

Special District Association of Colorado

SDA NEWS

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2025

Supporting Community-Based Government

2025 SDA Annual Conference

Tuesday, September 16 through Thursday, September 18

Keystone Conference Center

Registration is open!

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Designed by Emmett Jordan





Help Us Celebrate Our Golden Jubilee at the 2025 SDA Annual Conference!

We are so excited for the 2025 SDA Annual Conference, September 16-18 at the Keystone Conference Center! And, we are delighted to be celebrating our 50th anniversary this year!

For starters, we are thrilled to bring back our hybrid format, with both an in-person and livestreaming option. The entire Conference will be held in-person at the Keystone Conference Center, and just like the last 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. Plus, **there will be CLE opportunities** not only for the **in-person sessions**, but also for the recorded sessions, which provide **home study CLE** options. We know this format provides huge benefits for all our attendees, and we are happy 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. All three days of Conference are jam-packed, with a wide range of universally applicable topics for all district types as well as sessions that are more technical in nature. Check out pages 9-16 for a preview of the sessions we have planned!

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.

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 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.

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

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

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

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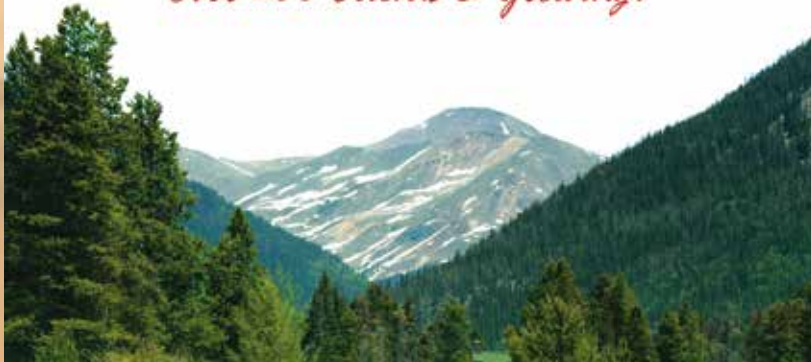
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Tuesday, September 16

- » **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 thought-provoking 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 page 3)! 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.

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James Robilotta



Lonnie Mayne

2025 SDA Annual Conference

Tuesday, September 16 through Thursday, September 18

Keystone Conference Center

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**.



Lauren Sisler



Joe Mull

Thursday, September 18

- » Thursday's keynote breakfast will feature a powerful presentation from **Brandon Young**, a former U.S. Army Ranger, and **Blayne Smith**, a former Green Beret, who are both now business leaders who inspire teams to achieve and overcome adversity.
- » Thursday will also 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!



Brandon Young and Blayne Smith

All of this and much, much more awaits you at the 2025 SDA Annual Conference, September 16-18 at the Keystone Conference Center!

Register today, and we will see you there!

Register Today!

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The SDA Annual Conference Will Be Here Before We Know It So It's Time to Check Out the Breakout Sessions We Have Planned!

The 2025 SDA Annual Conference is right around the corner so now's a great time for a preview of the breakout sessions, which start first thing on Tuesday, September 16.

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

You won't want to miss this information-packed, three-day event so make your plans now to join us at the Keystone Conference Center, September 16-18!

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

Tuesday, September 16

Turning Feedback into Action: Public Participation for Smoother Decision-Making

Michelle Stephens from Granicus

Special districts in Colorado serve diverse populations with unique needs, from rural water conservation efforts on the Western Slope to urban fire protection services along the Front Range. Traditional public engagement methods, like generic surveys, often fail to capture the depth of these differences, leading to missed opportunities for informed decision-making. This session will explore strategies tailored to the challenges Colorado special districts face—fostering meaningful dialogue, increasing community participation, and helping feedback directly influence decision-making. Attendees will gain actionable insights on improving public outreach, effectively reporting back to their communities, and minimizing delays and pushback in the planning process, all while navigating the regulatory and geographic complexities that define Colorado's special districts.

The Four R's of Comprehensive Financial Planning (Rehab/Renew, Replace, and Most Importantly, Reserve)

Jacob Strombeck and Ryan Graf from Advanced Engineering and Environmental Services, LLC (AE2S)

Utilities and districts across the country are facing aging infrastructure challenges and are in need of long-term capital plans with corresponding capital and renewal reserve targets. These long-term needs require adaptable organization-wide financial plans and a complimentary rate/revenue setting process that aligns future capital reserves with estimated capital needs. This presentation will explore the "Comprehensive Planning R's" —Renewal, Replacement, Rehabilitation, and Reserves—and the associated alternative infrastructure planning strategies as well as how these strategies can be applied to special districts throughout the state.

Continued on page 10

How to Prepare for and Run Effective Board Meetings

Bart Miller and Isuri Lawson from Collins Cole Winn & Ulmer, PLLC; and Mike Dell'Orfano from South Metro Fire Rescue

This program will provide practical tips on how to create Board meeting agendas to facilitate the conduct of Board business, productive Board discussion, and resolution of district issues. Presenters will cover the procedures that Boards are legally required to follow, including the Colorado Open Meetings Law, requirements necessary for holding executive sessions, and effective use of study/work sessions to develop issues and inform Board members of information they will need prior to taking action. In addition, presenters will offer suggestions on how to integrate public participation into Board meetings in ways that allow for meaningful public input and avoid the disorder that can hamper productive Board functioning. Attendees will get the benefit of practical information from experienced legal counsel for special district Boards and from district staff experienced in organizing Board meetings for maximum success.

Strategic Leadership for District Managers and Board Members

Jeff Arnold from Leading Associations

District Managers often face a challenge of Board members crossing the line between leadership and operations. For groups with “working Boards” this line is hard to define and becomes more of a dance than a clear agreement. This interactive program is designed to help special district leaders clarify and identify where they are doing well and where they can focus on improvements in applying Strategic Leadership within the organization. You will learn key principles of Strategic Leadership; governance and Board best practices and their effect on future focus; strategic roles and responsibilities for Boards and staff; resource alignment – people, process, and budget; and the role organizational culture plays in Strategic Leadership.

Manage and Detect Threats Before They Become a Breach

Sam Hamilton from Tyler Technologies

While there is no silver bullet when it comes to cybersecurity, there are many steps an organization can take proactively to defend their network. In this presentation we will talk through real-life examples of cyberattacks; discuss how a risk-based approach to cybersecurity can further enhance your organization’s resiliency; talk through the ins and outs of building a cybersecurity strategy; and provide actionable tips on where to start/focus your energy. In under an hour, you will: get practical tips to modernize your cybersecurity program; better understand the patterns of a cyberattack; understand how the right tools can thwart an attack; see methods for achieving the best ROI on your cybersecurity investment; and learn how to put together a holistic cybersecurity strategy. We will discuss the big picture around Business Continuity, Endpoint Security (Monitoring and Detection), IT Planning, and other general topics key to cybersecurity program building.

A Lasting Legacy: Digital Transformation of Institutional Knowledge

Caleb Domeyer and Derek Buschow from iamGIS

Special districts are navigating a period of unprecedented challenges and frustrations. A significant concern arises from the lack of proper documentation, which creates a critical gap when experienced staff members retire and new leadership assumes responsibility. This transition often results in the loss of invaluable institutional knowledge, leaving districts vulnerable to inefficiencies and setbacks. iamGIS experts reveal how special districts nationwide are successfully addressing these issues and creating lasting change. Learn how you can help your district preserve knowledge, streamline operations, and achieve long-term success with smarter tools and strategies designed to address today’s pressing challenges.

Making Your Management Company Work For You

Sue Blair and Marcos Pacheco from Community Resource Services of Colorado, LLC

Learn how to make your management company a true partner in meeting your district’s goals. This session will explore how to communicate effectively, set clear expectations, and align services with your district’s unique needs. Whether you’re new to working with a management company or looking to improve the relationship, this breakout will offer practical strategies you can use right away.



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Financing the Future: Leveraging Revenue Bonds for Wastewater Infrastructure

Andrew Sparn, PE from JVA, Inc.; and Jim Jones and Dave Lewis, CWP from Niwot Sanitation District

In response to the 2023 re-prioritization of the State Revolving Fund (SRF) for wastewater projects, Niwot Sanitation District faced the urgent need to identify alternative funding for a new wastewater treatment facility. This presentation will walk attendees through the district's strategic path to secure financing, highlighting key decision points and lessons learned. The session will conclude with an update on construction progress and a summary of the overall project approach – offering actionable insights for other districts navigating complex infrastructure and funding decisions.

Can't We All Just Get Along?

Katie James from Folkestad Fazekas Barrick & Patoile, P.C.

Running a local government, with taxpayer money and sometimes sensitive issues to address, will naturally result in conflict in some area or another. We will discuss common conflicts that arise and review both the law and practical tips for how to address and minimize conflict while understanding that it is inevitable. Common areas of conflict to expect and possible solutions: meeting decorum (from the public or among the Board) and reminders about public meeting but still business meeting; developing and using Code of Conduct (in person and virtual considerations); disputes big and small (resident or customer complaints, major items that may require litigation); contentious elections and maintaining civility; cautions about social media use that can fuel fires; communication requirements (and limits), tips, and public perception; and more.

Employment 101: Lessons Learned from Questions Asked (or Not)

John Chmil from Lyons Gaddis

When personnel matters occur they can raise significant legal concerns. Laying a foundation of clear policies and consistent application of procedure is a district's best defense to mitigate liability risks. This session will highlight some of the primary employment law considerations for managing a district's risk and encourage proactive communication, both internally and externally, to ensure the right questions are answered before the next issue arises.

Wednesday, September 17

Staying on Course: A Guide to Statutory Compliance Requirements

Crystal Schott from Ireland Stapleton Pryor & Pascoe, PC and Micki Mills from Cockrel Ela Glesne Greher & Ruhland, PC (CEGR Law)

Are you finding statutory compliance both tedious and challenging to understand and remember? Join us for an informative session that will address annual statutory compliance deadlines and filing requirements. This will include (but not be limited to) budget and audit deadlines; general statutory compliance; annual reports, if required; websites; 2026 special elections; and more.

Transforming “Trust” and “Conflict” into Usable and Manageable Processes

Rob Spangler from Leading Associations

For many people, trust is a moral judgement - more theory or belief than a leadership tool. Similarly, many think conflict is bad - it doesn't fit my personality or management style. In a nonconfrontational environment, we'll break down trust and conflict to identify manageable processes. Learn the specific components that build and erode trust as well as a practical system to improve trust among your Board members and staff. We've heard the term “productive conflict,” but what does it mean? We'll explore how to engage in dissent in a productive manner, avoiding the type of conflict that “gets personal.” Gain tools to share with your Board and staff outlining the roots and often well-intentioned components of interpersonal interaction that inhibit maximum function or create dysfunction, malfunction, or underfunction.

Water District Preparedness for Urban Wildland Fires

Dale Miller and Andrew George from Bear Creek Water and Sanitation District; and Wade Wheatlake and Meredith Berlin from Merrick & Company

With increasing wildfire risks and recent devastating outcomes as a result of wildfires, it is creating more pressure for public water systems to ensure adequate flows, pressures, capacity, and procedures in place to respond to these events. This session covers the Bear Creek Water and Sanitation District's proactive approach to study its overall water distribution system to identify vulnerabilities when water sources are compromised and what steps can be taken to strengthen water district preparedness. The session will kick off with a concise presentation of the study, followed by an engaging panel discussion with experts in water system and emergency management.

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Becoming an Influential Leader and Using that Influence to Build a Strong Culture

Kyle Brown from the Colorado Special Districts Property and Liability Pool

This interactive session will begin with participation from the whole group to demonstrate how poor leadership can cause confusion and frustration. We will then discuss how poor leadership can cause low morale and have minimal influence on your employees. We will talk about the importance of leading by example and not just being a “boss” and how this causes your team to want to follow your example. We will then discuss how to utilize this influence to promote a strong culture that makes your team feel empowered and welcomed. These points will be illustrated with Loss Control examples.

Colorado Sewer Operators Optimize Operations with Real-Time Monitoring and Data Analysis

Eric Van Cleave from SmartCover Systems

This presentation will feature several Colorado cities that have optimized their sewer operations by adopting real-time sewer-monitoring technology for around-the-clock observation of their collection systems without over staffing or confined space entry. Advanced warnings alert operators when changes occur in their systems, enabling crews to respond immediately and thwart emerging issues before they cause major problems. Additionally, the operators collect data for analysis and modeling that help inform decisions, including about capital investments to expand and sustain their infrastructures and to protect local waterways and the health and safety of residents and sewer maintenance crews. Demonstrations and case summaries will show how using real-time monitoring technology is helping sewer system operators address specific needs.

Smart Sourcing: Modern Methods for Discovering Top Talent

Deanna Heyn and Jennifer Houston from CPS HR Consulting

Unlock the future of recruitment with cutting-edge techniques designed to find and attract top talent. In this dynamic training, discover fresh, forward-thinking sourcing methods that go beyond traditional channels. Learn how to leverage technology, data-driven insights, and creative outreach strategies to engage passive candidates and build a diverse talent pipeline. Whether you’re looking to refine your current approach or explore new avenues, this session equips you with the tools to stay ahead in a competitive hiring landscape.

Going to the Voters for Funding: Ballot Measure Survey Research Best Practices, Success Stories, and Strategies

David Flaherty from Magellan Strategies

Join us for an insightful discussion on the best practices and strategies for securing voter approval for a funding ballot measure. Drawing on years of experience helping special districts achieve their funding goals, we will share proven approaches and practical tips. Learn how to effectively use opinion research and campaign consulting services to craft a compelling campaign that resonates with voters. This session is designed to provide you with the tools and knowledge you need to run a successful funding ballot measure campaign. Don’t miss this opportunity to gain valuable insights and improve your chances of securing the funding your district needs.

Top 10 Mistakes Special Districts Make—And Simple Ways to Avoid Them

Dominique Devaney and Ryan Stevens from Public Alliance, LLC

Join us for a lively, interactive session where we reveal the top 10 most common (and sometimes costly) mistakes special districts make—from budget blunders to Board missteps—and share simple, effective ways to steer clear of them. Using a *Family Feud*-style format with audience participation, we’ll test your knowledge, spark discussion, and bring a little fun to district fundamentals. Whether you’re a seasoned Board member, a new Manager, or somewhere in between, you’ll leave with practical tips and real-world strategies to help your district stay ahead of the game. Survey says... this is a session you don’t want to miss!

Debt 101: Demystifying District Debt and Financing

Kyle Thomas from DA Davidson and Dillon Peters from Butler Snow LLP

Thinking about issuing debt or exploring financing options for your district? This session breaks down what legally constitutes debt, how special districts can enter into debt, and the practical steps for doing so responsibly. Just as important, we’ll discuss how to evaluate whether borrowing is the right move for your district based on its goals, capacity, and long-term financial health. Whether you’re new to public finance or just need a refresher, this session will give you the tools and confidence to make informed, strategic decisions.

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Solving the Mysteries of Contract Review

Emily Powell from Ireland Stapleton Pryor & Pascoe, PC

Have you ever wondered what attorneys are looking for when they review a contract? Or why they add so many technical-sounding paragraphs to the end? Or what's up with all those capitalized words? This session will dive into the contracts review process from an attorney's perspective, answering these questions and many others, demystifying attorneys' contract revisions (and explaining why it's so much longer after they get ahold of it!). And because life is better with a little mystery, this session will offer a few new unexplained phenomena to replace the ones we solve.

Artificial Intelligence (AI): Opportunities and Risks for Districts

Mac Clemmens from Streamline

Explore the transformative potential of AI for productivity and GDP growth, with a focus on how it can streamline tasks for various district roles. This session will also address the risks and legal challenges posed by AI, including scams and privacy concerns, and offer strategies for mitigating these risks while maximizing the benefits of AI innovation.

At the Intersection of Districts and HOAs: Legal and Practical Implications of Being at These Crossroads

Trisha Harris and Heather Hartung from WBA

This session will explore the increasingly common overlap between homeowners associations (HOAs) and special districts in Colorado, focusing on the legal frameworks, governance issues, and practical challenges that arise when these two entities coexist or operate in parallel within a community. Participants will gain an understanding of the distinct powers, responsibilities, and regulatory obligations of both HOAs and special districts, including funding mechanisms, infrastructure ownership, and the provision of services to the community. We'll also look at common tensions, pitfalls, and strategies for coordination between districts and associations.

Special District Accounting and Financial Reporting

Christina Griggs from Gemsbok Consulting, Inc.

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

Grow Big or Grow Home: Identifying Signs that It is Time for Your District to Grow...or At Least Change

Chief TJ Steck and Kara Gerczynski from Elizabeth Fire Protection District

Whether you're a paid, volunteer, or combo district, a number of changes can impact the approach you take to your growth. Join us as we talk about triggers in an organizational structure that may dictate a different business model or changes in financial prioritizations.

Fighting for an Easement: What to Do When Your Infrastructure is Located on Private Property and There is No Recorded Easement

Bill Ellinwood from Wilson Mesa at Telluride Metropolitan District; and Ashley Hernandez-Schlagel and Allison Ulmer from Collins Cole Winn & Ulmer, PLLC

What happens when a special district discovers its infrastructure was built on private property without a recorded easement? Attendees will learn about their options and remedies, risk mitigation strategies, and how to navigate resolution with property owners. The session features a case study from Wilson Mesa at Telluride Metro District, offering insight into how one district confronted and addressed this issue.

Behind the Scenes: Discovering Entities that Make Your Community Thrive

Renee Anderson and Stephanie Stanley from Highlands Ranch Metro District

Exploring and learning more about the various entities that serve your community, develop relationships, and capitalize on partnerships to improve services.



Dealing with Districts and Their Contractors: What You Need to Know to Manage Contracts Effectively

Bob Gardner and Laura Gardner
from the Gardner Law Office

This informative session will cover the key elements of working with contractors, including what districts should include in their contracts to protect themselves and pitfalls to avoid when managing construction and service contractors. We'll also discuss how to ensure compliance, accountability, and fair performance as well as change orders, timelines, payment structures, and enforcement.

Tap Fees, Water Rights, and the Implication of the New Tap Fee Law

Bill Wombacher from Nazareneus Stack & Wombacher LLC

This educational discussion will examine the relationship and interplay between water rights and tap fees from a practical, real-world perspective. We'll also look at the recent bill regarding tap fees and the implications of this new law.

Navigating the Hiring Process of a New Leader: The Who, the What, and the When

Jim Albee and Renee Anderson from South Metro Fire Rescue

South Metro Fire Rescue recently completed the process to hire a new Fire Chief for the first time in a decade. In this insightful presentation, we will share our experiences, including key things to consider in preparing and implementing a strategic approach to finding a new leader. We'll also discuss lessons learned, successes, tools, and much more.

Thursday, September 18

What We Learned About a Sales Tax Ballot Question

Chief Roy Wilkinson, Rick Spencer, and Denise Sanchez from Cortez Fire Protection District

The Cortez Fire Protection District was able to secure a 0.54 cent sales tax ballot question passed in November 2024. At the same time, the county had a 1 cent sales tax question on the same ballot but was unsuccessful. The district used some interesting techniques to provide information about the district since marketing is non-existent in southwest Colorado. In addition, there is only a newspaper that is based in Durango, not Cortez. It was an uphill battle also due to historical matters involving past fire district members. We were successful, but not without a lot of hard work, dedication, and creativity.

Budget Development and Forecasting

Brian Camiller from Plante Moran

Forecasting revenues is a fundamental part of budgeting and financial planning for your special district's future. Revenue forecasts allow you to anticipate resource availability and plan accordingly. Join us as we review budgetary concepts and legal requirements. Explore best practices for preparing, adopting, and monitoring your special district's budget and walk away with techniques for short- and long-term forecasting.

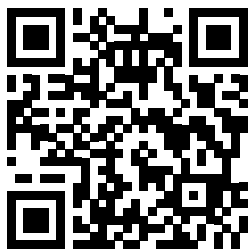
Under the Microscope: Governance Strategies for Controversial Moments

Polly Gallagher from the Colorado State Library

Leadership—particularly Board governance—is never just about policies or budgets. It's about courageous decision-making, especially when controversy arises. Whether you serve on a library district, a metro district, or a recreation, fire, or water Board, the challenge remains the same: how do we lead effectively when our values are questioned and our priorities are under a microscope? Library Trustees have been at the center of debates around book banning, serving marginalized populations (from immigrants to those experiencing mental illness), and balancing privacy rights with public pressures. Last year's state law regarding resource decision-making and required policies has reinforced the need for Boards to govern with clarity and integrity—not micromanagement. That same framework applies in many ways to all public-serving districts. This session will explore how leaders—whether from a library, parks and rec, or fire protection district—can develop a governance platform that is proactive, lawful, and community-minded. We'll look at examples drawn from real-world challenges and how Boards can align around mission, law, and impact to move forward—even when it's hard.

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Continued on page 16

10 Cybersecurity Practices to Keep Special Districts Safe in the Age of AI

Mac Clemmens from Streamline

Join us for a comprehensive overview of the top cybersecurity practices for 2025. This session will cover the latest in protecting against cyberattacks, including AI threats and passwordless technologies. Attendees will leave with an easy-to-follow checklist to secure their operations and communities.

Property Taxes 2025 and Beyond: What's Next?

Dianne Criswell from the City of Fort Collins and former SDA General Counsel

This session will empower us to navigate the complexities of the 2024 legislation with clarity and purpose.

Design-Build Demystified: Is It Right for Your District?

Jim Moody from the Colorado Contractors Association

Design-Build is a project delivery method where a single team handles both the design and construction of a building or facility – often resulting in faster timelines, improved collaboration, and potential cost savings. But is it the right fit for your district's next capital project? This session will walk you through what Design-Build is, how it differs from traditional Design-Bid-Build, and the key commitments and decisions your Board and staff must consider. We'll explore legal considerations, vendor selection, communication pathways, and how to keep your project aligned with district goals and community expectations. Whether you're building a fire station, recreation center, library, or maintenance facility, this session will help you make an informed, strategic decision.

No, Seriously, We're from the Government and We're Here to Help

Eric Bergman and Cynthia Thayer from the Colorado Department of Local Affairs, Division of Local Government

The Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) works closely with special districts across the state to offer a wide variety of financial and technical assistance resources. This session will provide a high-level overview of the various grant programs, technical assistance topics, and training that DOLA has available.

Difficult Conversations

Brandon Young and Blayne Smith from Applied Leadership Partners

Leading through uncertainty requires effective communication and (at times) difficult conversations. There is a reason we call these conversations difficult, and a cost of inaction when we do not engage in them. In this enlightening session, participants will understand the common obstacles to having difficult conversations and learn a simple framework through which to confidently and effectively approach them to yield team alignment.

Is Your Website ADA Compliant? Tips and Tools for Achieving Compliance

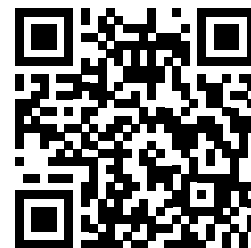
Mac Clemmens from Streamline

This session dives into the essentials of ADA compliance for your district's online presence. Participants will learn the importance of web and document accessibility, receive practical guidance on compliance, and walk away with a comprehensive checklist and their district's ADA score.



Register Today!

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Don't Forget to Check Out the New 2025 SDA Board Member Manual!

Just a quick reminder that as part of your membership benefits, complimentary copies of the 2025 SDA Board Member Manual have been sent to districts as well as to management companies to share with their clients!

We were proud to partner with the law firm of Collins Cole Winn & Ulmer, PLLC to produce this year's manual, which has been updated to include the most current information.

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

If you have questions or need any additional assistance, please feel free to call the SDA office at 303-863-1733.

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

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





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50 YEARS



SDA's Membership Services Manager Carlton Mundus, with his arms raised to second a motion makes his SDA acting debut as Director Evan Elpus (Heaven 'elpus')



Collins Coadwell & Cole's Micki Wadhams as "Sasha Payne-Diaz" (Sash-a-Payn-dee-ah)



John McCaulley in his "golf attire" at the special meeting of the metropolitan district



Pat Mulhern questions Dum-Dum Board actions



Leo Johnson

of the Dum-Dum Board was a big success!



Jim Collins's copter of the 2013 Dum-Dum Board presenting the correct information on how to conduct a board meeting

The Dum-Dum Board received rave reviews from the over 600 people in the audience and we extend our thanks to Jim Collins, John McCaulley, Pat Mulhern, Leo Johnson, Micki Wadhams and Carlton Mundus.

- John McCaulley**
Current or Former Board Member:
Rifle River Fire Protection District
Special District Association
Colorado Special Districts Property & Liability Pool
Western Eagle County Metro Recreation District
Edwards Metropolitan District
- Carlton Mundus**
Membership Services Manager,
Special District Association
- Director Isaiah No, Ph.D.**
- Pat Mulhern**
President, Mulhern MRE Inc.
Board Member:
Special District Association
South Metro Fire Rescue Authority
- Micki Wadhams**
Paralegal on All Special District Matters
- Leo Johnson**
Current/Former Board Member:
West Metro Fire Protection District
Southwest Suburban Denver Water & Sanitation District
Special District Association
Colorado Special Districts Property & Liability Pool

Not at the Meeting were:

- District Manager **Tryan Getalong**
- General Counsel **Gonna Costus**

The program began with SDA's Executive Director Ann Terry saying, "This is a special meeting of a metropolitan district that does water, sewer, roads, drainage, fire protection, ambulance and park and recreation functions. The Board will conduct the meeting, which will be interrupted five times to have Jim Collins review whether the Board did anything wrong." Well...Board Chairman "Doit Fast", also known as SDA Board Member John McCaulley and SDA's Membership Services Manager Carlton Mundus kicked the illegal meeting off with a bang!

SDA and Pool Board Member Leo Johnson, "Hannibal Lecture", chose to wear a blond wig and a fake nose when he delivered this infamous speech to the group. Wait! That wasn't a meeting! Everyone attended by conference telephone. There weren't any board members present in the meeting room.

SDA Board Member and former President, Pat Mulhern, was Board Director "Isaiah No, Ph.D." if say-a-No and we're fairly sure that in his position as President of the South Metro Fire Rescue Authority he's never seen a board meeting that even resembles the Dum-Dum Board.

The Dum-Dum Board received rave reviews from the over 600 people in the audience and we extend our thanks to Jim Collins, John McCaulley, Pat Mulhern, Leo Johnson, Micki Wadhams and Carlton Mundus.

A note from SDA CEO Ann Terry: Our stroll down memory lane article this month highlights several past appearances of the Dum-Dum Board at the SDA Annual Conference over the years (our historical records show this group even at the Conference back in 1983!). For the better part of 30 years, the Dum-Dum Board served as an invaluable learning tool at the Conference, with SDA's co-founder, Jim Collins, serving as the moderator for this whacky group of "Board members." With its cast of characters and silly hijinks, this "Board" would demonstrate what NOT to do at a meeting while Jim would provide the knowledge of what should be done instead. You'll recognize the actors as former SDA Board members, district attorneys and paralegals, and even SDA's longtime Executive Director, Evan Goulding!



"Major Diaz" and "Holly Wood" consider one of "Holly Wood's" many interesting comments during the "meeting" of the Dum-Dum Board.



The Dum-Dum Board even cracked themselves up!

Friday morning saw the return of the ever-popular **Dum-Dum Board**. This year's cast included:

- » Pete Webb ("Major" (retired) Payne Diaz)
- » Micki Wadhams ("Holly Wood")
- » John McCaulley ("Max Hovoc")
- » Evan Goulding ("Moe Mentum")
- » Kathryn Winn ("Candace Waite")

Everyone played their roles to a tee! Through the characters' bumbling, moderator **Jim Collins** was able to impart on the audience the proper way to conduct district business in this uniquely entertaining and educational presentation. All and all the 2015 SDA Annual Conference was a huge success and a fitting celebration of the past 40 years. We were thrilled with this year's speakers, topics, and our fantastic sponsor and exhibitor support. Thank you to everyone who joined us! We can't wait for next year!



"Candace Waite" wishes to be called on at the "meeting", most likely to ask if the issue of hand can wait.



This year we welcomed back the Dum-Dum Board, who "convened" on Wednesday morning for another amusing "meeting."



"Evan Elpus" ponders the comments of fellow Dum-Dum Board Member "Justa Motion."



"Director/Treasurer Sasha Payne-Diaz" was portrayed by Diane Johnson.

Dum-Dum Board Returns to 2018 SDA Annual Conference!

We kicked off this year's Conference with a "meeting" of the Dum-Dum Board, and it was a hilarious way to learn invaluable lessons on special district governance. This year's cast included:

- » John McCaulley: Board Chair Iam Machiavellan
- » Susan Saint Vincent: Director/Secretary Holly Wood
- » Diane Johnson: Director/Treasurer Sasha Payne-Diaz
- » Evan Goulding: Director Evan Elpus
- » Larry Moore: Director Justa Motion

Moderator Jim Collins sorted through these characters' bumbling antics to teach the audience the do's and don'ts of conducting district business. This uniquely entertaining and educational presentation was a great way to start this year's Conference!



Susan Saint Vincent, a.k.a. "Holly Wood," is ready for the "meeting" to begin.



The Dum-Dum Board even cracked themselves up!

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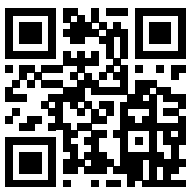
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October 15 Budget Deadline Quickly Approaching!

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

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

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

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

FUN FACTS 1975

This month's fun facts revolve around popular food from 1975, both things you would make at home and some fast-food tidbits. There seem to be a number of "salads" on this list...

- » Jello salad
- » Cheese ball appetizer
- » Watergate salad
- » Pasta primavera
- » Ambrosia salad
- » Pop Rocks candy
- » McDonald's Egg McMuffin was first introduced
- » Taco Bell was the most popular fast-food chain
- » Wendy's opened its 100th location

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