

Western Governors Convene Winter Meeting

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Last month, the Western Governors' Association (WGA) hosted their 2017 Winter Meeting in Phoenix, Arizona. Three federal cabinet members joined 12 governors for two days to discuss some of the most pressing challenges to Western States.

U.S. Forest Service Chief, Tony Tooke, touched on the need for more efficient coordination with states to better serve every American citizen. His remarks were very well received by all as WGA has been working with various other Western organizations, including CSG West, to strengthen the working relationships between state and federal officials and agencies.



For more information on these efforts, please see:

[CSG West Engages in Regional Efforts to Strengthen State – Federal Relations](#)

And / Or

[Western Governors Association – State – Federal Relationship](#)

U.S. Secretary of Labor, Alexander Acosta, also addressed the focus on solutions to remove barriers currently posed by occupational licensing requirements which will help Americans still looking for jobs. WGA Chair and South Dakota Governor Dennis Daugaard is leading an initiative on workforce development for his term aimed at enhancing career opportunities for students, graduates and displaced workers to help build a more vibrant regional economy.

For more information on these efforts, please visit:

[Western Governors Association – Workforce Development Initiative](#)

U.S. Transportation Secretary, Elaine Chao, outlined the department's priorities. In her remarks, she stated that "safety will always be our number one priority and second is addressing infrastructure needs – repairing and rebuilding our infrastructure. And third, preparing for the future by encouraging innovation."



Actor John Ratzenberger who played everyone's favorite mail carrier, Cliff Clavin, on the hit television show *Cheers* was the dinner keynote speaker. He recounted his experience while living in London and working as a house framer when he started the career for which he is now most known. Mr. Ratzenberger often exalts that kids today are no longer making things. "Instead they are going to college to get degrees and can't get a job. There are plenty of jobs out there. We just need to teach kids the skills. Many today, do not even know how to use

simple tools, hammers and screwdrivers. Manufacturers today say high school kids can't even read a ruler. How are they going to build airplanes, build homes, or even perform simple household repairs?" Mr. Ratzenberger made a passionate plea to support skilled labor.

The other keynote speaker was Arizona Cardinals President, Michael Bidwell. He shared the history of his football franchise and how the team and their stadium has been a successful story of economic development.

The participating governors formally adopted four policy resolutions during their Winter Meeting. These are the following:

Policy Resolution 2018-01: Wild Horse and Burro Management

Policy Resolution 2018-02: Public Lands Grazing

Policy Resolution 2018-03: Federal Disaster Recovery Assistance for Communities in the West

Policy Resolution 2018-04: Energy in the West

The 12 governors who attend the WGA Winter Meeting on December 1-2, 2017 were:

WGA Chair and South Dakota **Gov. Dennis Daugaard**

WGA Vice Chair and Hawaii **Gov. David Ige**

Alaska **Gov. Bill Walker**

Arizona **Gov. Doug Ducey**

Colorado **Gov. John Hickenlooper**

Idaho **Gov. Butch Otter**

Montana **Gov. Steve Bullock**

North Dakota **Gov. Doug Burgum**

Utah **Gov. Gary Herbert**

Wyoming **Gov. Matt Mead**

Guam **Gov. Eddie Calvo**, and

Northern Mariana Islands **Gov. Ralph Torres**

The WGA 2018 Annual Meeting will be held June 25-27, 2018 in Rapid City, South Dakota.