the same manner as authorized by Title 31.

The bill also requires districts to establish a process for owners and occupiers of private property to protest a fine and requires districts to adopt rules and policies for a vegetative fuel mitigation program only after public notice and comment.

Position: Support

Sponsors: House: T. Mauro, J. Joseph; Senate: L. Cutter, N. Hinrichsen

Effective: 90 days following adjournment of the General Assembly sine die, assuming no referendum petition is filed (August 6, 2025)

Final Status: Governor signed March 31, 2025

Senate Bill 25-007

Increase Prescribed Burns

SB25-007 establishes the Prescribed Fire Claims Cash Fund within the Division of Fire Prevention and Control at the Colorado Department of Public Safety. The fund, initially seeded with a \$250,000 transfer from the General Fund, is designed to compensate for property damage resulting from prescribed burns that are properly registered and conducted under state guidelines. Individual claims are capped at \$20,000 or 10% of the fund's balance, whichever is greater, and claimants must waive further claims related to the incident upon payment. The bill also allows for reciprocity in certified burner credentials from other states, streamlining the process for qualified individuals to conduct prescribed burns in Colorado. Utilities are authorized to issue Colorado Energy Impact bonds for wildfire

mitigation and related hazards, subject to Public Utilities Commission approval. For fiscal year 2025-26, the bill appropriates \$403,025 to the Department of Public Safety for administration and claims processing. The legislation aims to encourage safe prescribed burning practices while providing a mechanism for addressing damage efficiently.

Position: Monitor

Sponsors: House: E. Velasco, R. Weinberg; Senate: L. Cutter, J. Marchman

Effective: Upon signature of the Governor

Final Status: Governor signed on May 29, 2025

Senate Bill 25-060

Repeated Phone Calls Obstruction of Government Operations

SB25-060 amends Colorado's obstruction of government operations statute to include the repeated, unjustified contacting of public safety emergency call centers or entities, such as 911 dispatch, after being warned to stop by an employee. Warnings may be delivered verbally, by text, or in writing. Violators may be charged with a class 2 misdemeanor. The legislation is intended to discourage misuse of emergency services and ensure these resources remain available for legitimate emergencies. The bill is expected to have a minimal fiscal impact on state and local governments.

Position: Support

Sponsors: House: R. Armagost, C. Clifford; Senate: M. Catlin, D. Roberts

Effective: October 1, 2025

Final Status: Governor signed on April 17, 2025

Senate Bill 25-142

Changes in Wildfire Resiliency Code Board

Current law requires a governing body of a city, town, or city and county with jurisdiction in an area within the wildland-urban interface to, within three months of the Wildfire Resiliency Code Board (Board) adopting wildfire codes and standards, adopt wildfire codes and standards that meet or exceed those adopted by the Board. Senate Bill 25-142 extends that timeframe to nine months. The bill allows an adopting governing body to enter into a cooperative agreement with another entity, such as a third-party contractor or another governing body, to enforce wildfire codes and standards.

Position: Monitor

Sponsors: House: E. Velasco; Senate: L. Cutter, M. Baisley

Effective: Upon signature of the Governor

Final Status: Governor signed on June 3, 2025

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General

House Bill 25-1152

Tech Accessibility Liability Contractor

HB25-1152 requires contractors working with Colorado public schools to comply with technology accessibility standards for individuals with disabilities, as established by the Office of Information Technology. The bill mandates that contracts include provisions holding contractors liable for any costs, damages, or legal claims resulting from non-cooperation, and requires contractors to indemnify and hold harmless the school, its employees, and agents. Public schools may also require contractors to verify compliance through a qualified third party. These requirements apply to contracts entered into, amended, or renewed after the bill's effective date. The legislation aims to ensure that technology used in public schools is accessible to all students and staff, and that contractors are accountable for meeting these standards.

Position: Monitor

Sponsors: House: M. Lukens, L. Garcia Sander;
Senate: B. Kirkmeyer, J. Marchman

Effective: 90 days following adjournment of the General Assembly sine die, assuming no referendum petition is filed (August 6, 2025)

Final Status: Governor signed on May 24, 2025

House Bill 25-1198

Regional Planning Roundtable Commission

HB25-1198 establishes the Regional Planning Roundtable Commission within the Department of Local Affairs to support local governments in addressing regional planning challenges. The 21-member commission, representing a range of organizations and geographic regions, will convene only at the request of a local government seeking assistance. Its responsibilities include helping to define regional boundaries, recommending participants for planning discussions, identifying state resources, and developing integrated planning frameworks that address issues such as land use, housing, transportation, infrastructure, and community health. The commission is required to submit annual reports to the Legislature detailing its activities. The bill's implementation is contingent on the Department of Local Affairs receiving sufficient funding through gifts, grants, or donations.

Position: Monitor

Sponsors: House: M. Froelich, K. Brown; Senate: F. Winter

Effective: 90 days following adjournment of the General Assembly sine die, assuming no referendum petition is filed (August 6, 2025)

Final Status: Governor signed on June 3, 2025

House Bill 25-1215

Redistribution of Lottery Fund

This bill creates the strategic outdoor recreation management and infrastructure cash fund; requires a specified percentage of lottery fund money to be distributed to the cash fund in state fiscal years when available lottery fund money exceeds a specified amount; and continuously appropriates the money in the cash fund to the Division of Parks and Wildlife for specified outdoor recreation and management purposes.

Current law distributes, to the extent available, the first \$3 million of the lottery fund to the outdoor equity fund; the next \$3 million to the public-school capital construction assistance fund; and any remaining money as follows:

- » 25% to the wildlife cash fund;
- » 25% to the parks and outdoor recreation cash fund; and
- » 50% to the public-school capital construction assistance fund.

For the 2024-25 state fiscal year and each state fiscal year thereafter, the bill redistributes, to the extent available, the first \$4 million of the lottery fund to the outdoor equity fund; the next \$3 million to the public-school capital construction assistance fund; the next \$750,000 to the outdoor recreation industry office in the office of economic development; and any remaining money as follows:

If the total amount of lottery fund money available is \$20 million or less:

- » 50% to the public-school capital construction assistance fund;
- » 20% to the parks and outdoor recreation cash fund;
- » 20% to the wildlife cash fund; and
- » 10% to the outdoor equity fund; or

If the total amount of lottery fund money available is more than \$20 million:

- » 50% to the public-school capital construction assistance fund;
- » 15% to the parks and outdoor recreation cash fund;
- » 15% to the wildlife cash fund;
- » 10% to the outdoor equity fund;

- » 5% to the outdoor recreation industry office in the office of economic development; and
- » 5% to the strategic outdoor recreation management and infrastructure cash fund.

Position: Amend

Sponsors: House: R. Taggart, J. Joseph; Senate: J. Bridges, B. Kirkmeyer

Effective: Upon Signature

Final Status: Governor signed on May 30, 2025

...From fresh twists in audit thresholds to new spins on workers' comp, lawmakers managed to sprinkle, stir, and sometimes shake up nearly every corner of the special district universe...

House Bill 25-1239

Colorado Anti-Discrimination Act

HB25-1239 amends the Colorado Anti-Discrimination Act (CADA) by consolidating and clarifying remedies available to individuals with disabilities who experience discrimination in housing, public accommodations, or civil rights violations. The bill aligns these remedies with those available to all protected classes, allowing for court orders, actual damages, attorney fees, non-economic damages (capped at \$50,000), and a statutory fine of \$5,000 per violation. Small businesses may receive a 50% reduction in noneconomic damages if they promptly correct violations and did not act intentionally. The bill also extends the deadline for filing discrimination complaints related to public accommodations or advertising from 60 days to one year after the alleged incident.

Position: Monitor

Sponsors: House: A. Boesenecker, Y. Zokaie; Senate: M. Weissman, L. Daugherty

Effective: 90 days following adjournment of the General Assembly sine die, assuming no referendum petition is filed (August 6, 2025)

Final Status: Governor signed on May 22, 2025

Senate Bill 25-023

Local Government Audit Exemption Thresholds

Under current law, all local governments must conduct an audit of financial statements each fiscal year. However,

a local government with revenues or expenditures under \$100,000 may apply to be exempted from such an audit, and local governments with revenues or expenditures between \$100,000 and \$750,000 may apply for an exemption if the application is prepared by an independent accountant with knowledge of government accounting. For any fiscal year beginning on or after January 1, 2025, the bill increases the thresholds from \$100,000 to \$200,000 and from \$750,000 to \$1 million.

Position: Support

Sponsors: Senate: D. Michaelson Jenet, R. Pelton; House: W. Lindstedt

Effective: 90 days following adjournment of the General Assembly sine die, assuming no referendum petition is filed (August 6, 2025)

Final Status: Governor signed April 7, 2025

Senate Bill 25-276

Protect Civil Rights Immigration Status

This bill aims to protect the civil rights of individuals in Colorado, particularly those related to immigration status, by establishing comprehensive restrictions on how state and local government agencies can collect, use, and share personal information. The bill reinforces Constitutional protections by preventing state and local employees from participating in federal immigration enforcement operations; prohibiting the collection of immigration-related data in most circumstances; and creating strict guidelines for handling sensitive information.

Key provisions include preventing law enforcement from detaining individuals based on civil immigration detainers; restricting state agencies and political subdivisions from inquiring about immigration status; and mandating that public institutions like schools, healthcare facilities, and libraries adopt policies that protect individuals' privacy. The bill also establishes civil penalties for intentional violations, with any collected penalties being transferred to an Immigration Legal Defense Fund to support indigent individuals in immigration proceedings.

Additionally, the legislation emphasizes that these protections apply to all persons in Colorado, regardless of their citizenship or immigration status, and are designed to maintain public trust and ensure that individuals can access essential services without fear of immigration enforcement.

Position: Monitor

Sponsors: House: E. Velasco, L. Garcia; Senate: M. Weissman, J. Gonzales

Effective: Upon signature of the Governor

Final Status: Governor signed on May 23, 2025

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Health

House Bill 25-1223

Capital Needs of Rural and Frontier Hospitals

HB25-1223 addresses the capital needs of rural and frontier hospitals in Colorado by creating a comprehensive study and establishing a task force to oversee the research.

The bill acknowledges that many rural and frontier hospitals operate in outdated facilities that have not received meaningful upgrades for decades, with an estimated \$500 million to \$1 billion in potential facility improvement needs. The Department of Public Health and Environment will conduct or contract a study to evaluate these capital needs, which must objectively measure facilities' code compliance; identify facility ages; evaluate renovation or replacement costs; and estimate total capital needs.

A nine-member task force will be created, including representatives from rural hospitals, architects, construction professionals, hospital administrators, and a public member from a rural or frontier area. The task force will develop study parameters, oversee the research, and potentially facilitate contracting with a consulting company. The study must be completed within 18 months and presented to legislative health committees. Importantly, the bill specifies that the study and task force will be funded entirely through gifts, grants, and donations, with no additional state general fund money appropriated. The bill includes a sunset provision, with the study and task force set to be repealed on July 1, 2027.

Position: Monitor

Sponsors: House: M. Lukens, D. Johnson; Senate: D. Roberts, R. Pelton

Effective: Upon signature of the Governor

Final Status: Governor signed on June 4, 2025

~~House Bill 25-1088~~ Vetoed

Costs for Ground Ambulance Services

HB25-1088 addresses the regulation of ground ambulance service billing rates and out-of-network reimbursement in Colorado. It requires political subdivisions or ambulance services to submit their emergency ambulance service rates annually to the Division of Insurance, which will then publish these rates on a public website.

The bill establishes that for out-of-network ambulance services, insurance carriers must reimburse either at the locally established rates (if submitted) or at a maximum of 325% of Medicare reimbursement rates. The legislation mandates that these rates must be reasonable, uniformly charged, and legislatively adopted.

For emergency ambulance services, carriers will pay the ambulance service directly, minus any patient cost-sharing, and patients cannot be billed for additional balances beyond their required coinsurance, deductibles, or copayments.

Position: Support

Sponsors: House: K. Brown, K. McCormick; Senate: K. Mullica, M. Baisley

Effective: 90 days following adjournment of the General Assembly sine die, assuming no referendum petition is filed (August 6, 2025)

Final Status: Governor vetoed on May 29, 2025



Metropolitan Districts

House Bill 25-1219

Requirements for Better Understanding Metropolitan Districts

HB25-1219 aims to enhance transparency and public understanding of metropolitan districts in Colorado by requiring additional information to be posted on their official websites. Specifically, the bill mandates that metropolitan districts must update their websites to include more detailed information within one year of their court-issued organization decree. The new requirements include specifying the date, time, and location of scheduled regular Board meetings and the annual meeting, as well as providing a current map depicting the district's boundaries as of January 1 of the current fiscal year. By requiring these disclosures, the bill seeks to improve public access to information about metropolitan districts, making it easier for residents and stakeholders to stay informed about local governance, meeting schedules, and district boundaries. The legislation applies to both newly organized districts and those established between January 1, 2000, and January 1, 2022.

Position: Amend

Sponsors: House: C. Barron, J. Phillips; Senate: K. Mullica, L. Frizell

Effective: 90 days following adjournment of the General Assembly sine die, assuming no referendum petition is filed (August 6, 2025)

Final Status: Governor signed on May 29, 2025



Tax

House Bill 25-1247

County Lodging Tax Expansion

HB25-1247 authorizes Colorado counties, with local voter approval, to increase their lodging tax rate from a maximum of 2% to 6%. The bill also broadens the permitted uses of lodging tax revenue to include public infrastructure improvements, or enhanced funding for local law enforcement, fire departments, and emergency medical services. Existing voter-approved allocations for lodging tax revenue are preserved, and the bill clarifies how additional revenue from any tax rate increase may be distributed. These changes are intended to provide counties with greater flexibility to address local needs and priorities through lodging tax proceeds.

Position: Amend

Sponsors: House: K. McCormick, K. Stewart;
Senate: D. Roberts, C. Simpson

Effective: May 13, 2025

Final Status: Governor signed on May 13, 2025

House Bill 25-1289

Metropolitan District Leases & Property Tax Exemptions

Current law grants a property tax exemption to a part of real property that is used by the state, a political subdivision, or a state-supported institution of higher education for purposes of the public entity pursuant to a lease or rental agreement. Current law requires a public entity claiming a property tax exemption to file a copy of the lease or rental agreement with the County Assessor's office.

The bill requires a metropolitan district to also file with the County Assessor's office a statement describing:

- » The metropolitan district's use of the leased property;

- » The metropolitan district's authority to use the leased property for the metropolitan district's purposes;
- » Any use of the leased property by a private person for private purposes; and
- » Any disclosure filed by a member of the Board of Directors of the metropolitan district in accordance with certain laws that govern disclosures of conflicts of interest.

If the statement includes a disclosure that relates to the leased property and is filed by a member of the Board of Directors of the metropolitan district in accordance with certain laws that govern disclosures of conflicts of interest, the County Assessor shall, within 14 days of receipt of the statement, submit the statement to the metropolitan district's governing body. Within 63 days of receipt of the statement, the governing body shall issue a written decision including findings of fact and a conclusion as to whether the leased property is used for a public purpose. If the governing body concludes that the leased property is not used for a public purpose, the leased property is not exempt from taxation, and the County Assessor shall implement the governing body's decision. The decision of the governing body is not subject to appeal and does not give rise to any private right of action.

A leasehold interest in real or personal property that is owned by a private person and that has been leased to the state or a political subdivision of the state, the use and possession of which has been leased back to a private person for private purposes, is taxable to the owner.

Position: Support

Sponsors: House: Y. Zokaie, C. Richardson; Senate: M. Weissman, L. Frizell

Effective: 90 days following adjournment of the General Assembly sine die, assuming no referendum petition is filed (August 6, 2025)

Final Status: Governor signed on June 3, 2025

Senate Bill 25-040

Future of Severance Taxes & Water Funding Task Force

The bill creates the Future of Severance Taxes and Water Funding Task Force in the Department of Natural Resources. The 9-member task force will hire a contractor to conduct a study and develop recommendations. The contractor must explore options to continue funding water needs for the state while severance tax revenue is expected to decrease.

Appointments to the task force must be made by September 1, 2025. Members of the task force may conduct meetings as necessary to oversee and revise the contractor's work. The contractor must submit a draft report to the task force by January 15, 2026, and

Continued on page 28

a final report from the task force is due to the Water Resources and Agriculture Review Committee by July 15, 2026.

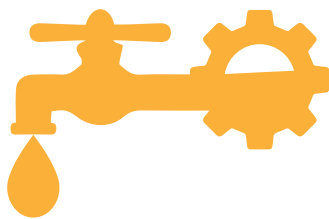
Lastly, the bill shifts implementation of a modified severance tax ad valorem credit calculation from tax year 2026 to tax year 2028.

Position: Monitor

Sponsors: Senate: D. Roberts, C. Simpson; House: M. Martinez, K. McCormick

Effective: 90 days following adjournment of the General Assembly sine die, assuming no referendum petition is filed (August 6, 2025)

Final Status: Governor signed May 15, 2025



Water

House Bill 25-1014

Increasing Efficiency Division of Water Resources

This bill makes several modifications to the operations of the Division of Water Resources (DWR) in the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The bill includes general language cleanup and removal of obsolete provisions and changes some procedures for how conditional permit holders can obtain a permanent permit to appropriate groundwater. Among its many changes, this bill:

- » Increases from one to two years the deadline for the holder of a conditional permit to construct the well and apply the water to beneficial use;
- » Increases from 30 to 35 days the time a conditional permit holder has to notify the Division once a well has been constructed and water put to beneficial use from any bedrock aquifer;
- » Increases from 30 to 35 days the time for filing written objections to notices made by the Division;
- » Reduces from \$60 to \$30 the fee required to reinstate an expired well permit if evidence is supplied that the well was constructed within two years; and
- » Replaces a \$30 filing fee for late submittal of evidence of well completion with a \$30 filing fee for permit reinstatement.

Under current law, each water division engineer prepares a list of abandoned water rights every ten years. This bill staggers the preparation of the abandoned rights list, requiring that the division engineer prepare the next decennial list for water divisions 1, 2, and 3 by July 1, 2030, and for water divisions 4, 5, 6, and 7 by July 1, 2035, and then every ten years thereafter.

Position: Monitor

Sponsors: House: M. Lukens, D. Johnson; Senate: D. Roberts, C. Simpson

Effective: 90 days following adjournment of the General Assembly sine die, assuming no referendum petition is filed (August 6, 2025)

Final Status: Governor signed on June 3, 2025

House Bill 25-1077

Backflow Prevention Devices Requirements

The bill removes the plumbing licensure requirement for individuals who inspect, test, or repair backflow devices. So certified backflow technicians are again allowed to inspect, test, or repair backflow devices without needing a plumbing license. The bill “fixes” the problems created in HB24-1344 that limited the inspection testing and repair of backflow devices to licensed plumbers.

The bill also imposes a new requirement for tagging devices with certain information when services are performed. Starting July 1, 2025, when licensed plumbers install or reinstall backflow devices, as well as when certified cross-connection control technicians test or repair a backflow device, they must place a tag on the assembly. Specific information must be included on the tag: the name and contact information for the business; the date the service was provided; a description of the service; and the ASSE or ABPA certification number of the cross-connection control technician. If the certified technician who performed the service is also a licensed plumber, the tag must include the plumber’s license number, along with the plumbing contractor’s registration number or the license number of the master plumber attached to the contractor.

Position: Support

Sponsors: House: N. Ricks, S. Lieder; Senate: D. Roberts, J. Rich

Effective: March 28, 2025

Final Status: Governor signed March 28, 2025

House Bill 25-1211

Tap Fees Imposed by Special Districts

The bill places some additional limitations on tap fees charged by the Board of a sanitation district, water and sanitation district, or water district. In determining the

amount of the fee, the bill requires that a Board:

- » Ensures the amount of the tap fee is reasonably related to the cost of providing water service, including the cost of infrastructure construction, water rights planning, and the acquisition and development of water rights;
- » Considers expected long-term indoor and outdoor use; square footage of the unit or the number of bedrooms; the presence of low water use appliances; pre-unit fixture counts in bathrooms, kitchens, and other spaces; and the presence of greywater treatment works as supporting a reduced or proportional tap fee.

Position: Oppose

Sponsors: House: S. Lieder, R. Stewart; Senate: J. Bridges, B. Kirkmeyer

Effective: 90 days following adjournment of the General Assembly sine die, assuming no referendum petition is filed (August 6, 2025)

Final Status: Governor signed May 9, 2025

Senate Bill 25-140

Irrigation Districts Inflation Adjustments

This bill increases the statutory rate of daily pay for directors and election judges of a water conservation and irrigation district from \$100 to \$150.

Under current law, contracts entered by the directors of a water district between \$250,000 and \$400,000 are non-binding unless ratified by at least one-third of the voters in the district, and contracts in excess of \$400,000 are non-binding unless ratified at an election conducted in the same manner as required when issuing bonds. This bill increases these thresholds to \$400,000 and \$650,000 respectively.

On July 1, 2029, and every five years thereafter, these amounts are increased by the rate of inflation.

Position: Support

Sponsors: Senate: R. Pelton; House: D. Johnson

Effective: 90 days following adjournment of the General Assembly sine die, assuming no referendum petition is filed (August 6, 2025)

Final Status: Governor signed April 7, 2025

...The SDA bill tracker with all the bills SDA tracked and lobbied can be found on the SDA website at www.sdaco.org.



Workers' Compensation

House Bill 25-1300

Workers' Compensation Benefits Proof of Entitlement

Under current law, the Division of Workers' Compensation in the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE) adopts utilization standards for the delivery of medical benefits for workers' compensation claims. This bill requires that an employer or the employer's insurer use the Division's utilization standards when responding to a request for authorization from a treating physician. If the employer or insurer fails to act in accordance with the standards, the Division may deem the physician's services as reasonable and necessary and require payment for the services by the employer or the employer's insurer. Many employers know this as designating a medical provider.

The bill repeals the requirement that an employer provide a list of designated medical providers from which an injured worker may select to attend to an injury and repeals the related provisions with respect to geographic location of providers and requirements when the employer is a health care provider that could treat the injury "in house." Instead, this bill requires that an employer or insurer notify the injured employee of the right to designate a treating physician and where to access the list of Level I and Level II accredited physicians maintained by the CDLE. The treating physician must be within 70 miles of the employee's home or work, or within 100 miles if there is limited availability of accredited physicians in closer proximity. If the employee fails to designate a primary physician, the employer or insurer may select from the list of accredited physicians.

Position: Oppose

Sponsors: House: J. Willford; Senate: C. Kipp

Effective Date: January 1, 2028; except that, if a referendum petition is filed 90 days following adjournment of the General Assembly sine die (August 6, 2025).

Final Status: Governor signed on June 4, 2025





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Scholarship Winners Announced in Districts Make The Difference Student Video Contest



Districts Make The Difference proudly announces the winners of the 2025 student video scholarship contest. To participate, high school students from across the nation showcased their creativity and demonstrated understanding of the vital role of special districts in local government by creating a 60-second video on these special purpose units of government. The top 10 finalists were selected by a committee vote based on video quality, accuracy, and entertainment value. The winners were selected by public voting.

Congratulations to these 2025 scholarship recipients:



- 1. Hakuto K. from Castro Valley High School in California will receive \$2,000 for the first-place video.**
- 2. Bennett Y. from Winchester High School in Massachusetts will receive \$1000 for the second-place video.**
- 3. Logan S. from California City High School in California will receive \$500 for the third-place video.**

Additionally, Districts Make The Difference recognizes the impact of teachers who make a difference in students' lives and has awarded \$500 to each winner's designated teacher.

The scholarships are sponsored by the National Special Districts Association (NSDA), which is the only national organization representing and advocating for all special districts at a national level.

"It is heartening to see the expansion of our scholarship contest across the country as students take the opportunity to learn about the role of special districts providing essential services in communities," said NSDA President and SDA CEO Ann Terry. "On behalf of our Board of Directors and members, we would like to congratulate our 2025 scholarship winners and thank all those who participated in the video contest."

Each of the winning video submissions is available for viewing on our website at:

DistrictsMakeTheDifference.org/video-contest



What Makes a Board Effective?

With the recent elections behind us, this is a timely moment to revisit the traits that contribute to a successful, high-functioning Board of Directors. Originally shared in the Ask Evan from the October-November 2017 newsletter, these qualities remain just as relevant today.

As you review the following characteristics, consider how they show up – or could be strengthened – within your district's Board.

Foundations of a Healthy Board

- » **Open and honest communication:** fosters clarity and accountability.
- » **Trust:** the backbone of collaboration – essential for good governance.
- » **No secret agendas:** Board members should approach issues with transparency and integrity.
- » **Respect for all opinions,** even when there's disagreement, leads to stronger outcomes.

Interpersonal Dynamics that Make a Difference

- » **Use a respectful tone of voice:** How something is said matters as much as what is said. Disagreements can be constructive when delivered with care and professionalism.
- » **De-escalate, don't inflame:** Responding calmly during tense moments sets the tone for the entire Board and preserves credibility with the public.
- » **Mutual respect** is essential: even if Board members don't become friends, they are still teammates in service to the public.
- » **You don't have to be friends, but you do have to work together:** Boards that function well focus on collaboration, not camaraderie.
- » **Build and protect public trust:** Community confidence is hard-earned and quickly lost. Your interactions – with each other and with the public—reflect on the district as a whole.

Avoiding Harmful Patterns

- » **Avoid cliques:**
 - > Aligning votes outside of meetings undermines open dialogue.
 - > Frequent side conversations between select members can foster suspicion.
 - > Inclusion builds trust; exclusion erodes it.

- » **Avoid ambush:** Don't surprise the Chair, District Manager, or Fire Chief with unexpected charges or issues during a public meeting. Bring concerns forward in a way that allows for preparation and thoughtful discussion.
- » **Avoid online conflict:** Social media is not the place for Board debates. Public arguments on digital platforms damage the Board's credibility, escalate tensions, and reduce the chance for thoughtful resolution.

Staying Focused on the Right Work

- » **Keep your focus on policy:** The Board's role is to set direction, not micromanage operations.
- » **Ask the right questions:**
 - > Is this truly a Board matter or should it be handled by staff?
 - > If this issue has been resolved before, what's changed to warrant revisiting it?
- » **Be inclusive in communication:** Make sure all Board members are informed and engaged.
- » **Own the outcome:** Every Board member shares responsibility for decisions and the Board's effectiveness.

Decision-Making and Moving Forward

- » **Nonpartisan by design:** Special district Boards exist to serve the public interest, not party platforms.
- » **The goal is not to win – it's to develop sound policy and find the best solutions.**
- » **Good Boards think ahead:** Effective Boards peer into the future and shape policies that guide the district toward long-term success.
- » **Disagree without being disagreeable:** Debate the idea, not the person.
- » **Listen for value:** Every member has something to contribute. Seek the gem in every voice.
- » **Once a decision is made, support it:** Functioning Boards do not issue minority reports. Speaking with one voice—especially after robust deliberation—builds trust and shows leadership.

While every Board is different, the most successful ones share a few essential qualities: **clear communication, mutual respect, policy discipline, and a shared commitment to public service.** These traits help Boards navigate difficult issues, foster public confidence, and serve their communities well. 🍌

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

ONSOLVE By **CRISIS24** **Mass Notification System**

Guest article by the Colorado Special Districts Property and Liability Pool

The Colorado Special Districts Property and Liability Pool (CSD Pool) remains committed to our more than 2,500 public entities as *Your Risk Management Partner*. Each month, we are focusing on a different program or service we offer our membership, either at no cost or at a discounted rate. This month's highlight is on OnSolve by Crisis24 for members of the CSD Pool.

Members can utilize the OnSolve mass communication platform to notify their staff of critical events in mere seconds. Now with a mobile phone app, this tool allows district management to blast messages to employees through email, text message, or phone calls, replacing the traditional 'phone tree' style messaging system.

These messages can be customized based on individual work locations or departments. It can even integrate with some human resources information systems.

Be Weather Ready

This system can be integrated with National Weather Service data to provide weather-based reminders about safe driving, personal protective equipment, or personal safety.

Members can also elect to receive notifications of potentially damaging weather events which include advice on coping with that event and directions on how to file a claim in case something is damaged during the event.

How OnSolve Keeps You Connected

Your district can use this system to notify employees of events such as:

- » Emergency meetings
- » Inclement weather closings
- » Fire or evacuation drills
- » Disaster notifications such as tornadoes or hailstorms
- » Active shooter or similar situations
- » Evacuation order coordination

This program is available to members at no additional cost. Full program details, including links to view a platform tutorial, are available on our website at [**csdpool.org/onsolve**](https://csdpool.org/onsolve)

Your Risk Management Partner

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



Welcome New SDA Members

District Members

Bridle Creek Metropolitan District No.1
Bristol Water & Sanitation District
Buffalo Highlands Metropolitan District Nos.1-3
Centennial Commerce Center Metropolitan District
Coal Ridge Metropolitan District
Comanche Crossing Metropolitan District
Costilla County Fire Protection District
Hammond Farm Metropolitan District No.3
Jefferson County Emergency Communications Authority
Middle Park Water Conservancy District

Minturn Cemetery District
Overland Metropolitan District Nos.1-6
Percheron Park and Recreation District
Prairie Ridge Metropolitan District Nos.1-3
Saddlehorn Ranch Metropolitan District No.3
Senac South Metropolitan District No.2
Smith Metropolitan District No.3
Timber Springs Metropolitan District
Tri-County Fire Protection District
Union Colony West Metropolitan District No.1

Associate Members

Organization	General Type of Services
Centennial State Liquid Investment Pool	Local government investment pool trust fund
CivicPlus	Software company specializing in local government management
CORE Electric Cooperative	Electric utility company
Distribution System Resources	Water utility service contractor
GMP Consultants	Public sector consulting firm
Level Engineering	Structural engineering services
Performance Services	Design-build construction
TRB Capital Markets dba Estrada Hinojosa	Public finance
Treatment Tech	Water and wastewater treatment chemicals
Water Extraction Team/Property Solutions Team	Water Extraction Team: Water extraction and environmental remediation services Property Solutions Team: General contracting and restoration
Waterworth	Cloud-based utility rate management and forecasting
Wolf Compliance Consulting	Contract management and operation of water and wastewater facilities

Free Amazon Business Prime is Now Available for SDA Members!

In case you haven't heard, all SDA district and associate members are now eligible for free Amazon Business Prime!

This offer applies to both current and new Amazon business accounts, and it allows for unlimited users per account.

In addition, the option to pay by invoice is available, and districts are able to upload their tax-exempt information to their account. Plus, there will be a dedicated account executive assigned to each participating district and associate member to help with any questions you might have. And of course, there is fast and free shipping!

On top of all this, there is special government

pricing on thousands of essential items like office supplies, janitorial supplies, and much more!

For all the details on the program, please make sure you are logged into the SDA website at www.sdaco.org and then click on "Resources" at the top of the page. Once you are on the Resources page, please scroll down until you see the black "Amazon Business" box. From there you will find a number of helpful resources, including enrollment and training videos as well as information on tax exemption.

We are thrilled to provide this valuable service to our members, and we hope everyone will take advantage of this great opportunity!

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