

Bennet makes stop near Paoli to discuss pressing issues

Written by Chris Lee



U.S. Senator for Colorado, Michael Bennet made a stop near Holyoke on Sept. 2 to speak with farmers and agriculture community leaders in the area. Bennet, along with roughly 55 people, met at Richard Starkebaum's farm southwest of Paoli to discuss current issues.

The hour long discussion hit on topics such as health care, the economy and banking, with health care issues stealing the show.

Bennet began by asking everyone to set aside their party affiliation and favorite television channel for the hour and be open to discuss any topic. "I don't want anyone to leave here and tell themselves, 'I wish I would've asked him that'," he said. He then went on to address the economy and his thoughts on what needs to be done to fix it.

The visit was part of Bennet's Fighting for Colorado Families Tour during the August recess. He began his day in Northeast Colorado in Ft. Morgan speaking at an Agriculture and Clean Energy Summit. He addressed Colorado's role in the agriculture industry and how rural communities can play in the New Energy Economy and addressed global climate change.

After stopping at the Starkebaum farm, he traveled to Yuma to tour the Ethanol facility and meet with employees as well as representatives of the Colorado Corn Growers and Growth Energy.

The topic that stole the show was health care. In the past few weeks, there has been news about town hall meetings getting out of hand due to health care conversations. That wasn't the case as Bennet told the crowd his opinion.

The first question of the afternoon at the Starkebaum farm is if the FDIC was sound or not. Bennet said his strong impression is that it is. Other questions concerning the climate, emissions allowances and agriculture were answered.

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A World War II veteran discussed his concerns with costs of his medication and health care. Bennet said the system is fractured and broken. He said it isn't because of doctors or health care providers but the system supporting it is not working.

Bennet took office on Jan. 21 after being appointed by Governor Bill Ritter to fill the seat formerly held by Ken Salazar. He has said he will seek election in 2010.