

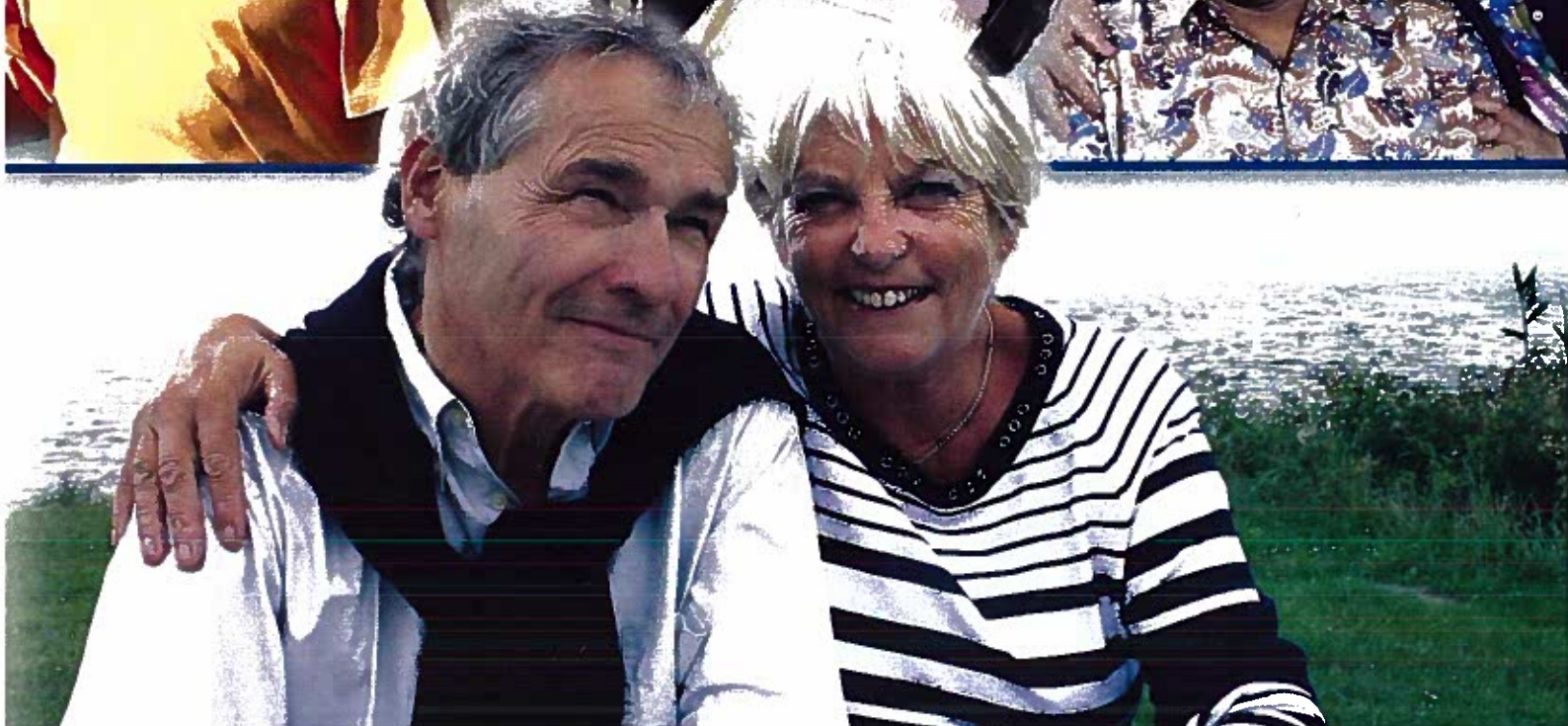


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Colorado Department
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people who help people

COLORADO COMMISSION ON AGING CCOA

SUPPORTING COLORADO'S SENIOR POPULATION

2008/09 SPOTLIGHT



Report from the Chair, Colorado Commission on Aging

It is my sincere honor and privilege to serve again as Chair of the Colorado Commission on Aging (CCOA) for 2008-09. Through the Annual Report, I am able to share with you the many accomplishments and coordination of effort and advocacy by so many individuals through education, dialogue and activities that enhance the lives of seniors throughout Colorado.

The CCOA is a volunteer organization of seventeen people appointed by the Governor and approved by the Senate committee, who provide their leadership, expertise and direction in the field of aging. Each commissioner serves up to two four-year terms. A Republican and a Democrat represent each of the seven Congressional Districts, one at-large commissioner, and one member each of different parties from the State Senate and House. This year, I would like to welcome our **new commissioners, Alice Langley, R-District 1; Debera Stewart, R-District 3; and Dr. Karyn Leible, D-District 2.**

I am very proud to work with all the commissioners who work diligently to carry out the mission of the Colorado Commission on Aging – to inform and advise decision-makers and to advocate for a better quality of life for all seniors and their caregivers, especially the low-income, rural and frail elderly.

The CCOA not only works closely with legislators, but also with the State Unit on Aging and local Area Agencies on Aging and Senior Centers to promote nutritional meals, in-home services, transportation, legal services and family caregiver support. These services improve the quality of life and independence for thousands of elderly seniors throughout Colorado.

I invite you to attend the CCOA meetings to share your knowledge and skills, and become better informed about senior issues so you can join us in advocacy efforts for all older adults. We appreciate your support for the Colorado Commission on Aging to represent the needs of seniors, strengthen programs, expand resources and help build healthier communities throughout all of Colorado.

– Sheila Casey, Chair

Accomplishments, Awards and More ...

From its beginnings in 1964, CCOA has stayed true to the course and its ongoing mission, which is to inform and advise decision-makers, and to advocate for Colorado seniors' quality of life. This past year was no exception. Following is a brief overview of our 2008 endeavors in pursuit of those goals.

Senior Day at the Capitol – February 25, 2009



Senior Day at the Capitol invites seniors from around the state to come meet and greet their legislators, attend the morning legislative sessions and take a tour. This year's event was enthusiastically attended, with standing room only in the Supreme Court chambers. In addition to the energetic and enthusiastic senior audience, more than 20 legislators were in attendance, as well as the Lt. Governor, Secretary of State, State Treasurer and representatives from the Attorney General's office.

Centenarian Celebration

Each year, CCOA sponsors the annual Centenarian Celebration during the Older Americans Month in May. The event recognizes Colorado seniors who have reached their milestone **100th (or older) birthday.**

This year's function, *Celebrating a Lifetime*, was held May 8, 2009, at the Wheat Ridge Recreation Center, continuing a tradition that annually recognizes individuals' lifelong achievement, and also focuses attention on the political and social issues associated with aging. Each of the 23 centenarians offered up the unique perspective that could only come from a century of living, learning and, in the process, enriching their respective Colorado communities.



John Daubert receives a certificate from Jefferson County Commissioner Kathy Hartman.

Additional Resources

Colorado Department of Human Resources: www.cdhs.state.co.us

Colorado Commission on Aging: www.coloradoaging.com

Silverprint: www.silverprintcolorado.org

Old Age Pension: www.coloradoaging.com

All CCOA meetings are open to the public and we encourage you to attend. Please call 303-866-2663 for a schedule of upcoming meetings.

CCOA volunteers provide their leadership

15th Annual Allen Buckingham Senior Leadership Legacy Award – Virginia Fraser, winner



Virginia Fraser (left) receives the award from Sheila Casey.

Named for Allen M.A. Buckingham, who served on the CCOA from 1986 to 1998 and additionally held other key positions in his career, the Allen Buckingham Senior Leadership Legacy Award is given to a senior who, having made a noteworthy contribution to the senior population in Colorado, is nominated by his or her peers. Allen promoted the needs of older people – especially helping to ensure that they live

in dignity, have freedom and choice, and realize full and active participation in their society. The spirit of his service is celebrated annually in this award.

The 2008 winner of the award is Virginia Fraser of Littleton. Following are some of the senior arenas in which Virginia has made a difference:

- 1 *A leader in the field of aging* – She's a pioneer in long-term ombudsmanship, setting the stage for all other states to emulate in creating their own ombudsman programs, and has been an advocate for Colorado's nursing home residents.
- 2 *Promoting a better quality of life for seniors* – Her work has focused on resident rights and quality of life for nursing home residents in Colorado, working toward a holistic model of care while maintaining an awareness of residents' desire for relationships with caregivers and the community, and being an avid promoter of creative quality incentive programs.
- 3 *Major accomplishments* – Virginia invented the Residents' Rights Bingo game, coauthored the book *Nursing Homes: Getting Good Care There* and created a training video for assisted living staff called *Making It Home*. She's past president of the National Association of State Long-Term Care Ombudsmen, a recipient of the Vesta Bowden Award and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Humanitarian Award, and has been inducted into the Colorado Women's Hall of Fame.

32nd Annual Eastern Plains Legislative Speak Out – October 2–3, 2008

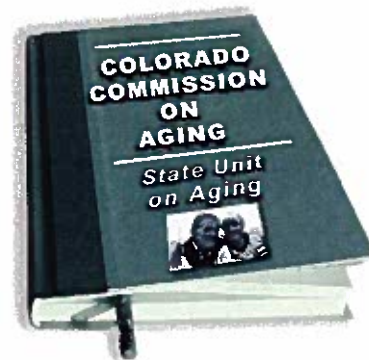
The CCOA held its October 2008 meeting in conjunction with the Eastern Plains Speak Out at the Ramada Inn on Oct. 2–3 in Sterling. The Speak Out provides a forum for residents of eastern Colorado to converge, meet with politicians and discuss local concerns. The meeting topic this year was *New Energy*, referring to the potential of wind-generated power. In addition to CCOA day-one meetings, committee reports and updates, a good time was had by all, with a banquet, bingo, breakfast and much-anticipated educational trip to the Peetz wind farm rounding out the two-day agenda.

Legislative Happenings – Championing HB08-1108 and more

CCOA is a busy group! In 2008, CCOA strongly supported HB08-1108, the Increase Funds for Older Coloradan's Cash Fund, which promised to increase state support from approximately \$5 million to \$8 million for seniors and persons with disabilities. It was proposed that by increasing such funds, many of Colorado's older and most vulnerable citizens will have greater opportunity to access supportive services, and so live with greater dignity and independence. This bill was passed and signed into law.

In 2009, the major goal for the legislature was attempting to balance the budget during difficult economic times. Bills that were passed include the following:

- SB09-228, which made budgeting more flexible and will gradually boost the state's reserve up to 10 percent.
- SB09-108 to improve state transportation funding and planning.
- HB09-1293 imposes a fee on hospitals, which then allows for federal matching dollars.
- Unfortunately, in an effort to balance the budget, a \$1 million cut to the Older Coloradan's Cash Fund was made, and SB09-276 froze the senior property tax exemption for one year.



The Commission will continue to work vigorously, championing the bills that serve and protect Colorado's seniors, and we especially thank the Legislative Committee for their advocacy and leadership.

Silverprint Colorado – Securing Our Seniors' Future

What is Silverprint Colorado? It's a bold call to action for partnerships between the nonprofit community, state and local government, and the business community to implement a plan for aging in Colorado. Silverprint's stated goal is to create a statewide strategic plan and expose gaps and redundancies in service.

This group has continued to meet and work with members of the CCOA, the State Unit on Aging and the governor's office to create a vehicle to move forward with an action plan for addressing senior issues in Colorado. The following areas have been selected as Silverprint's top five issues to be addressed:

- 1 Coordinated long-term care
- 2 Transportation
- 3 Training professionals about seniors and educating the public
- 4 Health/Wellness
- 5 Civic engagement, volunteerism and workforce

Moving forward, CCOA members and AAA (Area Agency on Aging) directors, along with others, will continue working together to pursue the goals of this very important and far-reaching endeavor.

CCOA Roll Call – Our Members, Movers & Shakers

It's a given that CCOA members are dedicated to the cause of our seniors here in Colorado. Because words of **appreciation** may often go unspoken amid the hustle and bustle of our everyday responsibilities, we'd like to take the opportunity here to **acknowledge** the names on the CCOA roster, and thank each one for his or her time and **commitment** to the cause.



Pictured left to right: Maureen Robinson, Vice Chair, D-District 6; Jerry Wathen, R-District 4; Barbara Martig, Legislative Chair, R-District 2; Steve Bender, Past Chair, D-District 5; Jeanette Hensley, Director, Aging & Adult Services; Mark Shelton, D-District 4; Debera Stewart, R-District 3; Gretchen Cerveny, R-District 7; Russ DenBraber, R-District 6; Karl Aguilera, Member At-Large; Frank Lay, D-District 7; Vivian Stovall, D-District 1; Linda Sanden, R-District 5; Dr. Karyn Leible, D-District 2; Rep. Tom Massey, R-Representative; Sheila Casey, Chair, D-District 3

Not pictured: Sen. Paula Sandoval, D-Senator; Alice Langley, R-District 1; Jamie Malone, Administration, Aging & Adult Services

Laying a Foundation for the Future – a Letter to Governor Ritter



In December 2008, CCOA drafted a letter to Governor Bill Ritter regarding the commission's future goals. The intent of the correspondence was both informative and predictive: CCOA is on the move, and we wanted to post our itinerary, show our leader(s) where we're headed and ask them to get on board and accompany us on the ongoing grand adventure of serving Colorado's seniors!

The following is an excerpt from the recent letter, outlining our proposed roadmap to success:

... It is our hope that by communicating what we are hearing from around the state, from local senior centers, community forums, area agencies on aging, private business and individuals, we, as the Commission on Aging, can fully serve you and the General Assembly in making informed decisions when it comes to Colorado's aging population.

The Colorado Commission on Aging supports further study and broad-based support of the following five areas of need regarding the aging population of Colorado:

- 1 Increase funding for the Old Age Pension Health and Medical Fund – maintain an annual increase as needed to ensure the safety of the frail and elderly;*
- 2 Support of professional education requirements for aging services providers – establishment and requirement of continuing education units (CEUs) for professional caregivers, such as Licensed Nursing Home Administrators, RNs, LPNs, CNAs, and Social Workers to increase the skill sets of these caregivers serving the senior population in a rapidly changing long-term care environment;*
- 3 Establishment and promotion of senior-friendly communities, with a focus on the issues of mobility, safety, affordability and signage in both rural and metropolitan areas;*
- 4 Support of the Silverprint Colorado initiative as a way of promoting positive aging in the state. Individual commissioners representing all areas of the state will be active participants in the Silverprint Initiative and report back to the Colorado Commission on Aging; and*
- 5 Continued priority funding for Senior Services through the ongoing support and funding for the Older Coloradan's Cash Fund. Specifically, we support the allocation of state General Funds going to Senior Services.*

... The Commission is requesting your attention be given to these issues if any arise during the upcoming legislative session or through any other discussions with you or your staff. The Commission is always available to respond to your inquiries on these or any other aging issues, as requested by your office.