



CAROL LAWRENCE, THE GAZETTE

**Starbucks** barista Penny Taylor prepared coffee drinks at a North Tejon Street store Tuesday. Thursday between 10 a.m. and noon, stores nationwide will offer a free 12-ounce cup of brewed coffee.

## Thursday, your morning cup of joe is on Starbucks

By **DEBBIE KELLEY**  
THE GAZETTE

Scott Larsen typically doesn't take a mid-morning coffee break. But if he's near a Starbucks on Thursday, the mortgage lender said he'll definitely stop by.

From 10 a.m. to noon Thursday, all company-operated and licensed Starbucks — about 9,000 in the United States and Canada — will give away 12-ounce cups of drip coffee as part of the second annual "National Coffee Break" promotion.

"I come in regularly and pay for my coffee, so I'm sure I'll come in if it's free," he said this week while sitting at one of the 17 Starbucks coffee shops in Colorado Springs.

Last year, employees poured 500,000 free cups of coffee, said Phil Smith, Starbucks re-

gional marketing manager.

"It's a great opportunity for us to celebrate with our customers what Starbucks is passionate about — brewed coffee," he said.

For anyone who wants to try duplicating the Starbucks experience at home, the free java promotion coincides with an annual sale on brewing equipment and accessories. Smith says it's part of Starbucks' goal "to be the coffee authority" and home-brew central.

Coffee masters will be on hand to answer any burning coffee questions.

Larsen is planning on continuing his frequent visitor status. "It's good coffee, and I like the consistency of it," he said. "That's why I come here."

