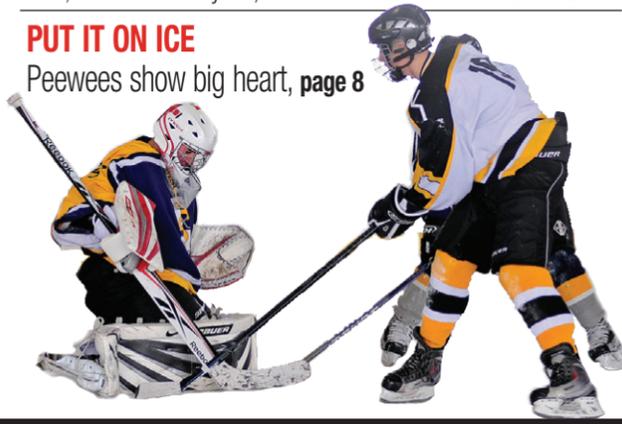


SKY-HI NEWS

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PUT IT ON ICE
 Peewees show big heart, page 8



COMMENTARY: "I was certainly interested in the recent Sky-Hi News article concerning the ... latest attempt to prevent Union Pacific from blaring the horns as their locomotives pass through Winter Park." **Letters, page 6**

Bipartisanship characterizes early session

Rep. Baumgardner plans bill rolling back late vehicle registration penalties

BY REID ARMSTRONG
 SKY-HI NEWS

DENVER — Colorado's 2011 legislative session opened Wednesday, Jan. 12, with words of hope from the state's leadership team.



Randy Baumgardner

"Right now everyone is talking bipartisanship and working together," said state Rep. Randy Baumgardner (R-Hot Sulphur Springs). "We'll see how that pans out."

With a focus on jobs and the economy, legislators are sharpening their pencils and drafting up new laws to make the Colorado world a better place.

No longer a freshman

Baumgardner is entering his second term as state representative for the 57th District. This year he's serving as vice-chair of the House Agriculture, Livestock and Natural Resources Committee and on the House State, Veterans and Military Affairs Committee.

He's planning to introduce five pieces of legislation this session. See **Legislature, page 2**

REGAL EAGLE



BYRON HETZLER/SKY-HI NEWS

A bald eagle perches above the Colorado River near Windy Gap Reservoir west of Granby on Thursday.

Joining forces

Many of Grand County's top real estate producers have gathered under one roof since December

BY REID ARMSTRONG
 SKY-HI NEWS

WINTER PARK — Almost overnight, a new real estate empire has sprouted in Winter Park and Granby.

Positioning themselves for a market turnaround, a team of 15 of the county's most successful real estate brokers joined under one roof last month. This group of 15 brokers sold a combined \$60 million worth of Grand County real estate last year, in the middle of the decade's worst market.

Owner/broker Lance Gutersohn of RE/MAX Peak to Peak explained that it was never part of his master plan to bring such a powerful team together.

"It just happened," he said. Gutersohn has tripled the size of his business in less than a month, "and more growth appears to be on the horizon," he said.

Gutersohn, who used to bat for Century 21 Winter Park Real Estate, headed out on his own in 2008 after 30 years in the business.

"It was Inauguration Day," he said. "I decided that the time for change had come."

Gutersohn, who had the exclusive sales rights to Pole Creek, went out on his own for a few See **Real estate, page 2**

Burford named to Transportation Commission

Fraser trustee fills vacancy on statewide panel

SKY-HI NEWS STAFF REPORT

FRASER — Joyce Burford of Fraser has been appointed to the Colorado Transportation Commission for a term expiring July 1, 2011. She will serve as a commissioner for the 6th Transportation District representing Clear Creek, Gilpin, Grand, Jackson, Moffat, Rio Blanco, and Routt counties.



Joyce Burford

Association of Ski Towns and sits on the Town of Fraser Board of Trustees. Previous to that she served as the marketing director for the Winter Park-Fraser Valley Chamber of Commerce. She is a graduate of the University

of Colorado at Boulder.

"I'm very excited and honored to be appointed to this position," Burford said. "We live in a state with a growing population and an aging highway system. The challenge is to

improve Colorado's transportation system, while competing for scarce taxpayer's dollars. I look forward to doing the best I can to work in ways that promote regional collaboration, innovation and efficiency."

The 11-member transportation commission formulates general policy for the Colorado Department of Transportation with respect to the management, construction and maintenance of public highways and other transportation systems in the state.

The Commission also works to ensure that the preservation and enhancement of Colorado's environment, safety, mobility and economics is considered in the planning of all transportation projects. The appointment requires Senate confirmation.



Lance Gutersohn

NEWS

www.skyhidailynews.com

970.887.3334

fax: 970.887.3204

Publisher

Matt Sandberg x13100
msandberg@skyhidailynews.com

General manager / editor

Drew Munro x19600
dmunro@skyhidailynews.com

Newsroom

Photos: Byron Hetzler . . . x19604
bhetzler@skyhidailynews.com
Tonya Bina x19603
tbina@skyhidailynews.com
Reid Armstrong x19610
ramstrong@skyhidailynews.com

Display Advertising

Maggie Butler, director . . . x13701
mbutler@skyhidailynews.com
Valerie Connelly x13705
vconnelly@skyhidailynews.com

Classified Advertising

Stephanie Richardson . . . x19119
srichardson@skyhidailynews.com

CORRECTIONS

The Sky-Hi Daily News strives for accuracy, but we occasionally make mistakes. Please call editor Drew Munro if you spot a factual error: (970) 887-3334 ext. 19100 or send an e-mail to dmunro@skyhidailynews.com. When corrections or clarifications are necessary, they will appear on this page.

The Sky-Hi News is published at 424 E. Agate Ave., Granby, CO 80446, Wednesday and Friday by Colorado Mountain News Media.



LIGHT WORK

Granby police and fire department personnel direct traffic as Colorado Department of Transportation workers fix the traffic light at Agate Avenue and First Street on Wednesday. The signal was blinking for a longer than a day because of an electrical problem.

BYRON HETZLER/SKY-HI NEWS

REAL ESTATE: 'It's an incredible buyer opportunity ...'

Continued from page 1

months before realizing that he needed the name of a strong brand name behind him.

"I began to explore franchise opportunities that were underutilized or available," he said. Eventually he chose RE/MAX, opening a small boutique office near his home in Tabernash that he ran for 18 months almost entirely on his own.

In February, Century 21's No. 1 sales person for the five-state Rocky Mountain region, Kristen Meyer, made a huge move, joining Gutersohn along with her husband Nick Meyer.

Independent broker Jennifer Metz and Denise O'Connell from Coldwell Banker Mountain Properties soon followed, joining Gutersohn later in the spring.

Location still proved to be a major obstacle to Gutersohn's business. Because there was already a RE/MAX office located in Winter Park, he was prevented from moving his office there, which kept away a lot of other brokers who were inter-

ested in joining him, he said: "I realized I was going to need to come to town."

Finally, in November, Gutersohn gained permission from RE/MAX International to move to Winter Park and he purchased an office space in the old brewery building across the street from the post office (and directly across the street from the town's other RE/MAX office).

With the move to town, Irene and Neil Jans and Suzy Robbins (Coldwell Banker's No. 1 team) came on board followed a few weeks later by Brenda Freeman, Mara Erlandson and Monica Anderson from Century 21 Winter Park Real Estate, and Tina Shearon of Oakwood Homes on the Front Range.

To top it off, Granby Ranch's real estate team managed by Jennifer Colley and including Laura Zeitz and Charles Haines joined forces with Peak to Peak.

"The Granby Ranch merger was very exciting," he said. Granby Ranch sold 77 prop-

erties this past year, he said, and they're getting ready to go vertical with more development. People are drawn there by the amenities, the price point and the family-friendly environment, Gutersohn said: "There's a lot there to sell to people who like Colorado."

The new Peak to Peak Winter Park office officially opened on Dec. 1.

Gutersohn said he's looking forward to the challenges of the market ahead.

"It's an incredible buyer opportunity out there," he said. "You can buy at 1999 prices right now."

Gutersohn added that he believes prices are in the process of "hitting bottom," with residential property selling for 60 to 70 cents on the dollar.

"People want to wait until it comes back, but the time to buy is now," he said. "Banks are loosening up. Interest rates are great. Banks and owners are willing to provide funding."

Not surprisingly, the properties that are selling best right

now are the foreclosures, short sales and aggressively priced houses, he said.

The future of Grand County Real Estate, he added, will be more in-state, second homebuyers (currently 65 percent of Grand County real estate is owned by Colorado residents, as opposed to other resort areas with a much higher out-of-state ownership rate.)

Traffic on I-70 is one of the best things to happen to Winter Park real estate, Gutersohn said: "People are sick of dealing with it."

And the resort's children's ski programs and the disabled ski program are other major draws for real estate clients. "This area is still very family-oriented," he said.

Gutersohn's greatest challenge now that he has all these power brokers under one roof will be "keeping everyone happy," he said. He's fairly confident he'll be able to do that by allowing people the freedom to do whatever makes them successful.

"I won't hold them back."

LEGISLATURE: Immigration legislation also likely to be introduced this session

Continued from page 1

He has re-introduced the farm license plate bill that the governor vetoed last year. The special plate is intended for farm trucks or tractors, "not for your 2010 Maserati," he said.

He is also introducing a bill to revoke the late fee penalty on the license plate registrations for all vehicles, reverting the late fee to its pre-Senate Bill 108 status of \$10. The bill does not address the entire registration fee, he added, only the late fee.

Baumgardner said he is still working on some type of immigration legislation.

"It's not Arizona's 1070," he said. It's more about clarifying what the state has in its statute and making sure businesses play by the same rules.

"I don't know exactly what finished bill will look like," he said.

Another bill Baumgardner is introducing on behalf of Colorado Counties Inc. (CCI)

Contact information

- State Rep. Randy Baumgardner
303-866-2949
randy.baumgardner.house@state.co.us
- State Sen. Jeanne Nicholson
303-866-4873
jeanne.nicholson.senate@state.co.us

would set up special federal mineral use lease districts, he said. If a county chooses to join one of these special districts, they would get their PILT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) money right away rather than waiting, he said.

Baumgardner's final bill looks to extend a tax credit that sunsets this year.

"We have a couple businesses looking into moving to Colorado and they would like to have that tax credit in place before they come," he said. "The goal is to bring jobs and stimulate Colorado."

Baumgardner said he's also keeping his eye on proposed legislation that

addresses health insurance, bringing it in line with the new federal standards; and he's following legislation that promotes open carry of weapons instead on concealed carry.

In the Senate

Freshman state Sen. Jeanne Nicholson (D-Gilpin County) had a busy first week at the Statehouse, lining up meetings with stakeholders and constituents to discuss several bills that she's proposing.

Nicholson plans to introduce six bills this session.

Two bills deal child welfare, stemming directly from Nicholson's days as a public health nurse.

The first one requires WIC program educators (Women, Infants and Children) to be mandatory reporters of child abuse and neglect. The other more clearly defines "failure to thrive" and when it's appropriate for professionals

to report it.

Nicholson is also introducing two forest health bills.

One will standardize the criteria for controlled and prescribed burns on private property and the other will aim to create a greater demand for forest products, particularly beetle kill. "I'm not sure where that will go," she said.

Nicholson will also have a bill removing term limits for water and wastewater treatment facility operators certification board members.

"It's hard to find people to serve on that board," she said.

Her sixth bill is a fire safety bill requested by the Department of Public Safety and addressing fire safety associated with fireworks.

"I'm very excited about being in the state legislature," said the former Gilpin County commissioner. "It's an honor and responsibility I take seriously."

Nicholson said she is paying close attention to all the financial issues the state is facing and, if any Arizona-style legislation is introduced, "I will be sitting straight up in my chair and voting no," she said.

"A major priority of mine is children, education and the welfare of children," she added. "I will fighting hard to say that should be our priority."

Nicholson said she is also interested in a property tax forgiveness program for people who have been through a catastrophic fire like Four Mile Canyon. The program would temporarily value property differently, "until they build again."

Nicholson will be serving on the Senate Education Committee, Senate Appropriations Committee, Senate Judiciary and will be the vice-chair of the Senate Local Government and Energy Committee.