



# Stateline

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Colorado State Employees  
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## A GREAT PLACE TO BE

BY GOVERNOR BILL OWENS

I recently spoke at the annual Governor's Tourism Conference, an event that brings together representatives from across our state's tourism industry: ski resort managers, innkeepers, visitors' bureaus workers, Colorado State Parks employees, and many more.

It reminded me of how much we have to be proud of in Colorado. Last year, 25 million people visited our state, which ranks among the top five "dream destinations" in the U.S. These visitors help fuel our economy; they stay in our hotels and shop in our stores. We're fortunate to live full-time in a place that so many Americans choose to visit on their vacations. As the winter holidays approach, I hope that you and your families will take advantage of everything Colorado has to offer.

I also would like to take the opportunity to bring you up to date on some good economic news. These past few years have been challenging ones for our state and for the nation as a whole. But economic recovery is well underway. The state's labor market is improving, construction activity is healthy, personal income is rising, and retail sales are up.

Unemployment in Colorado stands at 4.9 percent – more than one percentage point below the rate at this time last year. That's also lower than the national average. The Office of State Budgeting and Planning estimates that job creation between September 2004 and the end of this year will average 9,000 jobs *per month*. This is good news for the unemployed, and good news for our economy.

We're definitely rounding the bend, and the future looks bright.

Don't forget: November 2 is Election Day, and I encourage all Colorado citizens to become educated about the various initiatives and candidates on the ballot this year.



## THE FORGOTTEN ONES

BY EDRIE WOMACK  
HR DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY & VETERANS AFFAIRS

Several employees from the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs (DMVA) were fortunate enough to meet and serve Veterans from WWII, Korea and Viet Nam on Saturday, July 31, 2004. Employees' spouses and children also came and were involved, much to the delight of the veterans.



DMVA's community volunteer project for Colorado Cares 2004 was a barbecue hosted at the Veterans Nursing Home at Fitzsimons in Aurora CO. Employees cooked, served and generally had a great time chatting with many of the more than 100 veterans. Some were transported – wheelchairs and all – to a nearby park by Executive Director, Major General Mason C. Whitney, and others. Many more were served at the outdoor barbecue on site at the nursing home.

A couple of favorites were "Harmonica George" and "Hank". Harmonica George (who was in the Pacific Theatre of World War II) played music, and Hank did wheelies in his wheel chair and generally kept everyone in stitches. Two of the female veterans from WWII were very engaging in their conversation. One had been an airplane mechanic, and the other was in France as an officer and a nurse. It was a surprise, indeed, to learn that there were female airplane mechanics as far back as

WWII. The day was a delightful experience.

We were reminded afresh of the sacrifice that men and women in this country have made and are still making for freedom's sake. And, amazingly, they do not regret the sacrifice.

Nursing homes are frequently filled with lonely people who feel forgotten. Veterans are certainly no exception. We wanted to show them that they are remembered and appreciated. We are definitely going back!



Top Photo: Bill Belz, Division, Director of Veterans Affairs cooks up some burgers for the hungry veterans.



Middle Photo: WWII Vets eating and in conversation with DMVA staff members.

Bottom Photo: From left to right foreground: Audra Rinerson, Nicole Jordan, Abby Rinerson enjoy the tune of "Harmonica George" from WWII Vet.

## IN MEMORIAM



Theodore (Ted) Woods, of the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF) died suddenly in July, he was 48 years old.

After graduation from High School in Clarksdale, Mississippi in 1974, Ted received his degree in Economics from the University of Wisconsin in Madison, moving to Colorado shortly thereafter. It was here that he met and married his loving wife of 22 years, Demetra Demos-Woods. She survives him, as does one brother, six sisters and numerous nieces and nephews.

Ted approached his job duties just as he approached his life – with humor, even-handedness and enthusiasm. HCPF staff members respected his sense of fairness and miss his gentle teasing, cheerful demeanor and beaming smile every day.

## Inside Stateline

CONTRACTING REFORM PROTECTS EMPLOYEES, PAGE 2



AMERICAN INDIAN HERITAGE MONTH, PAGE 3





## WHY DOES IT COST SO MUCH?

BY JEFF WELLS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL & ADMINISTRATION

It seems like every week I get the following question: "My spouse/sister-in-law/bowling partner works for a company that has only 300 employees and their rates are much better than what I am paying as a state employee. Shouldn't we get better rates because we are insuring such a large group?"

It's an excellent question and one that I asked when I arrived at the Department of Personnel & Administration (DPA). Unfortunately, there is a pretty good answer as well - insurance companies basically set their rates on two factors: age and demographics of the group insured and what type of discounts that can be negotiated with the healthcare providers in the areas where the plans are offered. On both counts we lose.

The average age of our state workforce is over 45 years old; an older workforce increases the utilization of healthcare services and thus, is more expensive to insure. We also have employees in each of Colorado's 64 counties; many in rural regions of the State. Transportation, Corrections and Human Services have a significant number of employees located in these rural areas where healthcare comes at a premium because there are limited healthcare providers. Some rural healthcare providers demand higher fees because they are the "only game in town". Accordingly, insurance companies are unable to negotiate reduced rates in these areas and must pass those costs along when determining the premium for group plans.

Another factor is the established policy of treating all state employees the same, rather than breaking out areas with increased rates. For example, insurance rates in Pueblo are significantly higher than those charged in the metro area. Rather than charge employees in Pueblo higher rates we subsidize those employees through a uniform cost to all state employees. With about 50% of state employees living in rural areas this shifts a greater burden to those state employees living within urban areas.

OK, so what is DPA and the Governor doing to reduce the impact of these factors and provide employees with reasonably priced healthcare?

1) In the past, state statutes required that the State offer a minimum of two HMO plans in each of our 64 counties, this drove up costs because DPA was forced to enter into contracts with some insurance providers, virtually, no matter the cost. Through legislative action, DPA was able to get the statute changed last year, so the State is required to only offer one insurance provider per county, thus giving us greater leverage when negotiating contracts in rural areas.

2) The State's current contribution to employee health care premiums continues to lag behind prevailing market employer contributions. Last year, our Department, working with the Governor's office, was able to pass legislation that provided for an increase in the amount the State contributes to employee health insurance premiums. On January 1, 2005, the State's contribution to group medical plans will go up from a range of 38-52% of costs, to 56% of prevailing contributions to healthcare. For example, the state contribution for an employee plus one will go up over \$70 per month and an employee plus family will increase almost \$100 per month, starting in January.

This year, DPA has received the Governor's approval to ask the Joint Budget Committee (JBC) to increase the State's contribution another 9% to 65% of the prevailing contribution amount found in the market. If the JBC agrees to support this request we will work with the Governor's staff to get the increase included in the Long Bill and passed through the 2005 legislative session.

3) We have also initiated a shift to move the benefits cycle into alignment with the fiscal year cycle. On July 1, 2005, the State will align its benefits plan year with other budgetary elements of state operation. Open enrollment this fall will be for January 1, 2005 through June 30, 2005 only. We will hold another open enrollment in the spring to transition our healthcare plans to the fiscal-year cycle, which runs from July 1 through June 30 of each year.

State employees may actually see an increase in the State's contribution twice in one year. In January,

2005, the State will begin contributing 56% to all employees' premiums. Should we be successful in getting the 65% increase in the 2005 legislative session, employees will then see the State contribution increase to 65% on July 1, 2005.

4) The State is also seriously considering returning to self-funded medical and dental plans. As many employees know, the State began self-funding its group medical plans in the early 1990s and did so until 1999. We then moved to the private market because many HMOs were competing for business in Colorado and this competition kept prices in check while providing consumers greater choice with excellent prices. In that climate we were better able to provide quality care at the best prices by purchasing our group medical plans from outside insurance companies.

Due to the current market's inflation, our Department and private consultants have explored a return to self-funding as a possible way to stabilize our costs. While it is not a fix all for our concerns, self-funding will provide the State with much needed control and flexibility over its plans, and if managed well, should produce cost savings over time.

5) The shift to a fiscal year may also help the state offer employees a Health Savings Account (HSA) qualified High Deductible Health Plan (HDHP) in a shorter time period than would be possible with outside insurance providers.

HSAs are a newly created form of tax-advantaged account that allows an individual to save money tax-free for health expenses while participating in a HDHP. These types of plans are new to the market and many private insurers have not begun to offer them.

Rest assured, we will continue to proactively seek ways to provide state employees reasonable healthcare options and to control costs where we can, while moving toward the necessary flexibility to meet the various needs of our diverse workforce.



## CONTRACTING REFORM PROTECTS STATE EMPLOYEES

BY MILLER HUDSON  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, COLORADO ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES (CAPE)

Understandably, some state employees find themselves uncertain what the consequences of Referendum A might be. Particularly, they are unclear how, when, and for what services the State would be able to contract if voters approve this ballot question. As president of the Colorado Association of Public Employees (CAPE), the State's oldest employee organization, and the one which led the fight against overreaching state contracts in the early 1990's, I want to be sure all state employees understand what will - and what won't - happen if Referendum A is approved on November 2nd.

Referendum A does not expand the scope of contracting that is permitted today. There is reason to be confused on this point, since the Legislative Council's Ballot Analysis (or "Blue Book") mentions contracting, even though the Referendum itself does not. The reason for this discrepancy is that, as part of a compromise between CAPE and the other state employee organizations that negotiated with the Department of Personnel & Administration (DPA), all contracting language was removed from the Referendum and incorporated into House Bill 1373, the statute that implements the Referendum. However, because the statute only becomes effective if voters approve the Referendum, the Legislative

Council decided to include a contracting discussion in the Blue Book so voters would have a more complete picture of what they were being asked to approve.

The statutory changes provide unprecedented protections for the State and its employees:

- No employee may lose pay, status, or tenure as the result of a contract.
- No vacant position may be contracted out without a documented justification and advance notice to employees.
- For the first time, employees will be able to seek administrative, and ultimately, judicial review, to ensure that a contract is consistent with the law.
- Before any contract could be signed, it will have to meet requirements regarding both cost-effectiveness and quality.
- There will now be sanctions for poor, late, or incomplete performance by contractors.
- DPA will maintain a comprehensive contract database so we can effectively monitor the impact that contracting has on the civil service system.

In addition to these protections, employees will benefit from other provisions of Referendum A, including more opportunities for advancement, a smarter use of temporaries, and improved veterans' protections. Nothing in the Referendum or in HB 1373 undermines the principle of a merit based civil service. The implementing legislation is necessarily detailed and I encourage interested employees to review its specific provisions.

*Editor's Note: Miller Hudson is Executive Director of the Colorado Association of Public Employees. A former two-term Democratic state legislator, he previously served as the Executive Director of the Colorado Intermountain Fixed Guideway Authority studying the feasibility of providing high-speed transit service along the I-70 mountain corridor.*

## MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

By TIM DRAGO  
COLORADO VETERANS MONUMENT



The Colorado Veterans Monument is located on the East side of Lincoln Park, situated between the State Capitol and the Denver City and County Building.

The Colorado Veterans Monument near our State Capitol was dedicated on Veterans Day 1990 as both a memorial to the dead and a tribute for the living. This past Memorial Day, our World War II veterans and Colorado's men and women in our armed forces who died in Iraq and Afghanistan were honored.

The monument was built by the State of Colorado and the volunteer staff of the Colorado Tribute to Veterans Fund founded in 1983 by Vietnam Veteran Tim Drago. Its asymmetrical obelisk and wall are made from red sandstone from Lyons, Colorado.

Learning from veterans memorials in Washington, D.C., a Colorado Veterans Monument Preservation Trust Fund was established by law in May 2000. It is funded by private contributions to insure the timely maintenance of the Monument's honorable and respectful appearance.

In an effort to maintain the trust fund necessary for the maintenance of the monument, a book detailing the struggle a small group of volunteers was published in May 2003. "MISSION ACCOMPLISHED: Building Colorado Veterans Monument" is a limited edition "coffee table book" and all proceeds from its sale are donated to the trust fund.

For more information go to [www.coloradoveteransmonument.org](http://www.coloradoveteransmonument.org) or call Tim Drago at 303-756-0338.

## NOVEMBER IS COLORADO'S AMERICAN INDIAN HERITAGE MONTH

By AMBER O'CONNOR  
SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR COMMUNICATIONS  
LT. GOVERNOR JANE NORTON



Derrick Howell performs the Eagle Dance at the Governor's Residence at the Boettcher Mansion during the November 2003 celebration of Colorado's first American Indian Heritage Month.

The indigenous account of American Indians in our state and nation is a record of endurance, survival, adaptation, and creativity in the face of overwhelming obstacles. Their remarkable journey has played a key role in shaping our collective history. In recognition of this

unique and distinguished role, the State of Colorado has declared November 2004 as American Indian Heritage Month. It will be a

time dedicated to learning more about the history, heritage and contemporary lives of the Native peoples of this

great state and country.

Please see *HERITAGE*, p. 4

## COLORADO'S DEFENSE AGAINST DISEASE

By PHIL DROZDA, DPA INTERN

On the front lines of the battle against communicable diseases in Colorado, the Disease Control and Environmental Epidemiology Division (DCEED) and the State Epidemiologist work to track, control, and prevent the various infectious diseases that threaten public health. A division of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, the DCEED coordinates with local health departments and health care providers to ensure early detection of diseases and to identify their causes in order to stop epidemics from spreading. The division also compiles data on birth defects, works to prevent them, and provides technical support for disease control and treatment. In their efforts to prevent disease, DCEED educates the public in cooperation with various interested and affected groups to facilitate behavior changes and provide information on communicable disease prevention.

The Division operates several programs and sections designed to address specific threats to public health. For instance, the Environmental Toxicology Program deals with various contaminants within the physical environment that may be hazardous to human health: the program monitors air pollution, water quality, and hazardous waste, and provides scientific information to the regulatory agencies who handle them so as to ensure well-informed public health policy. They also offer information about mold and arsenic contamination, asbestos removal, and the West Nile Virus. In addition, the program operates several community health surveillance projects in locations such as Globeville and the Rocky Mountain Arsenal. Heavily involved in informing the public about potential environmental hazards, the program is committed to environmental health education.

The Communicable Disease Program monitors influenza, foodborne diseases, waterborne diseases, and any other potentially contagious or epidemic disease in Colorado. The Tuberculosis Program works with and funds local health departments and

labs to provide TB treatment and control activities as required by Colorado law. The program assists with the management of active TB cases, with contact investigations, and with quarantines. It also provides medication and reimbursement for laboratories that treat late-active TB cases and consultation and training on TB. The division operates a Lead Poisoning Prevention Program as well. That program collects, analyzes, and interprets data for children statewide who have elevated lead levels in their blood, and then ensures that they receive proper treatment for lead poisoning. DCEED also operates programs for the control and prevention of viral hepatitis, STDs, and HIV.

In addition to their various disease-specific programs, DCEED has several programs that cater to the needs of specific groups susceptible to contagious illness. The division runs a program for refugees resettling in Colorado. Established in 1980, the program gives initial public health screenings, physical examinations, and immunizations to all eligible refugees fleeing their homelands due to political or physical persecution. According to the Refugee Health Services Program (RHSP), approximately 1,100 refugees arrive in Colorado each year, and the majority of them settle in the Denver/Metro area. The RHSP provides medical screenings for newly arrived refugees in order to "ensure the health integrity of the residents of Colorado through referral for treatment of medical conditions." The program offers some services to help refugees become settled and self-sustaining in Colorado, though many services are provided through the Office of Refugee Resettlement and the Colorado Refugee Services Program, which incidentally provide funding for the RHSP.


The Colorado Responds to Children with Special Needs Program exists to help children with birth defects and developmental disabilities through research and preventative medicine. The program's goals include: maintaining a statewide database of children with or at risk for birth defects and developmental disabilities, to perform

epidemiological surveillance, and to connect affected children and families with necessary services to avoid secondary disabilities. The program provides data to researchers studying the causes and risks of birth defects and participates in research for fetal alcohol syndrome and autism in Colorado.

A final section of the DCEED is the Emergency Preparedness and Bioterrorism Response Section. State Epidemiologist and Executive Director of State Bioterrorism Preparedness Dr. Ned Calonge supervises this section, in addition to the whole division. The section collaborates with internal and external groups to improve statewide emergency response capabilities, epidemiologic response to bioterror attacks and other outbreaks, and laboratory identification methods of agents threatening public health. They organize the Department of Public Health to respond to environmental and health emergencies and assist other federal, state, and local emergency response agencies. In this time of need for increased awareness and alertness of possible terrorist activity, Dr. Calonge and Bioterrorism Response coordinate the state's preparedness in the event of such activity.

Dr. Calonge has been the State Epidemiologist and the Chief Medical Officer for the Dept. of Public Health since 2002. He supervises all health-related divisions in the department, which besides DCEED include Health Facilities, Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, and Prevention and Intervention Services for Children and Youth. He is also the President of the Colorado Board of Medical Examiners, and he teaches epidemiology and preventative medicine at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center. For more information about the State Epidemiologist or the Disease Control and Environmental Epidemiology Division, please visit [www.cdphe.state.co.us](http://www.cdphe.state.co.us).

2004



**HOUSE RESOLUTION 04-1013**

**BY REPRESENTATIVES** Rose, Berry, Boyd, Briggs, Brophy, Butcher, Cadman, Carroll, Cloer, Coleman, Frangas, Hodge, Jahn, Larson, Lee, Marshall, McCluskey, McFadyen, McGibon, Merrifield, Miller, Paccione, Pommer, Ragsdale, Rippy, Romanoff, Salazar, Smith, Spence, Spradley, Stafford, Vigil, Weddig, Weissmann, White, Wiens, Williams S., Williams T., and Witwer.

**CONCERNING RECOGNITION OF ALL STATE EMPLOYEES FOR THEIR HARD WORK AND DEDICATION TO THE STATE OF COLORADO.**

WHEREAS, State employees work tirelessly to serve the state of Colorado; and

WHEREAS, The devotion of state employees to their jobs has enabled the state to run smoothly, even during a trying fiscal situation; and

WHEREAS, State employees have contended with the budget restraints currently affecting the state, but their dedication to the state has remained constant; and

WHEREAS, State employees have put in many long hours of hard work and dedicated service for the state; and

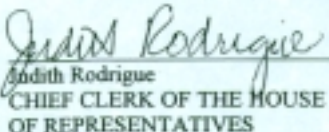
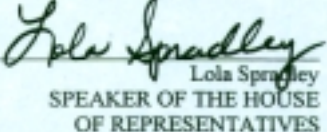
WHEREAS, State employees and their families have sacrificed financially for the well-being of the citizens of the state of Colorado; and

WHEREAS, State employees are contributing members of each community in the state of Colorado; now, therefore,

*Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the Sixty-fourth General Assembly of the State of Colorado:*

That we, the members of the House of Representatives, thank all state employees for their hard work, dedication, and devoted service to the state of Colorado.

*Be It Further Resolved,* That copies of this Resolution be distributed to all state employees through the Department of Personnel and Administration.

Judith Rodriguez  
CHIEF CLERK OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Lola Spradley  
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

## COLORADO STATE EMPLOYEES CREDIT UNION BEGINS ANNUAL C-SEAP FOOD DRIVE

Colorado State Employees Credit Union (CSECU) is holding its annual Food Drive to benefit the Colorado State Employee Assistance Program (C-SEAP) Emergency Assistance Fund and Food Bank. Through December 20, non-perishable food or monetary contributions may be donated at any of the thirteen CSECU office locations. In addition, there are collection points at various state worksites.

The most needed items include those that can make a nutritious meal such as: macaroni and cheese, cereal, pasta, tuna fish, soup, canned fruit/vegetables, peanut butter, and grocery store gift cards.

Donations aid state employees in crisis situations by providing them with short-term financial assistance and food. Monetary donations are also welcome. Contact CSECU at **303-832-4816** or **800-444-4816** or send your donation by mail to CSECU, 1390 Logan Street, Denver, CO 80203 (Attn: C-SEAP Donation).

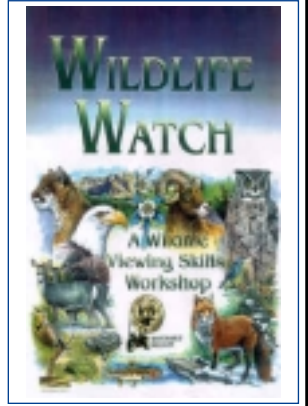
The C-SEAP Food Drive will help make the holidays a little brighter for many state employees and their families.

The Denver C-SEAP office is offering **Dual Responsibilities: Work and Eldercare**. Come learn about community resources and learn ways to manage both work and caring for your parent's needs. November 3, 11am-1pm



**Call: The Colorado State Employee Assistance Program 303-866-4314 for information about this class and other services offered.**

## 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 need to register for Wildlife Watch online or by phone. The workshop dates, times and places are detailed on both the Web site and phone line. When you sign-up, be sure to let us know that you are a state employee.

Register online at [www.wildlifewatch.net](http://www.wildlifewatch.net)  
or by phone: **303- 291-7258**



The Division of Wildlife just completed another outstanding, successful, Becoming an Outdoors-Woman workshop near Estes Park. Such topics as Shooting Sports, Family Camping, Nature Journaling, Preparation for the Hunt, Outdoor Photography, Compass/Map Reading 101, Wilderness Medicine, Fishing, Wildlife Watch and much, much more will be offered at the next "gals getaway weekend" scheduled for May 20-22, 2005 at Lost Valley Ranch in Sedalia. Contact **Renee Herring** at **303-291-7250** for more information.

### HERITAGE, from p. 3

As Chair of the Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs (CCIA), Lieutenant Governor Jane Norton is working with support from the Southern Ute Tribe and Ute Mountain Ute Tribe of Colorado to coordinate a kick-off event honoring the proclamation of November as American Indian Heritage Month. The event will take place at the Governor's executive residence in Denver, Colorado on November 3, 2004 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. The occasion encourages all citizens to consider activities that recognize and promote awareness of the accomplishments, history and modern lives of American Indians of this state and throughout the nation.

To RSVP for this event or for more information, please contact **Karen Wilde-Rogers** in the Office of the Lieutenant Governor at **303-866-3027**.

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**Bill Owens**, Governor

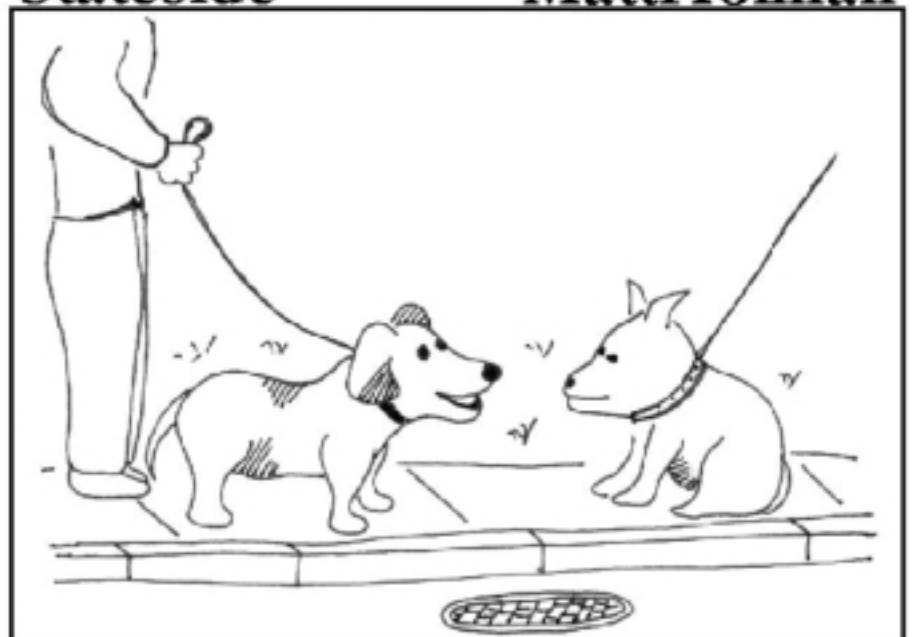
**Jeff Wells**, Executive Director

**Jeff Woodhouse**, Editor-in-Chief

**Julie Postlethwait**, Communications Coordinator, 303-866-6095

**Stateside**

**Matt Holman**



**He tells people I'm his best friend, but we're really just roomies.**