

## Republican camaraderie endorsed at Lincoln Day Dinner

Written by Brenda Johnson Brandt

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Bad weather and a non-election year minimized the attendance at this year's Phillips County Lincoln Day dinner, but those attending enjoyed the Republican camaraderie.

Secretary of State Scott Gessler, State Senator Greg Brophy, State Representative Jerry Sonnenberg and Jamie Gardner, wife of U.S. Congressman Cory Gardner, addressed the crowd of close to 40 at the Haxtun Community Center Sunday noon, March 10.

Acknowledging they've had tough times in the legislature, Sonnenberg asked the crowd, "So why do we do this?"

"Because liberty and freedom are still worth fighting for," he emphasized.

Two of the 2012 Voice of Democracy contest winners, Erin Vieselmeyer of Holyoke High School and Matt Wilcox of Haxtun High School, shared their speeches.



**Jerry Sonnenberg, Dist. 65 Representative in the Colorado State House, is pictured in center at the Phillips County Lincoln Day dinner as he visits with Phillips County Commissioner Harlan Stern, at right, and Keith Sagehorn, at left.**

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### —Enterprise photo

Phillips County Republican chairperson Steve Young emceed the afternoon program.

County officials in attendance were commissioners Joe Kinnie and Harlan Stern, assessor Doug Kamery and treasurer Linda Statz.

Gardner had been on NBC's Meet the Press earlier Sunday, so was unable to be in Colorado. His wife represented him at Sunday's gathering, reporting that the U.S. House is holding firm on keeping things on a practical level.

Brophy also had media time Sunday, when he said he was on KOA Radio regarding the gun control debate.

He spoke of frustration with the gun control issues, specifically with House Bill 1224 which would limit ammunition magazines of more than 15 rounds.

He said this bill, starting July 1, will effectively block the sale of handguns made by Glock, one of the most popular manufacturers today. "We know the world is watching this," he added.

Gessler served as the featured speaker for the annual Republican gathering. He shared the accomplishments in his office since he took office two years ago and also touted the success of the 2012 election process in Colorado.

Not accepting the status quo, Gessler said he landed in the middle of a budget cycle when he

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took office in January of 2011. He persevered and succeeded in keeping business fees rather than inflating fees and treating them as taxes.

While in office, they have permanently reduced six to eight business fees. He noted they just completed a fee holiday, where every single fee in the office was one dollar. Even back on the normal fee structure, fees will be low compared to the rest of the nation.

He's proud of the password protection system they've initiated. Additionally, he discussed the plan in which foreign companies (like from Kansas and Nebraska) can complete registration statements online. This is less expensive and easier.

From an administrative standpoint, Gessler believes the 2012 election in Colorado is the best in the history of Colorado.

Voter turnout in the state was the third highest in the country. While military and overseas voter turnout was down nationally, it was up over 60 percent in Colorado.

This was a result of his office reaching out to those in the military and overseas to deliver ballots online and encourage voting.

Election administration was handled well on election day, with no problems with long lines. Gessler said there were far fewer problems in the 2012 election than ever before.

Election integrity was the final item that made Colorado's election successful, according to Gessler.

