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Section B

Northern Colorado BUSINESS REPORT

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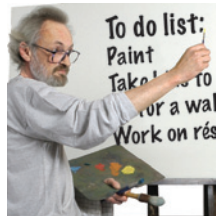
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Businesses win, lose at Capitol

Over a dozen biz-related laws pass '09 session

By Steve Porter
sporter@ncbr.com

DENVER — Sandra Hagen Solin looks back at the recently completed 2009 legislative ses-

sion with mixed feelings including an underlying sense of accomplishment on behalf of the region's business community.



SOLIN

"I would say it was a mixed bag although we fared better

than I thought we were going to fare at mid-session," said Solin, issues manager for the Northern Colorado Legislative Alliance. "We came out of it better than we thought. It could have been a lot worse. But it was a lot of hard work."

The NCLA has been the lobbying arm of Northern Colorado business since 1992. Officially, it represents the Fort Collins, Loveland and Greeley

chambers of commerce and the Northern Colorado Economic Development Corp.

With Democrats in the majority in both the House and Senate and a Democrat governor this year, business interests were in the hands of a party not generally known for being the most business-friendly. But Solin said there were some bills carried by Democrats that NCLA strongly

See LEGISLATURE, 24A

Time is now to make online networking push

By Kristen Tatti
ktatti@ncbr.com

Love it or loathe it — social media is here to stay.

For businesses, the world of tweets, tag clouds and user-generated content can be a scary place. But so was the World Wide Web 15 years ago. Local experts contend that companies not wading into the social media tide will be left high and dry in a few short years.

Media watcher Nielsen Co. reported earlier this year that more than two-thirds of the world's Internet population is using social media and that it may be more popular than e-mail. Social networking — or participating in "member communities" — was reaching 66.8 percent of the online public versus 65.1 percent for e-mail in 2008, according to the report.

Loveland-based Infomedia is building an empire based on the opportunities to be had online. Company founder and CEO Joel Comm wrote the book "Twitter Power," but Infomedia President



Illustration by Chad Collins, Northern Colorado Business Report

NETWORKING OPTIONS — Online networking can be scary, but don't avoid it. Social networking experts agree not having an online networking presence now could have a future consequence equal to not having a company Web site today.

Ken Burge said that the company's focus for social media is on the "big four" — Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and YouTube (see pages 23A and 24A for more detail).

Burge recommends businesses dedicate around 30 minutes per day to "get their feet wet" in

social media, and to gauge its potential value.

"There is more value in it than just driving sales," he said. "You can learn something."

He feels that a big mistake companies make is to jump in and start putting quantity over quality.

"The key is to listen first," he said.

Listening is the key

Listening seems to be the drum most social media experts are beating.

"If you know how to network, you know how to social network," said Lori Gama, owner of DaGama Web Studio and a Twitter enthusiast.

Gama said connecting with people in social media is similar to connecting to them in the real world. At a networking event, a person enters the room, scans it to see who is there and finds groups to speak with. Gama feels the online realm is all about creating relationships and the "help thy neighbor" mentality.

Her general rule is that about 90 percent of the time spent interacting on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn should be dedicated to helping and listening to others, leaving only 10 percent for shameless self-promotion. Others will appreciate the help that was offered in the past and even help with the promotion side. It's the same, Gama pointed out, with networking events.

"I don't just step into the room and start handing out my business card," she said.

See MEDIA, 22A



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Pinnacol Assurance assets to go under review

Committee to offer findings on workers' compensation agency

By Steve Porter
sporter@ncbr.com

Ken Ross, CEO of Pinnacol Assurance, says he's looking forward to an audit and review of the state's workers' compensation insurance provider this summer under Senate Bill 281, passed in the final days of the 2009 Colorado legislative session.



ROSS

The bill, sponsored by Sen. Brandon Shaffer, D-Longmont, creates a 16-member "interim committee" to decide what status Pinnacol should have and whether its assets should be fair game when the state is in economic crisis.

"From Day 1 we've told anyone who would listen, if you want to audit us, fine," Ross said. "If you want to study us, fine. But just structure the committee so it's unbiased and you can get accurate data."

Members of the committee had not been named at press time.

For about a week in the first half of April, the state was buzzing with the

"Our view is we're a mutual insurance company."

Ken Ross, CEO
Pinnacol Assurance

Pinnacol drama unfolding at the Colorado General Assembly.

Lawmakers, faced with the possibility of a \$300 million shortfall in funding for higher education because of the recession, were looking at tapping the bulging reserves of Pinnacol Assurance, the state-created insurance company that handles workers' compensation claims for about 58,000 businesses in Colorado.

Senate Bill 273 — sponsored by Sen. Al White, R-Hayden — proposed taking \$500 million from Pinnacol's surplus and using the money to shore up higher education. At the time, Pinnacol allegedly had a loss reserve account of about \$1.2 billion and another surplus fund of about \$700 million, and SB 273 was based on the premise that the state legally had access to those funds.

Opinion: Unconstitutional

The Capitol drama included a protest by about 250 people against the proposed "raid" on Pinnacol's surplus. By the middle of April, Gov. Bill Ritter had weighed in and said he could not support SB 273's asset transfer plan. That came a few days after Colorado Attorney General John Suthers issued an opinion that said seizing Pinnacol's assets would violate the state's Constitution.

Lawmakers eventually decided to find other ways to cut the budget and reduce the impact on higher education.

But SB 281 — introduced April 6 and passed on May 4 — is expected to get Ritter's signature. Shaffer, the bill's main sponsor, said its aim is to sort out how much control the state should have over Pinnacol and whether its tax-exempt status should change.

"There were a number of ideas that floated out there," Shaffer said. "One was to sell it, but what's it worth and who do we sell it to? Do we bring them back into the state or leave them alone in the structure in which they currently exist?"

Shaffer said he has no confusion about Pinnacol's status. "The statute's pretty clear," he said. "It says it shall act like a mutual insurance company but it never says it's not a state entity. It is a state entity."

But Ross concedes no such status. "We're a hybrid, created by statute and not unlike other states that have created workers' compensation agencies," he said. "It specifically states we are not a state agency and we are regulated by the Division of Insurance as any other insurance company. Our view is we're a mutual insurance company."

Nearly a century of history

Pinnacol's history dates back to 1915 when the state created the Colorado Compensation Insurance Authority to offer worker's compensation coverage to high-risk industries.

In 2002 — after CCIA faced large deficits in the late 1980s and early 1990s — the Legislature passed a bill that morphed the CCIA into Pinnacol Assurance and declared its assets would be off limits to the state.

"All revenues, moneys and assets of Pinnacol Assurance belong solely to Pinnacol Assurance," the act states. "The State of Colorado has no claim to nor any interest in such revenues, moneys and assets and shall not borrow, appropriate or direct payments from such revenues, moneys and assets for any purpose."

Some Republicans, in opposing SB 273 and SB 281, declared Pinnacol a private company whose assets should be outside the reach of government. Highlands Ranch Sen. Ted Harvey called the intent of SB 281 a "witch hunt."

See PINNACOL, 30A



SHAFFER

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On June 17, air guitarists will show up at the **Aggie Theater** in Fort Collins, with guitar cases of air apparent instruments, to pit their skills against one another for the chance to become the U.S. Air Guitar Champion.

The event organizer, **US Air Guitar** and "the official air guitar association of the United States," is "devoted to taking our nation's unofficial pastime out of the bedroom and putting it up on the world stage." And to the worldly stage of Oulu, Finland, the U.S. champ will go thanks to an "alliance" with **Air Guitar World Championships** to compete for the world title.

Air guitar rules are as follows:

- Each performance plays to 60 seconds of a song.
- The 60 seconds can start anywhere in the song.
- The instrument must be invisible and be a guitar.
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- Back-up bands (air or real) are not allowed.

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Visit www.usairguitar.com for more information, to sign up, or get tickets to watch performers live their dream and tear on some air.

Southwest Weld gets own eco-devo focus

Local towns, cities pulling together to attract primary jobs

By Steve Porter
sporter@ncbr.com

WELD COUNTY — A unique part of Northern Colorado is getting a sharper focus when it comes to attracting new primary employers.

Southwest Weld County, which includes the tri-towns of Frederick, Firestone and Dacono and other nearby communities, is putting together a collaborative economic development strategy that builds on a shared geographic location. Its mission is to

promote cooperation in bringing good jobs to the area.

The strategy is being developed under the auspices of Upstate Colorado Economic Development, the organization that serves Weld County as a whole. Larry Burkhardt, Upstate CEO, said the Southwest Weld Economic Development Initiative was created to better position that part of the county to attract primary employers.

Burkhardt said the close proximity of so many towns in the southwest corner of the county and just north of the Denver metro area makes working together on economic development a sensible choice.

"That's part of it," he said. "They share some similarities as a workforce that could be drawn from Johnstown to Erie."

Burkhardt notes that the area has an abundance of young families with bread-

winners driving 20 miles or more each day to work. "Logically, this could be an area that could be economically attractive to an employer from a workforce perspective," he said.

Primary job focus

Burkhardt said the goal of the effort is to attract employers who can provide jobs that pay well enough to provide a majority of a household's income. He said there is no particular income level attached to his definition of a primary job.

"The range is quite large, but by and large, primary jobs tend to pay a little more than average," he said. Burkhardt noted that the kind of jobs offered by Vestas at the company's wind turbine blade manufacturing site in Windsor and its plant under con-

See SW WELD, 17A

F O C U S

'Lobo Way' takes RMHS to most efficient

Culture changes help school outperform LEED-certified FRHS

By Kristen Tatti
ktatti@ncbr.com

FORT COLLINS — Tom Lopez acted as a leader to institute change within a group of more than 1,500 under his guidance, with surprising and awesome results.

By creating the right culture, Lopez saw his group affect a 50 percent energy-use reduction over the course of eight years, saving tens of thousands of dollars in electricity expenses.

Lopez is not the CEO of a Fortune 500 company, nor is he a profession efficiency evangelist. He is the principal of Rocky Mountain High School in Fort Collins.

Poudre School District has had an aggressive energy savings plan in place for almost 10 years. In 2000, the district implemented a centralized HVAC management system that resulted in great savings for all of the schools. Other district-wide efforts furthered the energy efficiency goals, including improved lighting and automated computer shutdown.

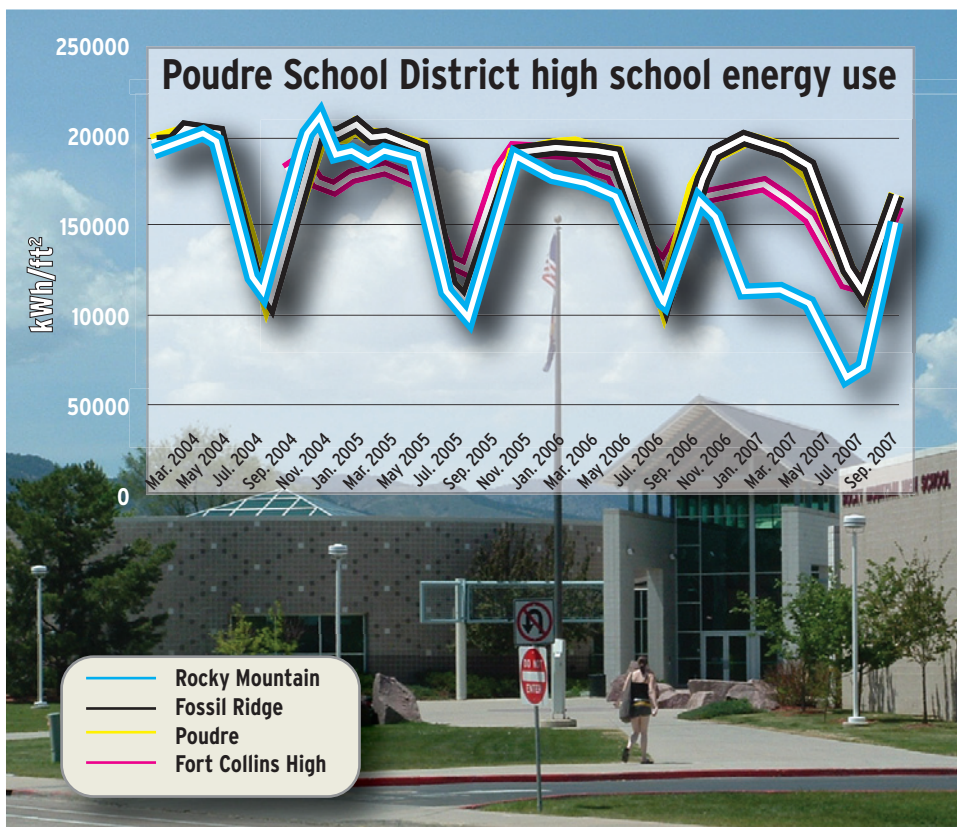
In general, the high schools in the district decreased energy use by 35 percent from 1999 through 2007. On top of that, Rocky saw an additional 15 percent savings, outperforming the newly constructed Fossil Ridge High School for energy usage starting in 2006.

Fossil Ridge was built in 2005 as a LEED-certified facility. Rocky was built in 1973 with renovations in 1994 and 2004.

Lopez credits the school's energy-savings success on culture: Doing things the "Lobo Way."

"I'm not a rules guy; I'm just about teaching the right thing to do," he said. "What you must do is a lot of culture building."

The Lobo Way has been a motto at the school for ages, so Lopez built upon that. The idea is that "Lobos take care of Lobos," and that includes respecting each other,



SOURCE: JENNIFER CROSS, COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY – Rocky Mountain High School in Fort Collins was able to become the most energy efficient in Poudre School District - even compared to the LEED-certified Fossil Ridge. A study by Colorado State University showed that textbook organizational change made the difference.

the equipment and the facilities.

"We started with recycling first," Lopez said.

The school added a recycling center to make sorting less of a chore. The next challenge was energy use.

Textbook example of change

The Lobo Way is a part of Rocky's success, but not all of it. In fact, the situation at Rocky Mountain is a textbook example of organizational change, according to Colorado State University sociology professor Jennifer Cross. Poudre School District Operations Manager Bill Franzen asked her to study what made Rocky Mountain students and staff so much more energy efficient than their counterparts in the district.

"(Rocky) was performing at the same level as Fossil Ridge, which is LEED certified," Franzen said. "We realized that it was about how they had changed behavior."

Cross decided to meet with students at Rocky and Poudre High School. Poudre was selected because its facility and student population were the most similar to Rocky.

What Cross found was that Rocky was displaying a perfect example of the organizational behavior change model, while Poudre was not. The model has four "C's":

- Commitment to change.
- Charismatic leadership.
- Communication.
- Culture.

"It all works together," Cross said. "They all reinforce each other."

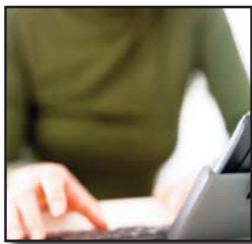
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Staffing companies feel strong effects of recession

Mergers, closures alter landscape for employment firms

By **Kristen Tatti**
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The business of placing people in jobs is in flux, as reflected in numerous changes to Northern Colorado's staffing industry during the past few months.

Nationally, staffing industry employment dropped sharply during the fourth quarter and has not changed much since. According to data from the American Staffing Association, the nation's employment companies placed 2.46 million temporary and contract workers per day from October through December — a drop of 19.5 percent for the same period in 2007. Since year-end, the association's staffing index has remained largely unchanged.

Not unchanged is the competitive landscape for staffing agencies in Northern Colorado. At least two firms have recently closed and one of the larger agencies recently joined forces with a national juggernaut.

Northern Colorado staple Weststaff Inc. was recently acquired by Santa Barbara, Calif.-based Select Staffing. The deal closed in March and will bring the combined company's revenue to around \$1.6 billion. Weststaff previously posted revenue around \$300 million annually. Before the acquisitions, Weststaff had nine offices in Colorado and Select Staffing had two in Denver, none of which overlapped.

"They're now very prominent in Colorado," said local area manager Erika Simpson.

According to Simpson, the acquisition will give Weststaff clients access to more expertise. In general, Weststaff was

focused on contractor and temporary placement, while Select Staffing has a number of specialty divisions.

The company's RemX division focuses on placement for skilled IT, scientific, engineering, financial and other direct hire needs. Select Medical Staffing concentrated on placing expert health care and medical staff. The specialty divisions have offices around the country, with a RemX site in Denver, but can offer assistance to all locations, Simpson explained.

Jobs the firm recently filled locally range from event staffing to an addiction specialist and a commercial driver.

"Really, there is no position we cannot fill," she said.

Diversity key to survival

Simpson feels that diversity is key to survival for a staffing firm in the current conditions. Select Staffing is not just surviving; it may even be thriving with some plans for future expansion.

"At some point, we will be opening a virtual office in Centerra," Simpson said.

A Select Staff agent will probably spend one day a week in an executive office suite. Simpson explained that with the increasing number of unemployed in the Loveland area, it was reasonable to have a presence in the city rather than ask them to drive to Fort Collins or Greeley.

The Loveland market might be feeling a bit of a void in recent months. Both Able Body Labor Staffing and Elite Staffing closed up shop. An operator at Able Body's answering service confirmed that the office closed a couple of months ago. Elite Staffing's Web site is no longer active and the telephone number has been disconnected.

The closures don't appear to have affected the market, too much. Kimberly Hill, branch manager for Labor Ready in Loveland, said they saw a number of

See STAFFING, 25A

C O R R E C T I O N S

The *Business Report* will correct any errors that appear in its pages. To suggest a correction or clarification, please contact editor Kate Hawthorne at 970-221-5400, ext. 224, or e-mail her at khawthorne@ncbr.com.

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Health insurers thrive despite global recession

In worst economy in decades, companies still see big profits

Despite a 16-month recession, waves of layoffs and continuing softness in the economy, most Health Maintenance Organizations in Colorado — and health insurance companies in general — continue to fare well.

Of 11 HMOs operating in the state in 2008, seven reported healthy total revenue increases over the previous year while four reported being down from their 2007 earnings, according to end-of-year filings with the state Division of Insurance.

Kaiser Permanente, headquartered in Oakland, Calif., and PacifiCare of Colorado remain the big dogs in the pack, both in total revenue and membership numbers. While Kaiser saw its total state membership drop from 479,000 at the end of 2007 to 476,000 at the end of 2008, it still managed to grow its total revenue by \$700 million over 2007.



HEALTH CARE
Steve Porter

PacifiCare saw its Colorado membership fall from 131,000 in 2007 to 101,000 in 2008 and its total revenue drop by \$76 million. PacifiCare's revenue and member numbers have fallen steadily since it was acquired by UnitedHealthCare, a division of the publicly-traded UnitedHealth Group (NYSE:UNH) of Minneapolis a few years ago, and it seems in danger of losing its perennial No. 2 spot on the HMO list.

Apples-to-apples comparisons of HMOs operating in Colorado are difficult given their individual structure, profit status and ownership by out-of-state entities. But Jim Hertel, publisher of Colorado Managed Care newsletter, notes that HMO profitability continued to grow dynamically in 2008. Before tax net income for the industry has grown from \$101.4 million in 2005 to \$265.2 million last year — a 162 percent increase over three years.

Hertel said 2008 was another good year for Colorado HMOs in general until the final quarter. "The recession really didn't hit until the fourth quarter, so the bulk of the (2008) numbers reflect a more robust economy," he said. "It's my expectation that changes in the economy will have a negative effect on numbers in 2009."

But first quarter 2009 reports from many of the nation's largest health insurers belie that expectation. While numbers of insured have dropped as workers lose their jobs and job-based coverage, revenues continue to rise for

most insurers.

Kaiser reported its total nationwide operating revenue rose by \$500 million in the first quarter of 2009 over the same quarter in 2008. This seems to defy explanation when the nation was officially in the grip of the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression.

Even factoring in investment losses, Kaiser reported net income in the first quarter of 2009 of \$430 million compared to \$250 million in the same period in 2008 — a 72 percent increase.

All doing well in troubled times

Other big HMOs and insurance plans are also doing very well in a troubled economy, it seems.

UnitedHealth Group reported strong first quarter 2009 earnings, with revenues increasing by \$1.7 billion or 8 percent over the same quarter in 2008, after investment losses. Those figures reflect a loss of 900,000 members in its commercial health plan business for the quarter.

Cigna Corp.'s enrollment fell 3 percent during the first quarter even as profit grew by \$150 million. Its total revenue for the quarter rose 4 percent to \$4.77 billion compared to first-quarter 2008.

Humana Inc.'s membership dropped by 149,000 during the quarter but the company still managed to squeeze out a net income of \$205.7 million — up 157 percent from the \$80.2 million net income it realized in the first quarter of

last year. Its total revenue rose 10.8 percent over the same quarter in 2008 to \$7.71 billion.

So what does all this mean?

I should likely leave that to those who understand all of the finer intricacies of ever-increasing medical care costs, new-and-better insurance products, medical loss and administration expense ratios, and the rest.

But doesn't it seem strange that despite all the bad economic news — losses of jobs and insurance coverage and the losses by the insurance companies on their investments in the soured financial markets — they just keep making a profit? And not just a little profit, but huge, honking profits?

Let's not forget that the industry also continues to pamper its top execs. For example, Ronald Williams, CEO of Aetna, just received a compensation package totaling \$17.4 million, even after the company announced in December that it would cut 1,000 jobs to reduce costs and adjust to the slowing economy.

Is it any wonder that the employers who provide most of the insurance coverage in this country and their workers who see nothing but higher premiums and deductibles year after year are getting fed up?

Steve Porter covers health care for the Northern Colorado Business Report. He can be reached at 970-221-5400, ext. 225, or at sporter@ncbr.com.



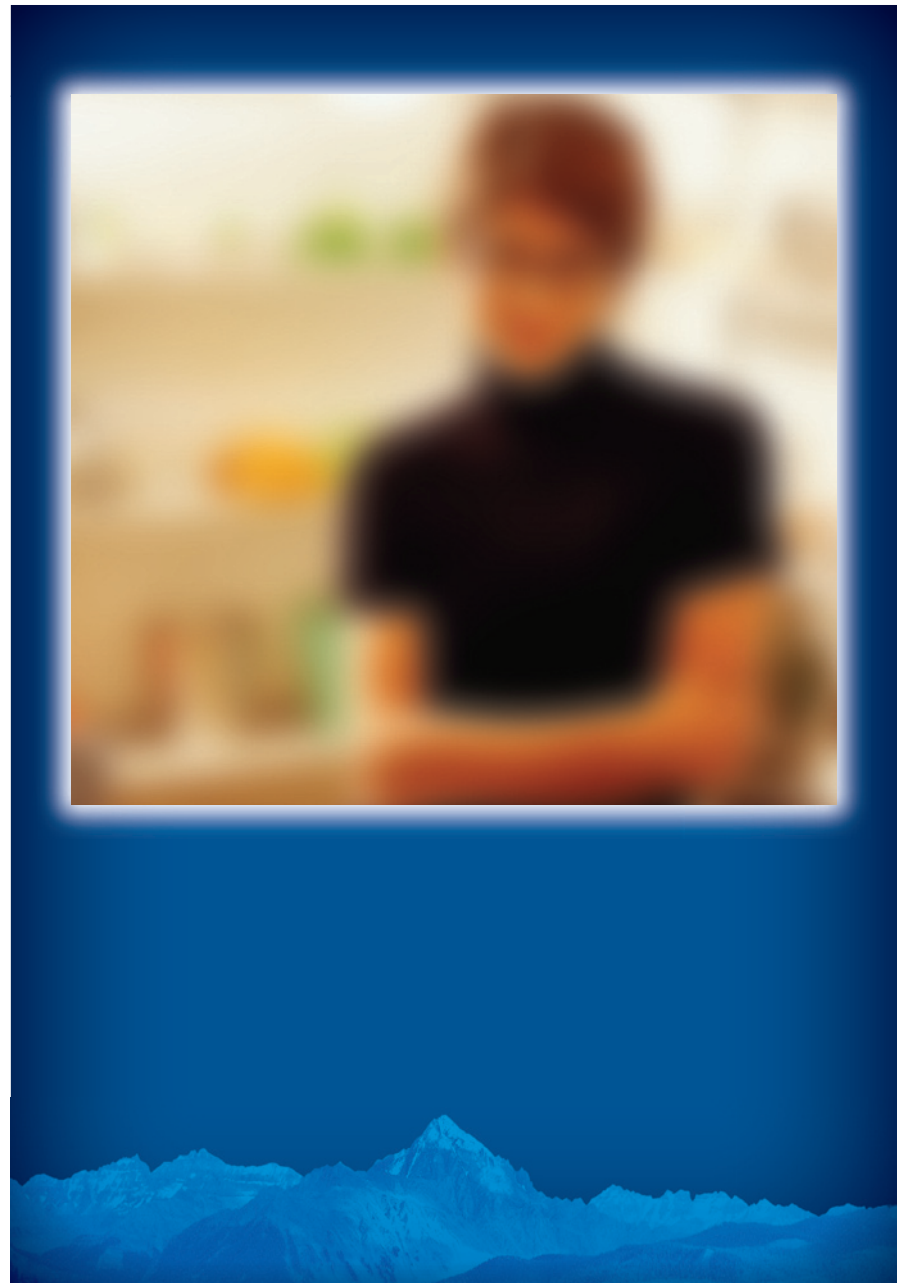
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The Beet goes on bringing culture to Fort Collins

Beet Street wraps second season of thematic programs

On an afternoon in late April, Dan Zanes and Friends took the stage at the Lincoln Center. Zanes, with his spiky gray hair and festive green jacket, acknowledged that economically things are pretty grim, then encouraged the crowd to sing loud, dance in the aisles, and transform the concert into a party.

The concert was one of many events in Beet Street's second series, "Finding Home: Sharing the Journey of Our Collective Immigration," which concluded in early May. For Dan Zanes and Friends, it was an opportunity to promote the new CD !Nueva York!, which celebrates music from Latin America.

After two seasons, how is Beet Street shaping the artistic, cultural and economic landscape of Fort Collins?

"Beet Street is incubated by the Downtown Development Authority," said Jean Lamm, interim executive director of Beet Street. The DDA "determined that arts and culture is known to be a very solid economic driver for downtowns. They wanted to establish an organization that would work with existing arts and cultural organizations here in Fort Collins and also do some programming around their activities and occasional stand-alone programming."

The idea for Beet Street was generated in 2005, with a kick-off in September 2007 and programming starting in 2008.

According to Lamm, the organization's name started first as a place-holder, in tribute to the impact of the sugar-beet industry on Fort Collins. "As Beet Street tried to figure out a name, they couldn't find anything better," she explained. "And it's been a really fun choice. As a play on words it's worked with our newsletter Re:Beet or the programming like Kids Beet."

Funding for Beet Street comes from three sources: the DDA, which collects taxes from businesses within its district; event ticket sales; and sponsorships for programs. The organization intends to be self-sufficient by 2011.

"We do a lot of collaborative partnerships. It isn't always that money changes hands. Some of our partner organizations will do programming for us," Lamm said.

Thematic programming

Beet Street's thematic programming comes in part from models like the Chautauqua Institution in New York, a



BUSINESS AND THE ARTS
Kiki Gilderhus

not-for-profit organization that focuses on four areas: arts, education, religion, and recreation. Each summer the Institution chooses an overarching theme.

The DDA, under former executive director Chip Steiner, tailored this idea to focus on arts and culture, and Beet Street started with last year's "Life on a Shoestring: Perspectives on Stepping Out of Poverty."

The themes are flexible "It allows us to create programming that might last three or four days, a week, or longer," according to Lamm. "For Life on a Shoestring we had at least 20 partner organizations. We ended up with more than 20 again this year."

This spring's Finding Home series incorporated music, film, lectures, dance, and theatre.

With an invitation from Beet Street, Bas Bleu Theatre put together two nights of readings called Immigration Tales.

Producer Trai Cartwright described the process of gathering participants. "I started asking around and discovered these tremendous pockets of culture in Fort Collins. It became a community effort to gather stories, and people kept saying to me, 'Have you talked to so-and-so?'"

Ultimately Cartwright split the production into "El Latino Experiencia" and a more global approach with "The World Comes to Fort Collins."

"We received great feedback from both performances about the range of experiences represented and the cultural dynamic," Cartwright said. "What was

most impressive to me is that the Immigration Tales, especially 'El Latino Experiencia,' had a real emotional impact on the audience. I think it really meant something to them."

'Memorias de las Tres Colonias'

The series also coincided with the release of the film, "Memorias de las Tres Colonias." The documentary, produced by the local Museo de las Tres Colonias, explores the stories of residents and the history of Andersonville, Buckingham and Alta Vista in north Fort Collins.

Collaboration with Beet Street provided an opportunity to present the documentary to the public. "We were looking for a venue for the premiere," said Betty Aragon-Mitotes, chair of the Amigos del Museo. "To have the premiere at the Lincoln Center with a big party was a dream come true, and I was ecstatic. What I think is important about the Finding Home series is that it was about common threads of our immigration."

One of the high-profile events was a talk by actor and community activist Edward James Olmos. Beet Street arranged for Olmos to visit the Museo, where he talked to neighborhood residents and signed autographs. "Watching the kids talk to Olmos, it was so exciting," Aragon-Mitotes said. "It took my breath away."

The series was not without controversy,

See ARTS, 8A

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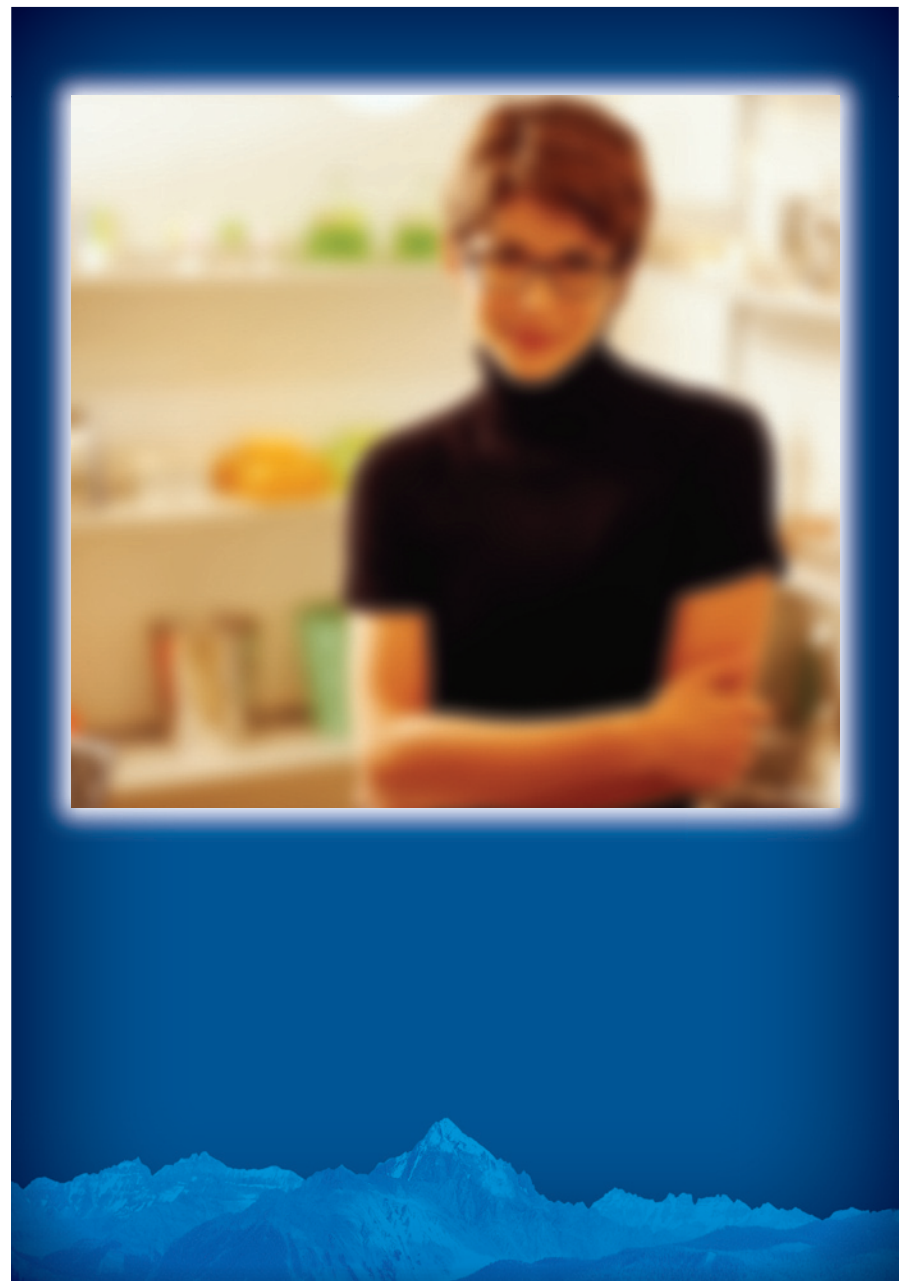
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REGIONAL ARTS EVENTS

May 22 - 1 - Gone But Not Forgotten Art Exhibit, Greeley History Museum, 714 Eighth St. in Greeley. Contact: Greeley Museum at 970-350-9220.

May 22 - 31 - The Great Frame Up presents Art on the Promenade: Welcome Spring, Promenade Shops at Centerra, in Loveland. Cost: Donations accepted.

May 23 - 20 - "Pride and Prejudice," Lincoln Center Mini Theater, 417 W Magnolia St. in Fort Collins. Cost: \$20/adults, \$15/seniors/students, \$13/matinees. Contact: LCTIX at 970-221-6730.

May 23 - 25 - Art Market, starting at 9 a.m., Bond Park in the center of downtown Estes Park, in Estes Park. Cost: Free. Contact: Suzy Blackhurst at 800-44-ESTES or sblackhurst@estes.org.

May 30 - 5 - Art and the Animal National Exhibit, starting at 10 a.m., Cultural Arts Council Fine Art Gallery, 423 W. Elkhorn Ave. in Estes Park. Cost: \$5, children 12 and under free with adult.

Contact: Suzy Blackhurst at 800-44-ESTES or sblackhurst@estes.org.

June 5 - 23 - Candlelight Dinner Playhouse presents "The Wizard of Oz," Candlelight Dinner Playhouse, 4747 Marketplace Drive in Johnstown. Cost: \$36 to \$59, \$25/show only. Contact: Candlelight box office at 970-744-3747.

June 5 - 20 - Wynne/Wynne: The Art of Al and Lou Wynne, Fort Collins Museum of Contemporary Art, 201 S. College Ave. in Fort Collins. Cost: \$2/adults, free/members/students/children.

June 6 - 7 - 5th Annual Colorado Medieval Festival, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Riverside Park, 42nd & Golden streets in Evans.

June 16 - F. O. Stanley, the Grand Old Man of Estes Park, starting at 6:30 p.m., Estes Park Museum, 200 Fourth St. in Estes Park. Cost: Free. Contact: Suzy Blackhurst at 800-44-ESTES or sblackhurst@estes.org.

ARTS, from 7A

particularly the late addition of a talk by Mark Krikorian, "The New Case Against Immigration, Both Legal and Illegal."

"A lot of the people in the community were upset," Aragon-Mitotes said. "The programming was so positive, and in that talk there were no common threads. It was really divisive."

In tackling a complex theme like immigration, Beet Street has sought to bridge artistic and economic concerns, bringing substantial cultural programming to Fort Collins.

"One of our key strengths is the marketing," according to Lamm. "We can really promote things for local arts and cultural organizations. At the same

time, Beet Street works closely with the Downtown Business Association in executing our programs and collaborating with their member organizations. We're really all about bringing more people to downtown, having them stay longer, and spend money. I think the city leadership is really looking to the future even though right now it looks gloomy."

The theme for 2010? "Actually we've been kicking around humor as an idea," Lamm said, laughing. "I think we may need it by March of next year."

Kiki Gilderhus, head of Art History Liberal Studies at Rocky Mountain College of Art + Design in Denver, covers the arts for the Business Report. Contact her at news@ncbr.com; send arts calendar items to nguillaume@ncbr.com.

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- **Tory Brown** – Business Advisor in Residence and senior manager of audit services for EKS&H;
- **Chris Banks** – Business Advisor in Residence and senior manager of consulting services for EKS&H;
- **Ryan Sanger** – Business Advisor in Residence and manager of tax services for EKS&H;
- **Jennifer Brinkmeyer** – Business Advisor in Residence and manager of small business services for EKS&H;
- **Michael Weiner** – Attorney in Residence and corporate attorney for Dorsey & Whitney;
- **Tim Worrall** – Attorney in Residence and intellectual property attorney for Dorsey & Whitney.

Volunteers provide pro advice to entrepreneurs

Advisors give RMII companies free business guidance

A big focus for the Rocky Mountain Innovation Initiative for the past few months has been on ironing out the details on a new facility, but the local technology incubator has also been busy developing more programs to ensure there will be plenty of robust companies to fill its new space.

RMII got the unanimous "thumbs-up" from the city of Fort Collins for its new building in the North College Avenue corridor earlier this month (see story on page 18A). While intensive work went



TECHNOLOGY
Kristen Tatti

into planning and arranging funding for the deal, RMII has also continued to roll out new programs to strengthen its incubator companies, especially in an economic recession.

"As we are looking at expanding our building space, we want to keep adding to our services as well," said RMII Executive Director Mark Forsyth.

The "In Residence" programs began in March and have so far been a great success, according to Forsyth. The programs — Entrepreneur in Residence, Business Advisor in Residence and Attorney in Residence — offer incubator companies professional business advice from some of the top practitioners in the region completely free of charge.

"There are a lot of things that can go wrong in the early stages without professional advice," Forsyth said.

Without proper planning, intellectual property rights and patent opportunities can quickly vanish. Poor financial planning is a quick death for young companies. Unfortunately, many startups actually fear calling up professional service providers to even ask a question, worried that the meter will start ticking and soon a large bill will accrue.

To launch the programs, serial entrepreneur Brad Florin agreed to donate his time as the Entrepreneur in Residence. Several professionals from the audit and accounting firm EKS&H and from law firm Dorsey & Whitney soon followed. Forsyth said RMII looked specifically for firms that have shown the willingness and enthusiasm for working with startups in the past.

"They're not in it to market their practice," Forsyth said. "They're in it to help the startups in this community."

Regular meetings with startups

Each firm, or individual in Florin's case, dedicates about one full day per month to meeting with incubator companies.

"We encourage the entrepreneurs to meet on a regular basis with these people," Forsyth said, rather than just when they have a specific need. That way, the advisers will already have a grasp on the needs of the company. The startups are encouraged to meet with any and all of the volunteers even if they already have a provider for those specific services.

Two more law firms have expressed interest in donating some time, but Forsyth said the organization will wait to assess the current need. The program might also expand to include other professional services, such as grant writing.

RMII is also preparing to launch the Kaufmann Foundation's FastTrac program along with program partners Larimer County, the city of Fort Collins, Colorado State University and CSU Ventures.

"We've recently gotten our certification to launch the classes for this region," Forsyth explained.

The FastTrac program brings together a trained facilitator and a handful of business coaches to hold concentrated workshops. The workshops will offer business plan development, investor-pitch training and advisory services.

Forsyth said the group is currently looking at how the program can be funded and is also looking for additional partnerships. He hopes to see the first workshops scheduled for the late summer.

Kristen Tatti covers technology for the Northern Colorado Business Report. She can be reached at 970-221-5400, ext. 219 or ktatti@ncbr.com.

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2	LBN Insurance Agency 4848 Thompson Parkway Johnstown, CO 80534 970-635-9400/970-635-9401	25 N/A N/A	N/A N/A	N/A N/A N/A www.lbninsurance.com	Mike Pierce Principal 1964
3	Brown & Brown of Colorado 125 S. Howes St., Fifth Floor Fort Collins, CO 80522 970-482-7747/970-484-4165	19 N/A N/A	N/A N/A	N/A N/A N/A www.bbinsurance.com	Scott Mayor Executive vice president 1937
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5	Ewing Leavitt Insurance Agency Inc. 4025 St. Cloud Drive, Suite 100 Loveland, CO 80538 970-679-7333/970-679-7377	14 N/A N/A	N/A N/A	\$1,825,000 \$1,650,000 N/A www.ewing-leavitt.com	Steve Ewing Executive vice president 1980
6	Renaissance Insurance Group LLC 101 E. Main St. Windsor, CO 80550 970-674-8825/970-674-8826	14 N/A N/A	N/A N/A	N/A N/A N/A www.reninsurance.com	Jay Helzer; Ryan Hicks Managing members 2001
7	Welsh Insurance Agency Inc. 1310 E. Eisenhower Blvd. Loveland, CO 80537 970-663-5404/	9 \$5,000,000 \$4,500,000	2,000,000 45	\$850,000 \$800,000 2 www.wiainsurance.com	Jeffery Welsh CIC, President 1987
8	The Craig C. Campbell Agency Inc. 141 S. College Ave. Fort Collins, CO 80524 970-484-1400/970-484-9018	7 N/A \$5,040,890	N/A N/A	N/A \$511,370 N/A www.farmersagent.com/ccampbellI	Craig Campbell President 1969
9	John C. Beckett & Associates Inc. 220 Smith St. Fort Collins, CO 80524-2942 970-484-2805/970-484-2885	6 \$3,700,000 N/A	N/A N/A	N/A N/A N/A www.beckettinsurance.com	Tim Beckett President 1983
10	Allstate Financial Services 363 W. Drake Road Fort Collins, CO 80524 970-223-1332/970-226-6991	5 N/A N/A	N/A N/A	N/A N/A N/A www.allstateagencies.com/JamesMichalka/Welcomer/	James I. Michalka Agency Principal 1977
11	The Empire Co. of Colorado 141 S. College Ave., Suite 102 Fort Collins, CO 80524 970-556-0814/970-221-1661	3 \$6,000,000 \$3,000,000	N/A N/A	N/A N/A N/A www.empire-co.com	N/A N/A 2005
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 companies**
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Furloughs can reduce need for layoffs

Weigh various options before implementing payroll reduction plan

By **Carrie Pinsky**
news@ncbr.com

Ask a room full of gainfully employed people if they would rather be laid off, take a 20 percent pay cut, or be forced to go on temporary unpaid leave, and you will likely find that the last option gets the majority of votes. In today's economy, employees are willing to accept almost anything that allows them to keep their jobs — and health insurance.

For most organizations, payroll is the single largest budget item and, when economic times get tough, the first place to cut. Layoffs are always an option. Organizations need to be aware of the associated costs, such as severance pay, unemployment benefits, payouts on accrued vacation hours, outplacement services — and then those associated with recruiting and training new people when the economy turns around.

Colorado State University and the University of Colorado have announced that they will layoff employees rather than imple-

See **FURLOUGH, 28A**



How to furlough

Some things to consider when dealing with furlough periods:

- Furloughed employees are prohibited from working in any capacity including checking phone messages and e-mail.
- Before furloughing exempt employees, consider consulting an employment attorney.
- Determine length of time to use furlough days, and pre-approve the times employees choose to use.
- Detail how vacation hours and PTO can be used during furlough.
- Understand how any reductions in work hours could impact employee health care.

SOURCE: WWW.SWLAW.COM

Business Report file photo

People key to moving business ahead



**THE AUTHENTIC
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Dawn Duncan

Strength-train your company to help it grow in lean times

An overriding theme for weathering this recession is that human beings need attention, especially when things aren't easy. Right now may seem like the time to completely buckle down, invest nothing, and stick it out until the economic storm has passed. However, it's also time to assess how to move people forward in a way that makes financial and long-term sense.

Specifically addressing the needs of your sales team is a way to address current revenues, projections and training needs in terms of developing existing personnel. By strengthening the team already in place, you apply value

to the individuals you have selected to grow your company, offer a valuable opportunity to learn, and create a return on investment that is tangible.

Providing a sales team with extra skills leads to increased motivation; it capitalizes on the intrinsic nature of a salesperson to push forward independently to sell and persuade. The "hunter mentality" of a salesperson is much like that of an entrepreneur in that it needs continual challenge and rewards to progress. Continued training and support, combined with the latitude to tackle markets aggressively, allows the skilled salesperson to forge ahead despite economics, competition and rejection.

The renewal of spirit provided by a good training program paired with financial success has proven to motivate sales teams through the toughest of business climates and

See **ENTREPRENEUR, 31A**

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ON THE JOB

FINANCE

Meg Spencer, a financial representative for Thrivent Financial for Lutherans' Rocky Mountain Regional Financial Office in Fort Collins, has been named the RFO's Outstanding First Year Financial Representative.

ACADEMICS

Karl Dukstein and **April McClure** have been designated master faculty and master instructor for 2009 at Front Range Community College-Larimer Campus. The two were chosen from among the faculty and instructors who were nominated by students, faculty, and staff.

Helen Douglass of Centennial Elementary in Firestone and **Carol Seemueller** of Rocky Mountain High School in Fort Collins received the Amgen Award for Science Teaching Excellence. The award recognizes teachers in the K-12 grade levels in public and private schools whose dedication to their student's education has had a significant impact on the learning and interest of the future generations of scientists.

ENGINEERING

Gary McFaddin, P.E., president of Compliance Partners Inc. in Fort Collins and principal at Seven Generations, has passed the Certified Building Commissioning Professional exam.

HEALTH CARE

Mark E. Howshar, M.D., subspecialty radiologist with Fort Collins-based Advanced Medical Imaging Consultants, has been awarded membership into the Society for Skeletal Radiology.

Union Colony Fire/Rescue Division Chief **Dale Lyman** has attained certification as a Certified Fire Marshal through the International Code Council. Lyman is the first to be certified in Colorado and is one of only 48 in the entire United States.

LaPalma Dobler, director of nursing at Life Care Center of Longmont, was named Director of Nursing of the Year for Life Care Centers of America's Mountain States Division. The award is given to the



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director of nursing in each of Life Care's seven divisions who demonstrates outstanding qualities in customer service ratings, staff development and successful state surveys.

Staci Stone has been promoted to director of marketing and business development for Northern Colorado Rehabilitation Hospital and Northern Colorado Long Term Acute Hospital.

REAL ESTATE

Jeanette Meyer, with The Group Inc. Real Estate in Fort Collins, has been awarded the Quality Service Certified Platinum in recognition of earning 100 percent client service satisfaction in 2008. **Felipe Sorzano**, broker associate/partner, has been awarded Quality Service Certified Gold status in recognition of exceptional client service satisfaction in 2008. **Todd Sledge**, a broker associate/partner, earned the EcoBroker Certified Designation by EcoBroker International.

Cheryl Pribble, **Charlotte Ryan** and **Cherie Gibout**, broker associates with Re/Max Action Brokers have been awarded the Certified Distressed Property Expert designation. The designation is awarded after completing a comprehensive course in how to efficiently and effectively help homeowners in distress avoid foreclosure and sell their properties.

MISCELLANEOUS

Dwight Gaiter has been hired as retail operation manager at Johnson's Corner in Johnstown. Gaiter oversees the convenience store, trucker supply and the development of an on-going training system for all employees.

If you have an item to share about a promotion, job change or career news of note, e-mail it to Noah Guillaume at nguillaume@ncbr.com, or mail it to On The Job at NCBR, 141 S. College Ave., Fort Collins, CO 80524.



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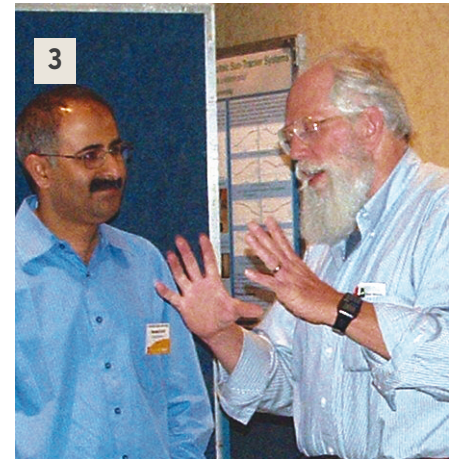
TIME OUT



CELEBRATE GIVING – 1. Larimer Human Society Executive Director Judith Calhoun, left, chats up Sandra Risler, owner of the Animal House Dog Rescue and Shelter, and Laura Sickle, right, a broker associate with Keller Williams, at the Community Foundation of Northern Colorado Annual Celebration of Philanthropy on May 14 at the Hilton Fort Collins. 2. Connie Koenig, training coordinator for Aims Community College's Corporate Education Center, and Rich Harter, senior sales manager for the Clarion Hotel and Conference Center, wake up with some networking at the Greeley Chamber of Commerce Business Before Hours event at First FarmBank on May 14. 3. Colorado State University Department of Chemistry researchers Sandeep Kohli, left, and Don Heyse get technical at the May 5 Cenergy Expo at CSU. 4. Event planner Nicole Franklin, left; Dawn Duncan, co-owner of Broadreach Recruiting & Consulting LLC; and Matt Philips, finance professional with AXA Advisors, prepare to grab some breakfast at the May 12 Emerge Colorado meeting at the Budweiser Event Center.

photos by Business Report staff

E-mail your event photos to Editor Kate Hawthorne, khawthorne@ncbr.com. Include complete identification of individuals.




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BRIEFCASE

KUDOS

The city of Fort Collins received high marks in a review by the federal department of **Housing and Urban Development**. The Annual Community Assessment Summary measures how well communities use federal dollars for affordable housing and human services activities. Fort Collins met or exceeded performance standards in all categories.

The **Tenfold Collective**, a Loveland-based graphic design and branding firm, earned the Silver Winner prize in the Strathmore Show for a brand and identity package for **Tree of Life Landscape** in New York. Entries are judged quarterly on creative design, production excellence and appropriate paper choice.

Signs of the Times magazine awarded Loveland-based **Schlosser Signs Inc.** first place in the electronic monument signs category in the 2009 International Sign Contest. The winning sign was created for **Boyd Lake Village** in Loveland.

The **Larimer County Search and Rescue Team** successfully passed all five phases of their Mountain Rescue Association's re-accreditation process. The test includes avalanche rescue, technical snow evacuation, search, and technical rock rescue.

NAME CHANGE

United Imaging Center in Longmont has changed its name to **Women's Imaging Center**. The new name reflects new developments including installation of the digital mammography and bone density machines, and completion of renovation to a patient-centered, warm environment.

NEW PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Miramont Lifestyle Fitness in Fort Collins is offering a free stress management program. This once a week class is for teens and adults who are looking for an outlet of stress relief. The hour-long class is held Saturdays starting at 11:00 a.m. at 901 Oakridge Drive in Fort Collins. No membership required to participate. Contact Fitness and Wellness Director Ryan Conover at 970-672-4236 for more information.

Take Me Home Real Estate LLC of Northern Colorado is now offering full service property management for builders, owners and investors with vacant property. Property management services include marketing the property, pre-qualifying tenants, providing complete lease paperwork, accounting and disbursement of rent monthly. Visit takehome realestate.com for more information.

A new Web site for Berthoud town residents, businesses and community groups has been launched at www.berthoudtownforum.com. The **Berthoud Town Forum** was developed to provide

Nonprofit notes

The **McKee Medical Center Foundation** received \$66,000 from the Denver affiliate of **Susan G. Komen for the Cure** to provide breast cancer treatment for women in southern Larimer County who are uninsured or underinsured. The grant will support patients who have been diagnosed with breast cancer and need treatment including surgery, chemotherapy and radiation. For information about how to access the grant, contact McKee Patient and Community Services Manager Linda Davidson at 970-635-4016.

Elderhaus Adult Day Programs in Fort Collins received a \$10,000 grant from the **Home Instead Senior Care Foundation** in Omaha, Neb. The grant will be used in partnership with the **Aging Center of the Rockies** to provide on-site, professional, psychological counseling to the center's clients as well as counselors.

the citizens of Berthoud an open forum to share information, opinions and ideas.

NEW LOCATION

Beyond Chiropractic Clinic has opened at 1002 W. Drake Road, #102, in Fort Collins. The clinic offers a combined approach to total chiropractic care including physical therapy, soft tissue management, Diversified Adjusting, and Myofascial Release techniques.

DEALS

Bicycle tour company **ExperiencePlus!** in Fort Collins is under new ownership. Founded by Rick and Paola Malpezzi Price in 1972, daughters Monica and Maria Elena Price have taken over the company to continue the family tradition of engaging travelers both physically and intellectually. Visit www.bike-rentalsplus.com for more information.

DEADLINES

The **Loveland Chamber of Commerce** is accepting submissions for the 2009 Corn Roast T-shirt design contest. Visit www.loveland.com, click on Events, click on Publications and Forms for complete rules, guidelines and logos. Submissions are due by 5 p.m., June 15.

If you have an item to share about name changes, new products or business news of note, e-mail it to Noah Guillaume at nguillaume@ncbr.com, or mail it to Briefcase at NCB, 141 S. College Ave., Fort Collins, CO 80524.

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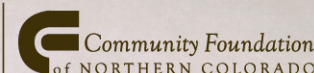
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CALENDAR

May 24 - The Realities Ride, starting at 9 a.m., Thunder Mountain Harley-Davidson, 4250 Byrd Drive in Loveland. Cost: \$30/bike, \$10/passenger. Contact: Realities for Children at 970-484-9090 or Holli@RealitiesForChildren.com.

May 28 - Business Networking Luncheon, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Candlelight Dinner Playhouse, 4747 Marketplace Drive in Johnstown. Cost: \$20. Contact: Johnstown-Milliken Chamber at 970-587-7042 or info@johnstownmillikenchamber.com.

May 28 - Greeley Weld Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours, from 5 to 7 p.m., Greeley Stampede/Old Chicago, in Greeley. Cost: \$7/members, \$20/nonmembers. Contact: Greeley Chamber of Commerce at 970-352-3566 or info@greeleychamber.com.

June 1 - Knowledge Bites presents Shades of Green Marketing: Going Green Without Going Overboard, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Fort Collins Chamber of Commerce, 225 S. Meldrum St. in Fort Collins. Contact: FCC at 970-482-3746.

June 1 - CEO Forum with Gov. Ritter, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., University Center Ballroom, 2045 10th Ave. in Greeley. Cost: \$25/Greeley Chamber members, \$35/non. Contact: Greeley Chamber at 970-352-3566 or steph@greeleychamber.com.

June 2 - Front Range PC Users Group, from 7 to 9 p.m., Fort Collins Senior Center, 1200 Raintree Drive in Fort Collins.

June 3 - Envision: Young Professionals, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Cost: \$15/early registration. Contact: FCC at 970-482-3746.

June 3 - Three-organization networking event, from 5 to 7 p.m., Biaggi's Ristorante, at Centerra in Loveland. Cost: No charge. Contact: NCHRA at www.nchra.com.

June 4 - Loveland Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours, starting at 5:30 p.m., Loveland Sports Park, 950 N. Boyd Lake Ave. in Loveland. Cost: Day before: \$15/members only, \$5/child. Contact: LCC at 970-667-6311.

June 4 - Greeley Young Professionals, starting at 5:30 p.m., Old Chicago, 2349 W. 29th St. in Greeley. Cost: Free. Contact: Greeley Chamber of Commerce at 970-352-3566.

June 6 - Macdonald Family Charity Second Annual Golf Tournament, starting at 7:30 a.m., Highland Meadows Golf Course, in Windsor. Cost: \$125. Contact: Katie Reiff at 970-667-6119 or Katie@macdonaldfamilycharity.org.

June 6 - Habitat for Humanity's 6th Annual Hard Hat, Black Tie fundraising gala, from 6 p.m. to midnight, Fort Collins Marriott, 350 E. Horsetooth Road in Fort Collins. Cost: \$100. Contact: Fort Collins Habitat for Humanity at 970-488-2704 or info@fortcollinshabitat.org.

June 6 - 7th Annual Denver Brain Tumor Walk, from 8:30 a.m. to noon, Sloan's Lake Park (Picnic Area), 4500 W. 17th Ave. in Denver. Cost: Varies. Contact: Andrina Schwartz at 866-455-3214 or DenverRegistration@braintumor.org.

June 6 - Linnea Memorial Pet Walk and Adoptathon, from 8 a.m. to noon, Spring Canyon Community Park, 2626 W. Horsetooth Road in Fort Collins. Cost: \$20/pre-register, \$25/day of. Contact: Animal Rescue Connection at 970-381-5573 or info@animalrescueconnection.org.

June 6 - Pride in the Park, from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Civic Center Park, Howes St. and Laporte Ave. in Fort Collins. Cost: \$75/booth. Contact: Andy Stoll, executive director at 970-221-3247 or andy@lambdacenter.org.

June 6 - Laser Harps at the Imagination Street Fair, from noon to 5 p.m., Elks Lodge, 140 E. Oak St. in Fort Collins. Cost: Free. Contact: Info at 970-419-8240.

June 6 - Laurie Anderson at the Imagination Fair, starting at 7 p.m., Lincoln Center, 417 W. Magnolia in Fort Collins. Cost: \$35-\$25, \$5 student/senior discount. Contact: Beet Street at 970-419-8240.

June 6 - 10 - IMA's 90th Annual Conference & Exposition, from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m., Sheraton

Denver Hotel, 1550 Court Place in Denver. Cost: See www.imaconference.org for details. Registration Deadline: May 22. Contact: Tara Baumgarten at 908-276-4344, ext. 219 or tara@sternassociates.com.

June 6 - Annual Hard Hat, Black Tie Gala, Voyage to New Zealand, from 6 p.m. to midnight, Fort Collins Marriott, 350 E. Horsetooth Road in Fort Collins. Cost: \$100. Registration Deadline: June 6. Contact: Shannon Hein at 970-488-2704 or shein@fortcollinshabitat.org.

June 7 - 28 - Girl Scouts of Colorado Daisy Journey, from 1 to 3 p.m., Fort Collins Farmer's Market, Corner of Harmony Road and Lemay Avenue in Fort Collins. Cost: \$12 for all four weeks. Registration Deadline: Application deadline is May 25. Contact: Nichole Franko at 970-493-1844 or nichole.franko@gscolorado.org.

June 8 - 14 - 9th Annual Debbie Boose Memorial

Tennis Tournament, from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m., North Lake Park, 920 W. 29th St. in Loveland. Cost: \$35/person first event, \$15/person additional event. Registration Deadline: June 1. Contact: Jodee Hinton at 970-292-1080 or jodee.hinton@pathways-care.org.

June 9 - Fort Collins Chamber of Commerce Business Before Hours, from 7:30 to 9 a.m., Habitat for Humanity, in. Contact: FCC at 970-482-3746.

June 10 - Science Cafe: Carbon Detectives, starting at 6 p.m., Stonehouse Grille, Highlands Room, 125 S. College Ave. in Fort Collins. Cost: Free. Contact: Kerri McDermid at 970-419-8240 or kmcdermid@beetstreet.org.

June 11 - Fort Collins Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Cost: \$13/early registration. Contact: FCC at 970-482-3746.




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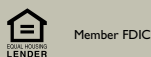
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Time on market rather short for NoCo homes

Key to quick sale in current economy lies in correct price

The Northern Colorado real estate market presents challenges to home sellers and real estate brokers alike. Fortunately, lengthy time on market is not one of them.

For most home sellers in the region, the time it takes to find a buyer is surprisingly short. In the first quarter of 2009, the typical seller of a well-priced single-family home in Fort Collins or Loveland had a contract in just over three weeks. In Greeley and Evans, this time was shorter: about two and a half weeks.

Condo and townhome sellers needed more patience but time on market was still short. In January, February and March, a typical well-priced attached dwelling in Fort Collins and Loveland was under contract in about six weeks. In Greeley-Evans, it was just three weeks.

Time on market is best measured from listing date or date of last price change, whichever is later, to the date a contract is accepted.

With prices flat or declining as is the case in nearly all of Northern Colorado, overpricing is the surest way of preventing a sale. The length of time a property is on the market while overpriced tells us more about the seller’s motivation — or lack of it — than it does about the market as a whole.

That is why I do not include the period while overpriced as part of time on market. For my calculations, the clock starts when a property is priced where a successful closing results.

Likewise, the time from contract to closing reflects the needs of buyer and seller rather than providing any insight into the market, so I do not include the days to close a transaction in time on market.

Data hard to find

Unfortunately, time on market data as I have described is not readily available. To generate the information in this column my assistant, Sarah Sikes, painstakingly reviewed the multiple listing system history for the first quarter of 2009, including all 849 single-family home and 133 attached dwelling transactions in Fort Collins, Loveland and Greeley-Evans.

In Fort Collins, the median time on the market in January, February and March for single family homes was 22 days — half of the single family homes in Fort Collins that sold were under contract in less than 22 days and half in more than 22 days.

Ninety percent of these properties were under contract within 99 days. The

Time on Market (Days)

January, February, March 2009

	Fort Collins	
	Median	90 percent
Single-Family Homes	22	99
Condos/Townhomes	43	161
	Loveland	
	Median	90 percent
Single-Family Homes	25	91
Condos/Townhomes	39	103
	Greeley	
	Median	90 percent
Single-Family Homes	18	70
Condos/Townhomes	20	90

Time on Market measured from listing date or date of last price change, whichever is later, to date contract is accepted. Data compiled from closed transactions appearing on IRES, LLC Multiple Listing System for January through March 2009.

SOURCE: ERIC KRONWALL, REMAX ADVANCED INC.



GUEST COLUMN
Eric Kronwall

median time on market for condos and townhomes was 43 days while 90 percent were under contract within 161 days.

Loveland’s time on market in the first quarter was similar. For single-family homes the median time on market was 25 days and 90 percent of these homes were under contract within 91 days. As with Fort Collins, attached dwellings took longer to sell. Median time on the market was 39 days and 90 percent were under contract within 103 days.

Time on market in the Greeley-Evans area was shorter than both Fort Collins and Loveland. The median time on market during the first quarter for single-family homes was just 18 days and 90 percent were under contract within 70 days. Condos and townhomes required only slightly longer to sell. Twenty days was the median time on market with 90 percent of attached dwellings in Greeley and Evans under contract within 90 days.

Market is active

Sellers and real estate brokers should take heart. This news reveals that our real estate market is active and buyers are making purchases. While prices may not be at the level sellers desire, marketing time is relatively short and selling need not be a drawn-out process.

Sellers should also recognize that homes that sell quickly. Therefore, pricing that produces speedy results is a winning strategy.

This is especially true for properties in areas with declining prices. If you know you are going to get a higher price for your home this month than you will next month, in which month do you want to sell?

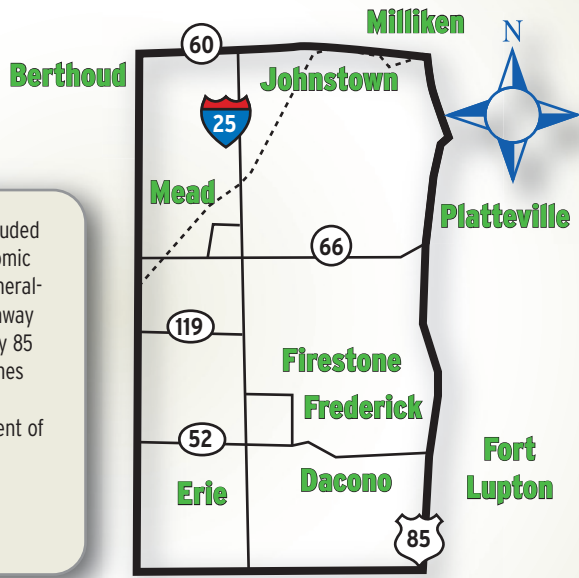
Buyers should take a lesson from this, too: the best homes at the most attractive prices may not be available next week. Of course, there is no need to hurry to buy a home one does not like, but for “the one,” buyers should not delay.

Eric Kronwall is a residential broker with Re/Max Advanced Inc. in Fort Collins.

Initiative boundaries

The area of Weld County included in the Southwest Weld Economic Development Initiative is generally bounded by Colorado Highway 60 on the north, U.S. Highway 85 on the east and by county lines on the west and south. This encompasses about 20 percent of the county's population.

SOURCE: UPSTATE COLORADO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Initiative participants

- Town of Berthoud
- City of Dacono
- Town of Firestone
- Town of Frederick

- Town of Mead
- Town of Platteville
- Fort Lupton Chamber of Commerce
- City of Brighton
- Town of Erie

- City of Fort Lupton
- Town of Johnstown
- Town of Milliken
- Carbon Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Weld County

SW WELD, from 3A

struction in Brighton are certainly examples of primary jobs, but \$10- to-\$12-per-hour call center jobs also fall into that category.

"It's a job or an employer that manufactures a product or provides a service and the money gets returned to the community," he said.

The initiative also aims to retain existing companies and encourage their expansion.

One of the initiative's key goals is to increase the number of primary jobs in southwest Weld County by 1,750 in the next five years. Other goals include working with local community colleges to develop curriculum that meets employer needs and creating a marketing plan that highlights the southwest region's strengths to existing and prospective employers.

Burkhardt said no money has yet been sought from member communities and entities to advance the initiative. "All of these are participating (entities) in Upstate Colorado," he said. "If there are significant cost factors, we'll address those independently."

More on the map

Wade Carlson, mayor of Dacono, said he's pleased to see the southwest Weld region taking a more cohesive stance toward economic development. "I've long advocated the significance of the

southwest Weld communities, and the initiative is highlighting it through the umbrella of Upstate Colorado," he said. "This puts us more on the map."

Carlson said working together makes sense. "Our objective is not just for Dacono," he said. "I'm a regionalist and I believe we're all in this together. Our objective is to make this an area where people can live and play and work."

John Dent, president of the Fort Lupton Development Commission, said the effort gives the southwest region a heightened exposure for potential employers.

"We think southwest Weld really has some characteristics that are unique to the southern part of the county," he said. "Hopefully, working together with other communities we can attract primary employers. When you pool resources, you're more able to make the kind of effort to provide the kind of information primary employers are interested in."

Dent said he thinks the region's leaders are united in seeing good employers come to the region rather than to a particular town or city. "We acknowledge and understand that when a primary employer chooses a location, those employees aren't necessarily going to live in that community," he said.

Dent said he's happy to see a level of cooperation developing among the area's cities and towns that's "much more than has existed in the past."

"We've been very pleased with the cooperation we've seen from the communities," he added. "So far, so good."

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INNOVATION

Innovative financing brings new home for RMII

With city's support, LEED building set to go up in Fort Collins

By Jessica Centers
news@ncbr.com

FORT COLLINS — Thanks to an initial — and unanimous — go ahead from the Fort Collins City Council on May 12, the home of the Rocky Mountain Innovation Initiative will get a significant upgrade next year. RMII will be tripling its space when it moves into a new four-story, LEED Gold-certified, 31,000-square-foot building on Vine Drive east of College Avenue.

This building, designed to foster innovation, is being made possible through innovative financial support from the city.

“This is a huge milestone for our many innovative entrepreneurs in the region,” RMII Executive Director Mark Forsyth said. “We also intend to make this a big win for the community by helping jumpstart the economy and spur redevelopment of the North College area.”

Josh Birks, Fort Collins Economic

Advisor, explained the unique — and complex — financing package the city came up with to support the building.

The \$7.1 million project includes \$2.8 million in tax increment financing from the city's Urban Renewal Authority and \$1.8 million from the state-supported New Markets Tax Credits. That means the long-term debt to the RMII for its \$7.1 million building is only about \$2.5 million, according to Birks.

“It's a great financing solution for them,” he said. “The less money they owe, the lower they can keep lease rates, and the whole goal is to provide below-market-rate space for startup companies to move from idea to proof-of-concept to production, and then graduate out once their business plan has reached maturity and they've secured financing.”

The URA financing comes from the building's property taxes; that \$2.8-million portion — about 65 percent of the tax revenue the building is expected to generate over the life of the URA — will be reinvested into the building instead of being paid to the city.

The unique part of the package is the New Markets Tax Credits. Birks said the credits work just like low-income or historic-preservation tax credits, but are meant to incentivize economic development in distressed areas. The city applied



Courtesy Preview Architecture + Planning

INSPIRED INNOVATION — The new Rocky Mountain Innovation Initiative incubator facility will break ground this fall, thanks in part to some creative financing options. The facility will offer below-market rates to start-up companies.

for and received a \$7.1 million allocation from the Colorado Housing and Finance Authority, which works out to about \$1.8 million in equity.

“In this case the allocation is going to stay with the project as equity, so the bot-

tom line is it's like we're having an equity partner investing to the tune of \$1.8 million and their only expectation for return is the tax benefit,” Birks said. “I hate to say free money, but it's pretty close.”

See RMII, 30A

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Project management: a philosophical approach

Open a 'beginner's mind' to innovative business solutions

"Beginner's mind" is a term in Zen philosophy. Compared to the mind of an expert, the mind of a beginner displays openness, eagerness and a lack of preconceptions; from a Zen perspective, all very good things. On our first day of swimming lessons, for instance, we are open to practicing and learning new skills. We know that we have much to learn, and it is important to pay attention to the teachers.



PRACTICING INNOVATION
Shirley Esterly

Not so with experts. As Shunryu Suzuki puts it in Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind, "In the beginner's mind there are many possibilities; in the expert's mind there are few." Limiting your possibilities is, well, limiting.

In a time when learning new skills, finding new ways to succeed and transforming our organizations is at the top of everyone's agenda, the path of the beginner is worth following. Considering all possibilities with the openness of a beginner will move us beyond problem

solving to creating solutions we may never have thought of before.

One of our most familiar business tools for solution development — one we tend to approach with an "expert" mind — is project management.

Project management is an invaluable tool in the work world. A good project plan is the difference between customer satisfaction and disappointment. It is a living, constantly changing process that facilitates learning. Most visions, especially innovative ones, will not come to life if not implemented through a formal project plan.

Start with vision

I recently experienced my own crisis of "expert" thinking. A new component of my business required compilation of data, management of databases and creation of graphic representations of the data — a departure from my usual facilitation, writing and process analysis. The data-driven tasks began piling up. I became frustrated and did not have confidence in the results I was producing.

Then a wise colleague asked me, "Are you practicing what you preach?"

It immediately became clear that I had not done the proper analysis of the process, developed tools, and executed a project plan for this component of the work as a beginner would. Upon completion of the process, I realized that my "expert" approach had produced inefficiencies, redundancies and unclear expectations.

Here are the tasks to begin basic project management:

1. Define the vision.
2. List the tasks.
3. Determine if any of the tasks are dependent upon each other, meaning they must be completed in a defined order.
4. Assign resources to complete each task.
5. Determine the time frame for completing each task.

Voila, you have a project plan!

There may be those "experts" who say, "Been there and done that. Project management is too time-consuming, requires complicated software, and is beyond the scope of my project."

Not so fast with the myths and judgments, expert! There are no projects too small to take a project management approach. Technology is an important leverage point, but project plans can also be created with Word documents, Excel spreadsheets and other basic tools.

Simple solutions yield results

Some organizations must build the principles of project management into everything they do, though even small tasks and activities can use simple project management solutions to yield optimal results.

"Technology fills a very important role, but it was only a year ago that we started using special software designed for our industry," said Ryan Keiffer, CEO of A-Train Marketing Communications. "Project management is critical for success, but it can be done simply and

effectively without fancy tools."

The value of using even the most primitive project management approach yields wide-ranging benefits for the client, the team and the system:

- System-wide collaboration including stakeholders to create and evaluate the plan provides clarity, highlights unknowns and gives a realistic view of the outcomes.

- Everyone on the team will have the opportunity to learn and grow.

- Project management discipline contributes to positive organizational change.

In my experience, the process of project management is more important than the documentation of the plan. Taking the time to collaboratively analyze a vision, prepare project plans and track progress are 21st-century leadership skills. The use of a project management discipline produces accountability, clarity of purpose and an ability to make realistic commitments.

Think of a challenging situation in your organization. Train your mind to view it as a beginner and see what possibilities arise. There are times for expertise, and there are times to be open to these new possibilities.

Shirley Esterly is a master facilitator who assists her clients to explore opportunities for innovation, strengthen collaboration and build sustainable practices. Her company, QuantumWest, is based in Greeley and she can be reached at sae@quantumwest.com.



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RANK	COMPANY ADDRESS PHONE/FAX	NO. WEB DEVELOPERS EMPLOYEES 2009 NO. OF WEB SITES DESIGNED 2008	REVENUES FROM WEB DESIGN 2008 TOTAL REVENUES 2008	INDUSTRIES SERVED	E-MAIL WEB SITE	PERSON IN CHARGE TITLE YEAR FOUNDED
1	DAGAMA WEB STUDIO INC. 7110 W. 12th St. Greeley, CO 80634 970-378-7822/970-378-7822	9 9 42	\$298,000 \$305,000	All	lori@dagamawebstudio.com www.dagamawebstudio.com	Lori Gama CEO, Owner and President 1997
2	ROCKET JONES INTERACTIVE 204 Walnut St. Fort Collins, CO 80524 970-428-5790/866-746-0052	7 11 N/A	\$434,650 \$455,000	Custom web development, application programming for marketing agencies, health care, retail, construction, real-estate, governmental agencies, non-profits.	jeff@rocketjones.com www.rocketjones.com	Jeff Bristol Principal 2000
3	SQUAREI TECHNOLOGIES INC. 1315 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525 970-377-0077/970-377-8488	6 8 6	\$542,000 \$668,870	Web application development, higher education, government, general business.	info@squarei.com www.squarei.com	Kent Bejcek CEO and President 1996
4	CROWN POINT SOLUTIONS P.O. Box 270966 Fort Collins, CO 80525 970-221-0082/N/A	6 6 12	N/A N/A	Travel, tourism, real estate, construction, retail, restaurants, professional services, health care.	mbren@crownpointsolutions.com www.crownpointsolutions.com	Michael S. Bren President 2003
5	BURNS MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS INC. 4848 Thompson Parkway Johnstown, CO 80534 970-203-9656/970-203-9657	5 28 61	\$614,000 \$4,100,000	Advertising, Web design, public relations, branding, social media, technology, real estate and development, manufacturing, bioscience, financial services, energy, health care.	lauries@burnsmarketing.com www.burnsmarketing.com	Laurie Steele; Mike Burns Vice President; Founder 1972
6	INFORMATION POINT TECHNOLOGIES 135 W. Swallow Road, Bldg. A Fort Collins, CO 80525 970-266-0703/970-266-0704	5 9 40	N/A N/A	Construction, retail, health care, technology, real estate, manufacturing.	pete@ipoint-tech.com www.ipoint-tech.com	Peter Fardal Director of marketing 2002
7	WEB YOUR BUSINESS INC. 1714 Topaz Drive, Suite 145 Loveland, CO 80537 970-593-6260/970-593-6257	5 (1) 7 N/A	N/A N/A	N/A	info@webyourbusiness.com www.webyourbusiness.com	Dianne Stayton CEO 1998
8	ADVANCED MEDIA SERVICES INC. 155 W. Harvard St., Suite 301 Fort Collins, CO 80525 970-282-9502/970-282-9728	5 N/A N/A	N/A N/A	Technology, bioscience, medical, construction, engineering, manufacturing, government, banking, agriculture.	info@advmediaservices.com www.advmediaservices.com	Chris Bell; Hank Curtis President; Sales director 1995
9	LIGHTSOURCE CREATIVE COMMUNICATIONS 121 W. La Porte St. Fort Collins, CO 80524 970-224-2806/970-224-2814	4 11 9	N/A \$1,500,000	Many, including high-tech.	Lisa@LightsourceCreative.com www.LightsourceCreative.com	Lisa Malmquist; Gordon MacKinney Owners 1996
10	HUEBNERPETERSEN MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS 2725 Rocky Mountain Ave., Suite 350 Loveland, CO 80538 970-663-9344/970-663-6585	4 10 N/A	N/A N/A	OEMs and their dealer/distribution networks	info@huebnerpetersen.com www.huebnerpetersen.com	Jim Huebner President 1989

N/A-Not Available
Region surveyed includes Larimer and Weld counties and Brighton
(1) 3 in house, 2 outsourced

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1	TELVENT (I) 4701 Royal Vista Circle Fort Collins, CO 80528 970-223-1888/970-223-5577	170 150	N/A \$21,100,000	ArcFM, ArcFM Viewer, Designer, Responder, Conduit Manager, Fiber Manager, and Network Adapter.	Providing software solutions to energy and water/wastewater utilities and municipalities around the world.	info@miner.com www.telvent.com	Andy Bennett President 1946
2	TECHNIGRAPHICS SYSTEMS INC. 3351 Eastbrook Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525 970-224-4996/970-224-3001	170 120	N/A N/A	N/A	Visual information systems, database development, custom software, digital mapping and GIS.	N/A www.tgstech.com	Stefanie Walts Director of HR and Vice President 1981
3	INTEGWARE INC. 1612 Specht Point Drive, Suite 101 Fort Collins, CO 80525-4300 970-282-0400/970-282-0500	106 80	\$9,446,608 \$5,198,860	Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) services and solution provider for Life Sciences and Consumer Packaged Goods industries.	PLM implementation services and ENOVIA Life Science Accelerators.	chris.kay@integware.com www.integware.com	Chris Kay CEO and President 1992
4	COLORADO CUSTOMWARE INC. 1109 Oak Park Drive, Suite 100 Fort Collins, CO 80525 970-212-4001/970-223-4204	82 61	\$7,458,357 \$5,795,964	RecordWare, RealWare, GeoWare, FieldWare, ScheduleWare and CollectWare.	Assessment and tax collection software for state and local government.	info@cci.ws www.coloradocustomware.com	Lori Schlotter CEO, Owner and President 1989
5	NEW CENTURY SOFTWARE 2627 Redwing Road, Suite 100 Fort Collins, CO 80526 970-267-2000/970-206-0157	52 42	N/A N/A	Application suite for oil & gas industry including geospatial (GIS), Web applications, mobile and desktop.	Provide GIS applications, mapping services, integrity management and consulting in the oil and gas pipeline industry, including gas and liquids transmission, gathering, and offshore.	ron.brush@newcenturysoftware.com www.newcenturysoftware.com	Ron Brush President 1994
6	ACCOUNTING SYSTEMS INC. - ASI 324 Remington St. Fort Collins, CO 80524 970-419-3210/970-416-0732	20 17	\$3,009,008 \$3,005,460	Sage software that includes, SYSPRO, accounting & business management software, MAS 500 and MAS 90, and Cougar Mountain software.	Consulting, customizing, implementing, training and ongoing service of third-party software systems to enhance clients' accounting and business technology and overall profitability.	bredt@ASIsucceed.com www.ASIsucceed.com	Bredt P. Eggleston President 1991
7	VISTA SOLUTIONS CORP. 2619 Midpoint Drive, Suite F Fort Collins, CO 80525 970-212-2940/970-212-2950	16 15	\$6,046,888 \$7,341,086	Microsoft, HP, IBM.	Full-service IT partner, offering business-class technology; unique and customized hardware, software, and services.	info@vistasolutions.net www.vistasolutions.net	Linda Vomaske Owner 1992
8	CARTOPAC FIELD SOLUTIONS 736 Whalers Way, Building F Fort Collins, CO 80525-4888 970-493-9500/970-482-1485	13 N/A	N/A N/A	Custom mobile field data collection solutions.	Specializes in mobile mapping technology, field data collection, and integration of GIS data into proprietary software solutions.	info@spatialdatatech.com www.CartoPac.com	Glenn Vlass President 1998
9	ECLIPSE SOFTWARE SYSTEMS INC. 8201 W. 20th St. Greeley, CO 80634 970-353-6313/970-353-6252	11 12	N/A N/A	RapidLog and RapidLog Pro, Eclipse Logbook, Route Recorder	High-speed log auditing software for trucking/transportation fleet operations; logbook software for the individual driver to record his daily logs; GPS system to track personal and/or business mileages.	sales@rapidlog.com www.rapidlog.com; www.logbook.com; www.routerrecorder.com	Larry Steinbecker President 1989
10	SQUAREI TECHNOLOGIES INC. 1315 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525 970-377-0077/970-377-8488	8 7	\$668,870 \$540,000	Custom software and Internet applications.	Web application development, software development, systems integration, e-commerce, .NET Microsoft certified developers, C++, SQL Server database design, custom hosting services and graphic design.	info@squarei.com www.squarei.com	Kent Bejcek CEO and President 1996

N/A-Not Available
Region surveyed includes Larimer and Weld counties and Brighton (I) Formerly Telvent Miner & Miner

Based upon responses to Business Report survey researched by Michael D. Wailes To be considered for future lists, e-mail research@ncbr.com

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NCMC Breast Center

North Colorado Medical Center operates a full service Breast Center located at Summit View Medical Commons in west Greeley. The Breast Center works collaboratively with the NCMC Cancer Institute to provide state-of-the-art screening, diagnosis and treatment, supportive care services, and a full continuum of specialized patient care services.

Each year, thousands of women rely on the Breast Center for their annual screening mammograms, diagnostic breast exams and bone-density studies. The NCMC Breast Center is the first health care provider in northern Colorado to offer the latest in breast health technology: full-field digital mammography. With this state-of-the-art innovation, women can now benefit from less radiation exposure, shorter exam times and enhanced image clarity resulting in up to 28 percent more breast cancer detection.

The Golf Tournament will provide additional funds for the expansion of the Breast Center and assistance to those in need of services who have limited resources.



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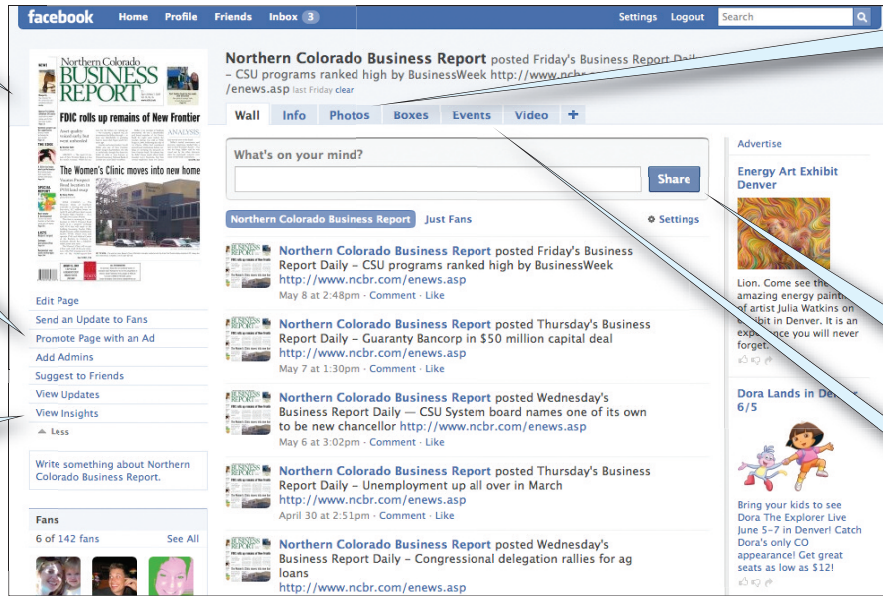
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For a small fee (as little as \$1 per day), Facebook will publish ads to promote your company's page or event. The internal ad creation program allows the user to specifically target certain demographic groups by age, location, education level, etc.

Facebook provides statistics on the activity on your page, post quality and the demographic and geographic breakdown of your fans.

Facebook creates a social/viral communications environment, since every action taken is broadcast to other users. Businesses can take advantage by increasing brand awareness and reach; targeting new audiences; test marketing new ideas and products and building relationships with and among customers. The Facebook audience is nearing 200 million. According to a Nielsen study, users spent about 20.5 billion minutes on the site in 2008.

SOURCE: BURNS MARKETING, BUSINESS REPORT RESEARCH



You can upload photos of up to five megabytes and videos of up to 1,024 megabytes and less than 20 minutes to promote products, events or to give fans a glimpse of the company culture with some "behind the scenes" shots. You can even record video directly into Facebook with a Web cam.

Provide opportunities for discussion, share content and ask questions with the Facebook status update.

Invite friends and fans to company events, send out updates and track RSVP's. Discussions can be hosted here, too.

MEDIA, from 1A

Marketing different game

While the networking aspect of social media might be the same, marketing is a whole new game.

"It's such a different concept than traditional marketing," said Viveka von Rosen, self-proclaimed LinkedIn Expert.

She feels that the people who do not find success in social media are those who are pushing rather than interacting. Social media marketing needs a much more targeted, soft touch rather than a shotgun approach to finding customers. Von Rosen feels that an authentic voice is a must, since using social media is about building trust and relationships.

There is no hard and fast rule on the social media "face" for a business — only Infomedia has Joel Comm, for example — but the voice must be personal.

There also isn't a hard and fast rule on which social media network is the best for business. For Comm, Twitter is the best for its immediacy. However, Burge feels LinkedIn is an invaluable business tool for professional connections.

Despite being the LinkedIn expert, von Rosen agrees with Comm.

"The one with the most potential for business is probably Twitter," she said.

For one, she says, it's quicker and easier to learn. Von Rosen can get a client up to speed on Twitter in about three hours, versus six to 10 hours for LinkedIn.

But the learning curve is not an excuse to ignore any of the other tools.

"LinkedIn is an absolutely necessary business tool," she said, adding that Facebook probably offers the most comprehensive toolset.

Look at all the channels

Longtime professional marketing companies are paying close attention to all of the social media sites.

"We recommend that everybody should be taking a look at the channels," said Robert Bean, the director of interactive media for Burns Marketing Communications. "It's the best kind of direct marketing."

Burns has developed social media campaigns for Epsilon Sigma Alpha International, WaterPik and Converge, focusing almost exclusively on Facebook.

"This media is highly measurable," Bean said.

Burns developed a Facebook page for an annual IT service management expo. The call-to-action was for potential speakers to submit proposals. The event

organizers received about 38 percent more submissions than in any other previous year.

"We did nothing differently, other than market to Facebook," Bean said.

While Burns has been very active in Facebook, Bean recommends that clients use LinkedIn as well. LinkedIn provides a networking and brand-building outlet, while Burns has used Facebook more for campaigns.

"We stay very tactical," Bean explained. "We haven't found a reason (for our clients) to be on Twitter yet."

Noise level rises

Even the champions of Twitter will concede there is an issue — as the user becomes more adept at using and interacting with that it quickly becomes difficult to manage, due to the volume of

conversations occurring. According to Yann Ropars, a principal at Extanz Social Media Marketing, "If you're not adding content and value, then what's the point? It's just noise."

Because of the rising level of activity, it is important to offer fresh content as part of the interaction. While that can be time-consuming, it can offer a high return.

Ropars points out that social media networks offer in-bound marketing opportunities and chances for customer research. He suggests that businesses identify keywords that could define their target customers and markets. Using those keywords in search.twitter.com — or an aggregator application (see Twitter tools breakout) will allow firms to find the people discussing topics related to their businesses.

He also adds that it is more important to listen than to speak, to see what potential customers are interested in rather than telling them what they should be interested in.

"It's about your customer; it's not about you," he said. "It's not cold; it's warm — your online shaking of hands."

Getting involved in the ever-evolving world of social media can be daunting. Ropars recommends meeting with a trusted adviser to develop a plan because doing the wrong things can be detrimental. Traditional tactics, such as pushing out information, can get a business painted as a spammer in the social media world. But Ropars said that fear is no excuse.

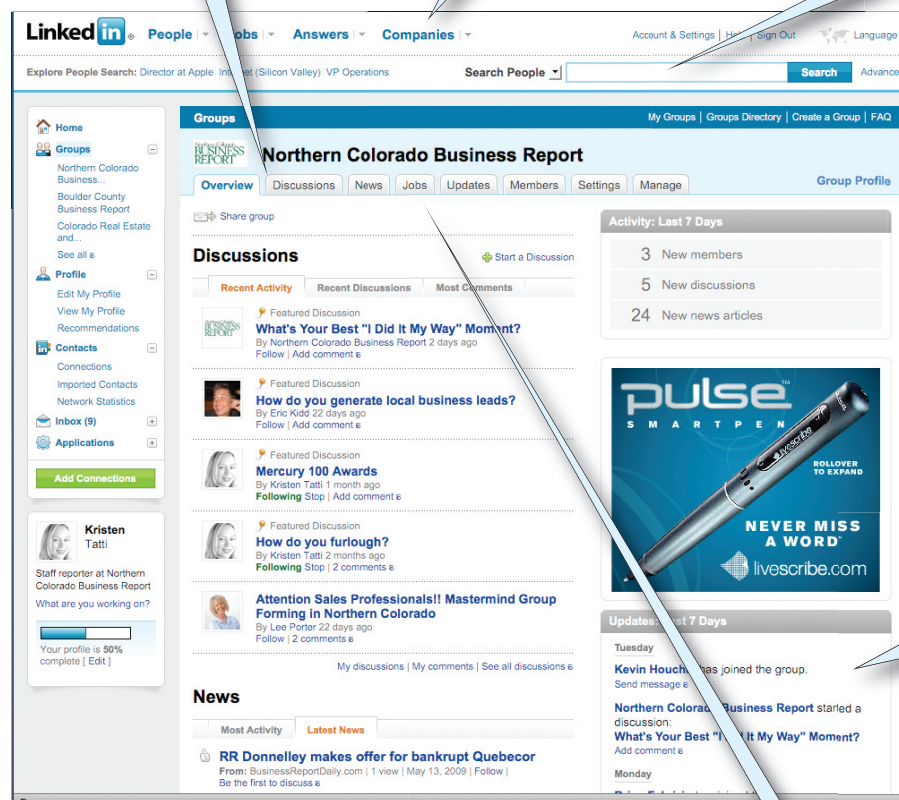
"Being afraid will not solve the issue," he said. "It's like refusing to have a Web site 10 years ago."

GET LINKEDIN

Interact with customers and employees by starting a discussion.

In addition to creating a "Group" page for your business, you can and should create a company profile. Use keywords that potential clients might use when looking for your services.

Search for people, groups and companies by name or search for keywords.



Fill out everything in your group profile and sprinkle it with key terms. How else will clients and potential customers find you?

Get a play-by-play of what your group members are up to. You might find some valuable connections, be aware of job changes and discussion activity.

Post open positions at your company, but don't forget that LinkedIn is a great active recruiting tool.

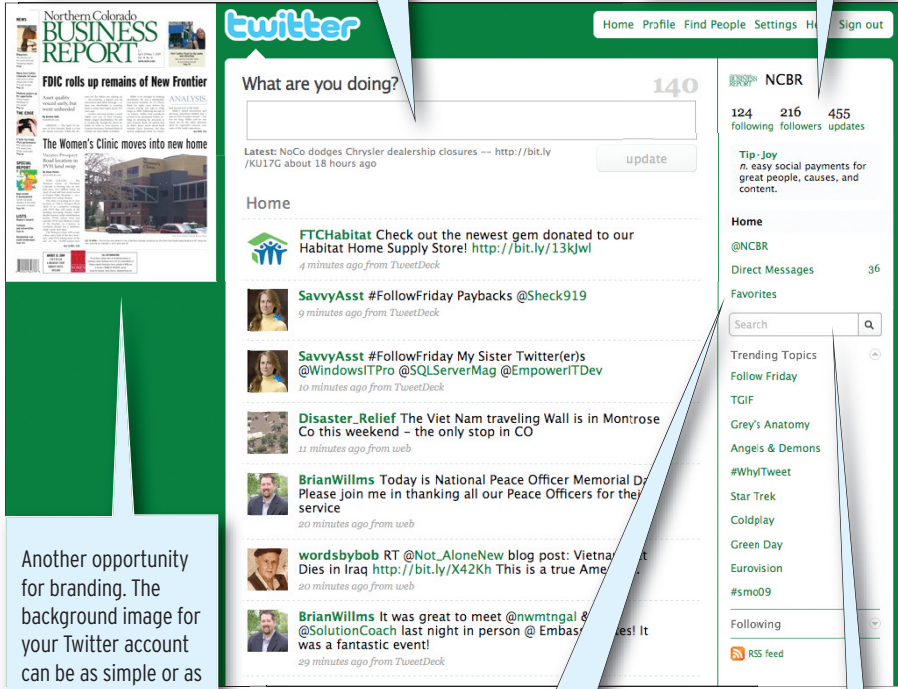
LinkedIn is a business-oriented networking site and has worked hard to remain so. The site has more than 36 million users around the world and is adding new professionals at a rate of about one per second. Businesses can create a group page to host discussions, job postings, news items, etc. Individual employees can create their own profiles and interact with other groups and professions.

SOURCE: BURNS MARKETING

ALL A-TWITTER

The up-to 140 character status update is called a tweet. Here you can offer links. Direct messages to a particular Twitter account can be made by starting the message with DM @username. Retweets, or sharing someone else's tweet, is accomplished with the RT tag.

In Twitter, you "follow" people whose tweets will update on your page. Conversely, your tweets show up on your followers' pages.



Another opportunity for branding. The background image for your Twitter account can be as simple or as complex as you want it - just keep it consistent to how your business is branded elsewhere.

You can add certain tweets to your favorites list where they will always be accessible and relatively easy to find. You can also view the favorite tweets of other Twitter patrons.

search.twitter.com could be one of the most powerful tools on the site - it allows you to search discussions. Using the search function, you can monitor your brand, that of your competitors or find target followers.

Microblogging service Twitter grew at a rate of 752 percent during 2008, reaching 4.43 million users by the end of the year. The site offers brief, live communication (140-character messages called tweets) among a selected group (users choose who they want to "follow"). Businesses can create a profile to follow and be followed, monitor their brand and products, share information and more.

SOURCE: BURNS MARKETING, BUSINESS REPORT RESEARCH

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Bills about business

Gov. Bill Ritter has until June 5 to sign or veto bills approved by the Colorado General Assembly in its 2009 session. Bills of particular interest to the business community include:

- HB1001 Provides tax credit for job creation
- HB1105 Provides investment tax credit for angel investors in new startups
- SB85 Phases out business personal property tax
- SB234 Expands enterprise zones in state
- HB1057 Provides up to 18 hours of parental leave to attend parent-teacher conferences
- HB1170 Provides unemployment insurance for locked-out employees
- SB178 Allows workers temporarily laid off to receive unemployment
- SB180 Allows police and firefighters to form unions to take part in collective bargaining
- SB243 Extends payment schedule for services delivered after settlement of workers' compensation claim
- SB247 Expands unemployment insurance coverage under federal stimulus funding
- SB281 Creates interim committee to study Pinnacle Assurance
- HB1288 Creates online searchable database of state revenue and spending
- SB212 Reduces amount vendors may keep of state sales taxes to offset the cost of collection
- SB228 Repeals 6 percent annual cap on state spending growth
- SB108 FASTER bill; raises transportation funds through vehicle fees
- HB1293 Health Care Affordability Act; adds hospital provider fee to receive matching funds from federal government

SOURCE: BUSINESS REPORT RESEARCH

LEGISLATURE, from 1A

supported, such as HB1105 sponsored by John Kefalas, D-Fort Collins, which provides tax credits to angel investors who help fund startup companies.

"We were the leading force behind HB1105, which will allow a number of companies requiring some additional capital to get that and start creating jobs," she said.



KEFALAS

Kefalas, for his part, is willing to spread the credit to both sides of the aisle. "I do believe a strong bipartisan focus of the legislature was to create jobs," he said.

But Solin said NCLA was disappointed in a number of bills that the majority was able to pass over near-unanimous Republican opposition in many cases, including the Parental Leave Bill sponsored by Bob Bacon, D-Fort Collins, and SB228, which removed the 6 percent cap on state spending growth, co-sponsored by Rep. Don Marostica, R-Loveland.

Marostica said removing the cap was "just the first tug on the Gordian knot we have in Colorado," referring to spending constraints on the state that are compounded in poor revenue years.

Marostica, who took heavy criticism from his Republican colleagues for breaking ranks and sponsoring the bill, said the state has to make some tough choices soon to cope with its spending limits and another \$400 million-plus projected shortfall in 2010.

"There's no other way to do it but to raise revenue," he said. "It's a drastic situation."

Negative bills die

Solin said NCLA was happy to see several bills die that she said would have had a negative impact on business, including HB1208 — which would have required contractors to pay federal prevailing wages on public works projects — and HB273, which would have seized assets from Pinnacle Assurance to offset cuts in higher education.

"We understood what the Joint budget Committee was trying to achieve in getting funding to higher education," she said. "We just felt it would have been setting a terrible precedent."

Rep. Randy Fischer, D-Fort Collins, said he was glad the legislature was eventually able to find a way to avoid devastating cuts to higher education in a terrible revenue year.

"In my district, higher education is definitely the biggest employer and my job is taking care of it — that's Job 1," he said.

Fischer said one of the most important bills to come out of the session for business was the so-called FASTER measure, which proposes to raise \$200 million annually for transportation through vehicle fees.

"I would say the FASTER bill, SB108, was one of the top bills for business because it addresses one of the issues business has always been interested in, and that's transportation infrastructure," he said.

All in all, Fischer said he's proud of the achievements of the 2009 session. "Given the horrendous budget situation, I think we did a good job with very little financial resources to back us up."

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FISCHER

ROCKY, from 3A

In Rocky's case, the school had leadership from students and staff as well as the principal. The custodial staff agreed to only use the lights necessary while cleaning the school.

Lopez had a lot of help from environmental science teacher Dave Schwartz. Schwartz kept in close contact with the district's operations team to get updates on energy usage, which he then converted to quantifiable terms — trees saved, carbon footprint reduced, and other metrics.

"At Rocky, people talked about having a feeling of efficacy," Cross said. At the same time, Poudre staff and students described the opposite feeling — that their individual efforts would not amount to much.

The feeling of efficacy adds to the commitment to change and is caused by communication. Schwartz' ability to relate energy savings back to the school in tangible terms was very important. By communicating throughout the school that energy efficiency is important and individual efforts are effective, students and staff really started to care about the effort.

"Intention is the one of the most important predictors of behavior," Cross said.

But caring about conservation means little without the intent to actually do so. Cross pointed out that individuals are often influenced to adopt the intentions of an organization they belong to, even if it is not a part of their individual values. She recalls speaking with some Rocky teachers who said they don't conserve energy at home but do at school because that is part of the culture there.

Commitment to a goal

In order to set an intention, an organization must have charismatic leadership, not necessarily at the top, but throughout the group. Because the leader has a goal, and the group cares about the leader, the group adopts the goal. "You can't come in and mandate that people make behavior changes," Cross said.

Also adding to the commitment at Rocky was competition. The natural competition built into the public school system lends itself greatly to this model. It speaks to the culture of the group and to the commitment to change.

The district's operations team has been compiling data for each school, but released the statistics in a single document. Since schools have been receiving data for all facilities it became a part of an energy-savings rivalry.

Franzen said the results of the case study could have wide-ranging implications.

"My interest was in seeing if there was a way we could replicate this to share with other schools in the district and other districts," Franzen said.

Replication is part of what he is doing now. Franzen retired from Poudre School District this year and has started a consulting firm, Sage2 Associates LLC. He is contracting with the Governor's Energy Office to identify energy-efficiency opportunities for school districts throughout the state.

He said that in addition to operations-level changes, the behavior change element is crucial, especially since many small districts do not have the resources to implement sweeping facility changes.

"It was all about changing behavior rather than building a \$30 million state-of-the-art school," he said. "Not everyone can have a LEED-certified building."

STAFFING, from 4A

new employable clients but no new employer clients in the aftermath of the closures. The change in competition isn't having much impact for Labor Ready, according to Hill, who feels that the economy is actually helping her firm.

"We have found that this economy is a good one for us," she said.

Labor Ready focuses mainly on blue-collar staffing in addition to payroll services, recruiting and temporary staffing. In Northern Colorado, the agency has traditionally placed workers into the manufacturing, warehousing and construction sectors but is also seeing strength in hospitality and catering. Hill has been seeing signs that some of the hard hit sectors are starting to hire again.

"Construction, especially for Loveland, has been picking up," she said.

Quality of workforce up

More than industry employment trends, Hill is seeing overarching trends in makeup of the staffing pool and the services needed by employers.

"The amount and quality of our workforce has gone way up," she said.

With so many out of work, filling positions can become a daunting task. Hill said that one client posted an open position on Craigslist and within 24 hours had received around 300 applications. Labor Ready is offering screening help to narrow the massive application pool down to a more manageable size.

Another service Labor Ready is seeing more of now is assistance with payroll and temporary staffing for companies in mass-layoff mode. Hill explained

that often a business will need to bring an employee back for a short amount of time, perhaps to transition a project. Labor Ready will handle payroll and benefits for the duration of employment.

Simpson said Select Staffing is seeing some market trends — down in some sectors but up in others. Weststaff had done a lot of light manufacturing and government placement, but with manufacturing still hemorrhaging jobs and governments under tight budgetary controls, the volume is shifting elsewhere. Now the firm is seeing more from clinical and non-clinical health-care placement.

"The staffing industry was certainly one of the first hit by the economy," Simpson said, adding that she is optimistic about the near future. "First in, first out."

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COMMENTARY

EDITORIAL

Marostica took courageous lonely stand on SB 228

Rep. Don Marostica, R-Loveland, freely admits the just-ended legislative session was "very tough" on him. The developer and two-term legislator was at the forefront of several controversial bills and more than once on the wrong side of his party.

His support of an unsuccessful attempt to pull surplus funds from Pinnacle Assurance to help prevent cuts to higher education was definitely not appreciated by his Republican colleagues.

"I caught a lot of arrows in the back for that," he said.

But it was Marostica's House sponsorship of Senate Bill 228 that engendered the most wrath from fellow GOP legislators. The bill, which eventually passed after a marathon 10-hour Republican filibuster in the Senate, repealed the 1992 Arveschoug-Bird budget cap. It had held annual general fund spending increases at 6 percent and required any additional revenues collected to be spent only on transportation and capital construction projects.

Republicans claimed removing the cap would open the floodgates of spending and result in tax increases. But Marostica and most Democrats maintained it would only allow lawmakers more flexibility in deciding how to allocate revenue in the state's shrinking budget.

While the cap ensured general fund spending would not increase by more than 6 percent over the previous year, it also had the effect of "ratcheting down" general fund spending, especially during and after poor revenue years.

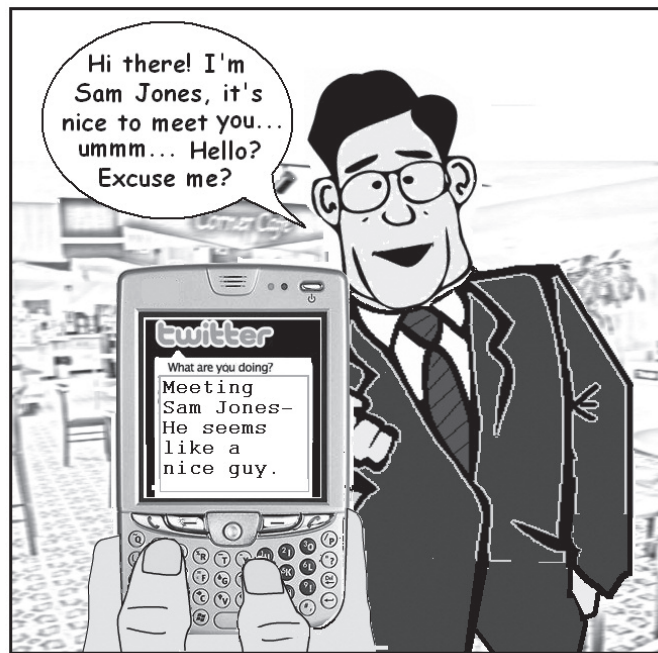
Marostica argued that not repealing Arveschoug-Bird would haunt Colorado as it tries to climb out of the recession by making deep budget cuts.

"Unless we pass SB 228, those budget cuts will effectively be made permanent," he said before the bill's final party-line vote. "When every other state will be able to restore funding for key job-creating priorities like education and higher education, Colorado will be handcuffed and unable to make a quick and strong recovery from the recession."

Will the repeal of Arveschoug-Bird put Colorado on more equal footing with other states when it comes to restoring recession-driven cuts from higher education and other programs? Only time will tell.

But the *Business Report* applauds Marostica for taking a lonely and courageous stand when all of his fellow Republicans refused to even consider removing the 17-year-old spending cap in light of starkly different economic times.

And with an expected budget shortfall next year of \$400 million or more and TABOR and other constraints still tying its hands, the state needs all the flexibility it can get.



Uranium mining not over, but new data available

Hydrologist B.K. Darling, Ph.D., is the author of a comprehensive report of 27 in-situ leach uranium mines in Texas. He was commissioned by the Houston law firm of Blackburn & Carter to compile a report on the condition of these mines and their impact on ground water quality. Five of the mines in this report are mines that Powertech Uranium Corp. identifies on their Web site as ISL uranium mines that have successfully restored ground water.



GUEST COLUMN
Howard Williams

The Darling report proves that statement is misleading because those mines are as polluted as the other Texas ISL mines. In fact, the report indicates that the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality has on 51 occasions approved mining company requests to lower water quality for the restoration phase of these mining operations.

The federal Environmental Protection Agency standard for water quality as it pertains to uranium is that it not exceed 0.03 parts per million. The TCEQ has allowed mining companies to leave as much as 5 ppm of uranium in the aquifer after mining has been completed. That uranium level is 167 times the EPA standard. That water quality may have satisfied the TCEQ standard, but it does not change the fact that the ground water is no longer safe for household use or for livestock.

Blackburn & Carter is representing local land owners in Goliad County, Texas, in a lawsuit against a mining company for, among other issues, their losses of land

value and future ranching and farming income due to the contamination of their water wells from recent uranium exploration drilling. No matter what the outcome of this and other legal battles, the groundwater will still be contaminated.

The negative economic impact of the proposed ISL mine near Wellington should be reason enough to deny all land-use permits for uranium mining, to say nothing of the potential negative health effects associated with this toxic process.

Up until now, uranium mining has been conducted in very remote places. Proposing an ISL mine 11 miles from Fort Collins, with a population of 130,000, and Windsor, population 15,000, and four miles from Wellington, with a population of 4,500, is unprecedented. Remember, if they are allowed to mine here, they will have set the precedent and could mine anywhere in Colorado, perhaps right next to your expensive subdivision.

The answer to this very real problem is for you to contact your elected representatives. Encourage them to oppose all permits for uranium mining in eastern Colorado, preserve our environment and aquifers, and retain the status of "best place in America to live."

Even the Canadians are placing more and more restrictions on uranium mining and prospecting. For instance, New Brunswick, on July 4, 2008, placed a ban on uranium prospecting and mining in designated watersheds and well fields. They said the residents of that region were entitled to clean drinking water.

The citizens of eastern Colorado are also entitled to clean drinking water. We need to stop in-situ leach mining before it starts.

Howard Williams lives in Weld County. Darling's full report and a summary are available at www.Powertechexposed.com.

Northern Colorado BUSINESS REPORT

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Write the Northern Colorado Business Report to comment on our content or to raise issues of interest to the business community.

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E-mail letters to Kate Hawthorne, khawthorne@ncbr.com or submit comments through our Web site, www.ncbr.com. Snail mail to 141 S. College Ave., Fort Collins, CO 80524.

BLOG COMMENTS

Editor's note: Yes, we have blogs, at www.ncbr.com. Join the conversation.

A leadership challenge

(The Business Route Less Traveled, Carrie Pinsky, April 3, 2009)

Thanks for pointing out this great resource! I will add it to my list of 101+ resources for entrepreneurs. This isn't the first time I've heard about Jim Kouzes from you, so I know it's got to be good stuff! Keep up the good work. You are a difference maker.

Brian Schwartz
Fort Collins

Weld natural gas on downward trend

(NCBR, Nov. 20-Dec. 4, 2008)

As a Paradox basin field geologist, I can assure you that when prices drop, drilling ceases and folks lose jobs! For each rig, approximately 100 really good jobs exist. Take away too many rigs and not only do jobs disappear, but ancillary businesses and industries like car sales, home sales, furniture stores, grocery stores, car washes, real estate, and hundreds of other job-creating businesses also disappear, leaving a financial wasteland it takes decades to recover from. We need to keep the monies from our own oil and gas industry within our borders to build both strategic and financial security.

K. Anderson

Fort Collins doctor launches e-business

(NCBR, May 8-21, 2009)

After a suspended license, a criminal conviction, and two civil judgments against him, all because he feels the rules and laws don't apply to him, hasn't this person done enough damage? It is unfortunate he has chosen to misrepresent the facts on his personal Web site, claiming he was "licensed to write prescription refills." Documents that are available online from the Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies show that his restricted license only permitted him to interview patients (with the presence of a nurse mandatory) and adjust medication levels for patients in clinical trials. He was specifically forbidden from having private patients and writing prescriptions for them.

Doctor D.
Longmont

SB 281 flawed but 'victory' for Pinnacol

(Business Report Daily, May 6, 2009)

While Pinnacol held on to its \$700 million surplus, some 17,000 Colorado children lost access to health clinics from budget cuts required when Pinnacol's lobbying and PR blitz ran over the General Assembly. Beyond (CEO Ken) Ross' moral bankruptcy is the financial one of poor kids getting really sick and ending up in the emergency room on the taxpayers' dollar. Some "victory," Mr. Ross.

C.H. Dockens
Ault

Five NoCo housing markets gained value in 2007-08

(Business Report Daily, May 5, 2009)

Any results for Loveland?

Mary Laing
Loveland

Editor's note: The report from the Everitt Real Estate Center at Colorado State University showed a drop of nearly 2 percent for housing prices in Loveland between 2007 and 2008. For the complete report, contact the center at www.biz.colostate.edu.

Smart grids coming to NoCo

(Business Report Daily, April 9, 2009)

It is one thing for the power company to be able to better monitor the grid, but individual power customers also need to be able to monitor their own personal power usage so they can learn how to reduce it. Google has been working on tools that I would love to see provided to customers in Northern Colorado. Just search for "google powermeter"

Jacob Brunson
Fort Collins

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FURLOUGH, from 11A

ment furloughs to cut costs for the coming year, while the University of Northern Colorado has instituted a salary freeze without layoffs or furloughs.

Furloughs may be a prudent alternative, especially for companies with lean teams or for organizations that want to be ready with a talented workforce when business picks up.

For example, the state of Colorado came close to balancing its 2009 budget in part by asking government employees to take eight days of unpaid leave before the end of the year. General Motors is idling workers at 28 plants across the country until July 13, for a total of 11 weeks. Gannett Co. Inc., the nation's largest newspaper publisher, required most of its 31,000 employees from the executive suite to the loading dock to take a week of unpaid leave during the first quarter of this year, and another week during the second quarter.

Arrow Electronics, a distributor of electronics components and enterprise computing solutions with nearly 13,000 employees worldwide, recently added furloughs to the list of measures it is taking to trim costs. The furloughs are company-wide but implementation varies based on salary level and job classification as well as the specific needs of each department. A significant number of Arrow's U.S. employees will be required to take six to 10 days off over the calendar year. According to Jonathan Lee, senior human resources manager of Arrow's Enterprise Computing Solutions Division in Englewood, "Some reductions in our workforce were necessary but by implementing furloughs we have been able to minimize the impact of layoffs. Other cost-saving measures we have taken include temporarily suspending salary increases, eliminating unnecessary travel and deferring new requests for tuition assistance." Lee attributes employee acceptance of furloughs to the fact that Arrow's leadership has been very transparent in communicating the various steps the company is taking to lower expenses. Employees are given freedom to plan and budget for their time off. "We initially met with some resistance from our people," he admitted. "It is not ideal, but overall, employees understand the business rationale behind the furlough program."

McWhinney in Loveland currently has two associates who have volunteered to take unpaid time off or work fewer hours over the next year. Dave Morante,

VP of People Services at McWhinney, said, "Furloughs are a viable option when an organization needs to save money in the short term but wants to retain talent in the long run."

Share the hardship

In some organizations, furloughs are mandatory and implemented across the board. The goal is to share the hardship to prevent some employees from losing their jobs completely. In other organizations, unpaid leave may be optional or department-specific.

Employees can be required to use accrued paid time off or permitted to save vacation hours for use at another time. In some cases, workers are even given the option of borrowing against and collecting unearned PTO during their leave.

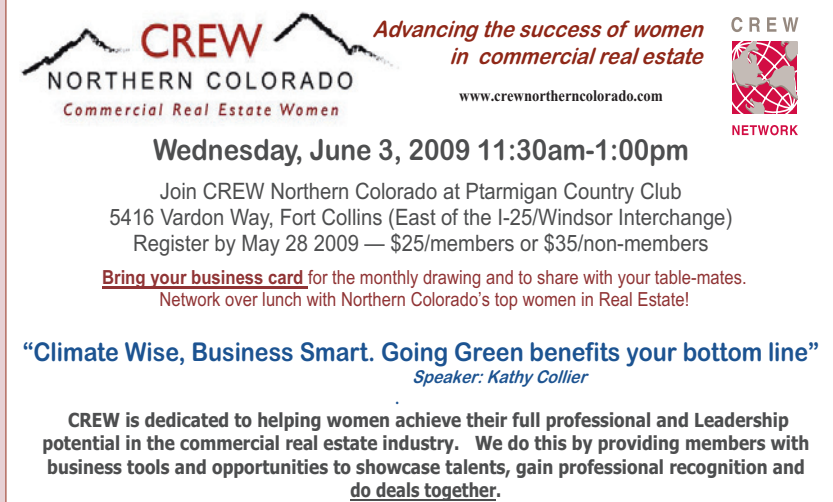
Advanced Energy, headquartered in Fort Collins and operating across North America, Europe and Asia, will enforce company-wide plant closures for 13 weeks over the next year. "The furloughs are designed for everyone," according to CFO Lawrence Firestone. "Some exceptions will be made in certain locations for essential personnel to work during the closures. On a positive note, this tactic keeps more of our workforce employed and with benefits. On the other hand, this is essentially a pay cut for our staff."

By enforcing closures for 13 out of the next 52 weeks, we are able to keep 25 percent of our employees working, whereas the alternative would be to do additional layoffs to achieve the same cost result."

Labor law compliance issues

Companies must plan furloughs carefully to ensure they remain compliant with state and federal wage and hour laws. For example, under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), exempt employees are entitled to receive their full salary for every week in which they perform any work. To avoid issues, furloughs involving exempt employees should be taken in weeklong increments at the beginning of the workweek. Furloughs for non-exempt employees can be less rigid. Non-exempt manufacturing employees may be asked to work four days a week until production needs increase. Organizations should seek legal counsel prior to implementing a furlough program to ensure they are following applicable FLSA guidelines.

Carrie Pinsky also writes the blog, *The Business Routes Less Traveled*, at www.ncbr.com



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RMII, from 18A

Birks knows of only one other time New Markets credits were used in Fort Collins, on the redevelopment of the Northern Hotel almost 20 years ago. "It's a pretty unique solution and it's certainly a financing tool we're interested in pursuing on other projects," he said.

City acting as banker

The city council's action was in support of loaning \$5 million to the URA, which will then be dispersed to the project in two installments. The money will be paid back to the city through RMII and the tax increment financing. "The city is acting as a banker because our investment policy allows us to use our reserves in that way," Birks said. "It does-

n't have any impact on our annual operating reserves."

The URA board agreed to accept the city's loan and lend an initial \$1.1 million to RMII directly for design and development costs. The board will have to meet again in August to take action on the second part of the loan.

"New Markets prefer to act more like a construction loan," Birks explained. "They want the design and site development done before money is disbursed. The (design and development loan) allows us to get that far down the road and then the New Markets structure will be built and put in place."

Groundbreaking is slated for this fall, with occupancy starting in 2010.

The building will include subsidized office space for clean energy, bioscience and technology startup businesses, con-

ference room space, central reception area, bioscience laboratory space, and administrative offices for RMII. In the last two years, RMII has assisted 13 new companies, with nearly 60 full-time employees in its incubation program and more than 50 other companies through its industry cluster initiatives and other programs.

Kelly Peters, RMII's chief operating officer, said all of the incubator's current clients are interested in moving into the space. In the meantime, RMII is also going to open another 6,000-square-foot interim facility in addition to its current 10,000-square-foot of space leased from the city to help accommodate its wait list of startups.

"Just yesterday, I had two clients walk in that may be candidates," she said. "We have a lot of work to do. We have high

standards to get into the incubator, and we need to continue to accept quality startup companies and not just look at filling the building."

"I can tell you I've worked for the city of Greeley and Loveland, and these incubators really put out high-quality entrepreneurs," she said. "Startups continue to grow organically in garages and basements but this helps statistically their chances of survival. (The city council vote) was critical. Now we'll have a state-of-the-art, LEED Gold, beautiful project to catalyze that."

Peters added that she's confident that the city's investment will produce a significant return when client businesses graduate from the program and go on to pay full-market rent in the community and stimulate the local economy as they grow.

PINNACOL, from 2A

"At best, this bill is a witch hunt — an investigation lacking even the hint of a problem in the first place," Harvey said.

Mike Pierce, an agent with LBN Insurance in Estes Park, demonstrated against the Pinnacol bills and said he hopes the Pinnacol study results in few if any changes.



PIERCE

"From an agent's perspective, it went from the worst company we dealt with to by far the best," he said. "If they come in with this committee and throw in a monkey wrench they could destroy what's happened over the last 20 years."

Supporters of Pinnacol note that the company has returned more than \$225 million in dividends to policyholders since 2005.

Ross, who earns \$500,000 a year heading Pinnacol, said the company managed to amass its surplus by "managing its claims very efficiently" and doesn't believe it is overly large.

"The surplus is there to help us return money to our policyholders, reduce rates by 42 percent over the last few years, and I have liabilities that go out 10, 20, even 40 years," he said. "We have to take care of that employee years and years into the future."

How did surplus grow?

Shaffer said he hopes the interim committee study — scheduled to begin in July or August — can answer how the company amassed such a huge surplus and how it should function in the future.

"It's hard to understand," he said. "They either don't pay out on legitimate claims or their premiums are too high or their actuaries are too conservative as to how much they should have on hand."

Shaffer said he doesn't expect the committee will recommend that Pinnacol's assets should be open to general fund use. But he said he hopes questions about the company's huge surpluses may be answered.

"They're supposed to operate at cost, which means they're supposed to maintain an adequate reserve, determined by the insurance commissioner, and then operate at cost and give out dividends so they don't end up with the huge surpluses they have," he said. "If the inquiry ends up doing that — giving more dividends back — then the inquiry will have been successful."

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ENTREPRENEUR, from 11A

economic downturns.

Chad Desserich, owner of Pinnacle Solutions LLC in Windsor, offers sales training that speaks to multiple levels in an organization: entry, mid-level and chief level officers. His approach, honed over 15 years working across multiple industries and through his open-enrollment Integrity Selling Workshop, focuses on addressing each attendee's own behavioral style and the style of the person to whom they are selling. This information provides the foundation for communication that is tailored and ultimately more effective than traditional "sales technique" approaches.

"People leave here feeling energized," he said. "They also take away an action plan that they share with their peers and supervisors. There is accountability and therefore a higher rate of success."

Hiring to build revenue

Companies in our region run the gamut in terms of how they are handling the current climate, but some are continuing to hire, mainly in areas that focus on revenue building and fiscal management. Boosting the team already in place works, but there are times when we have to assess if we truly have the right people on the ship.

If not, tough choices need to be made: Do we invest in people who have been mediocre, with the hope that they improve? Or do we let them go and replace them with others who appear more promising based on their track record?

This is a decision unique to each company, but in most cases the best solution seems to be a combination of the two. Invest in the people you can

truly say are "coachable" — open to feedback, new ideas, training and change. Forego coaching people who have consistently displayed bad attitudes, poor performance, and lack of professionalism even after discipline and training have been implemented.

When bringing new hires on board in the sales arena, especially during times that offer more challenge and increased need for creativity, entice them not only with compensation and growth potential, but also with training opportunities. Most employees are flexible when it comes to compensation and benefits if they know that there are other "perks" available such as education, ongoing classes and a set training program.

Overall, training is a gift that you give to yourself and to your team. You also benefit your customers, industry and image through ongoing commitment to helping your people be better at their jobs and increasing their capacity to communicate effectively. Focus and skills improve, employees can work more independently, loyalty to the company grows, and speed, efficiency and closing rates increase.

Above all, training empowers people to do well, to build trust and rapport with their customers, and to feel more knowledgeable. When your team feels ready to tackle the world, so will you — and this leads to success even in the toughest of times.

Dawn Duncan is the co-owner of Broadreach Recruiting & Consulting, a Fort Collins-based firm that assists companies in attracting, retaining, and training professional and executive staff. Contact her at 970-221-3511 or www.broadreachrecruiting.com



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- Minimum to open \$100 – no minimum balance necessary to avoid service charge
- FREE ChoiceOnline Banking
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Also located in: Arvada / Aurora / Conifer / Denver / Elizabeth
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*Items more than 500 per month will be charged at 30¢ per item.

Fort Collins
 **Habitat for Humanity**
 PROUDLY PRESENTS THE...
6TH ANNUAL HARD HAT, BLACK TIE GALA
 VOYAGE TO
NEW ZEALAND

"GO KIWI" WITH FORT COLLINS HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

JOIN OUR CELEBRATION
 with Master of Ceremonies, **REED SAUNDERS**, voice of the Colorado Rockies & Colorado Eagles. Featuring Auctioneer, **DON MARTIN** of Martin Auctioneering. With Honorary Chairs **DENNIS AND ROSALIE SINNETT**

WHEN: Saturday, June 6, 2009 from 6 p.m. – midnight
WHERE: Fort Collins Marriott
TICKET PRICE: \$100 per person - \$800 corporate table
MENU: Hors d'oeuvres and Authentic New Zealand Cuisine
 Complimentary Beer and Wine & Fully-Stocked Cash Bar
ENTERTAINMENT: Live music by "Easy Street"
 Silent and Live Auction

PROUD SPONSORS:



GRAB YOUR TOOL BELT AND CALL 970.488.2704 TO PURCHASE YOUR TICKET OR RESERVE ONLINE AT WWW.FORTCOLLINSHABITAT.ORG

Climate Wise

Partners Saved \$7.2M & Reduced
Greenhouse Gases by More than

100,000 Tons in 2008!

With more than 130 business partners, the City of Fort Collins' Climate Wise program is making a huge impact on the environment through transportation reduction, energy savings, water conservation and reduction of materials diverted to landfills. These innovative businesses also saved \$7.2 Million by being outstanding environmental stewards!

Did you know?

100,000 TONS OF CO₂e (carbon dioxide equivalent) IS EQUIVALENT TO...

- 8 Million trees planted
- A reduction of 1,260,000 round trip vehicle excursions between Fort Collins and Denver
- A reduction of 108,000 round trip airline flights from Denver to New York City
- Removing 14,300 cars from the road this year
- Taking 277,000 60-watt light bulbs—that were in use 24 hours a day—out of service

ENERGY SAVINGS

- Savings since 2000: 280,000,600 kWh, which is equivalent to the annual energy use of 25,400 homes
- Imagine 6,590,000 therms being saved since 2000! That's the equivalent to the yearly natural gas use of 9,300 houses

WASTE DIVERSION FROM LANDFILL

- 83,200 tons of material has been diverted from the landfill by reduction, reuse or recycling since 2000! That's the equivalent of the weight of 6,000 Transfort City buses

WATER SAVINGS

- 4 Billion gallons of water have been saved since 2000. Picture either of these equivalents — filling City Park pool 18,600 times a year, or the water usage in 63,000 homes annually

Join us in thanking our Climate Wise partners who are working hard to continue to make Fort Collins a better place to work and live!



Please support our Fort Collins Climate Wise Partners

fcgov.com/climatewise

Email: climatewise@fcgov.com



Did you know?

- Climate Wise is a **TOP 50 Innovative Government Program** as recognized by Harvard University.
- During 2009, the Climate Wise Program was awarded the **Outstanding Achievement in Local Government Innovation** awards from the Alliance for Innovation.

