

## ON THE STUMP

### Hodge seeks to grow state's aerospace biz

DENVER — Sen. Mary Hodge, D-Brighton, Jan. 11 introduced a bill that would establish limited liability provisions to shield commercial space flight companies from lawsuits that are not based on negligence or intentional wrongdoing.

"The Colorado Aerospace Act will be the first step in attracting new industry to Colorado," Hodge said. "Our state has some of the most highly educated workers in the country and the second-largest aerospace workforce, so it is imperative that we work to bring these jobs to our state."

She added that the bill makes Colorado a more attractive state for the growth of the aerospace industry by creating an open and transparent regulatory climate.

The Colorado Aerospace Jobs Act is one component of the Senate majority's "Colorado Works" jobs package, a



Hodge

### Coffman begins job creation effort

LONE TREE — Rep. Mike Coffman, R-Colo., Jan. 11 announced that he will focus his efforts in the 6th Congressional District to determine what small businesses need to create more jobs.

Coffman, chairman of the House Small Business Subcommittee on Investigations, Oversight & Regulations, credited Rep. Cory Gardner of the 4th Congressional District with the invention of the One More Job initiative.

Coffman said Gardner contacts small business owners in his district to determine the specific conditions necessary for them to create one more



Coffman

### ArapCo volunteer organizer named

LITTLETON — A new volunteer coordinator has been hired by Arapahoe County to develop new service opportunities within county government and to recruit assistants from the community.

Carrie Flint will oversee the Volunteer Connections program, which joins citizens with all aspects of county government through volunteering. She will be in charge of volunteer recruitment; forms and policies; orientation and training; and a database to track more than 37,000 service hours each year.

These hours translate to more than \$700,000 in budget relief for the county as determined by local average wage statistics.

Flint also will take the reins on recruitment and management of more

series of bills focused on job creation and economic growth to be introduced throughout the session.

Hodge represents all of eastern Adams County.

### Application rules bill passes biz committee

DENVER — The CLEAR Act, or Creating Level Expectations for Application Review Act, passed the House Economic & Business Development Committee Jan. 26 by a vote of 11-1-1.

Sponsored by state Rep. Jerry Sonnenberg, R-Sterling, the bill ensures that the rules of an agency in place when an application is filed govern that application for the duration of its review.

Currently, rules are subject to sudden changes, which force applicants to withdraw their original application and refile.

"The state should be working to accommodate the needs of business owners, not the other way around," said Patrick Boyle of the Colorado Competitive Council. "When businesses must go out of their way to accommodate

a rule change, that's not fair. Those losses add up."

### Gov't grants, contracts key to Bennet inquiry

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Sen. Michael Bennet is asking businesses, nonprofits and local communities for feedback about federal grants and contracting processes.

On Jan. 25, Bennet launched two online surveys for Coloradans who have applied for, submitted bids for, or been awarded federal grants or contracts.

"As I travel the state, I've heard from Coloradans who have had both positive and negative experiences with federal grants and contracts," Bennet said. "These surveys will help me gather more feedback about how these processes have worked and how to make them more efficient and effective."

The surveys can be found at <http://bennet.senate.gov>.

Bennet recently released a first-of-its-



Bennet

kind comprehensive collection of clear, easy-to-find, and accurate information on pilot projects, grants and workforce development initiatives available to Coloradans through the Affordable Care Act.

The Guide to Grants resource is also available on Bennet's website.

### Obama visit: Suburbs key for 2012 election

AURORA (AP) — Living in the Denver suburbs? Expect a lot of attention from presidential candidates this year.

President Barack Obama's stop in Aurora Jan. 26 highlights a battleground within a battleground state. Presidential hopefuls won't just be looking at Colorado, they'll concentrate their campaigning in Denver's swing suburbs, where crucial independent voters are concentrated.

GOP presidential candidate Mitt Romney held a fundraiser in Aurora in June.

Obama talked about energy at Buckley Air Force Base in Aurora. Colorado was one of five states the president visit on a three-day swing to promote his State of the Union proposals.

### Foreclosures focus of new bill

DENVER — Two Democratic legislators from Denver launched a pair of bills on Jan. 23 to help responsible Colorado families avoid foreclosure.

The bills introduced at a press conference Jan. 22 by Reps. Crisanta Duran and Beth McCann strive to protect neighborhoods and home values in a real estate market still reeling from the Great Recession.

Currently, 20 percent of homeowners in Colorado are under water.

The largest number of foreclosures is happening in the Denver area, and all data indicates that tens of thousands of foreclosures remain on the horizon.

Duran's bill requires mortgage lenders to provide responsible borrowers who are trying to stay in their homes every available alternative — including offering loan

modifications — before executing a foreclosure.

The bill also requires lenders to provide an explanation whenever a borrower is denied a modification.

McCann's bill closes a loophole in Colorado law that allows lenders to foreclose without offering original documents or documents clearly demonstrating the chain of title to prove that the lender has the right to foreclose.

Holders of evidence of debt can now foreclose simply with a statement from the holder's attorney that the holder's interest in the property is valid.

"This bill will save responsible homeowners from getting kicked out of their homes for simple mistakes that could have been avoided by instituting a more solvent process," McCann said.

### Xcel rate hike request killed

DENVER — The Colorado Public Utilities Commission Jan. 11 denied a request by Xcel Energy for a \$100 million interim rate hike while its full electric rate case is considered by the commission.

The PUC said the company failed to demonstrate that it would be adversely impacted by maintaining current rates during the six-month period while its request for a \$141.9 million rate increase is fully reviewed.

A 2010 law passed by the legislature allows the PUC to consider interim rates if the utility shows it will be adversely affected by the revenue deficiency while hearings are held on the suspended

rates. Xcel Energy had asked that interim rates be implemented by Jan. 21.

The PUC emphasized that the \$141.9 million request would be fully vetted during the hearing process and that the company would be granted recovery of all reasonable costs.

A decision is not expected until this summer.

Xcel Energy's proposal would increase monthly bills for residential customers, using an average of 632 kilowatt-hours per month, by \$4.01, or 5.99 percent. Monthly bills for commercial customers, using 1,123 kwh per month, would rise by \$5.30, or 4.83 percent.



PHOTOS BY CASSANDRA PUGH/The I-70 Scout

Davies Library in Deer Trail hosted a Crazy Contraptions With LEGOs activity Jan. 20. Pictured from left are Bowen Jarrell and Courtland Garner, Liddyva Lavoie, and Troy Svec. For more coverage of this event, see the Jan. 27 edition of the *Eastern Colorado News*.

## Civil War museums change perspective

MARY FOSTER  
Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Inside Louisiana's Civil War Museum, battle flags line the walls. Uniforms, swords and long-barreled guns fill museum cases beside homespun knapsacks, dented canteens and tiny framed pictures of wives that soldiers carried into battle.

In the back, one collection is devoted to Jefferson Davis, one-time president of the Confederacy formed by the southern states which seceded from the United States in 1861, complete with his top hat and fancy shoes at the spot where his body once lay in state.

The items are all housed in a little red stone building next door to the bigger and much more heavily visited Ogdon Museum of Southern Art and near the National World War II Museum. Yet, 150 years after the Civil War, the little museum finds itself struggling — like others both in the North and South — to make changes and stay relevant with new generations.

For some museums, that means

more displays on African-Americans or exhibits on the roles women played as combatants and spies. For others, it means adding digital maps and electronic displays to attract tech-savvy youth for whom the war holds no memories. Or it may simply mean adopting a wider, more holistic approach to the war — without taking sides.

But updating exhibits is not always easy for museums because of the high costs, curators say. Some would-be visitors' dollars are kept away by the perception that southern Civil War museums are one-sided — or even racist — because of the legacy of slavery in the South.

"It's a challenge on several fronts, one is getting enough money for it," said John Coski, historian and library director at the Museum of the Confederacy in Richmond, Va. "Most have recognized the need to make the transition to a more modern perspective, but for some that's a struggle. Especially in the South, there are still strong feelings about some of these museums."

Louisiana's museum opened in 1891, then called "Confederate Memorial

Hall: The Battle Abbey of the South." The combative name was dropped in the 1960s and today it's seeking a "more inclusive, broader" perspective, museum curator Patricia Ricci said. The museum has been invited to become affiliated with the Smithsonian Institution, which will further spur the effort to showcase a more modern interpretation of the war.

"I think we will add some information on the Union effort here," Ricci said. "And we will probably make some other additions with it. It always comes down to money, and we never have enough."

Today, the museum has the second largest collection of Confederate artifacts in the U.S. Visitors can view the uniforms of eight Confederate generals from Louisiana, rare swords and rifles, more than 125 original battle flags, and rare photographs.

Ricci, the museum's curator of 31 years, notes that fewer people have visited the museum with each decade since the 1950s. But the 150th anniversary offers hope that a tide of new visitors will arrive. Attendance in December was up by 800 people over 2010, Ricci said.

The 150th anniversary observances began in April with the commemoration of the first shots fired at Fort Sumter in Charleston, S.C. It will end in four years with remembrances of the Confederate surrender at Appomattox in Virginia.

For now, the Confederate Museum draws just a fraction of the visitors who flock to bigger museums nearby, averaging about 16,000 people a year. That's down from some 20,000 visitors before Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans in 2005.

The museum's main revenue source is the \$7 fee collected from each visitor, leaving it forever scrambling to make ends meet. Many artifacts are in need of restoration; the building needs a new slate roof and still hasn't added the handicapped facilities it wants.

"We have to be very frugal," Ricci said. "I look at the World War II museum which gets millions of visitors and wish we could get just part of that."

Some visitors do stumble upon the museum after visiting the others nearby — and are surprised by its scope.

"I think it's a very important part of our history," said Rose Adams, 47, visiting

from Dallas. "This is a wonderful display, full of such interesting things. I just happened on it after going to the World War II museum."

Interest in the Civil War got a huge boost in 1990 with the airing of Ken Burns' Public Broadcasting Service documentary on the war, still the most-watched public television series ever.

"One of the interesting things is that the series did in the North was it really provided a sense of ownership of the Civil War, which had been since 1865 the province of the South," Burns said. "We ceded the interest generally to the South, which is unusual, because it's usually the winners who write the history, not the losers."

But he notes museums that might have once been shrines to one side or another are adapting new kinds of displays exploring the war from new angles.

"I think a lot of that is changing and getting more centered on the war and not a distorted idea of it," Burns said. "Basically museums have started to interpret a more holistic look of the war."

In Charleston, the National Park Service has worked to make anniversary events more hospitable to blacks, offering events featuring Gullah story tellers and basket weavers, discussions of slavery, and programs with re-enactors portraying black units that fought for the North. Gullah is the culture of the descendants of slaves who live on the region's sea islands.

Later this year the Charleston Museum will mount an exhibition about Robert Smalls, the slave who commandeered a Confederate transport vessel and piloted it past Southern batteries to the blockading Union fleet. He later served five terms in Congress from South Carolina.

Still, the feeling that southern museums dedicated to the war are racist is a lingering problem, said president and CEO of the Museum of the Confederacy, Waite Rawls.

"It's still one of the greatest challenges Confederate museums face, and we are all working on it," he said. "Unfortunately the Confederate flag was used as a symbol of white supremacy in the civil rights era. We got hit with a double whammy of the 1860s and the 1960s."

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