



SKI COUNTRY EDUCATOR

November – December 2006

Election 2006 was a great success

Most of our recommended candidates were elected to the various political offices that represent Ski Country UniServ. Dan Gibbs was newly elected to the Colorado Legislature in House District 56 and Kathleen Curry was re-elected in House District 61. Evie Hudak was re-elected to the State Board of Education. Mark Udall and John Salazar were both re-elected to Congress. Bill Ritter was elected Governor of Colorado, Cary Kennedy was elected State Treasurer, and John Suthers was elected Attorney General.

Thanks to all of you who voted and especially thanks to those of you who donated your time in volunteering for the various candidates. The political process is very important to what we are able to accomplish for our members both at the state and national level. Hopefully, now that we have an increasingly public education friendly legislature along with a Governor that we supported and helped elect, we can be more proactive in influencing legislation that brings more dollars to public education and improves working conditions for both our classified and certified members.

When the legislative session starts in January keep abreast with happenings in the legislature and visit skicountryuniserv.org regularly to find out how you can be involved in the legislative process.

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**Are there organizations out there that are
competing with us for members?
Yes, maybe right in your own back yard!**

Our competitors are more diverse now than ever before. Twenty years ago our only competition was apathy and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) an organization with few Colorado members and with which we now work in various coalitions. Now there is competition from groups that specifically target NEA and its state and local affiliates including “independent” groups such as the Association of American Educators (AAE), Christian Educators Association International (CEAI), and the National Association of Professional Educators (NAPE). We would like to provide you with information concerning one group in particular that is gaining members in the Roaring Fork School District and possibly members in some of our other locals.

Association of American Educators (AAE)

The AAE positions itself as an alternative to membership in NEA and says it is “an organization for professional educators who are more concerned about our children’s right to a good education than they are with just their own benefits or personal agendas.” AAE bases its philosophy on character education for children. Membership includes \$2 million liability insurance from Forrest T. Jones Co. and a newsletter, “Education Matters.” A member has to find his own attorney and be reimbursed.

Annual membership is \$150. AAE has 10 state organizations, none in Colorado. It does not have staff or local organizations. It is headquartered in Mission Viejo, California. AAE is associated with a variety of pro-voucher/privatization organizations including Center for Education Reform and Thomas Fordham Foundation.

Organizations like the AAE provide no legal assistance, just liability insurance.

Our Association takes special pride in our legal services program that includes not only \$1,000,000 in liability insurance coverage, but much more importantly personal legal assistance from UniServ directors and CEA attorneys (who practice only in school and labor/employment law) for matters of dismissal, evaluation, child abuse, and many other job-related topics. We

are proud of the onsite, immediate representation through our UniServ program – experienced staff people not more than a phone call away, skilled and knowledgeable about evaluation, salary, discipline, contract disputes, and a myriad of employment topics. Our UniServ Staff help our local leaders and members in many other ways beyond legal assistance – collective bargaining and other salary/benefits negotiations, political organizing, lobbying school boards and the legislature, communications, organizational development, member recruitment and retention, and more.

Organizations like the AAE say they are apolitical and that representing our members in the “political arena” is a bad thing.

Our Association provides a tremendous service to our members through lobbying – representing our members at the school board, the legislature, and congress on education funding, children’s issues, and employee issues. We get involved in politics because the people who make decisions about public education are elected officials and, as educators, we have a duty to advocate for our interests and those of children. We also recommend candidates for elected office to help our members decide who will be a “friend of education” once elected.

Organizations like the AAE offer print publications and the opportunity to attend conferences and workshops. Of course, we do too.

We also provide workshops, right in our members’ locals, on topics they care about. And we provide research for our members and our locals. However, our “support” for our members doesn’t end there and isn’t just in print. Our support is also from real people who come to your work place, not just talk with you on the phone, and real people who help your local negotiate salary, benefits, and working conditions. The AAE does not and cannot provide this support.

AAE, and others like it, cannot match our benefits of belonging. Nevertheless, when our competitors try to appeal to the same potential members we want to join us – by pointing how different they are from us or by denigrating our Association or by suggesting that they have services that we don’t have – they are competition worthy of our collective attention. That is why we share this information with you.

But I don't wanna!

Early one morning, a mother went in to wake up her son.

"Wake up, son. It's time to go to school!" she said.

"But why, Mom? I don't want to go." he replied.

"Give me two reasons why you don't want to go." said the mom.

"Well, the kids hate me for one, and the teachers hate me, too!" responded the son.

"Oh, but that's no reason not to go to school. Come on now and get ready." said mom.

"Give me two reasons why I should go to school." requested the son.

"Well, for one, you're 52 years old. And for another, you're the Principal!"

Extreme Sports

