

Text Size



- [Home](#)
- [About the Governor](#)
- [Cabinet](#)
- [Media](#)
  - [Press Releases](#)
  - [Executive Orders](#)
  - [Photo Gallery](#)
  - [State of the State Speeches](#)
  - [Legislative Action](#)
  - [Current Flag Status](#)
  - [Letters and Proclamations](#)
- [Offices of the Governor](#)
  - [Boards and Commissions](#)
  - [Office of Policy, Research and Legislative Affairs](#)
  - [Office of Legal Counsel](#)
  - [Office of Constituent Services](#)
  - [Office of State Planning and Budgeting](#)
  - [Office of Information Technology](#)
- [Contact](#)
  - [Contact the Governor](#)
  - [Governor's Internship and Experiential Learning Program](#)
  - [Meeting and Event Request](#)

- [Home](#)
- [Media](#)
- [State of the State Speeches](#)
- [Inauguration](#)

- 
- [Press Releases](#)
  - [Executive Orders](#)
  - [Photo Gallery](#)
  - [State of the State Speeches](#)
    - [Inauguration](#)
    - [2011 State of the State](#)
    - [2012 State of the State](#)
  - [Legislative Action](#)
  - [Current Flag Status](#)
  - [Letters and Proclamations](#)

[Lt. Governor Joe Garcia](#)  
[Meeting & Event Requests](#)  
[Share Your Opinion](#)

Quick Links

- [Contact the Governor](#)
- [Press Releases](#)
- [Proclamation/Letter Request](#)



## Inauguration

A wise man told me: Humility has at least two essential ingredients – it is knowing that any aspect of your life can collapse in an instant, and sincere gratitude that it has not.

Some might say I am not your traditional elected leader. I struggled in school, was laid off when my first career collapsed, and had to work many years of long hours running restaurants.

I came to Colorado to study rocks ... and ended up selling beer.

I could not be more humbled to be your Governor, and I am deeply grateful.

So to the people of Colorado, I want to first say, thank you.

We face challenging times and I am proud that we will face them together. We are Coloradans. We are not daunted by a little cold weather. We don't shrink from high passes or hard work. With the current challenge comes a great opportunity to put aside our differences and work to make Colorado – Our Colorado – a model of prosperity and good government.

Helen and Teddy and I would like to express our warm appreciation and gratitude to the people who have taken this journey with us. First among these is my running mate, Lt. Governor Joe Garcia, and his wife, Claire, and their family. Joe's leadership and keen insight into the educational needs of the next generation will serve our state well.

Let me congratulate those who take office in this term: Attorney General John Suthers, Treasurer Walker Stapleton and Secretary of State Scott Gessler. I know we share the same love for this state and belief in its better future.

We have such strong partners with us today – Sen. Mark Udall and Sen. Michael Bennet, Congresswoman Diana DeGette, Congressman Ed Perlmutter and Congressman Jared Polis – working for Colorado in Washington. And here at home, our partners are Senate President Brandon Shaffer and Minority Leader Mike Kopp House Speaker Frank McNulty and Minority Leader Sal Pace – and all the members of the Colorado legislature. We look forward to the work ahead and we appreciate the commitment that's been shown already to governing together. I also want to acknowledge members of the Colorado Supreme Court who are with us today.

And to Gov. Bill Ritter: Thank you.

Thank you for defining Colorado as the epicenter for renewable energy and for keeping the education and health of our kids at the top of your agenda.

Thank you so much for all of your service to Colorado. Your administration has provided us with a smooth and complete transition. We are grateful to them and to you.

On behalf of all Coloradans, we thank you and Jeannie for your service and wish you Godspeed in your new endeavors.

As Helen and I walked over from Denver's City Hall this morning, I was reminded that we made nearly the same walk 365 days ago to announce our campaign for Governor.

It was only a few steps – well, actually, 663 steps to be exact ... we will measure everything in our new administration – but it was also the beginning of a great journey that took us to every county in Colorado. We visited feedlots and fish hatcheries, cheese plants and cracker companies, and wind farms and gas fields. We even found our way to more than a few brewpubs.

We saw old friends and made new ones. From the red rocks of the Book Cliffs to the cherry orchards of the North Fork, from high ranches in the Flattops to the high plains of Hugo, the Flatirons to Grand Mesa, we experienced the extraordinary beauty and diversity that all of Colorado has to offer. Along the way, we found ourselves sitting at a number of kitchen tables.

The kitchen table is where household decisions are made. It's where parents write grocery lists and kids do their homework. It's where families share their laughter and concerns, their joys and sorrows. There, in the heart of a family's home, you could hear the heartbeat of Colorado.

Let me tell you, that heartbeat is strong.

Even in these most difficult of times, the people of Colorado persevere and grow stronger.

This economic downturn goes beyond statistics and forecasts. It's personal. All of us know someone who has lost a job. We know someone who went back to work after retiring because their nest egg cracked along with Wall Street. And we know someone burdened with anxiety and fear about

the pink slip that might appear tomorrow.

As Franklin Roosevelt reminded my mother's generation, fear is both contagious and debilitating.

My mother knew something about hard times. In the middle of the Great Depression – when she was just 13 years old – her father's business, the Old Orchard Distillery, went bankrupt, changing the family's fortunes forever. My mother lost two husbands, one to war ... one to cancer. And yet, I never heard her complain or feel sorry for herself. She never blamed anyone.

The lessons she learned were brought home to our kitchen table. My older sisters Betsy and Deb, and my older brother Sydney, traveled great distances to join us today. As kids, we all learned that you don't spend what you don't have; you don't use up your savings on things you may want but don't need; and while no one would call my mom an entrepreneur, I learned a lot about business from her.

Even in adversity, she was an optimist. She was good at pinching a penny and above all she believed that hard work could overcome almost anything.

My mother's story is not unique, nor is her wisdom unfamiliar around Holyoke or Cortez, Craig or Walden. Our families may all sit at different kitchen tables but the talk is much the same. Our need for meaningful work, and our desire to see our children prosper and be healthy ... it's the same at every kitchen table across Colorado. To make those dreams come true, we need jobs.

Our first task, our highest priority, is jobs.

We will help businesses expand and protect the jobs we have, we will attract new jobs, and we will unleash the entrepreneurial spirit that has always defined Colorado through her history.

We will also face our budget challenge squarely. We will make the hard choices necessary to balance Colorado's budget just like families do at their kitchen tables.

Today, I will sign several Executive Orders. The first order requires state government to join in partnership with local communities in creating jobs and designing economic development plans that are uniquely suited to these communities. This effort, focusing on the use of local talent and resources, is an initiative for all 64 counties – from Dolores to Douglas, from Mineral to Morgan ... and all the places in between. We will chart a course for economic revival from the bottom up, county by county. On Friday, I will embark on a four-day trip around the state to begin this process.

Our second Executive Order places a new emphasis on global opportunities as an engine for job creation. Business is about relationships. This order will create the Governor's Trade and Tourism Ambassador Program. We intend to enlist Colorado-related businesses and individuals living in other states and countries who have a stake in Colorado. These volunteer ambassadors will spread the word about Colorado, brand us as a state that welcomes innovation and new investment, and help us spur international tourism and export opportunities.

A third Executive Order begins the task of making the State a more effective partner with our counties. It provides for more flexibility and less bureaucracy; more freedom with fewer mandates. It also sends a message to the private sector that we mean to cut red tape, make licenses and regulations more rational and easier to understand, and that we mean to do it as a partner with local communities.

By taking specific actions today, we want the people of Colorado to know that we heard you and we share your urgency to get Colorado back to work. We also heard you want a leaner and less partisan government. We recruited people for our Cabinet, independent of political backgrounds, who will put our state first and bring the commitment needed to meet our fiscal challenges. We chose them because they share our values of competence, integrity and compassion.

Their job will be to help us shrink government while still being effective and efficient. They have not been asked – nor will they be expected – to provide a partisan perspective. Their work will define Colorado as a beacon of good government, where innovation and customer service is part of the daily exercise of every state employee. As business is attracted to excellence, this emphasis on good government must be a cornerstone of our economic revival.

We will measure everything we do and make changes where change makes sense. We will protect our land and water and preserve the natural beauty that helps define Colorado. Above all, we will focus on education as the social bedrock for the hopes and dreams of our children and the quality of their jobs.

In these most challenging of times, while we recognize the limitations of government, we don't have to – nor should we – limit our dreams of what Colorado must be.

Colorado must be a place known for embracing young entrepreneurs with fresh ideas and innovative ventures.

Colorado must be a place where kids get a world-class education preparing them for the rigors of leadership and the jobs that will define prosperity in the 21st century.

Colorado must be a place where our college degrees and the learning they signify are the envy of every other state.

Colorado must be a place where we are known, not only for the beauty of our landscapes and wonders of nature, but also for the advance of new technologies and new ways of powering the economy.

Why Colorado more than any other place? We have one of the most highly-educated work forces in America. We have perhaps the highest percentage of any state, of people who came here not for a job or promotion, but for our quality of life. And they have kept coming even through this long, hard recession.

Plus, we have the best beer. Rest assured, we will be obsessive in spreading the word about the Colorado advantage.

We can be hopeful about our future. We can be bold. We will come through this rough time because we have emerged from rough times before – because we are resilient and undaunted. We'll do it by working together in the best tradition of the West. Like every river runner knows, when you get into rough water everybody paddles.

There's a Yiddish word, "landsman" (londs-man) which, roughly translated, means "a fellow villager" – a stranger, perhaps, but still someone you welcome because you know they share a common connection in the village of your ancestors.

I think we can learn from this Yiddish expression and the warmth it evokes.

This value doesn't spring from government. But it can teach all of us to govern together. I feel that every Coloradan is member of our administration.


As we traveled the state this last year, we didn't speak ill of those who disagreed with us – and we refused to make personal attacks.

Today, perhaps more than ever, our relationships must be defined by respect, our discourse must be civil and tolerant.

And so, I invite you all to join us at Colorado's kitchen table and to plan our future. Because this is Our Colorado.

God bless the state of Colorado.

- [Policies](#)

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