



# SKI COUNTRY EDUCATOR

September – October 2007

## Membership is the life blood of our Association

Many of us lose sight of the many important things that CEA, NEA, and our local Association members have achieved over the years for teachers and school employees. Public employee pension plans; Paid vacation, sick, and personal leave days; Employer funded medical, dental, and vision insurance plans, to name a few.

When speaking to potential members about the importance of belonging, remind them that the benefits they enjoy were the result of the toil and perseverance of Association members in the past. Without the diligence and continued work of current Association members these benefits could possibly become a thing of the past.

I challenge all of you to recruit at least one new member this fall. Remind them of the gains made on their behalf by the 3.2 million members of NEA and the 40,000 members of CEA, past and present.

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## **Milestones in Ski Country (2006-2007)**

**Aspen Education Association** became one of two locals in Colorado to obtain a starting salary of **\$40,000**.

**Steamboat Springs Education Association** through their Collaborative Bargaining Process condensed their teacher's salary schedule from 30 years to 20 years. Now a teacher in Steamboat Springs will earn their maximum earning potential in 20 years as opposed to 30 years. Making it possible for a teacher to make anywhere from **\$25,000** to **\$50,000** more dollars over the span of their career.

**Meredith Deem** of the **Eagle County Education Association** was elected to the **Fund for Children and Public Education** Committee for **CEA**.

**Norm Bolitho** of Glenwood Springs High School has been elected President of the **Roaring Fork Community Education Association**. **Matt Marran** of Carbondale Middle School, and **Megan Talbot** of Basalt Elementary School were elected Vice Presidents of the **RFCEA**.

**Renae Dove** has been elected President of the **Moffat County Education Association**. **Krista Schenck** was elected Vice President.

**Michele Conroy** of the **Moffat County Education Association** was re-elected to the **CEA Board of Directors** to represent **Ski Country UniServ** and **Noel Gannett** of the **Roaring Fork Community Education Association** was elected alternate to the CEA Board.

**Krista Paradise** of Glenwood Springs is the new President of **Mountain Education Association**, which is our local affiliate of the **Colorado Mountain College**.

**Brad Kindred**, **Brett Sperl**, and **Mike Wilde** have stepped down from their positions as President of **Steamboat Springs EA**, **Moffat County EA**, and **Roaring Fork Community EA** respectively. Thank you **Brad**, **Brett**, and **Mike** for your service and hard work.



## Believe in a Better Colorado

*Believe in a Better Colorado* is an unprecedented alliance among the state's three largest education associations to inform public school employees and citizens about Colorado's dwindling tax base for essential public services.

The ultimate goal is to adopt a new tax system to fund public services that are critical to our state's future – such as K-12 and higher education, health care and transportation.

**Why now?** The changing economy puts new demands on Colorado's public schools. The current tax system doesn't support preparing all students for success in a knowledge-based global economy. Colorado must invest more in public education, from preschool through post-secondary, to meet 21st century demands.

Colorado is a wealthy state, but spends less than the national average per student. Measuring education spending as a percentage of personal income, only two states spend less than Colorado on K-12 and higher education, and only one state spends less on teacher salaries and benefits.

The state's tax structure, which is piecemealed together and contradicts itself, must change by 2011 – the same year today's high school freshmen will graduate. That's when Amendment 23 funding will shrink and the Referendum C "time-out" will end, but TABOR spending limits will remain.

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Research ties the quality of education to a community's quality of life. It's the best investment Colorado can make. The quality of public education – just like roads, water, public health, open space and social services – is affected by economic and fiscal policy decisions.

Colorado's solution must come from a shared effort among citizens – from educators to business leaders to community groups and elected officials.

**What can this campaign do for me in my community?** Consider what could happen to public education in Colorado if citizens supported essential public services the way they backed the space race in the 1960s. What would happen if individuals and businesses in every community believed in a better Colorado the way they believed our country could put a man on the moon? That kind of public support could lead to incredible resources for public schools – for Colorado's future. It starts with public school employees understanding that the state finance context in which they work is at odds with itself. When we better understand the need for different funding for essential public services, we can be ambassadors for public education. If we tell our stories to the community, we can hope for more investment from citizens in our community and statewide for public schools and other essential services that are critical to Colorado's future.

**What can you do?** Educate yourself – and colleagues and friends. The first step begins in fall 2007 with educating the state's tens of thousands of public school employees about the need to more effectively fund essential public services.

Simultaneously, leaders from CASB, CASE and CEA – the Colorado Association of School Boards, the Colorado Association of School Executives and the Colorado Education Association, respectively – are working toward solutions with the business community, elected officials and leaders representing other essential public services, such as university presidents and hospital directors.

The next phase is for educators to share this message with neighbors, friends and others in every Colorado community.

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