



The Colorado College State of the Rockies Project **Research, Report, Engage!**

THE 2007 COLORADO COLLEGE STATE OF THE ROCKIES REPORT CARD

An Introduction from the President

Thank you for exploring this, our fourth annual *State of the Rockies Report Card*, a comprehensive and accessible annual statement on the challenges and controversies facing the eight Rocky Mountain states: Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming. Our students, staff, and many of our alumni live and recreate in this spectacularly beautiful region and thus are invested heavily in maintaining its vitality. We know that many others have similar concerns and wish to protect the region's communities, environment, and economy. Our State of the Rockies Project, including student-based research, report cards, and conferences, is designed to make a positive regional difference future generations will come to value.



a population that in recent decades has grown at more than three times the national average. Colorado College is a private, four-year liberal arts and sciences college enrolling 1,900 students, located on a 90-acre campus in downtown Colorado Springs near the base of Pikes Peak. Our mission statement speaks to what we are all about:

At Colorado College our goal is to provide the finest liberal arts education in the country. Drawing upon the adventurous spirit of the Rocky Mountain West, we challenge students, one course at a time, to develop those habits of intellect and imagination that will prepare them for learning and leadership throughout their lives.

Founded in 1874, Colorado College has both prospered in and contributed to our Rockies "backyard". Over the decades we have responded to the constant change in this region of 281 counties with

To achieve these goals, Colorado College offers first and foremost an excellent undergraduate education in the liberal arts. In doing so we encourage a spirit of intellectual adventure, critical thinking, hands-on learning, and personal responsibility in





an environment of small learning communities where education and life intertwine. Strong student involvement in each year's State of the Rockies Project is one way we seek to connect with the challenging issues around us.

In prior years the report cards have delved into a host of issues and problems that challenge the Rockies Region. *The 2004 State of the Rockies Report Card* included an inaugural grading of the region's counties based on 15 indicators grouped together under land and environment, social and cultural capital, and economic conditions. An overall grade was also assigned for community "vibrancy and vitality." *The 2005 State of the Rockies Report Card* examined issues of regional energy demands, the condition of our national parks, urban sprawl, and toxic waste. Again an overall grade was assigned, this time concerning "creative occupations and civic engagement." A year ago *The 2006 State of the Rockies Report Card* explored a new set of issues important to our region, including: overlapping and linked issues of ranching and land conservation alongside threatened and endangered species; climate change in the Rockies; prospects for a Western presidential primary and enhanced regional political voice; and environmental justice. Counties were graded on their status in "nurturing youth".

The Rockies conference for 2006–07 has evolved into several distinct but related events. From December 2006 through March 2007 a series of monthly speakers addressed key parts of the immense energy boom in exploration and production confronting the region, one of the topics for this year's report card. This "Energizing the Rockies" series spanned global to national and regional perspectives with the help of four renowned energy experts speaking on campus: Rebecca Watson, former Department of Interior assistant secretary for land and minerals management; Raymond Plank, founder and chairman of Apache Corporation; Randy Udall, director of Aspen's Community Office for Resource Efficiency; and Matthew Simmons, chairman and CEO of Simmons & Co. Intl.

In April 2007 we inaugurated a "Champion of the Rockies" award, with the first recipient for 2007 being Ted Turner, recognized for his leadership as a major landowner and rancher in the Rockies and for balancing business and ecological concerns in our beautiful but fragile region. Both of these events helped set the stage for the April 9–11, 2007 Rockies Conference here on campus. While the "Energizing" series addressed one important topic in this year's

report card, each of the three conference days has been dedicated to the remaining major topics:

- Kay Brothers, deputy general manager for the South Nevada Water Authority shared her expertise and experience in Rockies water issues and thirsty urban demands.
- James Hubbard, U.S. Forest Service's deputy chief for state and private forestry addressed innovative partnerships capable of helping return our national forests to healthy conditions.
- Peter Calthrope, renowned urban planner and architect, brought to campus expertise in new communities/ new urbanism.

Panels and case studies complemented each of these campus visitors as we explore issues, challenges, and solutions, in turn complementing the written materials in this *2007 State of the Rockies Report Card*.

Widespread and sustained public discussion continues on topics we address each year in report cards and conferences. Using print media circulation figures, the 2004 Rockies effort reached 2.3 million, and in 2005 this number grew to 4.4 million. Then new forms of media introduced dramatic changes to the coverage of State of the Rockies efforts. Traditional media print coverage gave way to Internet postings and web logs, opening up exciting new ways to engage people concerning the Rockies, with some 85 separate Internet links to coverage posted on the State of the Rockies Project website. Especially noteworthy this past year has been the excitement over and coverage of the climate change section in 2006, widely quoted in media and whose model projections were included in a brief filed before the U.S. Supreme Court.

As in past years I invite you to explore the Rockies through the material in this *State of the Rockies Report Card*. I am confident that it will inform, challenge, and stimulate your knowledge and thinking. We welcome you to a growing number of people who care to learn more about and contribute to protecting the unique features and character that make the Rockies Region everyone's special "backyard."

Richard F. Celeste
President of Colorado College

