

# Ski Country EduCator

January – February 2009

## **Hold on, it's going to be a bumpy ride!**

With the state budget anywhere from 77 million to 600 million in the red this could be one of the most contentious and least joyful legislative sessions in years. Luckily for K-12 Education the Colorado Constitution calls for funding to be increased by CPI plus 1%. But with the economy in the dumps and home values continuing to fall who knows what CPI might look like in March.

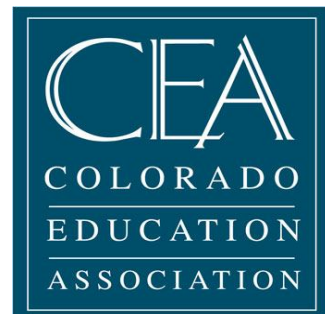
Keep in touch with what is happening at the capital by going to the CEA website and clicking the link "At the Capitol". Keep in touch with your legislators and make sure they understand that the way out of a sluggish economy is to invest in quality education.

The buzzwords seem to be reform and innovation. Make sure your legislators hear that public school employees are not opposed to reform and innovation. But in order to make any kind of innovation work, we must have a voice in designing the innovation. And reform must be meaningful and measurable. Who better to lead the way than those of us in the trenches?

...Dennis Carlson, Ski Country UniServ

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**Preschool Teachers Organize in Moffat County**

Preschool teachers in Moffat County have joined the Moffat County Education Association. With the help of MCEA co presidents Michele Conroy and Craig Smith close to 100% of the Preschool staff are now members of MCEA.

Concerned about added job responsibilities and pay that is not commensurate with other employees with equal certification and responsibilities; these classified members are turning to MCEA, Ski Country UniServ, and CEA for support and guidance.

Preschool members outlined the qualifications they must have and the duties they must perform on a daily basis in a meeting with local leaders of MCEA. Co-president Craig Smith's first comment was "why do you do this?" Their immediate response was "we love the kids, and we do it for our students." But they would feel much better about their jobs if their pay was equal to other employees with similar duties.

"MCEA's role is with our members, and we will always advocate for better pay schedules, better working conditions, and clear expectations for employees, regardless of classification." ...Michele Conroy, Co-president - Moffat County Education Association

Ski Country UniServ would like to give special thanks to Preschool members Kim Maneotis and Carol Taylor for assisting in this organizing effort.

We wish them luck in their endeavors and would like to express our great appreciation for their membership.

### **Summit County Education Association working to close the Achievement Gap**

The Summit County Education Association is piloting a mentorship program in January to assist low performing students in Summit County Schools. Retired teachers, current teachers, and community members will mentor and tutor individual students struggling to meet education attainment goals. Summit County EA will be using dues dollars donated by local president Mark Clark as well as matching funds from CEA to finance the program. Retired teacher and former President of SCEA Sioux Barr will be the point person in organizing the program.

SCEA President Mark Clark and Ski Country UniServ Director Dennis Carlson met with Linda Barker, CEA Director of Teaching and Learning, on January 6<sup>th</sup> to talk about how CEA and Ski Country UniServ could assist the local association in this program.

"It is important for our members and our potential members to understand that our Association is a professional organization. And that we are not only concerned about

member rights, salaries, and benefits, but also about student achievement and professional development.”

... Mark Clark, SCEA President.

If you are interested in more details about how the program is progressing and how to implement a similar program in your local association contact us here at Ski Country UniServ or contact Mark Clark at [MarkClark@summit.k12.co.us](mailto:MarkClark@summit.k12.co.us).

### **Independent Institute – up to their old tricks**

In late November and early December you may have received a communication from the Independent Institute with instructions for how to receive a refund for your EMO (Every Member Option) money. This is becoming quite regular with the Independent Institute, although some of our school districts have actually managed to block these communications when sent directly to our members through school email addresses.

Every Member Option is money that is collected separately from your dues dollars and is used on political action usually in four ways.

- Donations given to CEA recommended candidates
- Donations to help fight anti public education ballot initiatives
- Donations to help pass pro public education initiatives
- Donations given directly to local associations for school board races and mill and bond issues

Members may ask for that money to be returned if requested by December 15<sup>th</sup> of each year.

The Independent Institute is part of the “too extreme for Colorado” crowd. It is responsible for placing Amendments 49 and 54 on the Colorado ballot. It is funded by many out of state far right, anti-union, anti-public education individuals and groups. The Independent Institute and its executive director Jon Caldera would like nothing more than to remove our voices from the political process and detest the fact that we have been successful in electing pro public education legislators and successfully fighting their attacks against us.

In the future, if you receive these messages from the Independent Institute. Delete them as spam mail, ask your tech people to filter these messages from the district email, or respond with “please remove me from your mailing list”. “I know what you are about and I am not interested in your anti-union, anti-public education propaganda.”

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