

THE DENVER POST

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2009



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★★

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LINING UP THE
INFRASTRUCTURE

More transmission lines needed for wind, solar energy » 7B

dp Headed to the slopes? Check out the Denver Post snow report for latest conditions. » denverpost.com

Opinion nibbles at gift ban

By Tim Hoover *The Denver Post*

Gov. Bill Ritter's staffers can accept meals or tickets worth more than \$50 at events where he is speaking if their presence is "reasonably necessary" to help the governor, the state ethics commission said Tuesday.

The 4-0 decision from the Independent Ethics Commission creates the latest exception to Amendment 41, a gift ban approved by

voters in 2006.

Since it began making rulings in 2008, the commission has issued 19 position statements, advisory opinions or letters at the request of government officials seeking guidance. Of those, three could be construed as enforcing a clear ban of gifts or special benefits for government workers, and two others partially enforced an ethical restriction.

Previous opinions from the commission

have allowed:

- Colorado State Patrol troopers to accept free admission to an event if they are required to attend to protect the governor or lieutenant governor.
- Government workers to accept travel paid by private interests if it benefits the state.
- A lawmaker to accept a "cross-cultural" trip to Turkey.

AMENDMENT » 8A

Amendment 41

Passed in 2006, it places restrictions on gifts given to Colorado public officials, government employees and their immediate family members. They are prohibited from receiving gifts with value exceeding \$50, with an exception for friends and relatives or special occasions. Gifts from lobbyists are banned.

A girl gives back

During her painful chemotherapy, Allison Winn drew strength from her support dog, Coco. When she began feeling better, the 9-year-old raised money to help other kids with cancer receive the same comfort.

By Kirk Mitchell *The Denver Post*

After two years of surgery, chemotherapy and treatment for a brain tumor, 9-year-old Allison Winn wanted other kids with cancer to have a companion like her dog, Coco.

"She made me feel better," Allison said.

So when she regained her strength at the end of spring, Allison embarked on a fundraising campaign of her own invention to pay for feeding and training companion dogs for kids like her.

On Tuesday, in the lobby of the women's prison where Coco and the new dog were trained, she watched quietly, but intently, as 2-year-old cancer survivor Krysta Hubbard caressed the nose of Lucky Bug, a gentle black Labrador. Krysta affectionately called him "Puppy."

"It made me feel good," Allison said in a soft voice.

Allison was a 7-year-old first-grader on April 6, 2007, when a doctor told her mother, Dianna Litvak, 40, that a medulloblastoma was causing her to see double.

Within two days, doctors performed surgery to remove the tumor and initiated chemotherapy that sapped Allison's strength.

A doctor suggested that she get a pet for companionship. Litvak applied for a dog through the Colorado Department of Corrections' correctional industries program.

Under the program, inmates at the Denver Women's Correctional Facility train dogs surrendered to local animal shelters to be companion or service dogs for elderly, disabled or seriously ill owners, said Debi Stevens, who supervises the program.

Allison named her white bichon frisé Coco because the dog often got dirty around the mouth when she ate.

When Allison started feeling better in the spring, she announced one day, "I want to do this for a kid who has cancer."

It was her idea to bake homemade

DOGS » 4A



Cancer survivor Allison Winn, left, her sister, Emily, and Allison's support dog, Coco, a bichon frisé, watch as Krysta Hubbard, 2, bonds with Lucky Bug. *Cyrus McCrimmon, The Denver Post*



Afghan President Hamid Karzai, left, is the favorite to defeat challenger Abdullah Abdullah in the runoff election on Nov. 7.

Karzai bows to pressure for runoff

By Heidi Vogt *The Associated Press*

KABUL » Facing Taliban threats and approaching winter snows, Afghan election officials must now scramble to organize a runoff presidential election on Nov. 7 after a grim President Hamid Karzai bowed to intense U.S. pressure and acknowledged Tuesday that he fell short of a majority.

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon said it will be a "huge challenge" to pull off new balloting without repeating the widespread fraud that caused U.N.-backed investigators to strip Karzai of nearly a third of his votes from the Aug. 20 first-round election.

Although Karzai's capitulation was a

AFGHAN » 4A

Medical pot shortage may pull in cartels

By Mike McPhee and Victoria Barbatelli *The Denver Post*

Demand for medical marijuana in Colorado has grown so fast in the past few months that it has outstripped the production of legal "grow" operations and is now probably being supplied by international drug cartels, say some local sheriffs and agents from the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration.

And as dispensaries proliferate throughout the state, police and lawyers say they are worried about the peripheral crime rising around the shops intended to function as pharma-

POT » 8A



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\$

25

million keys to open new doors.

POWERBALL LOTTERY

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