



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

THE 2006 COLORADO COLLEGE STATE OF THE ROCKIES REPORT CARD

An Introduction from the President

Welcome to Colorado College’s third *State of the Rockies Report Card*. Building upon a strong start in 2004 and continuing through 2005, the Rockies Project this year provides a fresh look at key challenges to this beautiful but fragile region. This *Report Card* and the companion April 2006 State of the Rockies Conference are significant outreach activities of Colorado College: Vision 2010, an agenda to strengthen our college and our engagement in the region.

Over the decades, our college has both prospered in and contributed to our Rockies “backyard.” Since our founding in 1874, we have responded to the constant change in this region of 281 counties with a population that in recent decades has grown at over three times the national average. Colorado College is a private, four-year liberal arts and sciences college enrolling 1,900 students, located on a 94-acre campus in downtown Colorado Springs near the base of



Pikes Peak. Our mission statement speaks to our unique intellectual adventure:

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.

To achieve these goals, Colorado College offers first and foremost an excellent education in the liberal arts and sciences. The college encourages a spirit of intellectual adventure: critical thinking, hands-on learning, and personal responsibility within an environment of small learning communities where education and life intertwine. Stronger student involvement in this year’s State of the Rockies Project is one way we have sought to connect with the challenging issues around us!

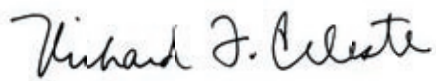


The inaugural *2004 State of the Rockies Report Card* and Conference successfully charted a new course to engage our students, the community, and the region in meaningful dialogue on regional issues. Off campus, it generated national and state attention, reaching a combined circulation of 2.3 million. The *2005 State of the Rockies Report Card* continued to identify, assess, and communicate key issues and problems in this unique region of spectacular natural beauty and cultural wealth, abundant resources and fragile environment, including: energy, the condition of the national parks, urban sprawl, toxic waste, creative occupations, and civic engagement. Again media attention helped us connect to national and regional audiences, reaching a combined circulation of more than 4.4 million.

This *2006 State of the Rockies Report Card* explores a new set of issues important to our region, including: overlapping and linked issues of ranching, land conservation, and threatened and endangered species; climate change in the Rockies; prospects for a Western presidential primary and enhanced political voice; environmental justice; monitoring of Rockies vital signs; and assessment of regional health of our families and kids. For the first time, during summer 2005, student-faculty teams collaborated in studying the Rockies and preparing materials for this report card. Classroom and textbook theory were linked to Rockies field study and engagement. And students were challenged to sharpen their research and writing skills and actively participate.

The release of this *Report Card* coincides with the third State of the Rockies Conference, April 10-13, 2006. Some of the sessions at the conference, addressing parts of the *Report Card*, include: Land Conservation - Protecting Unique Landscapes and Habitats; Preserving Biodiversity - Addressing Threatened, Endangered, and Invasive Species; Ranching in the Rockies - Threats and Signs of Hope; Conservation in Action - Success Stories; Environmental Justice - Equal Protection for all Humans and the Environment; New Approaches to Governing the Rockies - Can our Political Voices Be Heard?; Climate Change - What Happens in a Warmer Rockies?; and Rockies' History Comes Alive: a cameo appearance by John Wesley Powell, portrayed by Clay Jenkinson, cultural commentator for National Public Radio.

I invite you to explore the Rockies through the material in this *Report Card* and 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

