

## In This Issue

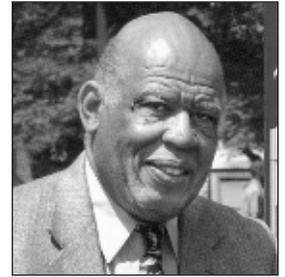


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## AAG Co-sponsors Race/Ethnicity and Place Conference

Over the past two years, AAG Executive Director Doug Richardson and Orlando Taylor, Dean of the Graduate School at Howard University, have been working closely together to explore the expansion of geography's presence at this premier historically Black college. As one outcome of this effort, Howard University has agreed to co-sponsor with the AAG and Binghamton University a conference on Race/Ethnicity and Place to be held on the Howard University campus in Washington, DC, from September 17-19, 2004. This will create an exceptional opportunity for AAG members to learn from Howard University's long experience, and to bring leading geographic scholars and

researchers together with the Howard University community to showcase modern geography's relevance to the educational, research, and policy needs of minorities in American society.



Taylor

Dean Taylor has been most supportive of this joint effort, and has expressed a strong interest in working with the AAG in further developing geography programs at Howard. He recently attended the AAG Centennial Meeting in

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## Denver: Site of AAG's 2005 Meeting

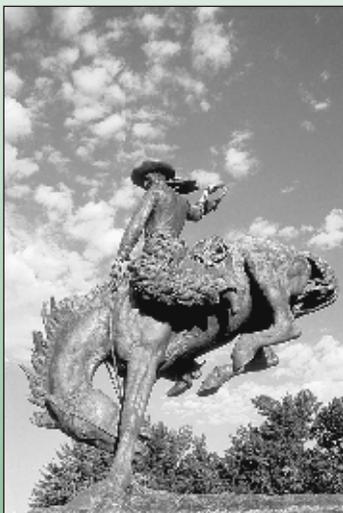
As Denver is the site of the 2005 AAG Annual Meeting, on behalf of the Local Arrangements Committee, I look forward to seeing you here next April. John Wyckoff at the University of Colorado-Denver and I are the co-chairs of this committee. This piece will kick off a series of informational articles about what you can expect to see and do while here for the AAG meeting. I'd like to dispel a few myths and present some information that perhaps you weren't aware of (although I realize that with geographers reading this, you're probably aware of most if not all of this information!).

First, Denver is not actually in the mountains, but just east of the Front Range of the Rockies. I remember my geography professor at the University of Colorado, years ago, proclaiming, "We're flatlanders, like the Kansans!" Because we're on the highest part of the Great Plains, Denver is flatter than most other American cities. It's not until one reaches Golden that the foothills begin, and

then rather abruptly, with an 8,000-foot vertical displacement along the Golden Fault. Ironically, it is upon this fault that the USGS National Earthquake Information Center is built. (Rest assured, this fault has been quite dormant for some time.) People living west of here really aren't flatlanders at all, but must contend with wildfire danger each year, just as those in the forested foothills in southern California.

Second, Denver is not snowbound for months upon end. Because Denver is on the leeward side of the Rocky Mountains, we live in a semiarid environment, with only 20 to 38 cm (8-15") of precipitation each year. We record 300 days of sunshine each year—more annual hours of sun than San Diego or Miami Beach. When we *do* get snow (such as the three feet we received in March 2003 and the six feet received in western Boulder County during the same storm), it typically melts quickly from our ample sunshine and from the warm Chinook winds blowing

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The statue "Bronco Buster" by Alexander Phimister Proctor, resides in Denver's downtown Civic Center Park.

Denver from page 1

downslope from the mountains. During the spring, you might see some wave-like altostratus lenticularis clouds, and when they catch the setting sun's rays, they provide some spectacular sunsets.

Because March and April are our snowiest months, we are likely to have excellent skiing available in the nearby mountains at the time of the AAG Annual Meeting, but on the other hand, it could also be seventy-five degrees in downtown Denver during that week. We typically have a dry, fairly balmy January with many days of light jackets or even no jackets at all. Over recent years, we have experienced an ongoing drought, and would definitely welcome more precipitation. You're probably aware that all of our major rivers (Arkansas, Platte, Colorado, and Rio Grande) flow away from Colorado, and that fact, coupled with our dry years and high growth has meant that water issues are paramount here. Yet even when Denver was founded back in 1859, water rights and law was an important force in the shaping of the city and state.

Third, Denver really is one mile high, and the mile-high contour line runs through Denver City Park, through the 15th step of the Colorado State Capitol building, and along the purple seats at Coors Field, home of the Colorado Rockies baseball team.

Fourth, the Denver area is one of the premier regions in the nation for geographic research, education, and applications.

### Academia

The Auraria campus, located downtown, is home to the University of Colorado-Denver, Metropolitan State College of Denver, and the Community of College of Denver. The University of Colorado-Boulder is thirty miles to the northwest, and the University of Colorado-Colorado Springs and the U.S. Air Force Academy are seventy-five miles south. The Colorado School of Mines (CSM) is twenty miles west in Golden, while Colorado State University (CSU) and the University of Northern Colorado are less than two hours away by car in Fort Collins and Greeley to the north and northeast, respectively. All of these campuses feature either a strong geography

department, or in the case of CSM and CSU, large natural science programs where spatial analysis is used on a daily basis. The University of Denver featured the first GIS degree program west of the Mississippi River. Community college geography programs and courses abound at Arapahoe, Red Rocks, and Front Range colleges.

### Private Industry

The Colorado Front Range is home to more companies producing and applying geospatial information than any other area in the U.S., with Space Imaging, Digital Globe, and ESRI, just to name a few.

### Government

The Denver area is home to regional headquarters for most federal agencies that produce and use geographic information as well, such as the USGS, the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Reclamation, the Census Bureau, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the U.S. Forest Service. In fact, the Denver Federal Center on the west side of the city represents the largest concentration of federal employees outside of Washington, DC. Dozens of cities and counties in the area use GIS and remote sensing technologies, as does the Regional Transportation District (RTD), who operate the buses that we encourage you to use during the conference.

### Professional Societies

The Denver area is home to the headquarters of the Geospatial Information Technology Association (GITA), and the home of the active local chapter of the Urban and Regional Information Systems Association (URISA). Many are active in the AAG Rocky Mountain-Great Plains Region; we have a vibrant geographic alliance named COGA (Colorado Geographic Alliance) with a membership of over 5,000 geography educators; and our GIS community "GIS Colorado" is represented by an annual fall conference called "GIS In the Rockies" and sponsors activities throughout the year.

Fifth, I had the opportunity to tour the Adams Mark Hotel, the site of the 2005

AAG Annual Meeting recently, and am pleased to report that the conference site is ideal. You can view a map of the conference hotel and photos and descriptions of nearby attractions on: [www.denver.org/maps/map\\_dtacom.asp](http://www.denver.org/maps/map_dtacom.asp).

You will be within walking distance of the Colorado State Capitol, the U.S. Mint, the Auraria campus, Coors Field, the Cherry Creek urban greenway, and the Sixteenth Street Pedestrian Mall. A free shuttle bus runs the length of the mile-long Sixteenth Street Mall—lined with outdoor cafes and flower baskets. Nearby is Colfax Avenue, considered the longest straight street in the nation. Denver has the tenth largest downtown in the U.S., and from every street, one can see a 120-mile long mountain panorama. On most days, you can see Pikes Peak, 100 miles to the south.

Downtown Denver is home to three new sports stadiums, 300 restaurants, a restored historic district named Lo-Do (for Lower Downtown) overflowing with 90 bars and brewpubs (Denver brews more beer than any other city, with 80 different types), a collection of museums, a variety of galleries and shopping, the second largest performing arts center in the nation, and even a unique downtown amusement park, Six Flags Elitch Gardens.

Sixth, not surprisingly, with so many amenities, Denver is one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas, in a quickly growing state. The Denver-Boulder metropolitan area population stands at over 2.5 million. Colorado was the third fastest-growing state during the decade of the 1990s, increasing by over 30% to a population of over 4.3 million. Three of the five counties in the U.S. that doubled in population were here in Colorado. Douglas County, between Denver and Colorado Springs, was the nation's fastest growing county from 1980 to 1997.

Our Local Arrangements committee is already at work planning special events and field trips for the 2005 AAG Annual Meeting. Contact me at [jjkerski@usgs.gov](mailto:jjkerski@usgs.gov) if you have any input or would like to help our committee. We look forward to seeing you! ■

Joseph Kerski, co-chair  
Local Arrangements Committee  
[jjkerski@usgs.gov](mailto:jjkerski@usgs.gov)