



MESSAGE FROM MARSHA

FOOD COUNCIL TACKLES HUNGER PAINS

Over the past year I have been working with representatives from Live Well, Colorado's agriculture industry, hospitals, anti-hunger organizations, the USDA and Colorado Dept. of Human Services to develop plans that enable Colorado farmers and ranchers to broaden their markets and have more access to poverty stricken and underserved areas, homeless shelters, school districts and food banks throughout Colorado.

Working closely with all of the above stakeholders, we have drafted legislation (SB-106) to establish a Food Advisory Council to promote robust, resilient and long-term food economies in Colorado, increase consumer access to fresh, healthy, and safe foods and provide greater food security for all Coloradans.

With El Paso County's unemployment rate at 9 % and the state's unemployment rate at 8.4%, it's clear that many more men, women and children are living below poverty level and are in desperate need of food assistance. According to 2007 census data, Colorado has over ½ million people living in poverty, and our state has the fastest growing rate of childhood poverty in the country with an increase of 84%! With record numbers of families requiring emergency food assistance, many of the food bank supplies are dangerously low.

Colorado producers rank 2nd in production for market sheep and lambs, 4th for cattle, and 5th in onions, apples, peaches, grapes and melons in the United States. When there is an abundance of Colorado agriculture products available, why not get more of those surplus products to urban areas in Colorado Springs, rural areas of Eastern El Paso County and distributed throughout our state rather than letting those products go to waste?

The thirteen member council established in SB-106 consists of leaders in agriculture, food wholesalers and retailers, nutrition, health, rural economic development, anti-hunger, food assistance programs and several governmental agencies. These council members will seek to find comprehensive methods to address Colorado's serious hunger issues. For additional information contact Rep. Looper at 719-238-5600 or marshalooper@gmail.com.

Please join Commissioner Lathen and State Rep. Looper on May 1, 2010 for a Town Hall Meeting from 10:00-12:00 am at Mtn. View Electric Association located at 11140 E. Woodmen Rd. A brief summary of state and county issues is planned from 10:00-11:00 followed by a presentation from Mtn. View on wind and solar options available to property owners in Eastern El Paso County. For additional information contact Rep. Looper at 719-238-5600 or www.gomarsha.org.

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