



# Stateline

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## DOC DEDICATES FALLEN OFFICER MEMORIAL

BY CHERYL AHUMADA  
OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, DOC

In 2002, after the loss of its fourteenth fallen officer, Sergeant Eric Autobee, the CDOC decided it was long overdue for a permanent, public memorial dedicated to all correctional staff, and families of the officers who had lost their lives in the line of duty. It was decided to place the memorial on the grounds of the Colorado Territorial Correctional Facility in Canon City, Colorado's oldest state prison, and the site of a 1929 riot which ultimately claimed the lives of eight officers.

In April 2005, the memorial committee members traveled to Marble, CO to select the material for the memorial. The type of stone chosen is the same as that of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier,



*Left stone is inscribed "In Honor of our fallen officers who lost their lives while performing their duty...Gone but not forgotten." Middle stone has an inlaid replica of the CDOC Correctional Officer's Badge. Right stone lists each fallen officer's name, and the date on which they perished.*

in Arlington, Virginia. Correctional staff designed, poured and finished the sidewalk leading to the memorial, and a decorative circular concrete slab, which is in front of the memorial.

The CDOC Fallen Officer Memorial was dedicated in November 2005, and christened "Memorial Plaza." Family members of fallen officers Myron Goodwin, Marc Perse, and Eric Autobee were in attendance.

The ceremony was opened by Sterling Correctional Facility bagpipers Kevin Benzel and Steve McMonagal, followed by the CDOC Honor Guard who presented the colors. The National Anthem was

*Please see MEMORIAL, p. 3*



## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

BY JEFF WELLS  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DPA

### Legislative Issues of Interest

*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.*

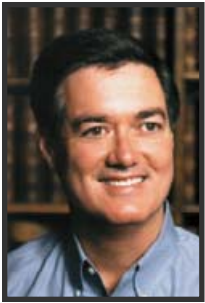
Last month brought the end of the 2006 legislative session, and in many respects it was a good session for state employees. As Executive Director of the Department of Personnel & Administration, the statutes relating to state employees are always one of my top priorities. This year, my staff and I pursued an aggressive legislative agenda with a great deal of success.

### Total Compensation

Our primary focus is always on total compensation, and this session we were able to get passed significant improvements to our total compensation package.

Governor Owens and the General Assembly provided a 3% average salary increase for state employees. This 3% includes the salary survey at 2.63% plus an additional 0.37% that we will be using to raise the salary range minimums for many of the State's 527 individual job classes. It is important to note that when we say the survey calls for a 2.63% increase, that this is

*Please see KNOW YOUR RIGHTS, p. 4*



# PERA REFORM TOPS LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

BY GOVERNOR BILL OWENS

In the last edition of *Stateline*, I emphasized just how important I considered reforming the Public Employee Retirement Association (PERA) to be. I made sure it was among my foremost legislative priorities, and impressed upon my colleagues the imperative nature of the situation. Without reform, PERA would have continued lumbering toward insolvency, putting public employees and taxpayers at risk. In fact, PERA's own projections predicted collapse within 30 years. Well, I am pleased to announce that a compromise was struck, and Senate Bill 235 was the result. S.B. 235 is the atlas on the road to fiscal solvency. The key components of the bill include:

- The diversion of one-half percentage of salary increases over the next six years into PERA. These funds will address an \$11.3 billion unfunded liability and help place the fund back on fiscally solid ground.
- A "rule of 85" for new hires, which will raise from 80 to 85 the number (calculated as age plus years of service) required to receive full retirement benefits.

These two key changes will move PERA from an infinite amortization period to a period of approximately 45 years. By the year 2034, the plan will be nearly three-fourths funded and fully so by 2051. Other items in the PERA fix:

- The board of directors will include more outsiders who have expertise in running pension plans. Currently, PERA members elect 14 of the 16 trustees. S.B. 235 cuts the total number of board members to 15 - eleven elected by the membership, and three outside experts appointed by the Governor with Senate approval. The state Treasurer will remain a member.
- The General Assembly will be required to consult an independent actuary prior to any benefit increase. The bill also includes protection against "spiking," so that large salary increases in the final years of service won't mean inordinate increases in benefits.
- The 401(k)-style defined contribution option will be expanded and made available to every new higher education employee.

Although arguably the most significant, PERA reform was not the only accomplishment of the 2006 Legislative Session:

**Higher Education** - General fund support for higher education increased by 15.3 percent. The

individual student stipend – the fundamental unit of higher ed support created by the College Opportunity Fund – will grow to \$2,580, while tuition increases were limited to 2.5 percent. Also, H.B. 1024 increased additional funding for underserved students, while S.B. 32 appropriately assured in-state tuition for dependants of Colorado's military families.

**Transportation** - The Colorado Department of Transportation was one of the hardest hit sectors of our state government during the recession, with revenues declining 41 percent over four years. As a result of Referendum C and the economic recovery, transportation funding will increase by \$350-400 million over the next two years. These funds will make sure that Colorado's infrastructure keeps pace with its burgeoning economy.

**Economic Development** – It has been proven time and time again that investments in tourism pay off exponentially. In my State of the State message, I asked the legislature for \$10 million to increase tourism interest in Colorado. The passage of H.B. 1201 will provide \$19 million for tourism this year, while also establishing an annual funding source for tourism promotion in the future.

Other notable economic development bills include: H.B. 1017, which provides \$3 million for performance-based job creation incentives; H.B. 1360, allocating \$2 million to tech-transfer research grants to help accelerate commercialization of bioscience in Colorado; and H.B. 1201, which provides \$1.5 million for the arts.

**Healthcare** – Referendum C funds helped bring a brand-new, state-of-the-art forensics mental health unit to Pueblo. S.B. 165 expanded telemedicine programs to help Colorado's rural citizens. And finally, S.B. 20 will allow Colorado to join interstate nursing compacts that will help to alleviate nursing shortages.

Higher education, transportation, economic development, healthcare – this is heavy stuff. But what's important to remember is that without Referendum C, none of this would have been possible. Instead of investing in Colorado, we would have been forced into a slash-and-burn approach to budgeting that wouldn't have benefited anyone. More than \$400 million would have been pared from the budget in the same vital areas that I've just listed. Referendum C allowed us to keep true to the voter's wishes, keep TABOR, and keep Colorado on the cutting edge – all without raising taxes.

Between PERA reform and Referendum C, the 2006 Legislative Session wasn't about today or even this year. It was about making sure that the future of Colorado is safe – and that's exactly what we accomplished.

# 2006 GOVERNOR'S STAR AWARD WINNERS



**Creativity Award Winner:**  
LEED Certification Team – Angie Fyfe, Department of Labor & Employment, Linda Smith, Governor's Office of Energy Management & Conservation, and Lance Shepherd, Department of Personnel & Administration, State Buildings & Real Estate.

**Citizenship Award Winner:**  
Jim Midyett, Hearings Reporter, Public Utilities Commission, Department of Regulatory Agencies.



**Mentorship Award Winner:**  
Dino Ioannides Rates & Authorities Supervisor, Public Utilities Commission, Department of Regulatory Agencies



**Outstanding Service Award Winner:**  
Craig Young, Fort Lewis College, IT Director



**Manager/Supervisor of the Year Award Winner:**  
C. Katherine Erwin, Manager, Office of Labor Relations, University of Colorado at Boulder

**Employee of the Year Award Winner:**  
Judy Giovanni, Purchasing Agent/Contract Administrator, Department of Personnel & Administration



For more information about the award winners and the award ceremony go to [www.colorado.gov/dpa/](http://www.colorado.gov/dpa/).

## MEMORIAL from p. 1

sung by a quartet, composed of CDOC employees Clint Carr, Randy Foshee, Fred Gifford, and Leonard Vigil. Territorial Correctional Facility (CTCF) Chaplain Dan Matsche conducted the invocation, and Warden James Abbott (CTCF), Memorial Committee Member Joyce Langloss, and Major Doug Dietrich (both from Fremont Correctional Facility (FCF)), spoke about what this memorial means to correctional officers across our State. Later, the Fallen Officer Roll Call was read by Fred Gifford and Jan Yuncker from CTCF and Richard Weems, from DOC HQ. One red rose for each fallen officer was laid on marble bench slabs in honor of their lives.

After this very solemn roll call, Warden Gary Watkins, (FCF), reflected about the most recent incident in which fallen officer Eric Autobee was slain, and the bagpipers again favored the attendees with their rendition of Amazing Grace. Retired Warden Ben Johnson spoke about the old days, and the ceremony speeches were concluded by Executive Director Joe Ortiz.

Captain Peter Pierce (CTCF) and Sergeant Phil Thomas, of the Canon Minimum Centers (CMC), who were both instrumental in the construction, unveiled the memorial. After a moment of silence, the benediction was given by Chaplain Dan Matsche, (CTCF), and the ceremony concluded with "Taps" performed by bugle player Timothy Grabin, retired DOC. Cheryl Ahumada, HQ, was the mistress of ceremonies throughout.

Executive Director Joe Ortiz stated, "For years to come, people visiting the memorial will be able to honor the heroic deeds of those correctional officers whose names are inscribed upon its walls. This memorial will forever commemorate those correctional officers who have paid the ultimate price in keeping their respective communities safe."

*Financial support was provided by Colorado Department of Corrections Employees, Colorado Correctional Industries, Correctional Peace Officers Foundation and Sierra Steel Company.*

## CDOC PAYS TRIBUTE TO OUR FALLEN OFFICERS:

Thomas Tobin, July 4, 1899  
William Rooney, January 26, 1900  
John B. Russell, June 19, 1913  
Raymond Brown, October 3, 1929  
John J. "Jack" Eeles, October 3, 1929  
Elmer G. Erwin, October 3, 1929  
John W. McClelland, October 3, 1929  
Walter Rinker, October 3, 1929  
Charles G. Shepherd, October 3, 1929  
Robert A. Wiggins, October 3, 1929  
Myron Goodwin, October 10, 1929  
Victor McMillin, December 21, 1961  
Marc Perse, August 15, 1994  
Eric Autobee, October 18, 2002

an average increase. It is very likely that no employee will get exactly a 2.63% raise: one occupational group may get 1.5%, another 2.5% and yet another may receive 3.7% for an average of 2.63%. The additional 0.37% will be used to raise many salary range minimums. Many employees that are at or near the bottom of their pay ranges may actually receive a 4 to 6% total pay increase this year.

The increase we were able to get in the area of health insurance is probably even more significant. When I came to DPA, we were at an embarrassing low of 49% of what private sector employers pay toward health care premiums. One of the successes I'm most proud of is that we have worked hard to bump that amount up to 66% this year, and 75% for FY 06-07. Please note that the 75% does not mean that the State is paying 75% of the total premium – it means that for every \$100 of employer contribution in the private sector, the State is paying \$75. Our five-year goal remains to increase this to 100%.

I should also add, that with our new plan designs, every employee can afford catastrophic health insurance, at least for themselves. I recognize that full family coverage may still be out of reach for a few of our lowest compensated employees, but that problem will diminish as we continue to move toward 100% of market rate employer contributions. That being said, I need to point out that employee-only coverage under our PPO-3300 catastrophic plan costs \$251 per month and with the State paying \$244 of that amount, any employee can cover themselves for only \$7.08 per month.

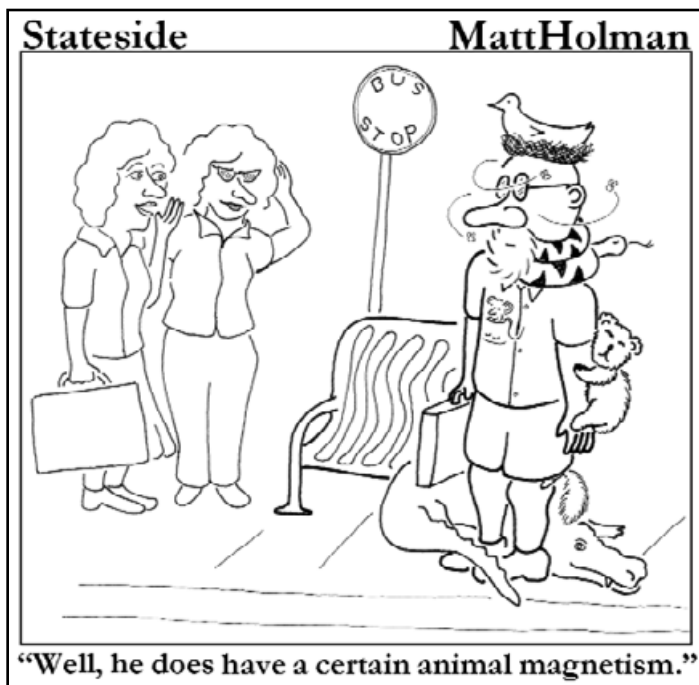
### Mileage Reimbursement

Gas prices have risen dramatically over the last several months, increasing the financial burden on all of us. This session, DPA proposed legislation providing an increase in mileage reimbursement for employees using personal vehicles for official business. The current state mileage reimbursement rate of 28 cents per mile was set in 1999, when the average price of a gallon of gas was \$1.31. Today's average price is \$2.79 - a 120% increase since 1999. Senate Bill 173 establishes a percentage of the IRS rate for mileage reimbursement: 75% for 2006; 80% for 2007; and 90% in 2008, rounded to the nearest cent. Since the current IRS rate is 44.5 cents per mile, the new state mileage rate based on passage of this bill would be 33 cents in 2006, 36 cents in 2007, and 40 cents thereafter. An increase is also provided for 4-wheel drive use, but only when authorized and necessary for official state travel. The law will become effective immediately upon the Governor's signature.

### PERA

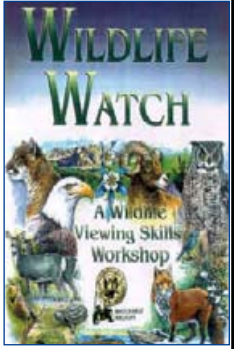
The new compromise PERA legislation, Senate Bill 235, provides a number of significant changes that will help ensure PERA's economic viability for years to come. Perhaps of equal importance is the fact that these economically beneficial changes were accomplished with only a few structural or benefit changes to current state employees. There has already been an abundance of written explanations concerning the provisions of the PERA legislation, and I won't attempt to repeat all of that material here. There is one provision that hasn't

*Please see KNOW YOUR RIGHTS, p.5*



## 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



## STATELINE

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**KNOW YOUR RIGHTS, from p. 4**

received much press, however, and I want to call to your attention to it because it potentially affects every current employee regardless of age or whether you are vested in PERA.

This change is found in CRS § 24-51-101(25), the definition of highest average salary or “HAS”. There has long been an “anti-spiking” provision to limit the amount of salary that can be included in HAS to 15% above the prior year’s actual salary. For example, if an employee regularly earned \$30,000 per year, but in their last year of employment they earned \$50,000, this salary would be limited for retirement purposes to \$34,000 (\$30,000 plus 15%). If this same employee earned \$50,000 for two years, then the 15% limitation would apply for the first year, but not the second because under current law the 15% limitation is based on the prior year’s actual salary.

However, for all employees who both are members of PERA on December 31, 2006 and thereafter have an effective retirement date on or after January 1, 2009, the 15% limitation is based on the prior year’s HAS salary rather than the actual salary. Hopefully, the following examples will clarify this distinction.

Joe, a long time state employee, gets a promotion toward the end of his career and his annual salary increases from \$30,000 to \$50,000 per year.

**Example 1** – Joe earns the \$50,000 for only one year of his last 3 years of covered employment.

|          | Actual Salary | Old PERA-HAS | New SB 235-HAS* |
|----------|---------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Base Yr- | \$30,000      | N/A          | \$30,000        |
| Yr 1     | \$30,000      | \$30,000     | \$30,000        |
| Yr 2     | \$30,000      | \$30,000     | \$30,000        |
| Yr 3     | \$50,000      | \$34,500     | \$34,500        |

\*SB 235 establishes a base year salary as being the lowest of the member’s highest four years of salary.

In this instance, the calculations of HAS are identical between current law and SB 235; but what happens if Joe earns the higher amount for two years?

**Example 2** – Joe earns \$50,000 for two of his last 3 years of covered employment.

|          | Actual Salary | Old PERA-HAS | New SB 235-HAS* |
|----------|---------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Base Yr- | \$30,000      | N/A          | \$30,000        |
| Yr 1     | \$30,000      | \$30,000     | \$30,000        |
| Yr 2     | \$50,000      | \$34,500     | \$34,500        |
| Yr 3     | \$50,000      | \$50,000     | \$39,675        |

SB 235 changes the HAS calculation for year 3 to a limit of 15% above the amount of HAS for year 2 or \$34,500 plus 15% equaling \$39,675. The former statute applied the limit to the prior actual salary of \$50,000 – hence the

full \$50,000 in year 3 is included in HAS. This change is most dramatically shown when Joe works at the higher salary for 3 years.

**Example 3**

|          | Actual Salary | Old PERA-HAS | New SB 235-HAS* |
|----------|---------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Base Yr- | \$30,000      | N/A          | \$30,000        |
| Yr 1     | \$50,000      | \$50,000     | \$34,500        |
| Yr 2     | \$50,000      | \$50,000     | \$39,675        |
| Yr 3     | \$50,000      | \$50,000     | \$45,626        |

Thus, under the current statute Joe’s HAS would be \$50,000, while under SB 235 it would be \$39,933. (average of Years 1, 2 and 3).

While these numbers may seem somewhat dramatic, I suspect many of you are thinking something like, “So what, very few, if any, regular everyday employees get this type of increase.”

I wondered about this as well and was greatly surprised to find out that in the last three years, because of the combination of promotions and the salary survey, over 3200 state employees have received at least one pay raise exceeding 15%. When you couple that statistic with the fact that over 2100 employees are eligible to retire today, and that another 1600 employees will become eligible to retire in 2007 or 2008 before the new rules take effect, you can see that a surprising number of employees may be affected by this change.

In conclusion, if you are one of the 3700 employees that will be eligible to retire before January 1, 2009 you may wish to calculate your HAS under both methods to determine your most advantageous retirement date.

In addition to the 3700 employees that will be eligible to retire before January 1, 2009, there are approximately 3600 employees that will not be eligible to retire until after the January 1, 2009 trigger date, but will be eligible in 2009, 2010, or 2011 the first three years after the new rules go into effect. If you are one of these employees, and you receive a promotion plus salary survey that exceeds 15%, you may wish to work for at least four years at the new salary in order to receive the full benefit of your promotion in your HAS retirement amount.

Check with PERA, a professional investment counselor, or an attorney if you have particular questions about what S.B. 235 might mean for you.

On the whole, it was a productive legislative session for state employees, and we’ll make every effort to build upon these accomplishments next year.

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

# LET THE GAMES BEGIN!

BY LT. GOVERNOR JANE NORTON, CHAIR

COLORADO COMMISSION OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

The Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs would like to extend an invitation to all state employees to participate in the 2006 North American Indigenous Games (NAIG). These games will be a phenomenal celebration of sport and culture for North American Indigenous Peoples of Turtle Island (North America). The 2006 NAIG is a large-scale multi-sport and culture celebration offering competition in sixteen sports for youth between the ages of 13-19, and adults ages 20 and over. The games will also feature opening and closing ceremonies and a cultural village.

This eight-day sports celebration will begin on July 2 with opening ceremonies at Invesco Field at Mile High, and associated cultural events will be held at the nearby Denver Performing Arts Complex throughout the week as well. With up to 100,000 spectators traveling to Colorado for the event, event planners have estimated that as many as 4,000 volunteers are needed for the upcoming games and related activities in the Denver area. There are currently 36 team delegations, featuring



over 8,000 athletes, registered to compete in the games.

Colorado's Southern Ute and Ute Mountain Ute Tribes are sponsoring this Olympics-style competition expected to include 8,000 – 10,000 athletes representing delegations from across the U.S. and Canada. An additional 40,000 to 50,000 supporters and spectators will

also be participating.

There are a variety of volunteer opportunities for interested individuals or organizations, providing close interaction and first-hand exposure to the proud tradition of the North American Indigenous Games. State employees are invited to participate in this exciting cultural and sporting event, honoring the history and heritage of the North American Indigenous People.

To volunteer, purchase tickets, or learn more about the 2006 North American Indigenous Games, please visit: <http://www.naig2006.com/home.asp>.

## VOTE FOR YOUR STATE PERSONNEL BOARD CANDIDATE!

BY KRISTIN F. ROZANSKY, DIRECTOR  
STATE PERSONNEL BOARD

The on-line electronic election for a seat on the State Personnel Board will be held from June 1, 2006, through June 15, 2006. The candidates are Rich Djokic, Kathy Newell and Ira Sanders. To vote follow the instructions below (these instructions will also be repeated on the back of your May paycheck):

Go to <https://www.sctc.state.co.us/spb/elections/ballot.aspx>. This will take you to the election LOGON page.

On this logon page, you will be asked to enter your **LAST NAME** and the **LAST FOUR DIGITS** of your Social Security Number. Once you enter this information, click the “LOGON” button.

You will then go to the **Online Ballot** page and be asked to **vote for one of the three candidates**. Click on the “Click here to cast your vote!” button. [The candidates’ biographies are included on this page.]

After you click to cast your vote, your voting confirmation number will be displayed. You may print this screen for your records, and log off by closing your browser.

**You must be either a trial service or certified state employee in order to have your vote counted.**

# CSP TAKES IT TO THE TRACK

BY BEAR KAY, PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
COLORADO STATE PATROL, DPS

The Denver, Westminster and Loveland Police Departments, the Adams, Arapahoe, Douglas, and Jefferson County Sheriffs' offices, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Bandimere Speedway, the Alive At 25 Teen Defensive Driving program and several national and local corporate sponsors joined the Colorado State Patrol to support the *2006 Take It To The Track* program at the kick-off ceremony on April 26.

"Unfortunately too many young drivers in Colorado, and nationally, are involved in crashes, many of which involve fatalities," says Colonel Trostel. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for young drivers, and many of these crashes are a direct result of a lack of awareness of the consequences of risk-taking behavior well as inexperience, distractions, impaired driving, and speeding. This program allows teen the opportunity to gain valuable experience and insight, in a safe, controlled environment.

"The CSP is the first state law enforcement agency to create a drag racing series for teens," said Colonel Trostel, Chief of the Colorado State Patrol. "This is the third year that the *Take It To The Track* program is being offered on evenings between April and October. The program provides teens with a safe, legal, and fun environment in which to satisfy their need for speed, while avoiding the dangers of illegal street racing.



*Photo with Colonel Mark Trostel, Chief of the Colorado State Patrol, speaking to the news media at Bandimere Speedway announcing the third season of Take It To The Track, with partners from seven other law enforcement agencies.*

The program is open to anyone with a valid state driver's license; participants pay a \$30 entry fee and can make as many runs as they wish for the duration of the event. Participation is open to any type of vehicle, but must pass a technical inspection to verify the vehicle is safe for racing. Participants ages 16 & 17 must have a minor release form signed by a parent or guardian prior to participating. Spectators over the age of 12 pay \$10 to attend, and those younger are admitted free.

The program, which began April 27, will hold twenty-two Wednesday night events, at Bandimere Speedway in Morrison. This year the CSP is being joined by seven metro area law enforcement agencies who will have representatives present at the events, to talk with teens, and answer questions.

As part of the 2006 program kick-off, yellow balloons were released in memory of the 162 Colorado teens killed in motor vehicle crashes in 2005. Sadly, 106 (65%) of the teens killed were not wearing seat belts. One red balloon also was released in memory of Clint Parker, an active member of Bandimere's *Take It To The Track* team, who died tragically last year.

Teen spectators and participants can register at the speedway, and will receive a membership card making them eligible for weekly prize drawings from Checker Auto Parts, Grease Monkey International, Ralph Schomp Automotive, Bandimere Speedway, and other sponsors/supporters of the program.

"Last summer more than 4,390 Colorado teen drivers raced safely at Bandimere Speedway, instead of on Colorado streets," said Colonel Trostel. Since the program began, more than 8,700 teens have raced safely more than 51,550 times, and more than 19,700 spectators have attended the Wednesday night events.

Carole Walker, Executive Director for the Rocky Mountain Insurance Information Association (RMIIA), pointed out that when teens take their racing to the streets, what they don't realize is that they're not only putting their lives and those of everyone else on the roadway at risk, but they may be betting their families' entire financial future. "Insurance companies will not pay a claim for a crash that is proven to be the result of a speed contest or illegal street racing," says Walker. "Insurance is intended for accidents and illegal street racing is considered a deliberate act. So, even if teens survive the crash, they risk having to pay medical bills, car repairs, and any lawsuits out of their own pocket."

The program is such a success because of the efforts of our law enforcement community and the generosity of the corporate sponsors: FirstBank, Bandimere Speedway, Checker Auto Grease Monkey International, Ralph Schomp Automotive, and the Alive At 25 (AA25) teen defensive driving program. Alive At 25 is taught by CSP and other law enforcement partners across Colorado, and for more information to go [www.alive-at-25.org](http://www.alive-at-25.org).



# MY BACK PAGES: EVERY DOG HAS ITS DAY

By PAUL FARLEY

As promised, we pick up where we left off last issue with more Colorado canine greats, including the first dog ever to serve as a paratrooper in the United States armed forces.

It's true. In 1942, a soldier of the 507<sup>th</sup> Army Parachute Regiment at Fort Benning, Georgia named Ken Williams befriended a stray dog, part coyote and part German shepherd. Williams named him "Geronimo," and since the military was beginning to use dogs to help with demolition work, "volunteered" him as his partner. Although Geronimo howled all the way down on his first parachute jump, before long he was so eager that soldiers had to hold him back until they were over the target.

The dog became famous as he jumped with the regiment at air shows, and his photograph appeared in newspapers throughout the country. President Franklin Roosevelt gave Geronimo the rank of sergeant and kept a plaster print of the dog's paw on his desk at the White House.

Although the 507<sup>th</sup> was preparing to participate in the D-Day invasion, Geronimo's partner broke a leg on a jump in late 1943, and both were honorably discharged from the Army. Nonetheless – inspired by the dog – by the end of the war American paratroopers everywhere were shouting "Geronimo!" as they jumped.



Geronimo and Ken Williams moved to Denver. A few years later, on May 11, 1947, Geronimo got out of his yard and was hit and killed by a truck on the 2000 block of South Race Street. He was buried at the Denver Pet Cemetery in Commerce City,

where to this day the tombstone of "Sergeant Geronimo" is adorned with fresh flowers and an American flag.

And then there is the heartwarming tale (tail?) of Shep. When the Boulder turnpike was under construction in 1950, a young stray puppy wandered near the work site at the Broomfield exit. Workers would toss him bits of their lunches, and after a time the dog, whom they called

"Shep," became a daily visitor. When the work was completed and the turnpike opened a year later, the dog made the toll booth his home. He became the official mascot of the turnpike, even appearing in the official State Highway Commission annual reports to the General Assembly.

The standard toll was 25¢, but many visitors would pay 50¢, a dollar, or more, and say, "keep the change for Shep," which the staff would use to buy food, treats, toys, and other items. Shep also received hundreds of Christmas cards each year from throughout the country, sometimes with money enclosed.

As the years passed and Shep got older, he became increasingly deaf and blind and developed acute arthritis. Finally, in 1964 he had to be put to sleep and the toll operators lovingly buried him near the toll booth. Donations came in



from around the country, and they were able to put up a wrought-iron railing and a marble marker reading, "Part Shepherd, Mostly Affection." You can still see his grave, often decorated with flags, flowers, and doggie toys, on the grassy hill on the southwest side of the Broomfield interchange.

*Additional background information drawn from Karen Derrico, "Unforgettable Mutts," (1999) and Greg Lopez, "To Vets of 507<sup>th</sup>, Sgt. Geronimo Lives On," Rocky Mountain New (August 16, 1992).*

### *This and That*

- "To live long, eat like a cat, drink like a dog." - German Proverb
- "The dog wags his tail, not for you, but for your bread." - Portuguese Proverb
- "One dog barks at something, the rest bark at him." - Chinese Proverb
- "Do not respond to a barking dog." - Moroccan Jewish saying