

Reading in Moonlight

Next full moon: Saturday, 18 January 2003

Your Name _____

Instructions: Go outside on Friday, Saturday, or Sunday night, away from other light sources, hold this paper so the moonlight shines on it (from over your shoulder) and determine the smallest type size you can read at normal reading distance (14-18 inches).

28. After more than a year of moving money from one fund to another to cover state budget shortfalls, Colorado lawmakers are balking at a proposal to move the payday for state employees.

24. Some lawmakers say resistance to the idea could mean cuts to college financial aid, while others are suggesting a change in Medicaid accounting as an alternative.

18. The state faces an \$850 million revenue shortfall this year on the heels of last year's \$1.2 billion shortfall. Gov. bill Owens suggested the payday move as part of a package of cost-saving recommendations, but it requires legislative approval.

14. Moving the payday for state employees from June 30 to July 1 would save about \$134 million in the current fiscal year, although state income taxes would decline by almost \$12 million the next year as a result.

12. Both Democratic and Republican lawmakers expressed opposition to the payday switch earlier this week. Some call it an accounting trick, while others question its legality.

10. But government budget experts say moving a payday to save money isn't all that unusual for state or local governments. "In a perfect world, you don't want to do something like that in budgeting," said Scott Pattison, director of the National Association of State Budget Officers.

8. "But the alternative could be worse ... if you end up cutting colleges and universities or Medicaid. It basically buys you some time. ... It's a very common practice when times are bad." Virginia moved the pay date five or six years ago, partly in response to budget issues, said state comptroller David Von Moll. But he cautioned there are potential problems "which could cause a lot of employees to be concerned about meeting mortgage payments and all that."