Find out what's going on at the Denver Auditor's Office.

View this email in your browser

A Moment With the Denver Auditor's Office

Hello Neighbor!

These are three of the drivers who received back pay from Auditor Timothy M. O'Brien, second from left, and Prevailing Wage Investigators Valerie Ramirez, third from right, and Rafael Gongon, far right. Robert Boston, pictured with Auditor O'Brien in the next column, said, "I'm very grateful for this blessing bestowed on me and my family. I appreciate everyone who was part of it." Read more below.

Prevailing Wage Back Pay

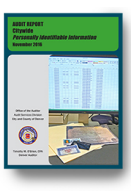
$550,000 Secured for DIA Bus Drivers

Fifty-three shuttle bus drivers formerly employed at DIA during the construction of the hotel and transit center had reason to celebrate on Thanksgiving after Auditor Timothy M. O'Brien, CPA, secured more than $550,000 in unpaid wages for them.

"When the DIA hotel and transit center were completed earlier this year, this matter was left unresolved. While in the beginning there may have been some confusion about whether prevailing wage applied to the drivers who shuttled construction workers from the parking lot to the job site, by the end all parties understood that these employees had not received the proper wage," said Auditor O'Brien.

November was a busy month for Prevailing Wage. City Council unanimously approved Auditor O'Brien's proposals to improve the 66-year-old prevailing wage ordinance by making it clear where prevailing wage applies, beefing up penalties for willful non-compliance, establishing a dispute resolution process, simplifying previously complicated procedures, and changing the City's debarment panel to make it more effective.
MORE

Personally Identifiable Information Audit



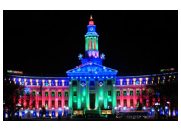
A variety of personal information is collected from residents by a variety of City agencies in a variety of forms. The City collects personally identifiable information — including birthdates and social security numbers — for property tax exemptions for seniors, discounted parks programs, and marriage licenses, to list a few examples. An audit of City practices found outdated and inconsistent safeguards over this collected information.

While working on the audit, auditors were able to access unsecured files containing private information. Although there was no evidence that people outside the City accessed the files and the shared drive was secured once it was reported, the audit team recommended measures to prevent this in the future.

The audit found that nearly 40% of City employees had not completed the required security training related to protecting personally identifiable information. Also, some agencies were unaware of City policies and relied on internal policies not consistent with City requirements or industry standards.
MORE

I'm Timothy M. O'Brien, CPA, Denver's independently elected auditor. My office serves as a check and balance on Denver's "strong mayor" government. I am a licensed CPA and have a MBA from the University of Colorado. With over 40 years of auditing and accounting experience, I have produced more than 750 financial and performance audits.

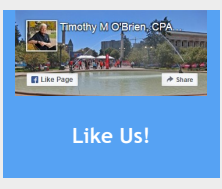
MORE



Do You Hear Those Bells?

Tammy Phillips works in the Auditor's Office and plays the bells at the City and County Building during the holiday season. She has been doing this for seven years, and played on the night the lights were turned on. Tammy, trading off with about 10 other volunteers, plays most evenings and some lunch periods through the end of the year. The "bells" are actually a keyboard, sometimes referred to as a carillon. Tammy has been playing since she was four years old.

The volunteer musicians play the bells for about 45 minutes in the evenings, starting at 6:00 pm. Visitors to Civic Center can enjoy the music while they look at the lights.



Like Us!

Audit Services Profile: Nicole McClusky

"I struggle with answering what I do at my job," says Nicole McClusky, a senior auditor. "There's no short easy answer. I'm not an IRS auditor. I don't crunch numbers for fun. I like to come up with ideas to help fix situations. And even in the midst of audit work, it can be refreshing not to take ourselves too seriously."

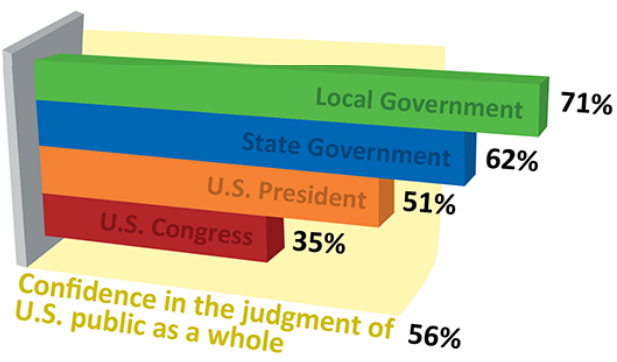
Nicole, on the right

Nicole moved here from Texas in September to work in the Denver Auditor's Office. She has a Bachelor's degree in International Studies with a focus in Business, and did public relations for Race for the Cure and Texas Instruments. When she was laid off during the downturn, she looked to secure her future career by earning a Master's degree in Accounting. She also is a CPA.

After working for a couple of CPA firms, she worked at the Texas State Auditor's Office for nearly four years. With almost 200 staff members, auditors had little influence over the audits they were assigned. Nicole says that framework provided a good mixture of audit work, along with learning to communicate with a wide variety of people and the way they approach situations differently. "I try to balance being assertive and delicate." She is currently working on the Parks Permitting audit.

Trust in Government

Percentage of people responding to a nationwide poll conducted in September who had a "great deal" or "fair amount" of confidence in the various levels of government to handle problems.



Source: Gallup poll from September 2016, and published in the Colorado Municipal League Newsletter, October 28, 2016

In November, Denver voters approved all ballot questions regarding local tax retentions and increases:

- *Referred Question 2A* >> **75.7% yes /** 24.2% no
  Retain, spend and continue to collect 0.03% sales and use tax for the Denver Preschool Program through December 31, 2026.
- *Ballot Issue 3A* >> **67.3% yes** / 32.6% no
  Increase property tax by $57 million for Denver Public Schools.
- *Ballot Issue 3B* >> **65% yes** / 34.9% no
  Allow the issuance and payment of general obligation bonds of $572 million.
- *Ballot Issue 4B* >> **72.5% yes** / 27.4% no
  Reauthorize the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD) sales and use tax of 0.1% through June 30, 2030.

Potpourri from around the City . . .

People have been skiing in Winter Park for over 75 years. In 1933, members of the Colorado Arlberg Ski Club with the Civilian Conservation Corps cleared the Mary Jane Trail. Arlberg Club members along with Denver's Manager of Parks and Improvements, George Cranmer, raised federal and private funding of about $32,000 to acquire land and build a single rope tow. Winter Park ski area, then known as West Portal, opened in 1939. There were four original trails: Hughes, Highway Run (later abandoned), Parkway Run and Bridge Run (now Larry Sale). Balcony House opened in 1955, and the first chairlift was built in 1962. Winter Park's National Sports Center for the Disabled, now the world's largest and oldest disabled skiing program, was started in 1970. The Mary Jane area opened in 1975. The Panoramic lift, opened in 2007, became North America's highest six-passenger, high-speed chairlift.

Winter Park Recreation Association (WPRA) was formed in 1950 to operate the ski area, and now owns the assets at Winter Park Ski Area on behalf of the City and County of Denver. The WPRA Board is comprised of five members with five-year terms: three appointed by the Mayor, and two "citizen" members who are voted on by the rest of the Board. The WPRA has a cooperative agreement with Intrawest that expires on June 30, 2052, with extensions for another 26 years. Since 2012, the City is paid 3% of the resort's yearly gross revenue over $33 million (which has been about $1 million annually, according to the WPRA) in addition to $2 million in rent. These payments go into the Winter Park Trust, another mayoral-appointed board that funds maintenance for Denver's parks and recreation centers.

MORE

You indicated an interest in receiving information from the Denver Auditor's Office. If you no longer wish to receive this communication, please click the "unsubscribe" option.
You can update your preferences or unsubscribe from this list