



IMPACT

JANUARY
2009

Upcoming Events

Legislator's Breakfast

January 12 | 11:30 a.m.
Community College of Aurora

Annual State of the Base Luncheon

January 14 | 11:30 a.m.
Doubletree Hotel

Business before Hours

January 14 | 7:30 a.m.
PrintColorado

Member Orientation

January 21 | 4:00 p.m.
Chamber Conference Room

Business after Hours

January 22 | 4:30 p.m.
The Summitt
411 Sable Blvd. (6th & Sable Blvd.)



Newsletter Online

Don't forget that the monthly *IMPACT* is on our Web site before you get it in the mail! The newsletter is sent via bulk mail at the end of every month, and can take up to 14 days to get into your hands.

The monthly package you receive in the mail is chock full of offers and information from your fellow Chamber members, as well as registration forms and meeting notices from The Chamber. Be sure to open it and look through the flyers as well as the newsletter!

Chamber events get New Year started right

Two important events will help Chamber members start their new year off right.

On Jan. 12, members will have the opportunity to meet state legislators from the Eastern metro area and hear directly from them how they plan to address the challenges facing Colorado in 2009.

Then on Jan. 14, the CEO of one of the largest economic engines in the State will give his annual "State of the Base" address including a rundown on how **Buckley Air Force Base** impacted the economy of Aurora and the region during 2008.

The first Legislative Breakfast of 2009 will be held on Monday, Jan. 12 at the **Community College of Aurora** CentreTech Campus beginning at 7:15 a.m. State legislators, both representatives and senators, that serve the Eastern Metro area are expected to attend and share their views on the 2009 legislative session that begins on Jan. 7. The meeting will be hosted by **CCA** President Dr. Linda Bowman, past chair of the **The**



Chamber and Jim Suss, chair of **The Chamber** Government Affairs and Education Committee. The gathering will also serve as the first meeting of the New Year for the GA&E committee which is completing work on policy white papers that will delineate **The Chamber** position on critical issues expected to be discussed by the Legislature. An RSVP for this breakfast should be made by Jan. 8 to Janice Cooper at 303-344-1500.

The latest information from military community at **Buckley AFB** will be provided by Col. Wayne McGee, commander of the **460th Space Wing** at his annual State of the Base address on Jan. 14 at the **Doubletree Hotel SE** (I-225) beginning at noon. The wing

delivers global infrared surveillance, tracking, and missile warning for theater and homeland defense. It provides services to 77 associate organizations from all branches of the service including the **Colorado National Guard** and several federal agencies. The Aurora base has consistently had a strong economic impact on the area both as an employer and user of various business services. More than 90,000 people in the Front Range region are associated with the Wing. Reservations for the \$25 luncheon are required and seating is limited. Please call Janice Cooper at 303-344-1500 before noon on Jan. 13.



Col. Wayne McGee

It's a wrap – The Chamber closes out 2008

Reflecting the national trend, it was a year of change for the 104 year-old **Aurora Chamber of Commerce**. Membership, key to the ability of **The Chamber** to support the business community, continued to be steady with increased support from **Arapahoe County** and several corporate members. Small businesses, which depend on **The Chamber** for business-to-business contacts and strong advocacy for their concerns continued to support **The Chamber** as their collective voice.

Nowhere was the leadership role of the **Aurora Chamber** more evident than the strong support and effort it put into pushing for passage

of mill levy proposals 3A and 3B for **Aurora Public Schools** and **Cherry Creek School Districts**. The initiatives will mean much needed improvements and new construction will move ahead keeping the Eastern Metro area schools strong and competitive. Chamber President **Kevin Hougen** who made more than 30 presentations in support of the initiatives said the passage would mean continued economic vitality as we continue to "grow our own" for businesses in the area.

As we entered the New Year, the news was good from a major economic engine in the Eastern Metro area. **Buckley Air Force Base's** commander, Col. Wayne

McGee told a crowd gathered for the annual State of the Base luncheon that the Space Command base would continue to grow and that they had added nearly \$1 billion to the economy during the past year.

Dr. Richard Wobbekind added his assessment of the state's economy at the State of the Economy breakfast. He was joined by **Dick Hinson** with the **Aurora Economic Development Council** and **Corri Spiegel**, the new head of **Centennial Economic Development**. While none were able to predict the slump the country experienced this fall, **Dr. Wobbekind** did indicate some serious weaknesses on the horizon.

The Chamber was again

[continued on page 3]



Jo Snell
Chair

As we enter the New Year and reflect back on 2008, we realize the only thing constant in business is change. The **Aurora Chamber of Commerce** continues to adapt to an ever-changing climate to provide quality programs and services for today's Chamber members.

With change there will be opportunities in this challenging economy. We will need to seize the leadership opportunity and start building for the future. This coming year, when times are tough, we will explore more opportunities to work together. **The Aurora Chamber** Board of Directors, along with our staff and volunteers, are reaching out to the membership for your input and ideas on how we can all work together.

We will be working with a number of local business entities together to create a one-stop shop for your business education needs. This new Business Alliance includes:

- The Aurora Chamber of Commerce
- Better Business Bureau
- Aurora Business Development Center
- Denver Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber's Mission

The mission of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce is to serve as a voice for the business community, acting as an advocate for its members on issues that affect their growth and long-term economic vitality.

Chair's Letter

Challenges and opportunities abound in 2009

- Greenwood Village Chamber
- City of Centennial Economic Development Office
- Arapahoe/Douglas Works! Workforce Center
- Adams County Workforce & Business Center
- Arapahoe Library District
- Aurora Public Libraries

What we are creating will provide our membership with the resources, opportunities and support necessary to operate a successful business in the Aurora/Denver Metro area. Over time, we expect to see the depth and breadth of resources continue to grow.

One of our jobs at **The Chamber** is to provide a progressive approach and perspective on critical issues facing our communities and then to help foster and build momentum for progressive ideas. A critical challenge we face every day is the role of government in business. We are encouraging our local, state, county, and federal governments to exercise caution during their decision-making

process of revamping ordinances and regulations governing our business concerns. A major economic crisis like the current one could cause legislative and regulatory responses that later have to be modified. TABOR, Gallagher, Amendment 41, Amendment 23 come to mind. Regulation of our business markets should be guided by simple principles such as transparency, responsibility, and accountability.

We have all experienced tough times before, and by working together we can do more to support our long-term plans to help make our communities the best places in Colorado to work, live, and play. Please feel free to contact your Chamber Board of Directors or the hard-working staff of the **Aurora Chamber of Commerce**; it's time to seize the leadership opportunity this economy presents!



DON'T FORGET: "Every employee of a Chamber member is a member of The Chamber"

Please route this issue to your sales reps, account managers, marketing directors, HR and PR departments. You can also access each month's newsletter online at our website, www.aurorachamber.org, so you can forward it to every employee in your company!

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Ken Smith | *Qwest*
Jo Snell | *E-470 Public Hwy. Authority*
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The **IMPACT** is published monthly for the members of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce. Subscription rate to nonmembers: \$50/year. Advertisers: The Chamber members—use the **IMPACT** to advertise your products and services to over 1700 Aurora Chamber members. Advertising space only available to members. The **IMPACT** also accepts preprinted inserts. Contact The Chamber for details. Deadlines: the 10th of the month prior to publication.

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Year in Review [continued from page 1]

selected by the **U.S. Chamber of Commerce** to head the When Work Works program in the metro area designed to single out for the prestigious Sloan Award companies that have shown a commitment to innovative and flexible workplaces. Ultimately four metro businesses were recognized including the **Aurora Chamber, Arapahoe Douglas Works!, Merrick & Company** and **The Medical Center of Aurora**.

Jeannie Ritter headlined the annual Women in Business Unsung Heroes Breakfast in March sponsored by the **Aurora Credit Union Alliance** with *Venus Martinez* from **Northrop Grumman** and *Marlene Husson* with **Aurora Mental Health** taking top honors.

The much anticipated 53rd Annual Chamber Awards Banquet used the Phantom of the Opera theme to showcase the best of the best in Aurora and the Eastern Metro area naming **1stBank of Aurora**, *Rev. Robert Galinas*, the **Rotary Club of Aurora**, *Jim Suss* of **Suss Buick, Pontiac GMC**, *Lee Cooperman* with **FastSigns**, *Al Liu* with **Mt. Fuji Restaurant**, **Pinnacol Assurance**, *Congressman Ed Perlmutter* and *Gayle Jetchick* who heads the new **Havana Business Improvement District** as 2008 winners, joining a constellation of leaders from years past.

The Chamber also kept its strong ties to the military and aerospace contractor communities with another successful Armed Forces Recognition Luncheon. Sponsored by **Northrop Grumman** and featuring keynote speaker *Congressman Ed Perlmutter*, the event, again emceed by popular radio personality *Rick Crandall* with the **Colorado Freedom Memorial**, honored the top young enlisted members of Aurora's growing military community. **The Chamber's** work to advance veteran's issues was also recognized by the **United Veteran's Committee** which gave them the Outstanding Organization Award for 2008.

A record number of initiatives in 2008 meant **The Chamber**, working through the active Government Affairs and Education Committee headed by *Jim Suss*

and *Bob LeGare*, was very busy advocating for a business friendly vote helping defeat a number of initiatives that could have had a negative impact on members (see related article by member *Chris Bray*). Thanks to the committee and the excellent work of Chamber lobby group **Axiom Strategies**, members stayed on top of critical issues.

The arts were not neglected either with **The Chamber** and the **City of Aurora** organizing another successful Banks in Harmony Concert series sponsored by **Wells Fargo, 1st Bank** and **Citywide Banks** as well as an evening of fun at the **Aurora Credit Union Alliance**-sponsored Fox Gala.

Yes, it was a busy year. The **City of Centennial** moved into new digs and began work on its economic development plan. **Rural Metro Ambulance** stepped up yet again to sponsor the highly popular Leadership Aurora Golf Tourney. The **Aurora Chamber Foundation** Reward Fund was directly responsible for the capture of a number of felons. The **Aurora Police Department** and *Chief Dan Oates* won a special award from the U.S. Secret Service for their exceptional support of the Democratic National Convention. **Lend Lease** broke ground for their spectacular Horizon

Uptown development. The Buckingham Mall came down and the **Gardens on Havana** began going up all under the watchful eye of *Gayle Jetchick* and the new **Havana Business Improvement District**.

The **City of Aurora** had a banner year being named an All American City; one of the best places to build personal wealth by **Salary.com**; and best city for use of technology to create a seamless environment between local government and constituents by the **Center for Digital Government**.

The **University of Colorado Hospital** was named one of America's Best by *U.S. News and World Report* and, in addition to the Sloan Award, **The Medical Center of Aurora** was named one of the top cardiovascular hospitals in the national **Health Care Administrators Network**.

Topping off the year was the announcement by 2008 **Civitan** Man of the Year *Kevin Hougen* that **The Chamber** would be moving in early spring to newly renovated offices in the **Westerra** Building at 14305 E. Alameda Avenue.

All in all, 2008 was indeed a memorable year, one full of promise for an even better year ahead.

Sharp recognized by BPW



WOW! She's WOY —
Chamber Customer Service Director *Mary Beth Sharp* poses with her certificate naming her the Aurora Business and Professional Women Outstanding Woman of the Year Community winner. Joining her in the photo (l-r) are BPW Aurora President Elect *Cheryl Derman*, Sharp, runner-up *Dr. Robin Waterman* and winner of the Outstanding Member Extraordinaire award *Nancy Rinker*.

All America City of Aurora earns additional recognition

The **City of Aurora** is on a roll. In a year filled with honors that include it being named an All America City, **Aurora** has also been selected by the Terrorism Injuries Information, Dissemination and Exchange (TIIDE) as a Model Community.

It was also named as the top city of its size for its use of technology to create a seamless environment between local government and constituents.

Safe city award

Aurora was selected as one of only seven communities receiving recognition as a model of how emergency medical services can work with other safety and public health agencies in times of disaster.



During a crisis, the **Aurora Fire Department** and the **Tri-County Health Department** works in partnership to play a vital role on the front lines of emergency care.

"I am very pleased to receive this award on behalf of all of those health and safety professionals who work hard every day to make Aurora safe and prepared," said Aurora Fire Chief *Mike Garcia*.

Aurora was selected because of established emergency care community and public health partnerships which are tested through drills and exercises. Through this process of drills, Aurora Fire Department and Tri-County Health test their capabilities in responding to potentially large-scale emergencies that may be terrorist-related or natural disasters with large numbers of injuries.

Top award in Digital Cities Survey

e.Republic's Center for Digital Government and Digital Communities magazine released results of the

eight annual survey which examines how cities use technology to create successful two-way communication between the city and its citizens.

"This year's winners reflect that even with budgetary challenges, cities are placing a high value on citizen engagement and improved services," said *Cathilea Robinett*, executive director for the Center for Digital Government. "Cities are incorporating newer technologies such as

Webcasting, podcasts and blogs while continuing to use IT to enhance delivery options for citizens and businesses."

The survey is open to all U.S. cities with a population of 30,000 or more and respondent cities are classified into four size-based categories.



When work works, it works here

Four local companies won a nationally recognized award for their innovation and flexibility in the workplace.

The **Medical Center of Aurora, Merrick & Company, Arapahoe Douglas County Works!** and the **Aurora Chamber of Commerce** received the Alfred P. Sloan Award for Business Excellence in Workplace Flexibility in 2008 at a luncheon attended by business and political leaders from throughout the Eastern Metro area.

The companies were selected by the When Work Works national partners: Families and Work Institute, The **U.S. Chamber of Commerce** Institute for a Competitive Workforce and the Twiga Foundation.

The awards were presented by Patricia Kempthorne, founder and executive director of the Twiga Foundation.

The prestigious award recognizes employers who are successfully using workplace flexibility to meet both employer and employee goals.

Winning its second award in as many years, **Arapahoe Douglas County Works!** was cited for using flexible scheduling to decrease absenteeism by more than 40 percent and a job sharing program that is a model for businesses throughout the region. According to **AD Works** Director Joe Barella, they have also consistently scored 100% on all goals set by the Department of Labor.

Also honored for the second time was **The Medical Center of Aurora**. Human Resources Director Kathy Yeager who accepted the award said her organization believes success lies in the care and nurturing of employees through flexible job scheduling, opportunities for advanced education including school to work programs.

Picking up their first award was an employee owned, Aurora-based company that Kempthorne said is well known for their willingness to embrace innovation and change, **Merrick & Company**. "These are the kind of attributes that makes them an extremely family friendly and highly productive company," she said. "They offer telecommuting and compressed and flexible work schedules as well as flexible transition programs including part-time plans with benefits for older employees." Accepting the award was their Human Resources Director, Debbie Norris.

The final award went to the **Aurora Chamber of Commerce** which Kempthorne said exhibited not



This work really worked – Winners of this year's Sloan Award for Workplace Flexibility are joined by Patricia Kempthorne (center) as they show off their awards. Representing their organizations are (l-r) Stephanie McDonnell with the Aurora Chamber; Kathy Yeager, HR director of The Medical Center of Aurora; keynote speaker Kempthorne; Arapahoe Douglas Works! Director Joe Barella; and Merrick & Company HR Director Debbie Norris. (Photo by Brian Molitoris, Photographer)

only flexibility in the workplace but a long term commitment to employees.

More than 150 business and political leaders attended the luncheon held on Dec. 9 at the **Four Points Sheraton Hotel**.

Amendment 53 – gone but not forgotten

By Chris Bray

(Editor's note: An exceptional number of initiatives were proposed to Colorado's Constitution this year. One of the more potentially onerous proposals was Amendment 53 which would have held company executives and owners criminally liable for the acts of their company. While 53 was defeated, Chamber member Chris Bray felt strongly enough about the potential unintended consequences to share these thoughts should something similar be brought to the voters again.)

With the debate over golden parachutes for CEOs of failed or failing Wall Street companies and the specter of Enron and Qwest fresh in our minds - John Q. Public is calling for action against the leaders of those companies. Amendment 53 sought to address that issue seeking to hold executives and owners of companies (big and small) criminally liable for the acts of their company.

Many thought this was a good idea for the Ken Lays and Joseph Nacchios of the world - but for you and me? Small businesses? To be held criminally liable for the actions of your employees? Fortunately, 53 provided an affirmative defense against these criminal allegations, stating that if the malfeasance was reported to the Attorney General - before they knocked on your door - all would be forgiven for the business owner.

Nonetheless, should such a law find its way onto the books, would you be prepared for the

consequences? How would you detect and deter criminal activity in your workplace? Here are a few suggestions to think about.

Your best approach is a proactive one. As small business owners, you should always look to the "best practices" being performed by the large corporations. Amendment 53 was nothing new to large businesses. In 2002, The Sarbanes-Oxley Act was passed which mandated strict guidelines for corporate governance. It required internal audits, internal investigations and that corporations provide their employees with the ability to anonymously report illegal activity to corporate management.

Anonymous tip lines? Whistle Blower programs? Exactly. Every publicly traded company, financial institution and large non-profit current employs some type of tip line. Why? Not only is it an effective detector and deterrent - its amazingly cost effective.

You, too, can make use of this effective and inexpensive tool in monitoring the everyday activities in your workplace. Most employees really do have your company's best interest at heart, because it's their livelihood. Given the chance to control waste, fraud, abuse or illegal activity - they'll take it. And if you give them the opportunity to report it with anonymity, the majority of employees

jump at the chance. Recent studies suggest that as much as 70% of fraud and illegal activity is discovered through an anonymous tip line.

While Amendment 53 did not pass, don't wait for the government to tell you to implement a program that ferrets out illegal activity in your workplace. Use this great tool to make your business more productive and profitable. Any report through a tip line is a gift - it's a looking glass into your company that points out a loss in revenue. Inefficiencies, waste, poor performance - it all impacts your bottom line. Fix the problem, and the bottom line gets healthier immediately.

Amendment 53 is history - this election cycle. But all of us as business owners should understand that the acts of our employees have an effect on our community, our businesses and our families. A tip line engages those around us and gives them the tools to help us avoid the bad acts of a few.

Chris Bray is the President of Corporate Investigations, Inc., which provides investigative services - as well as anonymous tip lines - for all sizes of business. For more information, visit him at www.corporate-investigations.org or email him at chris@corporate-investigations.org.

Mueller named Ambassador of Year

Scott Mueller with **MuellerTime Designs** was awarded the 2007-2008 Ambassador of the Year. He was selected for his extraordinary dedication to **The Chamber** and the many hours he has dedicated to supporting the membership through delivery of new and renewal member packets, participation in nearly every ribbon cutting ceremony during the year and strong involvement in the annual Ambassador Retreat. Mueller was also appointed as the new co-chair of the Ambassador group serving alongside Felicia Stanton of **Colorado Prudential Real Estate**.



Scott Mueller

Arapahoe County adopts \$350.8 million budget for 2009 Budget

The **Arapahoe County** Board of County Commissioners Tuesday adopted a balanced \$350.8 million budget that ensures vital County services will continue in 2009 to seniors, people facing unemployment and families struggling to make ends meet.

After years of belt-tightening during better economic times, **Arapahoe County** finds itself in a good position to weather through the current financial storm.

The 2009 budget, which is 5 percent less than 2008 due to fewer capital expenditure needs, will continue to fund senior transportation, homemaker services, community development block grant funds, employment and workforce development through **Arapahoe/Douglas Works!** and weatherization services at the same levels as in 2008.

The budget also includes funding for new voting machines, improvements to the Arapahoe Road and Parker Road interchange and the widening of Broncos Parkway.

"This year we've seen significant economic challenges at the local, state and national level and very few local governments are immune," said Commissioner Susan Beckman, who serves as Board Chairman. "**Arapahoe County** has been very committed over the last few years to tighten our belts in hopes that we could weather the bad economic times. Now, we are benefiting from that vision. With this budget, we are taking care of the citizens, taking care of our employees and following our mission to provide the best County services to our community."

In the line of fire – a Leadership Community Exploration

By Miguel Martinez
Class of 08-09

It's one thing to read about the police department, its problems and challenges and another to actually spend some time with its officers and command to understand them better. Having been fortunate enough to work with the police department before and after the new Chief's arrival, I can say the changes are very evident. The wide overview we received from Chief Oates during his presentation highlighted the many improvements and changes that have been implemented since his arrival.



We were able to observe a department with a hands-on chain of command that is highly trained, very demanding and dedicated. One of the things that impressed me the most was the professionalism and level of training and expertise among the officers. While talking to them, you can feel the pride and confidence they exude. All officers were equally impressive, from the K-9 team and the hard work they do, always inserted in dangerous situations, to the SWAT team, who are the best of the best.

As for our class, we learned a lot. I can safely say that all of us were impressed by the work the officers did during the DNC convention and the investigation of the Obama threat. It was very comforting as a citizen of Aurora to hear how well regarded our officers are among other police departments. The communications



Police line-up – Leadership Aurora Class of 08-09 members pose with officers from the Aurora Police Department during Police Day activities. Class member Martinez who wrote the story is standing on the far left.

center was also remarkable. I think that the general consensus was that it takes a very special person to work on that environment.

Although the weather was very cold, it didn't deter the enthusiasm or participation of the class members. The faces of those few among us brave enough to face the police dogs were priceless. Also, having the opportunity to see the equipment the SWAT team uses on a routine basis was also remarkable. The ballistic vest was heavy enough but adding the helmet, the weapons, and the rest of the equipment requires a fit and strong officer. Just thinking that a regular patrol

officer carries almost 35 pounds on his utility belt every day for 8 hours makes one appreciate the level of fitness required.

The opportunity to fire the SWAT assault rifles was also exciting. All of us got to fire a number of rounds. The SWAT officers were very kind and patient as well as good instructors since most of us managed to get at least one round to hit the target! All and all, I can say that the day was a great experience and allowed us to see one of the most efficient and highly trained police departments in the country in action. This is a great example of our tax dollars at work!

2008 – A Chamber Year in Pictures



Renewals

Aurora Public Schools Education Foundation
 Aurora Rotary Club
 Aurora Sentinel
 Bandimere Auto Performance Center, Inc.
 Bellco Credit Union - Aurora City Place
 Big D Pizza dba Blackjack Pizza
 Colorado Freedom Memorial Foundation
 Colorado Wing Civil Air Patrol
 Concentra Medical Centers
 Creekside Homes, LLC
 Crystal Inn
 DPRA, Inc.
 Drive Train Industries
 Embassy Suites - DTC
 Fairfield Inn - Denver/Aurora
 Freund & Company
 Grand Prix Motorsports
 Hampton Inn & Suites Denver Cherry Creek
 High Country Coatings
 Hillcrest Village
 Image Brokers
 Inclusive Solutions, LLC
 JBK Landscape, Inc.
 L. W. Barrett Company
 La Quinta Inn and Suites Denver Tech Center
 Landtech Contractors Inc.
 The Learning Source
 Brian Molitoris, Photographer
 Montview Properties
 National Association of Insurance
 & Financial Advisors
 NextCare Urgent Care
 Padgett Business Services
 Residence Inn by Marriott - Denver Tech Center
 State Farm Insurance
 TGDanzport Studio
 Wal-Mart Stores #5334
 The Weitz Company
 Werner's Mastertek, Inc.
 Aurora Y.M.C.A.

Member News

Optima to shut doors

Johnson Controls, parent company of Aurora's **Optima Batteries**, announced Nov. 26 that they would close the Optima battery plant in Aurora by January 2009.

"The Chamber was saddened to hear of the closure of the Optima Battery plant here in Aurora. Optima has been a member of The Chamber since 1994 and a

solid member of the business community as well," said Kevin Hougen, Chamber president. "They will be missed."

Company officials said that although they continued to see gains in market share, Johnson Controls felt they needed to consolidate to better serve their constituents. Production will be shifted to Cienega de Flores, Mexico, they said.

NEW MEMBERS

2 Key Solutions
 Angel Reflection Cleaning
 Ascent Solar Technologies
 Budget Building Services
 Continental 4, Inc.
 JKAT Designs
 McDonald's
 Rocky Mountain Urgent Care
 Seaford Logistics, LLC
 University Hills Animal Hospital