



Legislative Links

June 4, 2008

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Upcoming Chamber activity:

June 9 - Energy Advocacy Luncheon, 12:00 p.m.

June 12 - Workforce Seminar: Absenteeism

June 17 - Roan Plateau Tour ~ Reservations Required

COGCC HEARING IN GRAND JUNCTION, CHAMBER PLANS ROAN PLATEAU TOUR

The [Colorado Oil & Gas Conservation Commission](#) has scheduled a public hearing in Grand Junction on Tuesday, June 10 starting at 8:30 AM at the Two Rivers Convention Center. The hearing is meant to gather comments and information from the public prior to the formal rulemaking process that will be finalized in mid-July. In a letter approved by the Chamber Board of Directors, the Chamber will submit its comments at the June 10 public hearing on behalf of the business community, sighting concern with multiple provisions included in the commission's draft rule making such as possible 90 day restrictions that could lead to a transient workforce, a continued lack of industry expertise and involvement in the rulemaking process and overstepping the bounds of the enabling legislation.

Also, on June 17 the Chamber along with industry representatives will host a tour of the Roan Plateau for Chamber members interested in seeing for themselves the area that has sparked so much media attention and political controversy. Participants will get a bird's eye view of industry activity, reclamation efforts and a view of the oil shale deposits so abundant atop the Roan. Reserve your spot on the tour by contacting Ryan at 263-2917 or rlongman@gjchamber.org

MILL LEVY FREEZE RULED UNCONSTITUTIONAL

The Chamber saw a bit of victory this week in its efforts to undue the Governor's mill-levy freeze when District Court Judge Christina Habas ruled that the freeze - which has generated more than \$117 million this year alone - could not take effect without voter approval under Colorado's Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR). The Chamber **opposed** the mill-levy freeze from its creation as "SB-199" in the 2007 legislature, calling it a violation of TABOR. The law freezes property tax rates in most of the state's school districts, causing increased taxes for property owners. Businesses have seen the highest increases in their property taxes since the freeze took effect. Gov. Ritter will now appeal the district court ruling which will send the issue to the Colorado Supreme Court, who will have the final say on SB-199. The Supreme Court is expected to make a final ruling late this summer.

FEDERAL BILL SEEKS TO ESTABLISH COLLECTIVE BARGAINING RIGHTS

Yesterday, the Chamber's Executive Board of Directors voted to oppose a bill currently being debated in Congress that seeks to provide collective bargaining rights for public safety officers employed by states or local governments by establishing the "Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act of 2007". The pro-union legislation would direct the Federal Labor Relations Authority to determine whether and ensure that state law allows state-employed public safety officers the right to form and join a union and further requires public safety employers to agree to bargain with the employees' labor organization. The bill has passed the House and awaits further action in the Senate.

BUSINESS FEEDBACK SOUGHT AT UPCOMING FORUM ON HEALTH CARE REFORM

As the issue of health care reform in Colorado continues, it is important for businesses to be included in the conversation about addressing the major health care challenges facing families and employers. The Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce, along with the Business Health Forum, will host a presentation Tuesday, June 24, to update employers on health care reform efforts and capture their responses to proposed changes. Ralph Pollock and Amy Fletcher of the Business Health Forum will lead the discussion. Pollock is as frequent speaker on health care market dynamics. He served on the Blue Ribbon Commission for Health Care Reform and chairs the Colorado Association of Commerce and Industry's health council. Prior to joining the Business Health Forum, Fletcher spent seven years reporting on health care and the state Legislature for the Denver Business Journal.

Join us to review recommendations from a blue ribbon commission on health care and legislative proposals, and give us your feedback to take back to the Capitol. The latest survey technology will capture your opinions – and those of your peers – for on-the-spot sharing and discussion. The meeting will be held from 7:30 to 9:00 AM, Tuesday, June 24 in the Kresy/Zeigel Room of the Mesa State College Student Center. There is no cost to attend, but registration is required. Register for the event online at www.gjchamber.org or by calling 242.3214.

Have you missed out on attending our latest energy briefings? Check out our "Energy Fact Sheets" on the Chamber Web site.

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