

The Email Express



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Budget crisis will test city officials



Mayor John Hickenlooper



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Denver's budget picture has steadily gone from bad to worse since the beginning of 2009, and now the worst is due to hit Sept. 15, when Mayor John Hickenlooper unveils his draft budget for 2010.

Possible police cuts have been in the headlines recently, but the proposed budget is expected to contain much wider reductions that will directly affect human service programs, other services to residents and the paychecks of city employees, as well as the jobs of some.

The city must reduce spending by some \$120 million out of a total budget of about \$950 million, a cut of nearly 13 percent.

Cuts of that magnitude will require tough-mindedness on the part of the mayor and City Council members, and a willingness

to rise above political calculations and special interests.

The easy cuts, if there were any, already have been made. As Hickenlooper said in July, "We've cut tens and tens of millions out of this budget and cut into it carefully and cut services people don't really value or don't notice. We're past that point."

Sales taxes, which supply about half of city general fund revenue, are slumping because of the recession. Budget officials now estimate sales tax revenues will be down 8 percent for the year compared to 2008. Some other city revenue sources are down as well.

What city programs and services might be on the chopping block? The mayor's administration isn't saying until Sept. 15,

(Continued on page 2)

District 6 Libraries and Recreation Centers

There are two branch libraries in the district:

- * Eugene Field, at 810 S. University Blvd., and
- * Virginia Village, at 1500 S. Dahlia St.

Both are already closed two days a week. Several branch libraries in other neighborhoods are only closed one day a week; a few others are closed three days.

Both Field and Virginia Village are in the top half of branches in terms of circulation and visits per hours open.

The district has two recreation centers, both currently open six days a week:

- * Washington Park, 701 S. Franklin St., which has a large gym, lockers, meeting room, indoor pool, showers and weight room. From January to the end of June this year, 71,493 people have utilized these facilities.
- * Cook Park, 7100 Cherry Creek Drive South, which has dance space, a small gym, lockers, meeting room, outdoor pool, showers, and weight room. From January to the end of June, 31,966 people have utilized the facilities.



Weight Room at Washington Park Recreation Center



Cook Park Recreation Center

(Continued from page 1)

but previous statements, suggestions, media reports and common sense suggest some possibilities.

Personnel costs consume about 70 percent of city spending, so it's fair to assume that cuts will affect employee salaries, working days, workloads and, in some cases, jobs. Expect hundreds of city jobs to be held open or abolished, along with some layoffs.

City employees probably won't get merit increases in 2010 and may have to take furlough days. (Hickenlooper has proposed an early-retirement program, which could be available to nearly 1,000 city workers. Implementing that will require council approval, and its impact would depend on how many workers sign up.)

The administration likely will propose fee increases and dipping further into city reserves to help bridge that \$120 million gap.

The need to reduce the workforce or hold city jobs vacant is expected to translate into service reductions and closures for such neighborhood-based facilities as branch libraries and recreation centers.

The Denver Public Library administration already has discussed possible budget cuts with staff and the public, including reducing hours across the system and closing the Byers branch at 675 Santa Fe Drive.

The city has 30 recreation and senior centers, many of which are aging and small, and some of which have very low daily usage. In some cases, recreation centers are less than a mile apart, which may become a factor in considering closures.

Public Safety Cuts:

The city's public safety budget (about half of annual city spending) presents a special challenge because of collective bargaining agreements with police, firefighters and sheriff's deputies. That means proposed salary rollbacks have to be ratified by union members.

Police union members recently rejected the city's proposal to delay pay raises in

"I have no illusions about the difficulties of balancing our budget. It will be a fierce test of our resolve, and it will require us to adopt new financial disciplines and shared sacrifices.

The days are over of need, rather than affordability, driving our city budget debates.

As my mom used to say: 'We must learn to live within our means, which really means that sometimes we are going to have to do without.'"

- Councilman Charlie Brown

The city's budget problems have mushroomed as the year has progressed. In January, the shortfall was estimated at about \$55 million, and budget director Ed Scholz was quoted at that time as saying, "There is not going to be anything drastic, like cutting recreation centers."

Last spring, the budget gap was estimated at \$70 million, but that rose to \$120 million at about the time of the mayor's State of the City speech in July.

The crisis has sparked a number of revenue-raising ideas, including a fee for trash collection, which seems to have little support.

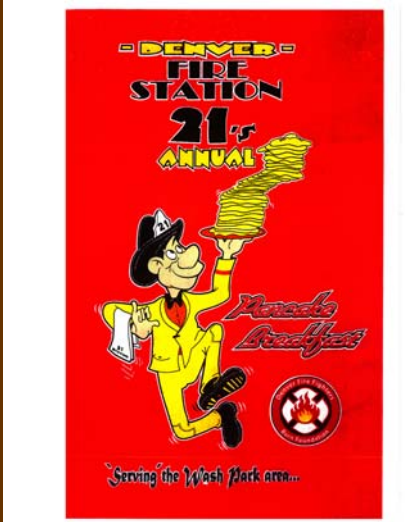
The council will hold budget hearings Sept. 21-29, and there will be a public hearing on Oct. 26. The council has to suggest changes by Nov. 2 with the mayor accepting or rejecting those by Nov. 7. Initial council consideration of the budget will come on Nov. 9.

the next two years. Hickenlooper said that may force the city to lay off more than 90 officers. Union members earlier this year agreed to some benefit cuts.

Leadership of the firefighters' union has agreed to wage reductions in 2010, and the membership will vote later this month on an additional wage freeze.

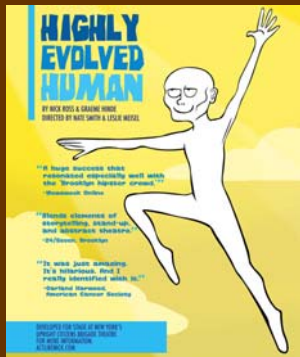
Sheriff's deputies earlier this year refused to reopen their contract, and 11 were laid off to cut costs.

Annual Pancake Breakfast at East Washington Park Fire House



Denver Fire Station 21 will be hosting its annual Open House and Pancake Breakfast on Saturday, Sept. 26, from 9 a.m to noon. We hope to see you at this great annual event!

Critically acclaimed Comedy Coming to Denver Sept. 10



“Highly Evolved Human” is a comedy about a young man learning to come to terms with his cancer. Denver native Nick Ross had to come to peace with his cancer after it struck in the form of Hodgkins lymphoma at the age of 26. This comedy is about his personal journey and recovery from the deadly disease. It will be presented in Denver on Thursday, Sept. 10, at the Avenue Theatre at 7:30 p.m. The tickets are \$15. Call (303) 321-5925 to reserve yours.

“A huge success that resonated especially well with the Brooklyn hipster crowd.”
- Newsweek

Charlie's Round-Up
All the news that's fit to corral

MIA for DHA — More than 25 angry Cook Park homeowners filed into the District 3 police station recently to give their first-hand accounts of ongoing problems with unruly residents of an out-of-control Section 8 house in their neighborhood.

District 3 Police Commander Kris Kroncke and I heard disturbing, detailed reports about shots being fired in the early morning hours, arrests, outdoor pot smoking, loud and large yard fights, intimidation of neighborhood children, no adults living in the house and drug dealing.

The residents of this quiet, well-maintained neighborhood that backs up to Cook Park assumed the Denver Housing Authority (DHA) had plenty of evidence to terminate the renters' Section 8 voucher. But DHA's Intergovernmental and Community Affairs Officer, Stella Madrid, didn't even bother to show up for the meeting. Her excuse: “Conflict in scheduling” and, as she told the commander, HIPPA confidentiality.

The neighbors were rightfully upset about DHA's MIA representative. One told me: “To hide behind a federal regulation involving medical records as a way to avoid working through a property problem, when the two bear no relationship to each other, left a bitter taste in the mouths of a lot of folks. As excuses go, that was about as flimsy as anyone can remember.”

Fortunately, the landlords were present and have agreed to terminate the lease at the end of September. Commander Kroncke and I will continue to monitor this issue.

In the meantime, DHA needs to change its absurd HIPPA policies, stop making excuses, show up at meetings and do its job. All homeowners, and especially Cook Park residents, deserve better representation from the Denver Housing Authority.

Denver's Toll Road Home — At a recent city council meeting, I reminded my colleagues that Denver's Road Home is a free road for the homeless but a toll road for taxpayers. As a city, we spend \$46 million a year on homeless programs. Not only are our efforts expensive (almost \$1,000 per month for each homeless person) but they also attract homeless from other parts of the country.

As the Step 13 director notes on page 6, other cities offer their homeless one-way bus tickets to Denver. So, some of the 4,000 homeless on the Denver streets have been sent here from Albuquerque, Milwaukee, and San Diego. Is Denver becoming the dumping ground for the homeless and medically indigent? See the quote from the Adams County Human Services and you decide. →

Up Close and Personal — Bonnie Brae resident and award-winning journalist Stephanie Riggs interviews former Colorado First Lady Frances Owens Saturday, Sept. 12, at 9 a.m. on Comcast, Channel 19 (VistaTV Denver).

Animal Artist is Honored — T.D. Kelsey, whose “On the Wind,” a 3,000-pound bronze North American bison, guards the Colorado History Museum's public plaza, is the honored artist at the 28th annual Buffalo Bill Art Show & Sale in Cody, Wyo. The prestigious event, Sept. 25-26, is a benefit for the Buffalo Bill Historical

Center and the Cody County Chamber of Commerce. Many thanks to James J. Volker, president and chief executive officer of Whiting Petroleum Corp., for donating the 10-by-13 foot bronze to the Colorado History Museum in November 2005.

Where's That Park Again? — “Trout 2010,” the official calendar of Trout Unlimited, has a slight typo. March 2010 features a short take on the Yellowstone cutthroat trout and a photo credit

of “Yellowstone National Park by Susan Smetana. Right state, wrong park. It's actually a beautiful photograph of Grand Teton National Park, 55 miles south of Yellowstone. Obviously, TU has problems with the Tetons. In 2007's calendar, it flipped the photo of the Teton range.



Quote of the Month

“We will not be contributing to the cost of anything at Denver Health. We don't believe it's a responsibility for county government to compensate hospitals for uninsured care. Adams County is not in the hospital business.”

Mark Tandberg,
Division Director, Adams County Department of Human Services

“Hospital pushes counties to pay/ Out-of-city uninsured strain Denver Health.”
The Denver Post, Aug. 28, 2009

The news story noted that uninsured residents from Adams County cost Denver Health \$11.3 million last year. The cost to Denver Health was \$12 million for Arapahoe County and \$9.8 million for Jefferson County. Whatever happened to intergovernmental cooperation?

Brown Appointed to Contract Working Group

After raising many questions at a city council meeting about delays in getting contracts approved, Councilman Brown has been appointed to a Contract Working Group to address this important issue. Brown's views were supported in a Denver Post editorial "First, sign on the dotted line," on Monday, Aug. 24.

Currently, it takes too long for contracts to be approved. The group's goal is to streamline how contracts move through the negotiation and approval process. Chief Services Officer David Roberts will head the group, and many of the organizations that deal with city contracts are represented, including the City Council, the auditor, the clerk and recorder, the mayor's office, the city attorney and large city departments.

"The group will be instrumental in directly impacting economic activity in Denver at a time when the city is working hard to accelerate projects of all sizes and get jobs on the street," said Roberts.

The city processes more than 2,200 contracts a year, including those for Denver International Airport.



Wyoming's new football coach has deeper appreciation for "cowboy tough"



Photo Credit: Holly Herring, UW Alumni Association

Dan Haley, editorial page editor of the Denver Post and UW Alumni Association past president (left), new Wyoming football coach Dave Christensen (center) and Charlie met at a recent University of Wyoming alumni gathering at Cherry Hills Country Club.

Wyoming's new head football coach was familiar with the term "cowboy tough," but it wasn't until Dave Christensen stood behind the chutes at Cheyenne Frontier Days watching cowboys get bucked, kicked and thrown that he came to appreciate what it really meant. The fearless, raw courage displayed by rodeo cowboys impressed him so much that he had it videotaped to show at team meetings, he told those gathered at an alumni meeting in Denver recently.

Christensen comes to Wyoming following a nationally acclaimed career as offensive coordinator at the University of Missouri. He is determined to revive the Cowboys football program using a wide-open, no-huddle spread offense that some have labeled "the greatest show on turf."

If there was ever a time to "cowboy up" and play "cowboy tough," this is it. Almost half of Wyoming's opponents are ranked in the top 20 in pre-season polls. One of the best teams in the country, Texas, comes to Laramie Sept. 12, and the next week the Cowboys travel to Boulder to face the Buffaloes. Other opponents include always-tough TCU, Utah, and BYU. Sports Illustrated predicts Wyoming will win three games this year, so the new coach is telling fans to have patience. Sounds like the University of Wyoming has made a wise choice.



Brown appointed to DU athletic program review panel

University of Denver Chancellor Robert Coombes has appointed Councilman Brown to the DU Steering Committee that's doing the "self study" required by the NCAA certification process. This process occurs once every 10 years, and DU is starting work two years ahead of time. The committee will look at the DU athletic program's key operating principles, such as academic integrity, governance, commitment to rules compliance, gender/diversity issues and student-athlete well-being. The panel also includes faculty, students, staff, trustees and alumni. The final report is due in 2011 following visitation by NCAA staff.

**New PBS Series
“The National Parks:
America’s Best Idea”
Debuts Sept. 27.**



*Series Director Ken Burns
Illustrated by Tim Bower*

PBS will soon be unveiling a new documentary series directed by Ken Burns and co-produced by Dayton Duncan. The series, “The National Parks: America’s Best Idea,” will debut Sunday, September 27 and run through Friday, October 2. Burns and Duncan filmed all over the United States—from Acadia to Yosemite, Yellowstone to the Grand Canyon, the Everglades of Florida to the Gates of the Arctic in Alaska—in order to bring the national parks and all that they celebrate into people’s living rooms.

Filmed over six years, the 12-hour documentary addresses the unique American idea that national treasures should be enjoyed by everybody, not just the wealthy elite. This was first fulfilled in 1872, when Congress approved Yellowstone as the first national park. The documentary also celebrates the men and women who devoted their lives to ensuring that portions of our land could be saved and appreciated by generations to come.



“Jackson Hole Captured Me”

Brown recalls his introduction to the grandeur of Grand Teton National Park



When he was a twenty-something river guide, Charlie Brown maneuvered his raft down Wyoming’s Snake River in Grand Teton National Park

Councilman Brown wrote about his Jackson Hole experience in a recent edition of Colorado Expression Magazine. Here are some excerpts:

“The old car with the spitting muffler and brown and gold Wyoming plates slowly stopped and let the hitchhiker out at the entrance to Jackson Lake Lodge. ‘Employees check-in is yonder,’ the driver pointed. ‘Good luck,’ he said, and drove north to his destination, which was Yellowstone National Park, less than an hour away.

I still remember stepping out of that stranger’s car and taking my first gulp of clean, brisk air that tasted like the Fountain of Youth. Grabbing my duffel bag and zipping my ‘back east’ London Fog jacket against the light rain and Wyoming wind, I walked with much trepidation to the small office of the Grand Teton Lodge Co.

A high school debate coach and Duke University student teacher was the reason I was in Grand Teton National Park that afternoon. She encouraged me to work in a national park, heed the call of Horace Greeley and ‘go West, young man.’

Like many college students, I had seen the Western movie classic ‘Shane,’ starring Alan Ladd, in which the Tetons served as a spectacular backdrop. But it was more than ‘Shane’ that lured me West.

I was seeking refuge from the summer heat and humidity that hung over the tobacco factories and cotton mills of my hometown of Durham, N.C. While my mom and dad taught me the value of work, the 75-cents-an-hour wage at my father’s plumbing shop didn’t cut it.

I wanted to escape the segregated South, where there were dogs in the streets and defiance in the doorways. Most important, at 19, I was thirsty for adventure, and I found much more than just a summer job in Wyoming.

Jackson Hole captured me, and I ended up working eight more summers at the lodge. The lure of the place was so strong, I eventually transferred from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to the University of Wyoming in Laramie. My wife and I honeymooned in Wyoming and gave both our sons names that reflect our love for the state.

Our recent Memorial Day trip reminded me that nights in Jackson Hole can be even more dazzling than days. As night fell, we stepped outside and marveled at a million stars that lit up the sky like busted crystal. The silent emptiness was broken by the lonely call of coyotes howling at the brightest moon we’d ever seen. This sky show was far better than any recent movie.

In the old days, when I returned to the Tetons every spring, I would traditionally pull over to sit and reflect at a 15-foot wooden sign on Togwotwee Pass, about 10 miles from the lodge.

Pictured on the sign was a granite-jawed cowboy with a waxed mustache and a haughty stare, pointing the business end of a rifle west. ‘Yonder there is Jackson Hole,’ the inscription read, ‘the last of the old West.’ After a moment of silence, I would reverently climb back behind the wheel and, like horses returning to the barn, continue my pilgrimage ‘almost to heaven.’ ”

For the full story, go to Charlie’s website at this link:
<http://www.denvergov.org/Default.aspx?alias=www.denvergov.org/CouncilDistrict6>



The rugged beauty of the Grand Tetons is reflected in Jackson Lake

Step 13 Offers “Tough Love” to Combat Homelessness

Twenty-five years ago, Bob Cote counted himself among the alcohol-addicted homeless population. Then, in 1983, he started Step 13, a new approach to get the drug- and alcohol-addicted off the streets.

What is your background in the homeless business?

I was drinking on Larimer in the early '80s and became very familiar with street people and their way of life: Scheming, scamming, system-dependent abusers. They would not take responsibility for their actions. And many who tried to help treated them like stray pets ... give them a bowl of food and say a few kind words. That was the standard way of caring for street people.

I don't have a degree in social work or psychiatry. It's my life experience It's street psychology that has taken me to where I am today. I learned early on that we need to fix people, not just feed them.

When and why did you start the Step 13 program?

I got the idea for Step 13 one summer afternoon 26 years ago. I was well into my daily half-gallon-of-vodka lunch when I noticed another drunk passed out on a sidewalk on Larimer Street. I kept staring at him, and in a flash it struck me: “That’s me. I’m committing slow suicide, just like he is.”

That day on Larimer, I emptied my bottle of vodka on the sidewalk and vowed never to drink again. I also decided to make it my mission in life to help others like myself.

Has Step 13 been successful? And if so, why? How do you gauge your success?

Yes, Step 13 is successful, not 100% of the time, but enough. You see, most of the street people know each other from food lines, jail, detox ... hanging in the parks sucking on a bottle of Mad Dog, meth or crack. A new resident comes in and runs into a couple of his old drinking buddies and they have a job, a bank account, a nice room, a car, and they ask him, “How did you do this?” “I went to work. Step 13 helped me give up the madness.” About a third of those who



Bob Cote
Director of Step 13

attend our program actually make it. We hope we put a crack in the glass of the rest. We don't believe that failure is fatal. They can come back and try again.

Are other cities sending their homeless to Denver (via one-way bus tickets)? If so, could you name the cities?

Yes. Ten or so years ago I was getting requests to come to Step 13 from folks in Albuquerque ... a lot of requests. The reason was Albuquerque was using the G.H. solution for their homeless program: Greyhound. Milwaukee did the same thing for awhile, as did San Diego. It doesn't take long to figure out when you get 50 letters and 100 phone calls from one city asking about the program.

What is it about Step 13 and your “tough love” approach that works?

We do not baby our residents. If they want to get their life in order, we will support them 100 percent. But there's no “feel sorry for me.” We say, here is a job slip. You show us you are going to do your part and we will help you reach your goals.

The rules of Step 13 are simple but tough. Each resident must get a job and buy his own food. Each resident must become computer literate. You see, drugs and alcohol aren't the only problems our residents face. They need to obtain work

skills. They need to attend to long-neglected health care issues like their teeth and eyes. Some even need and/or want basic living skills. At Step 13, we strive to help each resident obtain the skills they need. We even address self-esteem issues. We now have a dental clinic and also an eye clinic ensuring our residents can read job applications and look managers in the eye and smile.

What do you have to say to the critics of your program?

It costs \$6,000 per man, per year to stay at Step 13 (\$650,000 annual budget). The residents contribute a third or so to our bottom line. We raise the rest through foundations, fundraisers, supporters and our in-house businesses. We think that's a pretty good bang for the buck.

Our residents are working, buying their own food and paying taxes. That's a whole lot better than sitting in the park drinking, waiting for the Denver Cares van to pick them up and take them to detox on the taxpayer's nickel.

What is your opinion of Denver's Road Home and Mayor Hickenlooper's “10-year plan to end homelessness?”

I don't believe in it.

Final Thoughts:

People do not have the right to live anywhere they please, nor do they acquire that right by being labeled with the generic term *homeless*. They disturb businesses, shoppers and the general public. Go to our website, step13@step13.org and you can learn more about how we are trying to fight homelessness by asking our residents to become responsible, taxpaying citizens again.

Step 13
2029 Larimer St.
Denver, CO 80205
(303)295-7838



Aidan, Sophia, and Abby Frei in their backyard in Observatory Park. Aidan has Type 1 Diabetes.

Giving Diabetes a “Walk” for the Money

The Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation's “Walk to Cure Diabetes” at Elitch Gardens in Denver is set for Sunday, Sept. 13. Fundraising for a cure for Type 1 Diabetes is very near to the hearts of the Frei family, who live in Observatory Park. Their son, Aidan, was diagnosed with diabetes three years ago. Debbie Frei says “When your 5-year-old says, ‘I can't wait to go to heaven because angels in heaven don't have diabetes,’ you know that you will do everything in your power to work for a cure.” A major part of finding a cure is fundraising, and the family is asking for your help to cure Aidan and millions of other people with this disease. The walk is on Sept. 13 beginning at 9 a.m. To be on Aidan's team, go to this link:
<http://walk.jdrf.org/walker.cfm?id=87358024>.