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April-May 2014

SENIOR DAY AT THE CAPITOL

The 33rd Senior Day at the Capitol was held on April 2. The Colorado Senior Lobby has been the sponsor of this event since its inception.

All the events were recorded. You can experience the action by going on-line to ColoradoSeniorLobby.org. In the upper right corner is a link to the You Tube page set up by the Senior Lobby.

We consider this an important step in using technology to enable everyone to experience the event. There are several separate recordings making it easier to watch over time.

We are very fortunate to have available the technical skills that can provide such a high-quality product. A special thank you to: **Karin Hall** (owner of SeniorsResourceGuide.com, Director and Web Master), **Steve Grund** (master of ceremonies who also provided technical and editing assistance), and **Randy Little** (owner of Colorado QR, who provided the videographer — phone 303-716-1423).

We are thankful for our special Guests:

Lieutenant Governor Joseph A. Garcia. It was an inspiring talk by Lieutenant Governor Garcia. It was especially noteworthy that he was available for questions from the floor.

United States Army (Retired) Major Henry “Duke” Boswell. A true hero from World War II. “Duke” lead the pledge of allegiance in the morning and told War Stories during lunch. Since many of the attendees have direct memories of the war, it was of particular interest.

Reproduction of newsletter provided by Ed Shackelford,
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Mark Koebrich, News Anchor for Channel 9NEWS. Mark's father was a pilot in WW II and he had several interesting stories about his father.

Jennifer Ballentine: Director of Senior Lobby & Executive Director of Life Quality Institute, a nonprofit organization dedicated to education of healthcare professionals and the public in palliative care and related topics. Jennifer provided us with a better understanding of the meaning of palliative care.

Palliative Care is an emerging program for providing a quality, more natural life in a person's last months. We believe this is an important program and would anticipate supporting legislation that would promote the values of palliative care.

There were 17 legislators who came by during either the morning or afternoon session. Fifteen of these were Democrats and two were Republicans. We are a non-partisan organization. This is a clear indication that the Senior Lobby needs to establish improved relations with the Republicans and find a mutual basis to work together.

We consider it important to hold the event in the Capitol. The largest space available is the Old Supreme Court Chambers. It is unfortunate that we are limited in the number of seats available. We have each year requested an additional room where attendees would be able to hear the proceedings. But the policy of the Capitol is that this only be available for legislative committee hearings. We know there were some disappointed people. But if we were to hold the event at another location with a larger space we would not have the same participation from the legislature. There is the possibility that there might be a new, larger space in the Capitol available next year.

IMPORTANT LEGISLATION THIS SESSION

Telecom bills

There are 5 bills affecting the telecom industry — basically telephone land lines, cable for both TV access and telephone access using VOIP technology, mobile phones, and internet access.

Primarily these bills deregulate the industry. This has overwhelming legislative support. The intent is to bring competition to the industry and provide for 21st century technology to flourish. No longer will the Public Utilities Commission be able to assist if you can not resolve differences with these providers.

The Senior Lobby hopes that the legislature is perceptive that deregulation provides better service at a competitive price. Seniors depend on the land lines to a greater extent than the general population so they have a vested interest in success of the legislation..

The ultimate folly is to think that something crucial to your welfare is being taken care of for you.

—Robert Brault, American operatic tenor

A special thank you to the Volunteers of America for providing the Senior Lobby with access to their meeting rooms for the weekly Legislative Committee meetings and for the monthly Board of Directors meeting.

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These individuals provide important pro bono support for the Colorado Senior Lobby

The Senior Lobby encourages you to track your phone bill and measure whether there are increases in the cost of service. Although hopeful that competition will keep cost to consumers from increasing there is a possibility that costs will increase. Seniors would be one of the groups most affected if there are increases.

A concern of the Senior Lobby is the process by which these bills were drafted and introduced to the legislature. There was no meaningful participation by any person or group representing the consumers. These were drafted by industry and the governor's office. This was called stakeholder involvement. Then were introduced late in the session and "fast tracked" through the legislative process.

This is not the Senior Lobby's idea of stakeholder involvement. There should have been consumer input during the drafting of the bills.

The Senior Lobby will work diligently to do its best to see that this does not happen in the future. We are firm believers that all impacted parties should be at the table when significant legislation — not just approximately 35 lobbyists and representatives of the governor's office.

We encourage all seniors to contact their legislators and demand fairer, more comprehensive involvement of all parties affected by important legislation.

The bills might have ended up just the same — but the process becomes very important in having open government.



View of the crowd in the Old Supreme Court Chamber

Security is when everything is settled, when nothing can happen to you; security is the denial of life. —Germaine Greer

Identify your greatest fear and walk directly at it. — Eleanor Roosevelt

Love and work are the cornerstones of our humanness. —Sigmund Freud

Facts are the air of science. Without them you never can fly.

—Ivan Petrovich Pavlov



Jayla Sanchez-Warren with DRCOG talking about Older Coloradans Act



Lieutenant Governor

Joseph A. Garcia



Major Boswell with Bob Epstein—Chairman and Ed Shackelford — President of Senior Lobby



Jennifer Ballentine — Director of Senior Lobby and Keynote Speaker

There was been a surge of bills introduced last week, just days before the end of the session. Several are complex and need detailed scrutiny. Shown below are the bills with a brief description. Please let us know if you support or oppose any of these bills.

HB 1369: Durable Medical Equipment Supplier License - Requires a durable medical equipment supplier that currently bills or plans to bill the Medicare program for services or products to have a license with the Secretary Of State. The licensee must be physically located w/in the state or within 50 miles of the state, have sufficient inventory and staff to do business, and be accredited by an organization recognized by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

SB 180: Transfer Senior Dental Program to DHCPF - The bill moves the existing senior dental care program for low-income seniors from the Department of Public Health and Environment to the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing; directs HCPF to make grants to Area Agencies on Aging or other grantees designated by an Area Agency on Aging to arrange for dental services for eligible seniors; directs the medical services board to promulgate rules governing the program including itemizing dental services to be covered and maximum fees to be charged for such services; establishes a senior dental advisory committee.

SB 187: Colorado Commission Affordable Health Care - Creates the Colorado Commission On Affordable Health Care to study and make recommendations regarding health care costs, focusing on evidence-based cost controls and access and quality of care and including legislative and regulatory modifications that could make health care affordable while improving access and quality of health care.

SB 196: FAML I Insurance Program Wage Replacement – Creates the Family And Medical Leave Insurance program to provide partial wage replacement benefits to eligible individuals who take leave from work to care for a new child or a family member with a serious health condition or who are unable to work due to their own serious health condition.

SB 207: Seniors Contributions To Pooled Trusts - The transfer of assets by an individual who is 65 years of age or older to a pooled trust does not constitute a transfer without fair consideration. The Department Of Health Care Policy And Financing shall not delay an individual's eligibility for medical assistance or otherwise penalize an individual for entering into a joinder agreement, transfer agreement, or other agreement to transfer assets to a pooled trust so long as an actuarially sound spending plan is submitted with the agreement to the department or to a county department of social services that is responsible for acceptance of Medicaid applications.

Those who do not stop asking silly questions become scientists. — Leon Lederman

There is always room, if only in one's own soul, to create a spot of Paradise, crazy though it may sound. — Henry Miller

If you empower dummies, you get bad decisions faster. ~Rich Teerlink, chief executive officer of Harley-Davidson

Everybody in life gets the same amount of ice. The rich get it in the summer and the poor get it in the winter. ~Bat Masterson (William Bartholomew)(1853–1921)

Can't Get It Right? Let Go

The story is told of a Zen monk who was asked to dedicate a temple by writing the words "The First Principle" using his best calligraphy for display above the main door.

The monk sat at his table and carefully made the symbols on a sheet of paper. But a Zen master looked at it and said, "That's no good. Can you try again?" The monk performed his calligraphic art a second time with the master standing over him. Once he'd finished, the master again said, "No, that's still not good enough. Do it again."



The monk worked all afternoon and into the night, with the demanding master rejecting one attempt after another. He was close to exhaustion when the master finally stepped away to attend to other duties.

Relieved for a time from the pressure of observation, the monk sighed and mindlessly sketched the symbols again, without paying attention to the finer points of his art. The master returned a few minutes later, looked at the paper, and smiled. "That's perfect."

Paradoxically, I've found that sometimes letting go is the only way to get what I've been seeking!

Made You Laugh

Comedian Will Rogers was meeting President Coolidge, who was said to have absolutely no sense of humor. Rogers bet a friend he could make the president laugh in 20 seconds or less.

A formal introduction was made: "Mr. President, may I introduce my friend, Mr. Will Rogers." As they shook hands, Rogers made a quizzical face and said, "I'm sorry, I didn't get your name?"

Coolidge burst out laughing, and Rogers won his bet.

SAVE THE DATE

SENIOR LOBBY ANNUAL MEETING AUGUST 16, 2014

LOCATION CASTLE ROCK

There will be a short business meeting. Most of the meeting will consist of a program featuring legislators and people serving the senior community.

You do not have to be a member to attend — just have an interest in matters affecting seniors.

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“Healthy citizens are the
greatest asset any
country can have.”
— Winston Churchill

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