

# DENVER & THE WEST

## POT SHOPS CLOSED

Judge lets Longmont enforce its ban » 28



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## ANOTHER LOSING WEEK FOR STOCKS

Fears of 2nd recession taking a toll » 48

### Wall Street

DOW JONES	172.93
↓	10,817.65
NASDAQ	38.59
↓	2,341.94
S&P 500	17.12
↓	1,123.53

Coverage » B1  
denverpost.com/business

DOUGLAS COUNTY

## District asks for return of voucher cash

By Carlos Ilescas The Denver Post

The Douglas County School District wants its money back.

The district said Friday that it expects private schools paid about \$300,000 through its pilot voucher program to return the cash.

District officials were not commenting. But in a news release late Friday afternoon, administrators said that after a judge halted Choice Scholarship Program because it violated the state constitution, it only made sense to ask that the money be returned.

"Because last week's injunction prohibits further scholarship payments to students who chose to remain enrolled in their chosen private schools under the program, the district is requesting that the first quarter scholarship payments sent to parents be returned to the district," the statement said.

The program expected to provide \$4.575 each for up to 500 students to use for private-school tuition.

VOUCHER » 28

## School district busing kids until it's safe to walk

By Yesenia Robles The Denver Post

Most districts are encouraging students to keep fit by walking or biking to school this year, but Mapleton Public Schools wants some of its kids to stay on the bus.

At least for now.

"We are unable to do a lot of the programming with inserting or growing health programs because we don't want our kids in danger," said assistant superintendent Jackie Kapushin. "Our district has significant challenges, with major streets, a lack of sidewalks and, in some cases, a shoulder. It's just too dangerous."

That will change for about 300 Welby Montessori students next year, when the district creates a pedestrian-friendly route to school, using a \$198,310 federal Safe Roads to School grant.

SAFETY » 48

# New rule hits home

Denver deportation case stalls in light of a shift in immigration policy



From left, Sujei and Violeta Pando and the Denver couple's attorney, Lavi Soloway, walk into court Friday before a federal immigration judge postponed a decision on deportation of Sujei Pando. The decision came a day after the Obama administration announced a policy change that makes cases like Sujei Pando's a low priority. The Pandos were married in Iowa in 2010. Karl Gehring, The Denver Post

By Felisa Cardona The Denver Post

The Obama administration's sudden shift in immigration policy had a tangible impact in a Denver courtroom Friday when a federal immigration judge delayed a deportation hearing for a lesbian fighting to stay in the country with her wife.

"I feel relief, and I thank the judge because she is a human being," said Sujei Pando, who is trying to stay in the U.S. following a 2008 traffic stop that revealed her undocumented status.

Sujei Pando is one of 300,000 undocumented

immigrants across the country who Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano said Thursday should begin to be considered "low priority" for deportation. Pando was facing the possibility of removal from the country, but the immigration judge, Mimi Tsankov,

postponed the hearing until January, citing Napolitano's shift.

"The judge was not comfortable moving forward with so much at stake," said Pando's attorney, Lavi Soloway.

The status of undocumented immigrants who pose no security risk and came to the country as children should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis in compelling circumstances, Napolitano said in a letter to the Senate released Thursday.

The policy change includes consideration for immigrants who have familial ties to the U.S., including lesbian and gay families.

DEPORT » 48



This trailer and a different billboard, for CDOT's campaign against "Drugged Driving," were stolen this week. Jefferson County Sheriff's Office

## Despite theft, safe-driving message will roll on

By The Denver Post

An educational campaign warning Colorado motorists of the dangers of driving under the influence of drugs will kick off this morning, but without a large piece of it — literally.

A rolling billboard carrying a key message in the "Drugged Driving" campaign was stolen Thursday night in Jefferson County.

The 8- by 20-foot billboard and the flatbed trailer it was bolted to disappeared from near the intersection of West Charfield Avenue and South Garrison Street, near Ken-Caryl Ranch,

### Where to call with tips

Anyone with information regarding this theft is encouraged to call the Jefferson County tip line, 303-271-5512.

sometime between 9:30 p.m. Thursday and 8:25 a.m. Friday, the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office reported.

Stacey Stegman, spokeswoman for the Colorado Department of Transportation, said the CDOT campaign to educate motorists about the dangers of

driving under the influence will continue without the billboard — which included images of medicine bottles with pills and marijuana tumbling out of them and the reminder that "Drugged Driving is Impaired Driving."

Posters and fliers are being hung and distributed in pharmacies and medical-marijuana dispensaries.

CDOT will spend the next two weeks promoting the campaign before the Labor Day weekend. The billboard, worth more than \$1,000, is only a small portion of the campaign, Stegman said.

"Whoever took it, that's a felony," she said.

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## SAFETY: State lacks enough money to fund all projects

◀◀ FROM 1B

The district is working with Adams County to design the route, including new sidewalks and pedestrian bridges over irrigation canals in a mile-long stretch of East 78th Avenue from York Street to the school.

When the Welby Montessori moved to its current location on East 78th Avenue last year, the district decided to spend \$22,000 per year to bus students who lived closer than would normally warrant transportation.

Walking to school would have meant many of the elementary students would have to step into the 35-mph road to avoid irrigation ditches.

"Our ability to access these dollars is very impactful for our community," Kapushnik said.

The Colorado Department of Transportation distributes the grant money each year.

A CDOT advisory committee reviews applications and looks for those aiming to increase the number of students walking to class.

In the past 50 years, the number of students who walk to school in Colorado has dropped to less than 15 percent from about 60 percent.

Having more children walking to school could help decrease childhood obesity and improve attention in school. It also helps with air quality and decreases traffic congestion, CDOT officials said.

In recent years, grants have funded about 30 projects per year, but that's only about a sixth of the applications received.

"We never have enough money," said Ditsy Jacobsen, CDOT's bicycle and pedestrian unit manager, "but we work with the communities to help them find other ways."

For education projects that raise awareness of the safest routes or those that promote the idea



Traffic moves along East 78th Avenue near York Street on Friday. Mapleton Public Schools will use nearly \$200,000 in grant money to build a safe walking route along 78th from York to the Welby Montessori school, but it won't be ready this year. *Stacy Chang, The Denver Post*

of walking, money sometimes is unnecessary, Jacobsen said.

"But when it comes to infrastructure projects, we're pretty much stuck," she said. "It's tough to figure out other solutions then."

Mapleton chief operations officer Don Herman said the district will probably apply again to help fund improved walking routes for students in other schools. But, he said, officials first need to know what the solutions might be.

"We have many other problems, but the solution is not simple or straightforward," Herman said. "There are many large thoroughfares that will take a lot of coordination."

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### \$1.5 million worth of projects

Other grant recipients this year for infrastructure projects:

City of Las Animas	\$245,475
Huerfano School District RE-1	\$134,871
City of Loveland	\$ 85,880
City of Lafayette	\$159,140
City of Fort Collins	\$ 50,176
City of Colorado Springs	\$231,256
(three separate projects)	\$228,758
City of Arvada	\$146,113

## DEPORT: Security threats, criminals now top priority

◀◀ FROM 1B

Critics of the plan say the White House is providing back-door amnesty to undocumented immigrants and overriding Congress' authority on the issue.

Napolitano thinks easing up on those cases will let courts focus on security threats and undocumented immigrants with criminal records.

Over the next five months, prosecutors may be offered more guidance by the government as to how to proceed with Pando's case.

Prosecutors could decide to allow Pando to live in the U.S. under certain conditions and drop the case against her, Soloway said.

Pando's mother and stepfather brought her from Chihuahua, Mexico, into the U.S. when she was 16 and promptly kicked her out when she revealed she is a lesbian.

Her mother, who has permanent residency status, obtained citizenship for her three sons, but not her daughter, because she is gay.

In 2005, Pando, 34, traveled to Iowa so she could legally marry her longtime girlfriend Violeta Pando, a 27-year-old U.S. citizen. They live in Denver.

Sujei Pando works as a restaurant service manager, and Violeta Pando is a corrections case manager for felony offenders.

In November 2008, Sujei Pando forgot to use her turn signal while driving in Adams County, and police pulled her over. She didn't have a valid driver's license, and she didn't lie to the officer about her status.

The police called Immigration and Customs Enforcement to pick her up, and she was jailed for 96 months.

"I was scared to go into that kind of facility because I am not used to that kind of life," she said.

Violeta Pando says her government should be protecting her marriage instead of trying to destroy it.

"If I was straight they would be helping me keep her here," she said. "I do feel relief today, and I am happy our marriage was being recognized a little bit at least."

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Online poll. How do members of your family get to school? » denverpost.com

## 200 rabbits seized at Arvada home available again for adoption

By The Denver Post

The nearly 200 rabbits that were seized last month from an Arvada home are back up for adoption.

Friday, a Jefferson County Court judge denied a motion filed Wednesday asking the Foothills Animal Shelter to stop spaying and neutering the animals. Adoptions came to a halt while the motion was considered.

The motion argued that their owner, Debe Bell, would face financial hardship if the rabbits could no longer breed.

Mollie Thompson with the Foothills Animal Shelter said Friday that animals are available for adoption during the week from 9 a to 6 p.m. and weekends from 1 to 5 p.m. All rabbits the shelter adopts out are spayed or neutered.

The adoption fee is \$45, and there is a two-for-one special for adopting a pair of rabbits.

Bell faces 25 counts of animal cruelty or neglect stemming from the July 21 seizure of her rabbits.

An arrest warrant released this week said the animals lived in "deplorable" conditions. There were 75 percent more rabbits living on Bell's ranch than space provided for, and some of them had fur "so severely matted that they cannot urinate or defecate without extreme difficulty," according to the warrant.

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