



Economy will pose challenges for Buffs

Bohn addresses issues at town hall meeting

By Neill Woelk
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BOULDER, Colo. — Questions for Colorado athletic director Mike Bohn at Monday night's town hall concerned a very familiar topic these days: the economy.

Bohn hosted the first of a series of "Your Team" town hall meetings at the Boulder Broker Inn. Before a Q&A session, he detailed some of the progress the department has made since 2005, and the challenges it faces in the future.

The first part of the presentation was the good news part: significant improvements in facilities, improved academic performances across the board, 10 NCAA individual champions and 27 NCAA Tournament appearances, an increase in season ticket sales and a variety of community outreach programs.

Then came the stark reality of the future: Colorado's athletic budget ranks 10th in the Big 12 and 56th out of 66 BCS schools. CU's scholarship bill next year will surpass \$8 million, and CU ranked seventh last year in Big 12 sports revenue.

To top it off, CU will almost certainly lose Chancellor Bud Peterson, who is the only finalist for the job of president at Georgia Tech.

That, Bohn said, would be a "big blow," not just for the athletic department, but for the entire university.

Many of the questions for Bohn concerned the current state of the economy and how it will affect the athletic department.

Bohn said response to football season ticket renewals, a process that began earlier this month, has been "awesome" so far.

But, he added, "The overall effect of what's going on with our economy is still an unknown. We're moving to become more efficient in everything we do, just like everybody else in business. The sledding ahead is going to be tough for us."

In terms of increasing department revenue, Bohn said some of the best opportunities lie with the men's and women's basketball programs, and volleyball.

For years, the only sport to generate a positive cash flow at CU has been football. But the hope at CU is that recent improvements in facilities and support for the basketball and volleyball programs will produce success on the floor -- and thus generate more revenue in the long run.

And, he noted in response to one question, the department continues to explore the opportunity of naming rights as a means of generating revenue.

When CU was building the Dal Ward Center, the department needed approximately \$5 million to finish the project. CU then approached Coors about providing the necessary funds, and the Golden brewery did so in exchange for naming rights to what is now the Coors Events Center.

Bohn said a similar proposal with another entity could help finish the funding for the new basketball/volleyball practice facility, one that will cost in the neighborhood of \$10 million to \$11 million.

"We're making great progress in that area," Bohn said.

The remaining schedule town hall schedule:

Feb. 17 -- Pelican Lakes Golf Club, 7 p.m.

Feb. 23 -- UMC/Aspen Room, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. (students)

Feb. 24 -- Old Main Chapel (CU faculty and staff)

Feb. 24 -- Blake Street Tavern, Denver, 6 p.m.

Feb. 25 -- Boulder Broker Inn, 7:30 a.m.

March 2 -- Vista Ridge Golf Club, Erie, 7 p.m.

Women's golf ppd.

CHULA VISTA, Calif. -- The CU women's golf team was unable to finish its second round Monday due to heavy rain conditions in the San Diego State Aztec Invitational.

The second and third rounds will be completed today, weather permitting.



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