NOTES OF MAJOR POINTS RAISED BY BECKY LOCKHART, SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE, UTAH STATE LEGISLATURE ON DECEMBER 5, 2012, AT UHIA ANNUAL EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE

* Utah has a $300 million surplus is been widely reported in the media. What isn’t understood by the general public is that most of the surplus will be consumed by funding educational growth of students enrolled in K-12. After funding growth, little if any funding will be available for public employee cost-of-living raises, corrections, or infrastructure improvements.
* The Utah State Legislature has communicated with Governor Gary Herbert that on behalf of their constituents they want no part in creating a federally qualified exchange (FQE). Since the FEQ is being imposed by the feds, Utah State Legislature want the feds responsible for funding as well as managing the FEQ.
* Governor Gary Herbert has until December 14 to inform the feds of whether Utah will run its own FEQ, partnership with the federal government in order to run a FEQ, or allow the feds to run a FEQ in Utah without state cooperation. Utah State Legislature is bothered by the current trend by the federal government allowing the state executive branch in government to make decisions that require appropriations by state legislatures without authorization by the state legislatures.
* Utah is not likely to expand Medicaid. Utah State Legislature was pleased that the Supreme Court ruled that mandated Medicaid expansion, under ACA, unconstitutional. The court however did leave intact the requirement that individuals 400% of poverty or lower must apply for Medicaid. This provision will cost the state of Utah over $1 billion dollars because at the present time may Utah’s that may qualify for Medicaid choose not to enroll. Utah will struggle with meeting this requirement of ACA. If Medicaid were expanded as envisioned by ACA, it would cost the taxpayers of the state of Utah $2 billion.