

EDITOR

FROM PAGE 8

Something to pay attention to is how the different organizations operate their SCFD Free Days. Some may require an advance ticket, while others may do it as a first come, first served basis. The Denver Zoo, for example, does a lottery system for its SCFD Free Days.

I love the SCFD Free Days because they truly accomplish what they're meant to - I believe everyone should get to see a theater production, visit a museum or attend a concert, no matter if

they wouldn't normally have the financial means to do so. Culture and arts enrich us as a society.

But another reason that makes the SCFD Free Days so great is that they offer an opportunity to experience something new. Maybe there's something you think is not really your "thing," but there's no harm in checking it out free-of-cost during an SCFD Free Day. And who knows, after that experience, it just might become your new "thing."

To learn more about the SCFD, visit scfd.org. To browse its calendar of SCFD Free Days, hover over the 'Find Culture' tab to get the drop down menu, and select 'Free Days.'

LETTERS

FROM PAGE 8

Protect Medicare program

My grandfather spent more than three decades working to support our Colorado economy. After retiring, the years of hard labor started to take a toll, and his health began to decline.

At 91 years old, he handles a host of health issues, including frequent falls. This past year, he has had to be hospitalized seven times. And while these incidents used to result in high-priced medical bills, he has been able to access the care he needs for minimal costs since switching to Medicare Advantage earlier this year.

In addition to covering the majority of his medical bills, he is

able to access free transportation to and from his doctor appointments, which helps him get to all the appointments he needs since he can no longer drive. The benefits he receives have been helpful for our family too, as we know he is getting the care and assistance he deserves.

Coloradans should all have access to quality health care, like the coverage that is provided through Medicare Advantage. That is why I hope our representatives in Congress will continue to advocate for this program and protect it from potential funding cuts. After so many years of supporting our state, our lawmakers should be doing everything they can to assist outstanding citizens like my grandfather.

*Slade E. Mills
Denver*

KNIECH

FROM PAGE 8

a meaningful difference in our diversion rate, or the amount of waste being recycled or composted rather than landfilled. Denver's current diversion rate of 26% is below the national average of 34%, less than half of Boulder (53%) and less than a third of San Francisco (80%) and Los Angeles (76%). We know that Denver can and must improve our recycling and composting rate.

Denver has been exploring the best policy to achieve this outcome for more than a decade, including recommendations for policy change from the community-led Climate Action Task Force, the city's Sustainable Food Policy Council and many community organizations and leaders. Denver's current policy has made it harder for residents to do the right thing, because it has charged residents to compost and only picked up recycling every other week, while making it free to throw away as much as they want - eliminating any incentive to compost or recycle.

In response, Denver's Office of Climate Action, Sustainability, and Resiliency (CASR), in partnership with Denver's Department of Transportation and Infrastructure and Division of Solid Waste, has researched and is exploring a proven expanded waste service approach that would provide Denver residents free, weekly recycling and compost services, while charging people less if they throw less trash away. Customers would choose a small, medium or large trash cart size, and the monthly fee would vary accordingly

- the smaller the cart, the smaller the fee. All customers would receive weekly composting and recycling for free, which has been a growing need for many years and became increasingly apparent during the pandemic as households recycled more cardboard and plastics from online orders and deliveries. The current proposal includes an affordability index with instant rebates to support lower-income households or those on fixed incomes. Denver would be the only city in the nation that discounts trash fees for low-income residents. Additionally, tens of thousands of residents would simply be able to switch from the compost fee they are paying today to a smaller fee for selection of the smallest trash cart.

Residential waste policy change isn't the only step we need to take. Multi-family condo and apartment building residents in neighborhoods like Capitol Hill, who already pay for their waste service if their building has more than seven units, should also have better access to recycling and composting to reduce their trash waste. Expanding residential waste services first is the city's opportunity to lead by example before tackling ways to reduce private waste hauling.

Increasing Denver's diversion rate is a common-sense way to improve quality of life and reduce climate impacts in Denver. Stakeholder outreach is underway to answer questions and identify any challenges we would need to overcome to take this policy change on as a community.

Robin Kniech is an at-large member of Denver City Council. She can be reached at kniechatlarge@denvergov.org or 720-337-7712.

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