



NAVIGATING OUR WAY THROUGH TODAY'S ECONOMIC STORM

BY BILL RITTER, JR.

As you know, we are in very uncertain economic times. For months, the national economy has been sliding backwards, and while we in Colorado have been holding steady and even making modest gains, we are not immune to the storm around us.

In order to protect taxpayer dollars and ensure the state is able to continue providing essential services, we must take prudent actions today in case Colorado's fiscal condition worsens in the weeks and months ahead.

Therefore, on Sept. 25, I announced a series of pro-active and preventative actions that will give us greater flexibility should state revenues dramatically decline. These actions include:

Effective October 1, 2008, agencies will not be allowed to hire new employees - unless those positions are for essential personnel or those critical to protecting the health, life and safety of Coloradans. The Governor's Office of State Planning and Budgeting will provide details for an exemption process, and certain positions will be automatically exempted. Higher Education, Department of Education, the Legislative and Judicial branches, and other statewide elected officials cannot be required to comply but will be requested to do so. The

Judicial Branch and Department of Education already have voluntarily implemented similar hiring freezes. *This is not a request for layoffs or mandatory furloughs for current personnel.*

Capital construction projects that did not receive an appropriation explicitly for construction costs before FY 2008-09 will be put on hold. This applies only to new (non-continuation) projects that received their first appropriation for construction in FY 08-09. This delay does not apply to the issuance of certificates of participation for Higher Education or K-12 projects authorized through SB 08-233 and the BEST bill.

I have asked that the issuance of grants for the construction of new full-day kindergarten classrooms be delayed.

I have directed department heads to scrutinize their budgets for additional savings and work with their employees to identify other money-saving ideas and strategies. As part of this process, we are reviewing findings from the Government Efficiency and Management (GEM) Performance Review to see if any of the cost-saving recommendations can be accelerated. The GEM Review identified \$200 million in savings and benefits over a five-year period.

While I remain confident and optimistic about Colorado's economy and the state's budget, these precautionary measures will allow us to continue serving as responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars. If, over the next few months, we determine these precautions have served their purpose and are no longer necessary, they will be reversed.

Thank you again for all you do for the State of Colorado.

PERA ADDRESSES THE CURRENT FINANCIAL MARKET

Participants in PERA may be wondering about the status of the plan and its health in the face of record-breaking performance issues on Wall Street. In response to participant concerns PERA has addressed some of the most common questions in its September 30th "Latest News" posting on its website. Click on: www.copera.org/PERA/about/latestnews.stm#Update to read PERA's latest statement concerning the impact of the recent financial events on its portfolio.

For information on your 401k, or other supplemental PERA retirement accounts, please review your individual account records.



MAKING THE STATE A BETTER PLACE TO WORK

BY RICH GONZALES
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DPA

For the past year and a half, we've been trying to improve the environment within the workplace of the state personnel system. The intent of this focus is to make the state a more positive place to work. Part of that effort is to solicit concerns and issues from employees. As the state Personnel Director, I have made it clear that I am willing to meet with state employees as a group, or individually, in order to address any work place concerns they may have. We've also appointed the State Ombuds person, Karen Schaefer, and expanded the services of CSEAP by improving the State Employees Mediation Program, and increasing the number of counselors that are available in the more rural areas of the state. This effort has already shown results in the form of more contacts across the state personnel system, including DPA. We still have much to do to ensure that the workplace is somewhere where people feel comfortable voicing concerns, without fear or intimidation.

On the other hand, when we create an environment where acts of retaliation are common and are considered to be standard fare or the status quo, all of the above-listed efforts and resources will be for naught. Although acts of retaliation have been scattered, it is our goal that they simply should not be happening in any number. DPA believes that everyone should have a zero tolerance for retaliatory behavior in the workplace.

A much more productive approach lies in the resolution of workplace concerns that are conducted in a cooperative manner between all involved parties. This approach is a prime example of how a successful organization operates. Individuals who engage in retaliation are impediments to the creation of a productive work place. Retaliation in any form, in any agency or department across the state system as a form of government has no productive or useful outcome. Retaliation as a management theory that makes people "bend to your will or else," is unacceptable and cannot be tolerated. Education and information for our employees and our super-

visors is paramount. DPA has undertaken to make mandatory for all department employees and supervisors to participate in and complete a "Respectful Workplace" seminar. This seminar teaches employees how to see things from your peer's perspective with an appreciation for sensitivity, mutual respect, and courtesy for others. In addition, CSEAP Director Randi Wood will be conducting seminars that address bullying in the workplace. Bullying is definitely a devastating component and sometimes consequence of retaliation. This instruction will shed light on the deleterious effect that bullying perpetrates in the workplace. This seminar presentation will be mandatory training for all DPA employees, as well.

An environment free of career threats, intimidation, and fear, and open to honest employee communications is a workplace that values employee input. Getting the job done without the use of fear or reprisal is that which we all should strive to achieve.

"In taking revenge, a man is but even with his enemy; but in passing it over, he is superior" – Francis Brech

I encourage all employees of the state of Colorado to be aware of the ill effects of retaliation and stand up and report such acts to their supervisors or to any and all of the resources that have been

listed in this article for relief of your concerns.

To that end, DPA maintains an open door policy and is always willing to discuss your workplace concerns regardless of the department to which you are assigned. So, take advantage of CSEAP, the Ombuds, the DPA Personnel Director's office, your supervisors, your Executive Directors, and give us all an opportunity to help you resolve any issues you may be encountering in the workplace; particularly as it pertains to retaliation and retribution.

While it is true that we may not like everyone we work with, we must keep in mind that the converse may also exist in that others may not like working with us. The fact of the matter is that we must put aside those concerns and come to terms with the fact that we still have a job to do, we still have citizens and visitors to the state to serve. More importantly, we all must realize that we must demand an expectation of a respectful, safe, and non-threatening workplace in which the major focus is not on retaliation, revenge or retribution, but rather on honor, pride, and productivity; we must strive to be in the "superior" position.



ONE STEP AT A TIME: OPERATION BOOK DRIVE

By Army Capt. Michael Fields,
Executive Officer, 220th MP Company



Sgt. 1st Class Britton Fell and Staff Sgt. Eloy Silva unload books at Dar Al Hikmah (House of Wisdom) in Baghdad, Iraq. The Soldiers' mission at the school is to help improve operations and communication between agencies.

BAGHDAD, August 1, 2008 – Soldiers from the 220th Military Police Company, in concert with Iraq's Ministry of Education and the staff of an Iraqi school, are helping change the educational prospects for juvenile detainees under the supervision of Coalition Forces.

Until recently, Iraqi teachers at Dar Al Hikmah (House of

Wisdom) have been trying to teach 7-12 grade Iraqi youths without the aid of advanced textbooks; but with the cooperation of Iraqi and U.S. agencies, more than 1,500 high school books arrived in time to celebrate the first anniversary the school.



Over 1,500 academic books donated to Dar Al Hikmah from Iraq's Ministry of Education.

“With approximately 6.5 million illiterate citizens in Iraq, Operation Book Drive was our chance to assist in the efforts to educate this student population,” said Army Capt. Michael Fields, leader of the liaison team tasked with helping improve operations and communication between agencies. “Upholding our Army values, our team decided to do the right thing and pursued the acquisition of all the necessary books for the sake of the students.”

What began as a simple idea evolved into a letter of support drafted by Fields that explained the necessity and amount of books needed to sustain operations for the proper education of the juvenile detainees. The final translated proposal letter was ready by mid-July with the hope of making a difference for the entire school.



TIF / House of Wisdom Liaison Team, left to right: Sgt. 1st Class Britton Fell; Dar Al Hikmah's Principal Ali Mahdi Hussain, Staff Sgt. Eloy Silva, school staff supervisor Akeel Hassan, and Capt. Michael Fields

On July 26, Ali Mahdi Hussain, the school's principal, hand-carried the letter to Iraq's Ministry of Education. During the meeting, Hussain praised the efforts of the Iraqi staff and U.S. Army, who worked seven days a week to accomplish the mission.

After their discussions, the Deputy Ministry of Education offered all the requested books for the school at no monetary cost. The meeting also inspired the ministry to visit the school to discuss vocational programs and future testing.

During the last week of July, school staff supervisor Akeel Hassan delivered the news to the liaison team that Hussain had taken possession of all the books, which were in storage for years and are estimated to be worth more than \$15,000.

Dar Al Hikmah is the only reform school for juvenile detainees under the supervision of Coalition Forces. Curriculum includes a religious discussion (taught by moderate clerics), art, civic and government courses, and a soccer program.

With the arrival of the new, bare essential resources, approximately 300 Dar Al Hikmah students will have an opportunity to pass the required examinations and excel to the next level.

“During this period of stabilization, this effort was simply cooperation between two foreign nations with the same mission for the little school of Dar Al Hikmah,” said Fields. “Together, the Iraqi staff and a team of Colorado soldiers made a small difference, one step at a time.”



STATE IMPOSES NEW ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE FOR QUALIFIED VOLUNTEERS

In the 2008 legislative session, the General Assembly modified Article 1 of Title 28 through HB 08-1097 concerning leave provisions for certain employees who volunteer during state-level emergencies. Instituted in July, some of those changes include granting administrative leave, up to 15 work days in a calendar year, for members of the Civil Air Patrol who are called to duty for a mission per C.R.S. 28-1-104, et seq. The legislation further grants up to 15 work days in a calendar year to those employees who are qualified volunteers of a qualified volunteer organization on a list maintained by the Department of Local Affairs and are called to serve in the event of a state-wide emergency per C.R.S. 24-32-2202, et seq.

The legislation further provides that for both forms of leave, employees cannot lose any benefit that would have otherwise been afforded if the employee had not gone out on leave. The employer would not be required to grant the leave when an employee has been deemed essential and it would cause the employer to suffer "economic injury."

Existing statute and rule also cover certified disaster volunteers of the American Red Cross by allowing up to 5 days of discretionary administrative leave per fiscal year for a disaster

in-state. If these certified volunteers and the American Red Cross are also considered qualified under the new Act, the time would run concurrently. In other words, the five days of American Red Cross leave would count as part of the 15 days for qualified volunteers.

Release of Volunteer Firefighters

Through SB 08-116, the General Assembly passed legislation that provides job protection for employees who are volunteer firefighters when they are required to leave or cannot report to work in response to an emergency. The conditions that need to be met for this job protection include the following: the employee is not an essential employee to the operations; the department has received documentation from the fire chief of the employee's fire department that delineates the employee's status; the emergency is within the response area of the employee's fire department and requires the fire chief to issue a summons for all firefighters to respond; and the fire chief provides written documentation verifying the time, date, and duration of the employee's response time.

While paid leave is not required, it is recommended that supervisors work with employees on the use of annual leave or an alternate schedule. A volunteer firefighter's absence cannot exceed the amount allowed under C.R.S. 24-32-2225 or 24-32-2226 (changes enacted under HB 08-1097). For questions or further information please contact Joi Simpson at 303.866.5496 or joi.simpson@state.co.us

STATE EMPLOYEES CONNECTED TO THE MILITARY ARE ELIGIBLE FOR FAMILY MILITARY LEAVE

There seems to be little knowledge among state employees concerning the expansion of the reasons for FMLA leave entitlements. These changes were signed into law in January 2008, and then effectuated by State Personnel Director's rule in July 2008. Eligible employees can take 13 weeks (520 hours) of FML for any qualifying "exigency" for a spouse, child, or parent on active duty or called to active duty in support of a contingency operation directly related to acts of war. A "child" under this entitlement is defined as one who is qualified for military service.

The reasons for the leave are non-medical and could include, but are not limited to: arranging for daycare, financial and legal arrangements, and attending meetings directly related to military operations. The term "exigency" still needs to be defined by U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) and while this portion of the law has yet to be codified in the FMLA regulations, employers are expected to comply. Military orders will meet the certification requirements and departments are expected to interpret this new entitlement broadly, i.e., leave can be taken to spend time with the service member before deployment.



Military Caregiver Family Leave

Eligible employees are also entitled to 26 weeks (1,040 hours) of military caregiver family leave for a spouse, child, parent, or "next of kin" for a covered service member who suffers a serious illness or injury while on active duty. DOL is working on defining "next of kin," but at this point, it is interpreted as the nearest blood relative.

A covered armed forces service member includes a member of the National Guard or the Reserves. In order to be eligible for the leave, the service member must be undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy in "outpatient status," or on the temporary disability military retired list for a "serious injury or illness."

The entitlement for the leave is for a *single* 12-month period. The medical certification must state the condition occurred in the line of duty and the certification issued by the U.S. Department of Defense in lieu of the State's Medical Certification Form is acceptable.

Military caregiver leave can be taken on an intermittent basis and runs concurrent with all other forms of leave. In addition, all other state rules related to FMLA will continue to apply.

DIGITAL TRUNKED RADIO SERVICE - COLORADO'S SHINING STAR DURING THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION

BY JILL ELGGREN
OIT COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

Many state employees had a role in helping to maintain state services and security for the Democratic National Convention (DNC), held in Denver during the last week of August. And if you watched the news or were downtown, you know that security was especially tight given that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security designated it as a National Special Security Event. But what you probably don't know is that the statewide Digital Trunked Radio Service (DTRS) was a crucial component that made it possible for the various local, state and federal security providers to communicate with one another.

DTRS, which is operated and managed by the Governor's Office of Information Technology (OIT) Communications Services group, is the primary public safety communications system for all Colorado state agencies as well as for many local, county and tribal jurisdictions in the state. It also serves as a secondary means of interoperability for those local agencies not using DTRS as their primary communications system.

Several weeks prior to the DNC, members of the Communications Services' DTRS team worked diligently to ensure radio system coverage to all convention venues. Their work included installing two new temporary repeater sites and supplementing two existing repeater sites in order to support the more than 1,100 additional radios (loaned by Motorola, Inc.) that they programmed and distributed. This team also partnered with the City and County of Denver, state agencies and federal government, to install radio equipment for the Multi-Agency Dispatch, the center supporting primary communications and security for the DNC.

Beginning on the Sunday prior to the convention, DTRS personnel staffed both the DTRS Network Operations Center (NOC) and the Multi-Agency Communications Center (MACC) 24 hours a day through Saturday, 30 August 2008.

During that week, the system averaged 225,000 calls per day and hit a new monthly record of nearly 6.1 million calls for the month of August. Despite this increase, the DTRS team was so well prepared that the average busy wait time was reduced to a mere 1.3 seconds.

The following Communications Services employees are to be commended for their tremendous role in this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to partner with so many disparate agencies at all levels and in building trust for future inter-governmental operations:

Denver Transmitter Building: Ed Boyer and Matt Engelbrecht

DTR Monitoring team: Tony Hall, Ron Gill, Jim Weiss, and Keith McClune

NOC: Larry Riddle

MACC: JD Curto and Mark Allen

Denver Shop: Olen Teague, Bill Voges, Bob Foley, Phil Guttman, Lynette Rosetta

Mechanical Engineer Manager: Randy Mitchell
Supply: John Coco

Limon Shop: Chris Brown

DTRS Engineering: Dennis Kalvels, Kim Coleman, Balta Moreno, Ron Lutz, Gene McGahey, Kerry Mulford



Keith McClune and Tony Hall monitor DTRS traffic in the NOC

IF YOU HAVE A STORY IDEA FOR STATELINE,
PLEASE CONTACT YOUR AGENCY'S OR DEPARTMENT'S PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER OR COMMUNICATIONS
DIRECTOR AND ASK HIM OR HER TO SUBMIT AN ARTICLE.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNED, PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO CONTACT US AT

stateline@state.co.us



ABOUT THE COLORADO COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

"The need and right to communicate is the most fundamental of Human Rights" - National Deaf Education Project, Colorado Resource Guide (1988)

As an American, one of our "inalienable" rights includes our right to communicate. Colorado recognizes that some of our Citizens are deprived of this basic tenet of our existence due to lack of access, or even the lack of knowledge of The Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, a State provided resource.

The Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, part of the Department of Human Services, exists to help bridge the communication gap by providing assistance on a personal basis and with system-level advocacy.

The Commission has five primary functions:

- 1.) *Central resource for information as well as referrals*
- 2.) *Education and Training*; This training is made available to empower consumers and educate state agencies regarding communication accessibility.

3.) *System-level advocacy*; Studies are conducted to make recommendations to the General Assembly regarding any legislation that may facilitate and streamline the provision of general governmental services to the deaf and hard of hearing community.

4.) *Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (TEDP)*; This program provides telecommunications access by supplying equipment to deaf and hard of hearing citizens who qualify.

5.) *Legal Auxiliary Services Program*; This program oversees the coordination and payment of legally qualified sign language interpreters and communication access real-time translation providers for legal proceedings in State Courts.

The Commission staff is available any time. Please allow us to introduce you to how we can assist with the fundamental right to communication access.

We may be reached at:

Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
 Department of Human Services
 1515 Sherman Street, 2nd Floor
 Denver, CO 80303
 303-866-4734 (TTY/VP)
 303-866-4824 (voice)
 303-866-4831 (Fax)



REGISTER NOW FOR THE GOVERNOR'S STAR AWARDS LUNCHEON AND AWARDS CEREMONY

GOVERNOR BILL RITTER IS SCHEDULE TO ATTEND, PLEASE JOIN HIM IN HONORING OUR STATE'S TOP ACHIEVERS

The event will be held Wednesday, October 15, 2008, at the Arvada Center. The cost is \$35/per person, which includes lunch.

Parking is free

You can register on-line for the event at:

www.colorado.gov/dpa/forms/dpa/star08.asp to register for the event.

We hope to see you there!



STATE RECYCLING PROJECT A SUCCESS

State employees turned out in force the first week of September to recycle their personal electronics. The two-day event was the idea of the Department of Regulatory Agency's (DORA) Greening Government Team, and resulted in 53,469

pounds of personal electronics collected from 486 state employees.

That's enough elec-



tronic equipment to fill two-and-one-half semi-trailers full, front to back

and top to bottom. Diverting this material from landfill has the environmental equivalent of not burning over 6,000 gallons of gasoline.

Guaranteed Recycling Xperts (GRX) provided the recycling services, and Best Buy provided a \$5,000 grant to pay for the event.

Representatives from the two event locations, CDOT Headquarters and The Division of Wildlife Headquarters, along with Greening Government representatives from Health

Care Policy and Financing, Higher Education, and the Governor's Energy Office helped to plan the event.

Participation was widespread at both the Denver event, and the Department of Corrections event, held the next week at DOC the headquarters in Colorado Springs.

The Greening Government Coordinating Council hopes to provide similar waste reduction events in the future, and to offer them in locations outside of the Denver-metro area.RTD

TRANSIT PASS OPTIONS FOR 2009

The Governor's Energy Office is in the process of reviewing transit pass options for state employees located within the RTD service area, and is committed to providing State employees with access to RTD's employer pass program, as a part of the Governor's Greening Government initiatives.

It is our expectation that we will offer both the Eco Pass, and a new RTD pass program known as Flex Pass, to state employees for the 2009 calendar year. Our goal is to increase ridership and provide cost effective alternate transit options to state employees.

To provide accurate and timely information to all state employees, the Governor's Energy Office website will have current information about the program; Visit www.colorado.gov/energy/greening/index.asp for updates.

If you are a Human Resources contact in an office did not participate in the Eco Pass 2008 program, but are interested in participating in 2009 program, please contact Angie Fyfe, Greening Government Program Manager, at 303.866.2059 or angie.fyfe@state.co.us to discuss program options.

GETTING MARRIED? DON'T FORGET YOUR BENEFITS

Congratulations. With marriage, a lot of things are going to change in your life - your home, your car, your bank account. Your employee benefits will change too.

Are you going to add your spouse to your state medical and dental coverage? Or do you want to cancel your state coverage and join your new spouse's plans? Whichever you choose, you need to enter your change into the State's on-line Benefits Administration System (BAS) and provide documentation of the marriage within 31 days of the event (the wedding day counts as Day 1). **Miss that 31-day window and you will have to wait until the next open enrollment period.**

Think you'll be too busy with the honeymoon, "thank you" cards and setting up joint checking? Then take care of it ahead of time. BAS allows you to enter changes due to events like marriage up to 90 days in advance. Just be sure to provide the documentation to your agency's benefit administrator within 31

days of sayin, "I do."

Also, don't forget about optional life insurance with the State. An event like marriage opens access guaranteed issue life insurance for you and your spouse. What is guaranteed issue optional life insurance? This means that an employee can enroll in up to \$60,000 (\$30,000 for the new spouse) in optional life insurance without having to fill out a medical history statement and be evaluated by the insurance company. The employee still pays the premiums for this coverage, but this is a valuable and often overlooked opportunity. Again, the enrollment must be entered into the on-line BAS within 31 days of the marriage.

Keep in mind that the 31-day window between open enrollment periods is not unique to marriage. It applies to other events such as **birth, divorce** or when a spouse **gains** or **loses** benefits. Any change to the State's benefits must be completed **within 31 days** of the event and Day One is the date of the event itself. If you miss this 31-day window, you'll have to wait until the next open enrollment period to make your change.



STATEWIDE EMPLOYEE STATISTICS FOR SEPTEMBER 2008	
Promotions	103
New Hires	512
Demotions	17
Transfers	272
Resignations	124
Deaths	2
Terminations	20
Retirements	19
Employees Laid Off	3
Total Employees within the System	45,633
<i>These number reflect changes within the State Personnel System only</i>	
C-SEAP SERVICES PROVIDED STATEWIDE, AUGUST 2008	
Number of Clients	309
Total Client Contacts	437
Number of Workplace Consultations to Individual Supervisors/Managers	80
Number of Group-Based Organizational Development Services (Training, Mediation, Crisis Response, Problem Solving Facilitation, Work Group Performance Enhancement)	38
Number of Employees Participating/Attending Organizational Development Service	317

Upcoming Training Opportunities

October/November Professional Development Center Training Opportunities:

Change Management : (Oct 6) Learn to move from being change resistant to becoming a change agent.

Pre-retirement: Level III: (Oct 7) A planning workshop for people 1- 3 years from retirement.

Building a Retention Culture: (Oct 16) Learn skills to help you retain your best team members.

Managing Your Time and Priorities: (CSU - Oct 21)
Balancing time and workload is an important factor to personal success at work. In this

class, you will learn the tools to become a more efficient worker through organizing and prioritizing your job duties.
Coaching, Counseling and Mentoring Skills: (Nov 4th) In this full day workshop, you will learn how and when to apply each of these concepts for successful supervision and building great teams.

Multi-Generational Workplace: (Nov 18th) This half day workshop will help you understand each of the four generations in the workplace.

FYI: Live or work in the southern Metro-Denver area? ACC provides numerous computer training opportunities in their Greenwood Village and Parker locations. Click on the ACC link on the PDC webpage for more information.

Please visit www.colorado.gov/dpa/dhr/train for registration, schedule and fee information.

