

AGRICULTURE AND CLEAN ENERGY SUMMIT

September 2, 2009
Fort Morgan, Colorado

SPEAKERS BIOGRAPHIES

Senator Michael Bennet

Michael Bennet, the junior Senator from Colorado, has served most recently as the Superintendent of the Denver Public Schools. As a dedicated public servant with comprehensive experience as a businessman, Michael has a proven record of facing tough tasks at critical times. As Superintendent, Michael worked to improve student achievement and classroom performance, while also overseeing a halt to years of budgetary cuts in the Denver Public Schools. While serving as Chief of Staff to Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper, Michael was credited with leading the way on balancing a historic budget deficit. Prior to his service to the city, Michael was a Managing Director at the Anschutz Investment Company, where he managed the restructuring of over \$3 billion in corporate debt. Representing Colorado as our state's next U.S. Senator, Michael will use his understanding and leadership on complex financial and economic issues to be a voice for Colorado's working families.

Almost four years ago, Michael inherited a School District whose achievement rates were flat and, where, for year after year, budgets were cut. With the help of Denver Public Schools' principals and teachers, Michael has turned this around. Achievement and graduation rates are up, with Denver's kids growing faster than all the kids in the state on every single test at every single grade level with the exception of one math test.

As Superintendent, Michael worked hard to end the annual cycle of budget cuts at the Denver Public Schools. 2008 was the first in five years that the district did not have to cut its budget, and this year Denver was able to invest an additional \$18 million in its schools and classrooms to enrich the academic environment for children. As a result, programs such as comprehensive Early Childhood Education have been enacted allowing over 2,000 four year olds to now have a full day Early Childhood Education. Additionally, for the first time in Denver's history, over 90% of five year olds have access to full-day kindergarten. These improvements are closing the achievement gap suffered by low-income children.

Michael, working with the Denver Classroom Teachers Association, revolutionized Procomp, a system of differentiated pay that pays teachers more for driving student achievement, serving in a high poverty school, or bringing a special set of talents, like the teaching of math or special education. Although the changes proposed were controversial, nearly 80% of Denver's teachers voted for the new proposal.

Prior to serving as Superintendent of the Denver Public Schools, Michael served for two years as Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper's Chief of Staff. Michael oversaw the balancing of an historic budget deficit, the renegotiation of several collective bargaining agreements, and a complete redesign of the police oversight function. Michael, along with the Mayor, was widely credited with putting together a first rate, diverse team to lead the City through unprecedented fiscal challenges.

Before joining Mayor Hickenlooper's administration, Michael was a Managing Director of the Anschutz Investment Company, where he had direct responsibility for the investment of over

\$500 million. He led the reorganization of four distressed companies including Forcenergy (which later merged with Denver-based Forest Oil), Regal Cinemas, United Artists, and Edwards Theaters, which together required the restructuring of over \$3 billion in debt. Michael also managed, on behalf of Anschutz, the consolidation of the three theater chains into Regal Entertainment Group, the largest motion picture exhibitor in the world.

Prior to moving to Denver, Michael served as Counsel to the Deputy Attorney General at the Department of Justice during the Clinton Administration.

Michael earned his bachelor's degree with honors from Wesleyan University and his law degree from Yale Law School, where he was Editor-in-Chief of The Yale Law Journal.

Michael married Susan Daggett, a successful natural resources lawyer, in 1997. Michael and Susan are the proud parents of three daughters, Caroline (9), Halina (7), and Anne (4).

Ginny Brannon

Ginny graduated from the University of Denver Sturm College of Law in 1998; the University of Colorado, where she earned an M.A. in economics, in 1990; and The Colorado College, where she earned a B.A. in economics, in 1985. Ginny has served as the Climate Change Manager at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) for the past two years. Ginny worked with an interdepartmental team to draft the Colorado Climate Action Plan, which Governor Bill Ritter Jr. announced in November 2007. Ginny is currently implementing the initiatives for which CDPHE has responsibility as set forth in the Climate Action Plan. Prior to joining CDPHE, Ginny served as an attorney in the water rights unit at the Colorado Attorney General's office. Ginny is a 4th generation Colorado native.

Cindy Lair

Cindy Lair is the program manager for the Colorado Department of Agriculture - State Conservation Board. Before coming to work for the Department of Ag, Cindy developed and led the noxious weed program in Boulder County in the 1990s and later was the Director for the City of Louisville's Land Management Department. Along with a very talented staff of conservation specialists the State Conservation Board Program serves Colorado's 76 Conservation Districts through financial assistance, conservation grants, and board member training. In addition to managing this program, Cindy assists the Department of Agriculture through her representation in other conservation issues affecting Colorado's agricultural producers.

She was appointed to serve on the state's Conservation Easement Oversight Commission; represents the Western Association of State Departments of Agriculture on the USDA Western Sustainable Ag Research and Education program Administrative Council; and is a SW Regional Director for the National Association of State Conservation Agencies. Cindy is a believer in the philosophy that the future of tomorrow's healthy agricultural lands and rural communities depends on viable family farms and vibrant local agricultural infrastructure.

Bill Midcap

Fourth generation farmer and rancher, Bill Midcap, retired from farming and ranching in 2000. In his 28 years of farming and ranching Bill became interested in cooperatives especially rural electric cooperatives. Bill has served on countless boards within the rural electric family and is currently the Colorado Rural Electric Association's Treasure and Budget Chairman. His agriculture roots have given him a keen interest in the environment and renewable energy. Bill is committed to rural America and has been involved in rural issues his whole life.

Bill joined Rocky Mountain Farmers Union as the Cooperative Specialist in May of 2008. He became the Director of Renewable Energy at RMFU in April of this year. His work at Rocky Mountain Farmers Union allows him to help people connect the dots with companies who want to invest in America's clean energy economy.

Andy Olsen

Andy Olsen is a Senior Policy Advocate responsible for field organizing and constituency building for ELPC's Farm Bill – Clean Energy Development program. Mr. Olsen managed the Governor's Alternative Fuels Task Force and led several collaborative renewable energy efforts in Wisconsin. He has served as a Dane County Supervisor, Dane County Lakes & Watershed Commission member, and as the Board President of RENEW Wisconsin. *M.S., Energy Analysis & Policy, University of Wisconsin, 1996; B.A., Economics, Northwestern University, 1983.*

James Pritchett

James Pritchett joined the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics at Colorado State University in May of 2001. Dr. Pritchett's primary interdisciplinary research and extension efforts are focused on agribusiness management with special attention on agriculture's allocation and use of scarce water resources. He is currently examining the rural economic impacts of water transfers and the economics of limited irrigation in the rural West. Additional research includes evaluation of crop insurance alternatives for wheat farmers in eastern Colorado and developing an integrated water resource management training program in Afghanistan. Pritchett appreciates the opportunity to work with partners including CSU's Agriculture Experiment Station, USDA's National Research Initiative Competitive Grants Program, and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Dr. Pritchett enjoys teaching a wide variety of courses including in the areas of agribusiness finance, management and economics. Most recently, he has taught AREC 408 Agriculture Finance, AREC 428 Agribusiness Management, and BUS 635 Economics for World Business.

Originally from southeastern Colorado, Dr. Pritchett attended Colorado State University and obtained a B.S. in Agricultural Business and an M.S. in Agricultural Economics. Pritchett was awarded a doctorate in Agriculture and Applied Economics from the University of Minnesota in 1999, and then served as an Assistant Professor in Agricultural Economics at Purdue University from 1999 to 2001 before returning to Colorado.

Ben Rainbolt is the full-time director of the Rocky Mountain Farmers Union Cooperative & Economic development Center. He is an experienced educator and administrator, having almost 20 years of teaching experience and 10 years in administration, including both secondary and post-secondary, as well as private not-for-profit leadership. He holds B.A. degree in agriculture education and an M.A. degree both from Colorado State University.

Ben has a highly successful track record in quality educational program development and student success. Over 80 percent of his students have successful careers in entrepreneurship. The FFA chapters Ben led ranked in the top 3 percent in the nation for 14 consecutive years. During his career as an educator, Ben was particularly skilled at facilitation of community engagement in the school system, and integration of agriculture in the scheme of a vibrant community. As an administrator, he raised the graduation rate from 67 percent to over 90 percent in less than 10 years. During that same period, his graduation rate for Hispanic students doubled, going 44% to 88%. His ability to work with rural people from a variety of backgrounds and ethnicities contributes to the success of his work.

Ben Rainbolt is a second-generation Coloradan and third generation farmer who is still involved in production agriculture. He has been adept at combining resources with community groups to offer many choices for his students. He has a strong background in conflict resolution and meeting facilitation, which is a prominent factor in his overall effectiveness working with groups. Mr. Rainbolt has appeared as a guest speaker on cooperatives and cooperative development with a wide variety of groups.

Curtis Sayles

Curtis Sayles is a 4th generation ag producer residing near Seibert, CO. Mr. Sayles returned to the family farm in 1980 after college and a short stint working as an Ocean Engineer for Brown & Root in Houston, Texas. Curtis and his wife started independently farming in 1987 growing their farm to its current 5,000 acres (owned and leased). They have three girls, one of who has recently married into another farming family.

The Sayles' began no-till in 1996 and moved to continuous crop no-till in 1999. Currently they raise winter wheat (seed, red and white varieties), dryland corn, sunflowers and prozo millet. They are currently experimenting with canola and safflower in anticipation of bio-diesel demand. To balance their operation they also have a small all-natural beef feedlot.

Jon Scholl

Jon Scholl became the President of American Farmland Trust in July 2008, after serving as Counselor to the Administrator for Agricultural Policy at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) since 2004. At the U.S. EPA, Scholl led the development of the first National Agricultural Strategy, first agricultural advisory committee and the first agency-wide cross media agriculture team. He also helped direct agency regulations on animal feeding operations, renewable fuel standards, clean air rules, and emission reporting requirements. In 2007, Scholl provided counsel to the USDA farm bill team on conservation provisions.

Prior to his work at the U.S. EPA, Scholl was Executive Assistant to the President of the Illinois Farm Bureau, among other positions including Director of Public Policy, Director of National Legislation, and Director of Natural Resources. Over his 25 years with Illinois Farm Bureau, he worked with the Illinois Congressional delegation and coordinated several legislative initiatives at state and local levels. Scholl also worked at the Illinois Department of Agriculture.

Jon's leadership of AFT is fitting, given his extensive agricultural history. As the nation's leading farmland conservation organization, AFT will benefit from Scholl's impressive knowledge of agriculture, policy, and conservation issues, all of which are integral to its mission.

Jon and his family operate a corn and soybean farm in McLean County, Illinois. Interested in the development of renewable energy, they have sited windmills on their farm. Jon graduated from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1978 with a B.S. in Agricultural Science. Scholl was the recipient of the University of Illinois College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences Award of Merit in 2008. He is the former Chairman of the Illinois FFA Foundation Board of Trustees.

Jon and his wife Joyce are the parents of two children, Jay and Jill.

Gary Teague

Gary Teague and his wife, Laura, own and manage Teague Diversified, Inc., a diversified cattle feeding operation in Fort Morgan, Colorado. In addition to finishing cattle, they develop or breed heifers for ranches around the country. The feedlot operation is just a small part of their total business. They lease several ranches from absentee owners. They also run stockers on various crops including wheat, rye, turnips, alfalfa, and grass - some of which they produce on their own farms. They also have a sow operation, farrowing sows and marketing feeder pigs and replacement females to producers across the country. They also produce high quality compost from the manure resulting from their operations, and market it wholesale to Colorado Front Range entities.

Gary acquired his undergraduate degree in Animal Science at Texas A & M, and continued his education in a Master's program at Colorado State University in Beef Cattle Management. Laura received her bachelor's from Colorado State University and continued her education with a Master's program in Bovine Reproductive Management, also from CSU. It was through these programs that they acquired many of their contacts, and they value these experiences very much.

Gary grew up on a small diversified farming operation in Texas. Laura is from a family of teachers, but with close roots to farming. They have a 12-year-old daughter, Shelby; an 11-year-old son, Tucker; and a 10-year-old daughter, Charlee Jo.