

COST OF LIVING & QUALITY OF LIFE

An excellent quality of life is critical to the attraction, motivation, and retention of the skilled and talented workers that are essential to the success of a growing business.

Colorado's high quality of life is attractive to businesses and individuals, residents and tourists. An incredible combination of spectacular scenery, recreational opportunities, moderate climate, excellent facilities for arts and culture, and world-class health care and public school systems make Colorado an ideal place to call home.

- Fort Collins ranked #1 in Money magazine's 2006 "Best Places to Live" list.
- Colorado Springs was named the #1 Big City in the "Best Places to Live" rankings.
- Longmont and Westminster also ranked in the Top 100 nationwide.
- Numerous other Colorado communities have ranked at the top of lists as the best place for everything from Fitness, to Best Place to Retire, Best Place to Raise a Family, best places for recreation, to name a few.

Concern for the environment is a widely held value among Colorado's individual and corporate citizens. In the 2004 Colorado election voters approved a renewable energy initiative (Amendment 37) calling for the increased use of both wind and solar energy. The initiative provides for the following:

- A five-fold expansion of renewable energy resources from 2 percent at present to 10 percent by 2015.
- Legislation in 2007 increased the standard to 20 percent renewable by 2020.
- 4 percent of the renewable energy is to come from solar energy.
- Local building codes are required to meet the International Energy Conservation Code by July 1, 2008.

Colorado has abundant artistic and cultural resources with broad public and private support. The state is a national leader in funding for the arts, which are greatly supported by the private and non-profit sectors. A small sales tax set aside for culture and the arts was recently renewed by Colorado voters to assure continued opportunities and the enhancement of these valuable contributions to community life in Colorado. Red Rocks Amphitheater, a world-renowned venue for concerts near Denver, was named one of the top 50 examples of American architecture. Music and performing arts festivals are plentiful with something for everyone – including pop, rock, classical, jazz, bluegrass and country western, along with ballet, opera, Broadway and excellent regional theater.

Quality Of Life Indicators

Colorado's cities and towns appear frequently in national rankings of the best places to live and work as well as being among the most attractive venues in the nation for business development. Colorado ranks in the Top Ten nationally for a number of quality of life indicators.

Cost Of Living

ACCRA, a national nonprofit research organization for community and economic development, produces a quarterly index, which measures relative price levels for consumer goods and services **in participating cities**. Cost data from these cities are used to derive a relative ranking so that an easy comparison of cost of living in different metropolitan areas can be made. The average value for each category is assigned a value of 100. A value of greater than 100 indicates a cost of living higher than the average, with a value lower than 100 indicating a lower than average cost. The table below contains relative cost of living information for those Colorado cities, which participated in the ACCRA Cost of Living Index in the second quarter of 2007.

Colorado Cities' Cost of Living Index

Second Quarter, 2007 (290 cities participating nationwide)

<i>Area</i>	<i>C.O.L. Index</i>
Colorado Springs	94.0
Denver	103.7
Fort Collins	94.2
Glenwood Springs	129.3
Grand Junction	100.3
Greeley	98.1
Gunnison	111.3
Pueblo	87.0

Source: ACCRA Cost of Living Index, Second Quarter, 2007, published September 2007

Metropolitan Cost of Living Index Comparisons

While Denver is slightly higher than the national average in terms of its cost of living, a comparison with some of the largest cities in the survey shows that Denver and other cities in Colorado enjoy a competitive cost of living. Denver is significantly lower than many of the largest cities in the nation, and generally comparable to major cities in the western United States. The composite index for selected participating cities is as follows:

Major Metro Areas

Second Quarter 2007

<i>Area</i>	<i>C.O.L. Index</i>
Boston	135.9
Chicago	110.1
Dallas	90.9
Denver	103.7
Las Vegas	110.8
San Diego	140.6
Salt Lake City	101.7
New York City	214.7
Philadelphia	124.0
Phoenix	102.5
Portland	102.3
San Francisco	169.2
Seattle	120.4
Washington DC	137.0

Smaller Cities

Second Quarter 2007

<i>Area</i>	<i>C.O.L. Index</i>
Albuquerque	100.2
Idaho Falls	91.2
Laramie	104.3
Colorado Springs	94.0
Tucson	100.8
Flagstaff	116.1
Fort Collins	94.2
Greeley	98.1
Lawrence, KS	93.6
Pueblo	87.0
Reno	108.5
Bozeman, MT	104.1
Tacoma, WA	109.9

Crime Rate Comparison

Violent Crime Rate in 2005 (per 100,000 population)

Colorado ranks 24th nationally in violent crimes per 100,000 population and is well below the national average and compares favorably with most of its neighboring states.

<i>State</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Rate</i>
South Carolina	1	761.1
New Mexico	5	702.2
Nevada	8	606.8
Texas	12	529.7
California	14	526.3
Arizona	16	513.2
Oklahoma	17	508.6
U.S. Average	--	469.2
Colorado	24	396.5
Kansas	25	387.4
Nebraska	32	287.0
Wyoming	44	230.1
Utah	45	227.2

Source: Morgan Quitno "State Rankings 2007" based on U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Reports, Released in September 2006