



# Stateline

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## CDOT HONORS ITS FALLEN

BY DENNIS VAN PATTER

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER, DOT

In May of this year, an 18-ton Colorado white marble memorial was dedicated to the 57 Colorado Department of Highways (CDOH) and Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) employees who have died in the line of duty. Located in the center of a landscaped plaza, which includes walkways made up of more than 500 memorial paving bricks, this stunning memorial serves as the central focus of the main south entrance to CDOT Headquarters in Denver. At the dedication, DOT Executive Director Tom Norton noted "This monument is being placed so that all visitors to CDOT Headquarters will have an



*This memorial honors the CDOH & CDOT employees who have died in the line of duty from 1929 until the present day. In the foreground are some of the more than 500 memorial paving bricks that comprise walkways in the memorial plaza area.*

*CDOT photo by Dennis Van Patter.*

opportunity to stop for a few moments to reflect on the tremendous legacy of service and sacrifice that is CDOT, and all of its predecessor agencies over nearly 100 years."

The dedication was attended by more than 1,000 past and present CDOT and CDOH employees, family members, and friends, and is believed to be the largest CDOH or CDOT employee event ever held in the organizations' nearly 100-year history.

The Department of Highways became the Department of Transportation in 1991, and at

*Please see CDOT, p. 2*



## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

BY JEFF WELLS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DPA

### Total Compensation

*This is part of a continuing series of articles intended to provide guidance to employees on issues they may face during their career with the State.*

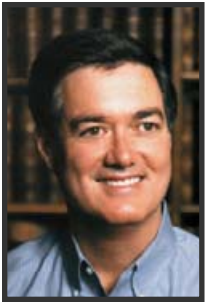
Not surprisingly, around this time of year many employees ask about my recommendations for next year's salary and benefits.

On August 1<sup>st</sup>, I submitted my total compensation recommendation to the Governor and the JBC. This recommendation is for an additional \$62.8 million in pay and state benefit contributions. This amount will fund an average occupational range adjustment of 3.1% and an average salary adjustment of approximately 4.2% for all successfully performing employees. The recommendation also provides for an additional

performance component and an increase to 85% (from the current 75%) of prevailing market for health insurance. Please note, that while individual state employees will not necessarily receive a 4.2% salary adjustment, the average of all salary adjustments would be 4.2% under this recommendation. Of particular significance is the fact that the average salary increase is higher than the occupational range adjustments.

For the last two years the JBC directed that salary and range adjustments be the same and while that still allowed for a pay increase, it did not allow employees to "move through the range." This recommendation would implement the first phase of returning to a salary model that allows an employee to move through the range. This is explained in greater detail later in this article.

*Please see KNOW YOUR RIGHTS, p. 3*



# T-REX COMPLETE

BY GOVERNOR BILL OWENS

With a name like “T-REX,” many people expected Colorado’s Transportation Expansion Project to be a monster. Nightmares of congested thoroughfares and round-the-clock gridlock danced through our heads. But over the course of the last five years, T-REX has proven to be a far gentler, kinder creature than anyone could have imagined.

In fact, a recent poll conducted by the Denver Business Journal showed that nine of every ten Coloradans assigned T-REX a passing grade. Ninety-percent is an amazing approval rating for anything, but when one considers that T-REX is a road construction project – not typically the most popular event – nine out of ten is downright amazing.

But make no mistake, the success and popularity of T-REX was no accident. The project has been well received because of the hard work of countless people. From the construction workers, to the contractor, to the decision makers – everyone involved helped make the *largest* transportation project in Colorado’s history, the *best* transportation project in Colorado’s history.

All in all, workers placed more than 868,000 tons of asphalt and steel over a 19-mile stretch of highways 25 and 225. To put that number in perspective, T-REX weighs as much as 124,000 tyrannosaurus rex dinosaurs. It’s safe to say that Jurassic Park has nothing on Colorado’s parkway.

It seems that oftentimes, those closest to a project like T-REX get caught up in their own rhetoric, promising the moon, only to disappoint afterward. But despite its grand scope, T-REX was a prime example of promises made and promises kept.

When we first broke ground at Mountain View Golf Course in 2001, we told Coloradans that the project would be finished on-time and on-budget. In August, when we lifted the final construction cone at the Downing Street off ramp, the highway portion of T-REX was complete *a month ahead of schedule*, and within the constraints of the original budget.

But as with any government project, T-REX could not have been accomplished without the consent of the governed. From the beginning, it was citizen-endorsed and citizen-driven. Because the voters’ sanctioned a bonding initiative called TRANS, we funded construction ten years sooner than traditional methods would have allowed. And we did it without raising taxes.

With the voters’ support, we are replacing the most outdated, fossilized sections of our highway system with state-of-the-art roads and transit that will serve the citizens of this state for years to come. In fact, of the 28 TRANS projects, 14 are already complete. Another four are fully funded and nearly finished, and the remaining ten will soon be undertaken with the same diligence and consideration that made T-REX so successful.

Five years ago – from a transportation standpoint – the I-25 corridor was downright prehistoric. Drivers were stuck in traffic so long, they faced extinction! Well, I am proud to announce that we have tamed the beast. The new footprint of T-REX will impact Colorado commuters long after my term as governor has gone the way of the dinosaurs.

*CDOT, from p. 1*

the same time assumed additional transportation coordination duties in the areas of inter-modal, bicycle, pedestrian, and aviation, becoming highways and much more.

Governor Owens, speaking at the ceremony, said, “CDOT employees are on the roads when the weather is at its worst. They bear the brunt of nature’s fury. They work at night so we’re not burdened by delays. It’s not easy work, and as we’ve seen, it can be deadly.” Other speakers at the dedication ceremony included State Patrol Chief Mark Trostel, CDOT Employee Council Chair Beth Carlberg, and region I CDOT Employee Council member Rick James. Speaking on behalf of the family members was Darlene Scott of Burlington, an employee of the Governor’s Office of Economic

Development. Her father, Eldon Misner died in the line of duty for CDOH in 1958.

The peak-shaped memorial, which came from the famed Yule Quarry above Marble, Colorado, is the latest addition to the CDOT Memorial Program, which began in 1992 as an initiative of the CDOT Employee Council. Many families, individuals, and groups donated more than \$20,000 for the project. In-kind donations of labor, materials, and equipment by contractor and consultant firms totaled many times that amount and made site engineering, preparation, and completion possible. Scores of volunteers stepped forward on their own time to help bring the project to reality in the final days leading up to the May 18 dedication. Nearly all funds required were raised privately or donated in-kind.

## Health Insurance

Despite the ever-increasing cost of health insurance, I believe we have made significant strides in the State's contribution toward your health insurance premiums. Since 2004, the State's contribution to benefits has increased from an average of 49% of what other employers contribute to premiums up to approximately 75% this year. And I am recommending another increase to an average of 85% beginning July 1, 2007. At the same time, I have taken steps to control costs, such as returning to self-funding, eliminating significant profit built into fully insured premiums, and allowing us to engage in more innovative cost containment measures. While we still have a ways to go to be where we would like in terms of your health and dental benefits, these efforts so far have dramatically improved the value of your dollars compared to where we started just three years ago.

Let me use our most popular PPO medical plan as an example of the improvement in benefits. In 2004, a family of four in the PPO 2000 paid \$294.30 per month. That same family is now paying only \$258.88 for the PPO 1500. While a reduction of \$35 per month may not seem like much, consider the fact that during this time period the cost of health care went up 24%, the deductible came down by \$500 (from \$2,000 to \$1,500), and the employee's out-of-pocket maximum cost was reduced from \$5,000 to \$3,000. So over the last three years the State's contribution to the family's insurance has increased \$257 per month (from \$310 to \$567) for an annual increase of over \$3,000. This is a direct savings to the family of \$3000.

We also offer affordable catastrophic coverage at \$7.08 per month for employee only coverage (\$160.28 for family). We now offer employees four statewide plan choices where, just three years ago, there were only two. Among those choices is a plan that qualifies for Health Savings Accounts. We know that these efforts are paying off not only by improving the purchasing value of your dollars, but enrollment is starting to grow again after several years of decline.

## Performance Pay

The area of total compensation where we have not made significant progress is performance pay, the mechanism for salary growth within pay ranges. Prior to performance pay, the State budgeted 2.2% of payroll to fund 5% annual increases ("steps") on anniversary dates, subject to pay range maximums. Unfortunately, the existing performance pay program has only been partially funded twice since its implementation in 2002-03 fiscal year, so it has never really had a chance to succeed. Over the years, I've heard the somewhat apocryphal belief that one political party supports state

employees more than the other. But I can tell you from my nearly quarter-century in both the legislative and executive branches of Colorado state government that it's really not that simple. During Governor Romer's tenure we had fiscal years both of significant benefit and salary increases and of frozen salaries, simply depending on available fund and budget necessities. For the last several years, I and DPA have asked for additional salary and performance pay funding for state employees, but have been turned down by the JBC when it has been controlled both by Republican and Democrats, depending on the year in question. This is not a criticism of the JBC – because they have extremely difficult job in balancing all of the critical components of our budget – it is simply to acknowledge that we need to work together and be vigilant in our message in order to obtain the strongest possible support for total compensation packages.

Consistent with my August 1<sup>st</sup> recommendation, the Department of Personnel & Administration is proposing a new and simplified model, the **Achievement Pay and Bonus Plan**. This plan is intended to obtain funding for the statutory policy of rewarding employee success on the job and to provide a mechanism to move employees through pay ranges, using a combination of base and non-base increases to actual pay. Beginning with the April 2007 performance cycle, three performance ratings will be used: *needs improvement*, *successful performers*, and *exceptional performers*. Successful and exceptional performers will receive base achievement pay that includes both occupational group market adjustments and a fixed statewide amount in recognition of those achievements, subject to pay range maximum.

In addition, exceptional performers will receive a non-base bonus equal to the amount of the base-building achievement pay increase available to all successful and exceptional performers. For example, if all successful and exceptional performers were paid a 1.5% base-building increase above their occupational adjustments, exceptional performers would be entitled to another 1.5% non-base achievement bonus. This achievement bonus, which may exceed the pay range maximum, is a lump sum payment and can be re-earned each year. As before, employees rated *needs improvement* are ineligible for the Achievement Pay and Bonus Plan.

The state personnel director will establish the annual base pay and non-base achievement bonus rates, depending upon the market movements and available funds. The goal is to keep salaries competitive with the labor market and recognize performance and, most importantly, to allow employee salaries to move through the pay ranges.

*KNOW YOUR RIGHTS, from p. 3*

The new Achievement Pay and Bonus Plan addresses concerns with the current performance pay system because it:

- Is simple and understandable.
- Restores the mechanism to move salaries through pay ranges by allowing employees the opportunity for salary growth in their ranges based on competent, successful performance.
- Shows consistent and clear commitment to the statutory policy of performance-driven government.
- Offers uniformity in the system through fixed statewide percentages, which minimizes variance in rewards.
- Allows the state personnel director to set rates that are more consistent, easier to administer, and flexible enough to respond to market factors while keeping within the budget realities of the State.

State employees are truly a dedicated, caring and professional workforce, and I wish the budgets of the last few years had allowed for even more improvements, but we have made great progress and there is every reason to be hopeful that things will continue to improve. We will continue to push forward in our quest to make state employment as competitive as any employer. Will there be hurdles? Of course, but the hurdles will not dampen DPA's or my personal commitment to improve the salary and benefits for state employees. In the meantime, we appreciate your support and will keep you posted on our progress.

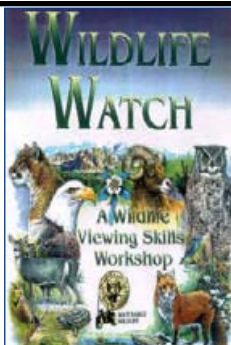
*This is general guidance only and should not be considered legal advice. For any legal advice you should always consult an attorney.*

## STATELINE

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## ATTEND WILDLIFE WATCH FREE

Wildlife Watch is a wildlife viewing skills workshop. **State employees and family members** (adults and children over 12) are invited to attend any workshop **free of charge!** Participants must register online at [www.wildlifewatch.net](http://www.wildlifewatch.net) or by phone: 303- 291-7258



## A PERA Retirement Issue You May Have Missed

Current and former employees who contributed to the Colorado Public Employees' Retirement Association (PERA) retirement fund anytime between July 1, 1984, and December 31, 1986, may be able to exclude portions of their retirement benefit from their Colorado taxable income. While this may seem like an unlikely scenario for all but a few of us, it actually affects 3,889 employee currently working for the State.

Subsequent to January 1, 1987 all PERA contributions are tax-deferred for federal and state income tax purposes. This simply means that you do not pay income taxes on the amount of your PERA contributions during the years you earned the money and contributed to PERA – but you defer the tax until you actually receive your retirement benefit or terminate your membership in PERA.

Prior to July 1984, both federal and state income taxes were paid on PERA contributions at the time you earned the income. If you have both pre and post 1984 service credits, PERA will calculate, after you retire, the portion of your retirement benefit that is taxable on your federal tax return. This calculation gets somewhat more confusing for the 2.5 years between July 1, 1984 and December 31, 1986. During this time period PERA contributions were subject to state income tax when earned, but were tax-deferred for federal income tax purposes. This means that while *federal* income tax is deferred until you actually receive your retirement benefit, *state* income taxes for those years were paid at the time you earned the income. However, you may subtract from your state taxable income the amount of pension benefits on which you have already paid state income tax. This subtraction is only applicable for this specific time period.

It is important to note that, if your total federally taxable pension income from **all** sources is less than \$24,000 and you are 65 years of age or older (\$20,000 if you are 55-64 years of age) this subtraction will not be a benefit to you, because all of your pension income is already fully excluded for Colorado income tax purposes.

In most cases, if you are eligible for both the annual PERA modification and this 2.5-year special pension subtraction, you should first claim the annual \$20,000/\$24,000 pension modification first, and then apply the special PERA subtraction to any remainder. You should also be aware that you can carry any remaining PERA subtraction forward into the next tax year.

— Jeff Wells

# BIRTH OF A PARK: COLORADO WELCOMES THE NEWEST ADDITION TO THE STATE PARKS FAMILY

BY CLARE SINACORI, PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST  
COLORADO STATE PARKS, DNR

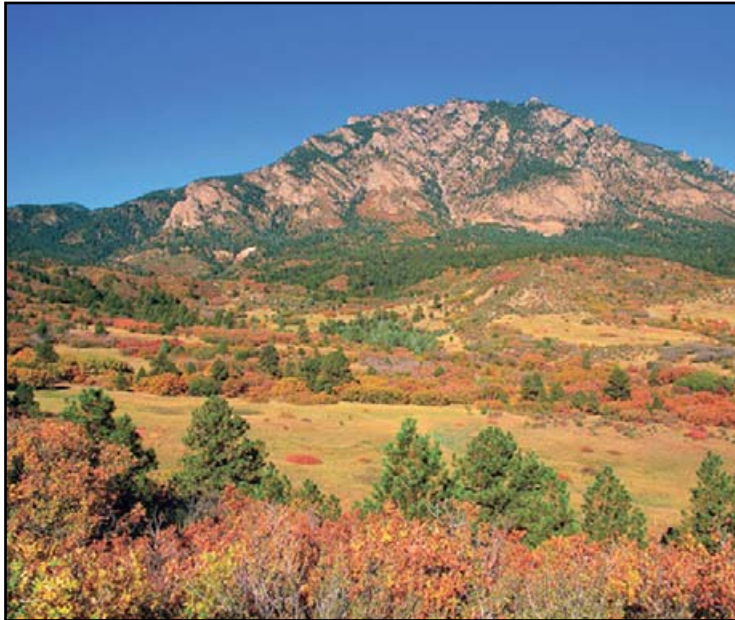
Colorado State Parks is proud to announce the newest addition to Colorado's extensive state park system, Cheyenne Mountain State Park just south of Colorado Springs. The 1680-acre park lies beneath the eastern flank of Cheyenne Mountain and borders the plains of Colorado in a stunning transition from plains to peaks. The property is in remarkable natural condition and wildlife-viewing opportunities abound due to the land's relatively undisturbed and unfragmented nature.

"The addition of this park is a magnificent achievement for the people of Colorado. Given the challenges of preserving open space so close to a major city, many individuals and organizations have shown their commitment to bringing to fruition this legacy for future generations," said Colorado State Parks Director Lyle Laverty.

Becoming the first state park in El Paso County, Cheyenne Mountain offers superior facilities and recreational opportunities. Foremost among the park's offerings is the trail system consisting of 20 miles of natural surface trails, allowing visitors ample opportunities to discover the park's natural beauty.

Facilities planned for the park are also top-notch. The Visitor Center will offer visitors the chance to learn more

about the area, or just relax while enjoying amazing views. Facilities to open in the near future include a 62-site campground, a group picnic shelter, and several full-service cabins. The planned Event Center, with its dramatic overlook, will accommodate weddings, banquets, conferences, and groups interested in first-class amenities in a natural setting that only a Colorado State Park can provide.



Cheyenne Mountain State Park is the result of strong partnerships and years of thoughtful planning. Acquired in June 2000 through collaboration between the City of Colorado Springs, Colorado State Parks, Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), Colorado Lottery and other local private

organizations, the park represents the protection of one of the last significant open spaces along the southern section of the Colorado Front Range.

With a unique balance of premiere facilities, breathtaking open space, and outstanding recreational opportunities, Cheyenne Mountain State Park is sure to inspire, rejuvenate, and invigorate its visitors for years to come.

Additional information about the park can be found at [www.parks.state.co.us/cheyennemountain](http://www.parks.state.co.us/cheyennemountain).

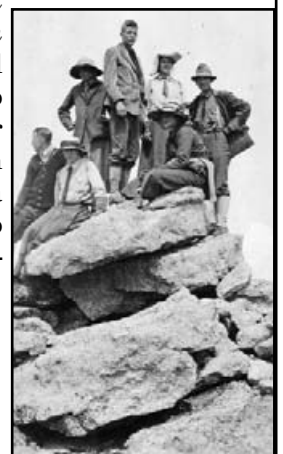
## Colorado Historical Society 2006–2007 Lecture Series: The Unexpected West

Challenge your assumptions about the West while enjoying provocative topics in this unique lecture series. Future talks include topics such as: why the "New Deal" was so beneficial to the West; the "Peace Pipe: The Calumet in Native Diplomacy before Lewis and Clark"; and much more.

There are daytime (1 P.M.) and evening (7 P.M.) presentations of all lectures. The cost to state employees for the eight-part series is \$45, or \$7 each for

single lectures; *this is a discounted rate, so identify yourself as such when making your reservation.* All lectures take place in the Colorado History Museum's Boettcher Auditorium at 1300 Broadway in Denver and are followed by a reception. For details or to register by phone, call **303-866-4686**.

*Pictured to the left: some of Colorado's earliest mountain climbing enthusiasts. Photo courtesy of the Colorado Historical Society.*





# NEW LICENSE PLATE HONORS AMERICAN INDIAN SCHOLARS

BY JANE NORTON  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

As the Chair of the Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs, my office is working with the Education Committee of the Commission to strengthen and promote higher education opportunities for Colorado's Native American students. One of the programs we are utilizing to accomplish this goal is the American Indian Scholars License Plate.



The American Indian Scholars License Plate is a Colorado state issued license plate featuring a medicine wheel design by Francis Sherwood. The plate will also be available for motor cycles beginning January 1, 2007.

The American Indian Scholars license plate is available due to the efforts of the Colorado Legislature, the Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs and members of our

community. Colorado residents may obtain a plate by purchasing a certificate for a \$25 donation and paying the specialty plate and registration fees. Purchase your certificate from the Rocky Mountain Indian Chamber of Commerce or the Denver Indian Center, take it to your county DMV office, pay the plate and registration fees, and pick up your license plate.

If the American Indian Scholars plate is not available, the DMV office will issue a temporary plate at no charge and order your plate for delivery to the DMV office within 2-5 days. The specialty plate fee is assessed by the Department of Revenue, Motor Vehicles upon purchase and does not apply when license plates are renewed annually.

*Please see LICENSE PLATE, p. 7*

## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT CLAIMS THEIR SECOND STRAIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP

BY TEDDY ABAD  
ART TECHNICIAN, DPA

The Department of Public Health won their second consecutive Colorado State Employee Softball League (CSESL) title by defeating the DCS United (Division of Central Services, DPA) 17-13 in the Championship Game.



The tournament consisted of 16 of the 20 teams participating in this year's state interagency softball league. As the tournament winners, Health took home the coveted prize of former Governor Vanderhoof's bronzed shoe, the same shoe the Governor wore when he participated in the league back in 70's.

*2006 CSESL Champions - Department of Public Health & Environment. First Row: Matt Schick, Ed Trainer, Kris Hulse, Chuck Bayard, Arne Sjodin, Jim Neubaum (coach), Marianne Sandquist. Second Row: Jeff Haugen, Tracy Goetz, Kristi Ladd, Rochelle Manchego, Michelle Manchego, Sue Przekwas. Not Pictured: Dave Trainer, Janell Bezdek and Bill Crick.*

United (Division of Central Services) to cap off their great season.

Trailing 8-3 in the fourth inning of the championship game, Health dug deep and came up with two stellar innings of 5 and 6 runs to overtake Central Services. After taking control of the game, Health did not look back, and cruised to their second CSEL title.

En route to this year's title the Health (10-1 in the regular season and seeded third) defeated State Lab (CDPHE Lab Services Division - Lowry), Watchdawgs (State Auditors Office), Conference "B" Champion State Parks and DCS

**2006 Season Results**  
Conference "A" Champion - CDOT (11-0)  
Conference "B" Champion - State Parks (11-0)

**2006 Tournament Results**  
1st Place - Health  
2nd Place - DCS United  
3rd Place - CDOT  
4th Place - State Parks



# A MESSAGE FROM DAVID KAYE

DIRECTOR OF THE DIVISION OF HUMAN RESOURCES, DPA

Have you ever experienced that dual feeling of being both very excited and a little nervous as you start a new job? I am fully aware that expectations are high for the new Director of the Division of Human Resources and I am energized at having the chance to make a positive difference. I care deeply about good government and the hard working people who make it happen.

A little background will help you know me better. I grew up in a military family and lived in a variety of places, relocating every 2–4 years. I understand well the stress that change creates, but I have also experienced the joy of knowing an incredible variety of people and places. I attended Western State College of Colorado and the University of Colorado School of Law. My working life travels include service as a welder in a shipyard, a commercial construction worker, a house painter, a gold exploration field hand, an attorney, an auditor, and a state manager. My experiences in life, education and work, including 19 years in state government, have given me a strong foundation upon which to lead, manage change, and continue growing as DHR’s Division Director. Despite all of this experience, I try to be smart enough to know what I don’t know.

I am honored by the opportunity to follow in the footsteps of my predecessor and mentor, Jeff Schutt, while bringing my own perspective and energy to the table. Like Jeff, I will continue the fight for decent pay raises and affordable health care coverage for state employees. I also share his vision of offering employees and their families a more flexible total compensation package to meet their individual needs, once all components of total compensation are fully funded. I will continue the good work he started regarding the collaboration of HR and Risk Management as business

partners with state agencies, to positively impact the bottom line in ways that can be measured.

I believe we can protect the values underlying the state personnel system and embrace fresh thinking that will enable the workforce to adapt to a changing world. You have my commitment to work toward that end, as well as continue to foster the great relationships Jeff embraced in the spirit of cooperation.

I see new opportunities in the challenges that lie ahead. The impending retirement of so much agency talent and loss of institutional memory, coupled with multiple generations of people within the workforce, will place tremendous additional pressure upon us to implement creative new approaches to age-old challenges with adequate workforce planning and development. Continuous improvement to effective hiring and supervision practices, fingertip access to current data, and greater focus on the well-being of employees, will be as important as anything we do from this point forward. We must maximize productivity through adequate financial rewards and job demands that do not drive people out the door or into the ground along the way.

Given the ever-growing demand for greater productivity and effectiveness of state programs and employees, I will be a strong advocate for work-life balance and investment in effective information systems to aid the workforce in getting the job done. I also envision affordable mandatory training for all new supervisors in order to maximize the quality of workforce leadership and management.

I look forward to serving you well and hearing your ideas. I ask for only your patience, support and constructive feedback as I endeavor to fill some pretty big shoes.

*LICENSE PLATE, from p. 6*

Proceeds from your donation fund scholarships provided by the Colorado Indian Education Foundation (a 501c3 charitable organization), and your scholarship donation is tax deductible. You will be sent a receipt for your records (if ordering by mail). There is no obligation beyond the initial \$25.00 donation, however, additional donations are always welcome and appreciated.

**HOW TO GET ONE**

Purchase a certificate from the Rocky Mountain Indian Chamber of Commerce for a \$25 minimum donation. You may print an order form from the Rocky Mountain Indian

Chamber of Commerce’s website at [www.rmicc.org](http://www.rmicc.org) or you may obtain a copy from their office in Denver, Monday to Thursday, 10 am to 6 pm. The office is located at 924 W. Colfax, Suite 104F (lower level) or from the Denver Indian Center, 4407 Morrison Road, Denver, CO 80219, 303-936-2688.

Take the certificate to your local Colorado DMV office, pay the specialty license and registration fees and pick up your license plate.

**For more information call: 303-629-0102 or FAX: 303-595-8880.**



# MY BACK PAGES: TO SERVE THE PUBLIC

BY PAUL FARLEY

A century ago, a former chairman of the U.S. Civil Service Commission – the federal government’s counterpart to the State Personnel Board – observed that “It is impossible, no matter how much care is used, to prevent the occasional appointment to the public service of a man who when tempted proves unfaithful .... Yet in dwelling on such misdeeds it is unjust not to add that they are altogether exceptional, and that on the whole the employees of the Government render upright and faithful service to the people.” His point was that while critics are quick to jump on those isolated instances of misbehavior, we hear very little about the overwhelming dedication of public employees day in, day out. I suppose some of this is to be expected, since “man bites dog” is a much more unusual and surprising story than “dog bites man.”

I reflected on this after an experience I had while making the long drive from Denver to Durango for some meeting or other. For those of you who haven’t had the thrill of navigating the steep, narrow, and winding approach to Red Mountain Pass from Ouray, there are few Colorado highways that can match it.

About six miles out of Ouray, and about eight miles from the summit, near a sharp turn, I saw a large stone marker by the left side of the road. I decided to stop and get out for a look. It turned out to be a memorial dedicated to three state employees who, died while trying to keep the road open for the public. Robert Miller was killed there on March 20, 1970 when a slide carried his bulldozer 200 feet from the road. Terry Kishbaugh lost his life on February 10, 1978, when his snowplow was swept off the road down into the canyon below by an avalanche estimated to be moving at more than 100 miles per hour. On March 5, 1992, Eddie Imel and Danny Jaramillo were clearing a slide that was blocking the highway when another slide came hurtling down the mountain at them. While Jaramillo managed to dig himself out some 18 hours later, Imel was killed.



In that sobering moment I thought about how many of our fellow workers have also made that ultimate sacrifice while serving the citizens of this State, and how most people have little appreciation of it. Instead,

sometimes we hear people joke about something being “close enough for government work,” or complain about “cushy government jobs”, or stereotype state workers as lazy bureaucrats. And I wonder how many of these people have jobs where what they do carries with it the very real possibility that they may have to lay down their lives for their fellow citizens. We work with people who do, and have.

In my nearly 16 years with Colorado state government, almost three dozen of our colleagues have fallen while on duty. State troopers, correctional officers, parks and wildlife employees, and many highway workers, have all been killed on the job. Most recently, a CDOT employee was critically injured near Watkins when he was hit by a tractor-trailer rig while clearing some debris from the highway. What price can we put on the devotion of such people?

You should take pride in your career as a public *servant*, because it is worthy of every citizen’s honor and respect. Keep in mind the example of that former civil service commissioner, who reminded people to be grateful for your “upright and faithful service” in his 1906 State of the Union Address – President Theodore Roosevelt.

### *This and That:*

- They tried to warn me not to do a contest, but I wouldn’t listen. The trivia question from last issue was “What unusual feature made the Brown Palace the ultimate “full service” hotel from 1892 to 1923?” What I was looking for was the basement crematorium for guests who really wanted to “go in style” (sort of a “Hotel California” thing if you think about it – “you can check out anytime you like, but you can never leave”). The first people to send us this answer were Thomas Schaffer of the Water Quality Control Division; Peter Wingate of the Division of Labor; and Judge Barbara Henk of the Office of Administrative Courts. But then a number of people also noted that there was a tunnel connecting the Brown Palace to a brothel across the street at the Navarre. Now, this isn’t really what I was after, but after looking at my question again, and since the article was about *tunnels*, after all, I decided that fair is fair. So Chuck Brown of the Division of Wildlife; Alison Needham of the Division of Water Resources; and Judge Craig Eley of the Division of Workers’ Compensation will also receive complimentary \$5 gift cards for Peaberry’s Coffee.