

**Our Economy:** Yes, our economy is doing very well. Unemployment is low and wages are starting to rise. But, this economy isn't working for everyone. If you do not have at least a high school education and have not learned a skill, you are pretty much relegated to a low skill, low income job (typically without benefits).

Colorado has voted for an increase in the minimum wage. The naysayers immediately said this was the end of the world as we knew it. Our increase went into effect in January and the jobs kept growing. Cities around the country have implemented minimum wages of \$15.00 an hour. Nothing bad happened.

Well, actually, something did happen. These unskilled workers suddenly were raised out of poverty. They didn't need food stamps. Maybe they could afford insurance. At least they could afford a walk-in-clinic when they needed a Doctor. And, maybe they could afford to go to a community college or get into an apprentice program?

Which, of course, brings up the question. Why aren't all of our community colleges offering apprentice programs and/or technical training? Should this be a cooperative effort between our Colorado government and business? Yes, without question. We need to offer courses that business needs and can't find workers to fill.

**Education:** TABOR has unintentionally crushed our education system. This must be fixed. Our investment in education per capita is one of the lowest in the country. Education is the key to financial well being and success. Why on earth wouldn't we invest in this?

Yes, we need to put apprentice and technical training into our Community Colleges. But, I would also suggest that we encourage potential students with limited resources to go to their Community College for their first 2 years and then transfer to a 4 year college for their degree. Much less expensive and the student can see if they are cut out for college. If not, change their major to an apprentice program or a technical skill. Let's keep in mind that not every person wants or should go to college. However, that doesn't mean they shouldn't maximize their education to match their ability.