



# Quality of Life in Boulder County

## 2002

A Community  
Indicators Report

**PEOPLE:** Population Distribution by Age • Ethnicity and Race • Poverty Level • Educational Attainment • Population Growth • School Enrollments • Homelessness and Basic Needs • Domestic Violence • Child Abuse • Teen Birth Rate • Low Birth Weight Births • Prenatal Care • Health Care Access • Women's Health Care • Child Care Costs • Health Status • Adult Physical Activity • Adult Overweight • Teen Substance Abuse • Adult Alcohol Use • Adult Smoking • General Crime Statistics • Traffic Accidents & Fatalities •

**ENVIRONMENT:** Air Quality • Watershed Water Quality • Water Imports • Water Usage • Land Annexations • Agricultural Land • Open Space • Plants and Animals • Automobile Registrations • Vehicle Miles Traveled • Transit Use • Energy Consumption • Business Involvement in Pollution Reduction • Recycling •

**ECONOMY:** Job Growth and Jobs/People Ratio • Per Capita Personal Income • Employment by Industry • Average Wage by Industry • Average Commercial Lease Rates • Housing Affordability • Sustainable Wages •

**CULTURE & SOCIETY:** High School Graduation Rates • High School Dropout Rates • Academic Achievement • Pupil to Teacher Ratios • Voter Turnout • Arts Organizations



...a project of...



THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION  
SERVING BOULDER COUNTY

## Boulder County Civic Forum

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[www.bococivicforum.org](http://www.bococivicforum.org)

## Boulder County Civic Forum

The Boulder County Civic Forum was launched in 1995 as the Boulder County Healthy Communities Initiative “to promote healthy decision-making that will sustain the environmental quality, livability and economic vitality of the Boulder County region.”

### THE CIVIC FORUM’S GOALS ARE TO:

- Articulate a vision for a healthy Boulder County community
- Measure our progress toward or away from that vision by monitoring fifty indicators and publishing biennial community indicator reports
- Inform and educate the general public about issues of interest and concern through a web site, presentations and publications
- Convene dialogue and partnerships to interpret trends and address key issues
- Identify opportunities for strategic action

The Civic Forum identified and tracks fifty indicators selected from credible data sources in order to help the community monitor long-term trends and the root causes of factors that impact community health. The Civic Forum seeks to promote regional participation, dialogue, cooperation and consensus building toward reducing negative trends and sustaining positive ones. In this way we “shed light rather than heat” on current and emerging issues affecting the quality of life in Boulder County. A detailed description of each indicator, our data base, reference documents and publications are available on our web site at [www.bococivicforum.org](http://www.bococivicforum.org).

The Boulder County Civic Forum is a non-partisan, non-governmental, tax-exempt organization supported by business, government, foundations, individuals and community-based organizations. It has been a program of The Community Foundation Serving Boulder County since 1999.



November 2003

## Dear Friend of the Boulder County Civic Forum:

This 2002 Community Indicators Report is a follow-up to those published by the Civic Forum in 1998 and 2000. As before, the Civic Forum measures progress toward—or away from—a vision of healthy Boulder County communities that describes community sustainability in four interrelated areas: People, Environment, Economy, and Civil Society/Culture. We maintain updated data for all fifty indicators on our web site [www.bococivicforum.org](http://www.bococivicforum.org). This printed report excerpts and summarizes six key trends affecting Boulder County that our research identified since the last report in the year 2000.

### 2002 TRENDS

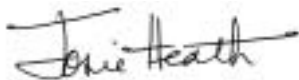
1. Our Demographics are Changing
2. The Economy has Weakened
3. Cost of Living Continues to Outpace Incomes for Many
4. Our Residents Are Moving More Often
5. Summer Ozone is a New Air Pollution Concern
6. High Alcohol and Drug Use Continues

During the next year the Boulder County Civic Forum will implement a research and dialogue agenda around these 2002 Trends. We will increase our understanding of the factors influencing issues such as the Hispanic high school graduation rate, costs and availability of housing and health care, use of alcohol and other drugs, and jobs and economic vitality. The Civic Forum will also convene or co-host dialogue on ways the entire community can work together to address some of the trends. We will continue to monitor all fifty indicators and prepare the next report for 2004.

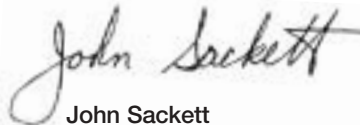
To simplify the reading of this report, only general source references are included. Please refer to the web site for specific citations and expanded information.

We hope you find this report and the entire set of indicators useful. Please let us know how you used these data and what additional information you would like to see included. We invite you to participate as the Civic Forum continues our mission to identify a vision of a healthy Boulder County community and measure our collective progress in achieving it.

Sincerely,



Josie Heath, President  
The Community Foundation  
Serving Boulder County



John Sackett  
President and CEO  
Avista Adventist Hospital

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• Ethnicity and Race • Poverty Level  
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# Trend 1: Our Demographics are Changing

The US Census estimate of the population of Boulder County in 2002 is 279,197. This is a 2.9% increase from 2000 and a 42% increase from 1990.<sup>1</sup>

The median age of Boulder County's population has increased from 31.5 in 1990 to 33.9 in 2002. The group of people between the ages of 45 to 64 increased the most, growing 9.5% in the two years 1990 to 2002, while the age group 25 to 44 remains the largest at 33% of the population. About 30% of the households include children under 18, and 14% have at least one person age 65 or older.

Boulder County is becoming more **racially and ethnically diverse**. In 1990, 93.3% of the population was White, 2.5% Asian, 0.9% black, 6.7% of Hispanic origin and 7.5% of other or mixed races. By 2002, the percentage of Whites declined to 87.8% while the Asian population increased to 4.3%. In 2002 Hispanic residents comprised 11.6% of the population—a 107% increase since 1990. Of the 28,500 foreign-born residents, 46.8% arrived in the decade 1990 to 1999 and 12.9% since the year 2000. Forty percent are now US citizens.

Latinos' socio-economic status and lifestyles are similar to other middle class families. It is all-too-common for Latino residents who have lived in Boulder County all their lives to be asked if they speak English. Too many find themselves responding to a stereotype that most Latinos are recent immigrants, poor and undereducated. The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation 2002 public opinion survey found that 59% of residents, in all racial and ethnic groups in Boulder County, agreed with the statement that tension between different racial and ethnic groups is a problem.

In Boulder County, Latinos comprise 35% of all children under 18 and 34% of the births to mothers under 25. Only 63% of Hispanic youth who started 9th grade in the St. Vrain Valley School District graduated from high school in 2002—compared to its overall graduation rate of 88%. This is down from 70% in both 1999 and 2000. Only 60% of Hispanic 9th graders in Boulder Valley School District graduated from high school compared to 95% overall, up slightly from previous years. Latino boys in the St. Vrain district graduated at a much lower rate than girls (52% vs. 73%), while gender differences are much less pronounced in the Boulder Valley district.

Many Hispanic families have been a part of our community for generations. Others are recent immigrants. Eighty-one percent of Boulder County Latinos are of Mexican descent. On average, Latinos in Boulder County are more likely to have larger families and start their families at a younger age. The average family size in Boulder County is 3.03, while for Hispanic families the average size is 3.91. As a group, Latinos are more likely to live in larger households as well, often with extended family. The average Hispanic household contains 3.55 people, while county wide the average household size is 2.47.

One in five births in Boulder County in 2000 was to a Latina mother, 60% of whom were born in Mexico. The average maternal age for birth of a first child is 22 for Latinas and 29 countywide. Of the 286 teen births in

## Boulder County Municipal Populations

	1980	1990	2002
Boulder	76,685	85,127	94,007
Broomfield*	14,514	16,390	22,882
Erie*	23	14	5,517
Jamestown	223	251	282
Lafayette	8,985	14,708	23,603
Longmont*	42,942	51,976	77,911
Louisville	5,593	12,363	18,742
Lyons	1,137	1,227	1,608
Nederland	1,212	1,099	1,390
Superior*	208	255	9,987
Ward	129	159	174
Unincorporated Area	37,974	41,770	45,136

\*Portion of town in Boulder County

Source: Colorado Department of Local Affairs, Demography Section

## LATINO

The fastest growing minority group in Boulder County is comprised of Hispanics (also called Latinos) who currently represent nearly 12% of County population. The 2002 Census Supplemental Survey estimated 31,401 Latinos live in Boulder County.<sup>2</sup> The term "Hispanic" is not a racial description but rather a term of ethnicity based on common history, language and culture. Hispanics can be of any race and most of the Hispanics in Boulder County identify as White. Thirty-five percent are immigrants, and sixty-five percent are native born. Some speak Spanish and some don't.

Latino families display the same variety as non-Hispanic families in terms of education and income. Middle class

Boulder County in 2000, 55% were to Latina mothers. Thirty-five percent of Latina women giving birth in 2000 were unmarried compared to 18.4% countywide. Sixty-four percent of recent adult immigrants from Mexico had not completed high school. These numbers are relevant because age, marital status and education of mothers have strong correlation to poverty.

Twenty-one percent of Boulder County Latinos live below the poverty level, compared to a county rate of 10.2%. The poverty rates for native born and foreign born Latinos are about the same. Spanish is spoken at home in 8.2% of the households in Boulder County. Of the people who speak Spanish, 2/3 also speak English “well” or “very well.”

Latino families, in general, place high value on work, family ties and education. Almost 70% of Latinos over 16 are in the workforce. For reasons as much cultural as economic, Latino families are more likely to use relatives for child care and to provide their charitable giving through non-cash efforts. Latino registered voters go to the polls at a higher rate than the county average.

The Civic Forum will be working with the Boulder County Latino Task Force and others to better understand the significance of these trends and the opportunities and barriers they erect for Hispanic and non-Hispanic residents alike—along with addressing the very real economic problems that face a portion of the Latino population.

**QUERIES:**

*How have you experienced the “face” of Boulder County changing? What have you noticed about the changes in the age, racial and ethnic makeup of your neighborhood, workplace, grocery store, or school? With the University of Colorado in Boulder, our county will always have large numbers of young people; what changes should we anticipate as the rest of the population ages? How will the aging of the population affect our housing, labor force, economy and services? How do the 70% of households without chil-*

*dren at home think about and act for the benefit of the upcoming generation? Are you learning Spanish (or English) as a second language? Are your children? With a growing segment of Boulder County youth of Hispanic origin, what are the long-term implications if only 60% are graduating from high school? What resources do young Latino parents need to help them and their children succeed? Just as an aging population might change demand for types of housing, how will increasing family size necessitate policy changes to accommodate larger households? How will facilities and services of our schools need to change as more children of immigrants become students?*

*A comment about using “averages:” I think it is valuable to know the effect the present skewed data has on the everyday life of a Latino/a. I will use myself as an example: I am a third generation Latina, have been a resident of Boulder County for over 30 years, graduated from CU, am married and have one child. I now am now part of the described “overall trend” and am asked everyday if I know English and what part of Mexico did I come from. At the same time my family’s salary averages with that of a new immigrant when it comes to determination of Latino social service needs. In my view the manner in which averages are used needs to be reviewed to more closely reflect the realities of the (diverse) Latino population.*

—Emma Pena-McCleave, Longmont

**Boulder County 2002 Population by Race and Ethnicity**

	Boulder County	Hispanic Origin	White	Asian/Pacific	Black	Native American
2002 Population*	270,691	31,401	237,626	11,774	1,830	867
Percentage of Total**	12%	88%	4%	1%	<1%	7%
Median Household Income	\$55,861	\$36,039	\$58,052	\$52,724	\$43,523	\$40,121
Average Family Size	3.03	3.91	2.97	3.31	3.15	3.10

\*These Census data exclude about 8,500 who live in dorms and other group homes.

\*\*Percentages total more than 100% because people of Hispanic Origin may be of any race.

Source: US Census Bureau

## Trend 2: The Economy has Weakened

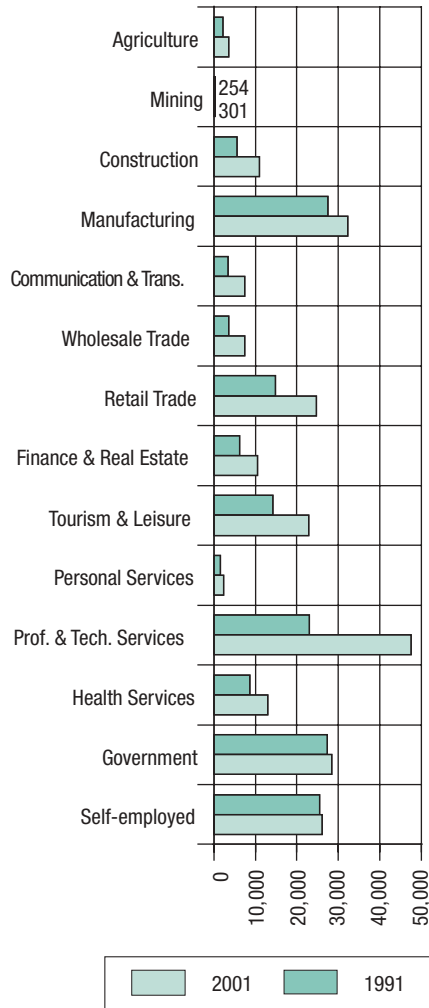
After remarkable prosperity in the 1990's, Boulder County was not isolated from the downturn in the national economy that began in the year 2000. Unemployment increased from 2.4% in 2000 to 5.7% in 2002—representing 10,000 Boulder County residents without jobs. Average annual wage per job in Boulder County declined since 2000 by \$1,060—a decline of 2.5% for those who kept their jobs. The estimated workforce living in Boulder County and Broomfield in 2002 was 183,700—2.9% smaller than in 2001. The number of jobs located in Boulder County and Broomfield in 2002 declined 3.4% in that year to an estimated 218,603.<sup>3</sup>

A healthy community requires a wide range of services that draws from a variety of economic sectors, each

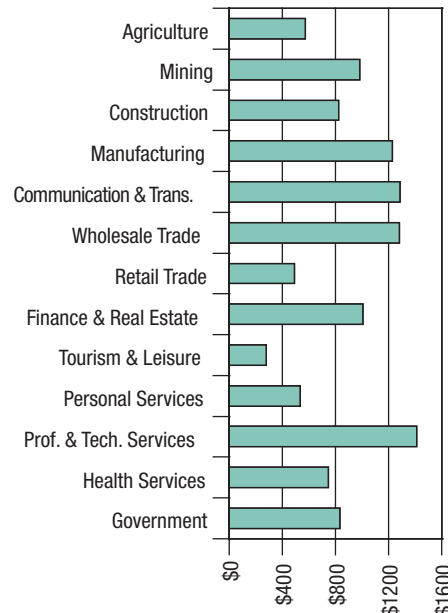
supported by a skilled, available workforce. The Civic Forum tracks employment by economic sector because different sectors pay higher or lower wages and have differing needs for public services. Wages constitute about 70% of overall household income (with investments, pensions, home sales, and government programs making up the rest). Some types of enterprises such as manufacturing—called “primary” industries—employ higher paid workers to produce goods or services that can be sold outside the region. This brings new money here. In contrast, “secondary” sectors like chain retail stores, while valuable for local consumer choice and as a source of sales tax revenue, produce goods elsewhere and employ lower-wage workers here, with net profits going out of the region. Healthy economic diversity provides goods and services for both local needs and for “export” outside the county, as well as offering workers opportunities for advancement toward higher wage jobs. Boulder County is a haven for small business, with eighty-six percent of the companies doing business in Boulder County employing fewer than twenty employees. About 25,000 people, 14% of the Boulder County workforce, are self-employed. This number typically rises as the economy weakens.

Between 1991 and 2001 the number of jobs in Boulder County increased by 65%. Three sectors more than doubled Boulder County employment, with the highest job growth between 1995 and 2000. The expanding sectors were Transportation and Communication such as publishing and telecommunications; Construction; and Professional and Technical Services. The two sectors that grew significantly below the county-wide average over these ten years were Government (including education), increasing by only 4%, and Manufacturing (primarily computer and electronics products), increasing by 17%. The manufacturing sector constituted 16% of total county employment in 2000 (nearly double Colorado's manufacturing employment of 9.4%), but this accounted for 24% of total Boulder County wages. Nineteen percent of Colorado advanced technology companies are located in

**2002 Boulder County Employment by Sector**



**2002 Average Weekly Wage for Boulder County by Sector**

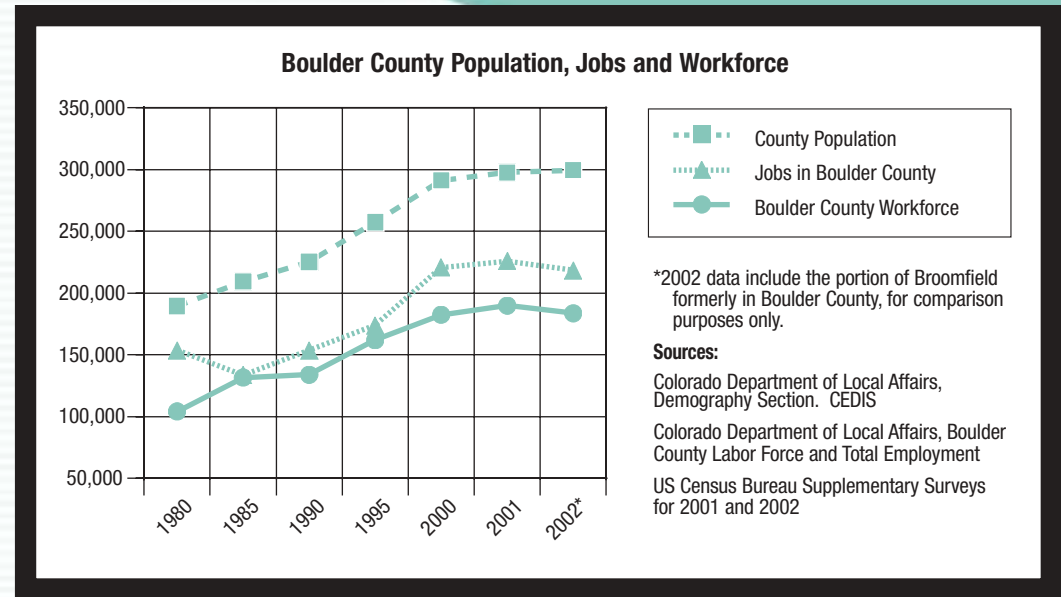


Source: 2002 Colorado Labor Force Averages, Colorado Department of Labor and Employment

Boulder/Broomfield Counties. The average wages for economic sectors in Boulder County are shown below right.

**QUERIES:**

*How was your family affected by the economic downturn? Are you earning or spending less? There is a built-in tension among city and state reliance on sales tax revenue, consumer shopping preferences in terms of location and selection (including purchases on the web), and the desirability of high skill/high wage jobs. Should communities or their local governments try to attract companies/jobs in one sector over another? What emphasis should be given to expanding/retaining existing companies vs recruiting new ones to relocate here, and what is the appropriate role for government? What do we know about the skills of our workforce? How can the community assure a mix of jobs that provides opportunities for upward mobility? What are the labor needs of our largest employers such as University of Colorado, IBM, Storage Tek?*



### 2002 Boulder County Median Hourly Wages

Waiter	\$6.84
Attorney	\$32.81
Retail Sales	\$8.43
Construction	\$14.92
Police Officer	\$23.95
Warehouse Laborer	\$10.21
Registered Nurse	\$23.25
Preschool Teacher	\$9.78
Aerobics Instructor	\$12.60
Software Engineer	\$37.02

## Trend 3: Boulder County Cost of Living Continues to Outpace Income

An overlay to demographic changes is the increasing visibility of economic differences. Boulder County has many affluent families as well as many other people from struggling low-income families. Our "middle" class is smaller and we have more households that are poor and rich than the national average. Median household income of \$61,493 and per capita income of \$39,347 in 2002 rank Boulder County fifth highest in the state with 134% of the national median household income. At the same time 20% of Boulder County households earned less than \$12 per hour/\$25,000 per year. The 20% of households at the top earn more than \$110,000. Per capita income declined 3.7% between 2001 and 2002 due to a combination of increased unemployment and lower wages.

In 2002, 10.2% of Boulder County's population and 4.9% of its families lived below the federal poverty level of \$8,980 for an individual and \$18,244 for a family of four. In 1998, the poverty rate was 7.7%. About 27,000 people and 3,223 families with children live in poverty here. An individual working full time at the Colorado minimum wage of \$5.15/hour earns just \$10,712 per year.

In 2002 the Colorado Center on Law and Policy calculated a "self-sufficiency standard" for Boulder County. Unlike the poverty calculation, this number includes actual costs for housing, child care, transportation, health care and taxes. It does not provide for retirement savings, vacations or higher education savings. Based on these calculations, a single adult in Boulder County would need to earn \$9.03 per hour/\$19,078 per year to live here. A married couple in Boulder County with one preschool child and a second school age child would need to earn \$11.52 per hour per adult/\$48,654 per year to afford basic living costs. The City of Boulder numbers are slightly higher due to housing costs.

### HOUSING

Median household income for Boulder County residents increased 74% since 1990, from \$35,322 to \$61,493.

Housing prices increased even more. The median value of a single-family home here more than doubled between 1990 and 2000, from \$102,800 to \$241,900. Median home sale prices increased 25% just in the two years from 2000 to 2002—from \$241,900 to \$301,667!

Median monthly rents also outpaced wage growth, increasing 89%—from \$502 in 1990 to \$949 in 2002. Quality of rental housing varies greatly. However, due largely to lower interest rates, median monthly housing costs for those with a mortgage increased "only" 74% during this period—from \$918 in 1990 to \$1,594 in 2002. Even so, just over 1/4 of those with a mortgage and 1/3 of renters pay more than 35% of their household incomes for housing, well above the national standard that no more than 30% of income should be used for housing.

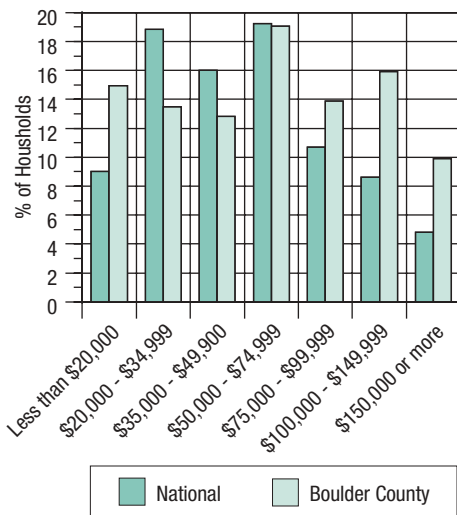
The county's highest 2002 median home purchase price (detached single family) is for the City of Boulder at \$390,000. The lowest was for Longmont at \$219,900. However, to afford a thirty-year mortgage of \$200,000 at 6% interest, a family would have to earn \$60,000, income that is out of reach for half the families in Boulder County. One-third of the homes sold in Boulder County in the last two years were in Longmont, where the population has grown by over five percent in each of the last three years.

The Civic Forum is working with public, private sector, and not-for-profit housing interests to better quantify and improve housing affordability in Boulder County.

### HEALTH CARE

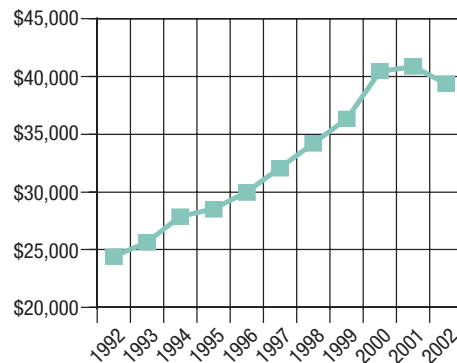
Boulder County was not exempt from the nation-wide effects of higher health insurance and health care costs. Many people who have lost jobs in the last two years lost health insurance as well. Premiums rose. State and federal spending cuts have also affected the ability of local agencies to improve access to health services.

2002 Household Income



Source: US Census Bureau Table P69, Household Income in Last Twelve Months

Boulder County Per Capita Income from All Sources



Countywide in 2001, 90% of adults and 94% of children twelve and younger had either public or private health insurance. However, only 85% of Hispanic children have coverage. The six percent of children who are uninsured constitutes 3,000 kids.

In 2002, uncompensated care provided by Avista Adventist Hospital, Longmont United Hospital and Boulder Community Hospital each showed more than a 20% increase from 2001. Caseloads at Salud, Clinica Campesina, and People's Clinic—not-for-profit medical clinics in Longmont, Lafayette and Boulder—have risen as well.

The Civic Forum will continue to monitor and analyze the accessibility, quality and cost of health care to assure its availability for all our residents, and to promote lifestyle choices that improve physical, emotional and public health.

#### QUERIES:

*How well are we providing opportunities for lower wage workers to move into higher wage jobs? As more people desire to live here, basic economics will result in higher land prices. Have your housing costs increased? Could you afford to purchase the house you live in at today's prices? Where would your children live if they want to stay in Boulder County? Do you know anyone at work who drives long distances as a trade-off for lower housing cost? If you are an employer, have you ever had trouble recruiting employees because of housing costs? Have you noticed your medical costs or health insurance premiums increasing? Is anyone in your family uninsured? What are the long term impacts of our hospitals providing "uncompensated" health care? What changes has your family doctor made to adjust to rising costs? Have you gone without proper medical care because you were concerned about its cost or the effect on your insurance? Have you used the emergency room for medical conditions other than accidents or injury?*

#### The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Boulder - Longmont, CO PMSA, 2001 City of Boulder

Monthly Costs	Adult	Adult + Infant	Adult + Preschooler	Adult + Infant + Preschooler	Adult + Schoolage + Teenager	Adult + Infant + Preschooler + Schoolage	2 Adults + Infant + Preschooler	2 Adults + Preschooler + Schoolage
Housing	752	965	965	965	965	1,343	965	965
Child Care	0	650	728	1,378	353	1,731	1,378	1,081
Food	168	246	255	330	437	444	475	521
Transportation	244	250	250	250	250	250	422	422
Health Care	77	246	224	267	272	288	322	301
Miscellaneous	124	236	242	319	228	406	356	329
Taxes	330	607	634	820	493	1,293	836	732
Earned Income Tax Credit (-)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Child Care Tax Credit (-)	0	-40	-40	-80	-40	-80	-80	-80
Child Tax Credit (-)	0	-42	-42	-83	-83	-125	-83	-83
<b>Self-Sufficiency Wage</b>							per adult	per adult
-Hourly	\$9.63	\$17.71	\$18,28	\$23.68	\$16.34	\$31.54	\$13.04	\$11.90
-Monthly	\$1,695	\$3,118	\$3,217	\$4,167	\$2,875	\$5,551	\$4,591	\$4,188
-Annual	\$20,334	\$37,412	\$38,601	\$50,006	\$34,503	\$66,616	\$55,090	\$50,257

Source: Colorado Center on Law and Policy

#### The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Boulder - Longmont, CO PMSA, 2001 Boulder County (Excluding City of Boulder)

Monthly Costs	Adult	Adult + Infant	Adult + Preschooler	Adult + Infant + Preschooler	Adult + Schoolage + Teenager	Adult + Infant + Preschooler + Schoolage	2 Adults + Infant + Preschooler	2 Adults + Preschooler + Schoolage
Housing	683	877	877	877	877	1,221	877	877
Child Care	0	650	728	1,378	353	1,731	1,378	1,081
Food	168	246	255	330	437	444	475	521
Transportation	244	250	250	250	250	250	422	422
Health Care	77	246	224	267	272	288	322	301
Miscellaneous	117	227	233	310	219	394	347	320
Taxes	301	570	597	784	456	1,202	809	695
Earned Income Tax Credit (-)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Child Care Tax Credit (-)	0	-40	-40	-80	-40	-80	-80	-80
Child Tax Credit (-)	0	-42	-42	-83	-83	-125	-83	-83
<b>Self-Sufficiency Wage</b>							per adult	per adult
-Hourly	\$9.03	\$16.96	\$17.52	\$22.92	\$15.58	\$30.26	\$12.69	\$11.52
-Monthly	\$1,590	\$2,984	\$3,083	\$4,034	\$2,742	\$5,326	\$4,467	\$4,055
-Annual	\$19,078	\$35,809	\$36,999	\$48,403	\$32,901	\$63,911	\$53,606	\$48,654

Source: Colorado Center on Law and Policy

## Trend 4: Our Residents Are Moving More Often

The population of Boulder County/Broomfield grew 33%—from 225,339 in 1990 to 299,651 in 2002.<sup>4</sup> However, population growth has slowed dramatically since the year 2000. Population growth is due to a combination of natural increases (births less deaths) and in-migration. The chart below shows the contribution of each of these factors over time since 1980. The net number of people moving into Boulder County peaked in 1999 at 7,618 and has declined yearly to only 155 people in 2002. Natural population growth has increased gradually and remains around 2,000 per year.

Two-thirds of Boulder residents have lived in the county for five years or more. One-third were born in Colorado. For those who moved into Boulder County from 1995 to 2000, 29% moved here from elsewhere in Colorado, 60% from another state, and 11% from outside the US.

Colorado's foreign-born population nearly tripled since 1990 and is growing at a faster rate than any other state's, according to the Census Bureau. Colorado ranks 13th among states in the number of foreign-born residents. Nine percent of Boulder County's population (compared to 10% for the state of Colorado) was not born in the U.S. and of these, 57% arrived here since 1990.

These statistics show that 35% of our neighbors lived somewhere else just five years ago. One in four moved here since the year 2000. Ten years ago, 62% lived somewhere else. To the extent that a sense of community is built on common experiences and shared stories, it is no

surprise that many residents experience a lessening of community ties with so many newcomers. We also know that community volunteers—Little League coaches, PTA members, Meals on Wheels servers, etc.—tend to be from families that have lived in a place longer. The transient population means 25,000 people moved in and another 25,000 moved out of Boulder County last year!

### COMMUTING

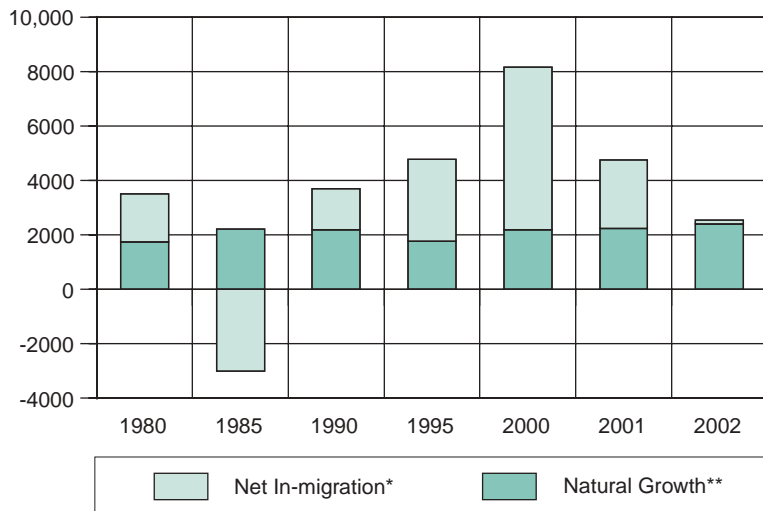
Another factor that affects our sense of community is commuting patterns. The number of County residents who drive alone to work has risen slightly since 1990 from 70% to 72%. The average travel time to work is 22.4 minutes, with over 15,000 Boulder County residents traveling more than 45 minutes each way to and from work. Over 10,000 Boulder County residents work at home. Half of children under six have both or the only parents working.

Because there are more jobs than workers who live here, 111,545 workers commuted into Boulder County for their jobs in 2000! Forty-six percent of the jobs in Boulder County are held by people who live in another county. Increasingly people are commuting here from as far away as Larimer, Douglas and Arapahoe Counties. Seventy percent of the Boulder County residents who are employed work in Boulder County, but 30%—almost 55,000 people—commute to jobs outside Boulder County. This pattern illustrates that for many families, work, school, shopping and recreation could all be done in different towns. This trend also contributes to a lessening of social ties.

### QUERIES:

*With so many of our neighbors and co-workers new to Boulder County, and an average length of residence under five years, how can “oldtimers” and “newcomers” get acquainted? What are your favorite ways to get acquainted with people who move into your neighborhood? If you moved here, how did you discover and help contribute to*

**Boulder County Population Growth**



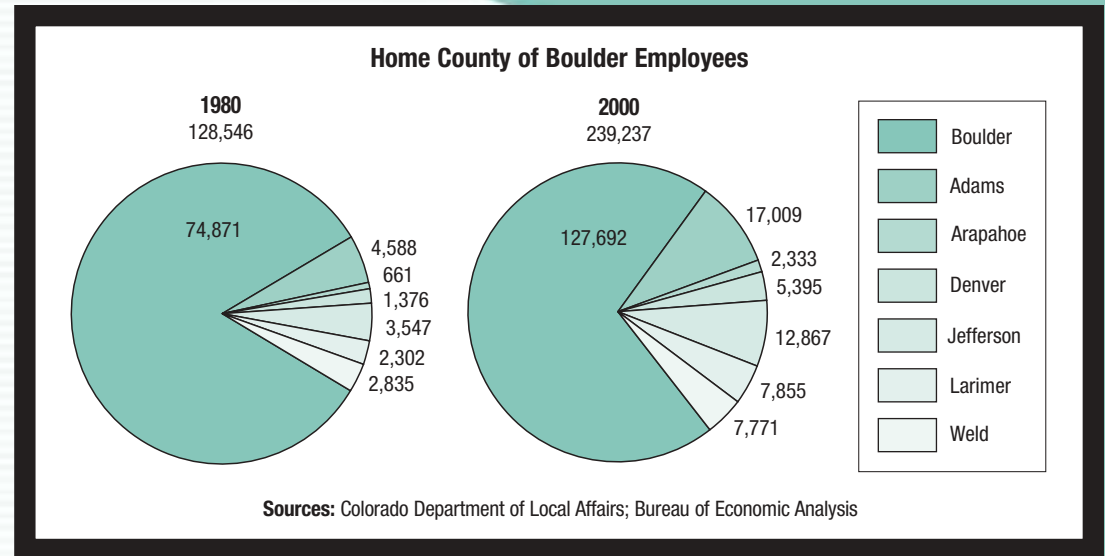
\*Net In-migration is arriving minus leaving

\*\*Natural Growth is births minus deaths

Source: Colorado Department of Local Affairs Demography Section

*Boulder County's quality of life and sense of community? What is important about the culture and history of Boulder County and how should it be passed on to new arrivals?*

*What are the factors that lead people to commute farther and farther to work? Is it reasonable to hope or expect that people live and work in proximity? How do increased commuting time and traffic congestion impact your quality of life, environmental health or cost of living? Does everyone in your family work and shop in Boulder County? How would your neighbors react to a proposal for infill or increased density to help reduce sprawl? How would you react? What can cities, counties, businesses and consumers do to address these issues?*



## Trend 5: Summer Ozone is a New Air Pollution Concern

Colorado did not violate any health-based air pollution standards in 2001-2002 and the Denver metro region had the cleanest winter season on record. This is a dramatic improvement from the 1970's and 1980's when the Denver metro area faced some of the worst air pollution in the nation. However, since 1997 there has been an increase in summer ozone levels.

The 1998 and 2000 Community Indicators Reports from the Boulder County Civic Forum touted the progress made in reducing winter carbon monoxide pollution. Due largely to improvements in automobile design and consumer

actions such as oxygenated fuel and using alternative transportation on pollution alert days, carbon monoxide levels have not increased at the same rates as vehicle miles traveled. Particulates have also been reduced through actions such as wood burning restrictions.

Summer ozone pollution is an increasing problem. Ground-level ozone—not to be confused with protective stratospheric ozone—causes lung damage and mucous irritation, and harms trees and plants. As a secondary pollutant, ozone ( $O_3$ ) is created when fumes from sources like vehicle exhaust, paints, degreasing agents and cleaning fluids react chemically in the presence of sunlight. This makes ozone primarily a summertime pollution problem, difficult to monitor and control.

In an effort to prevent dangerous ozone levels, the Colorado Air Pollution Control Division issues an Ozone Advisory whenever atmospheric conditions are conducive to increased ground-level ozone concentrations. During the June 1-September 15 ozone season there were more than twenty ozone action alert days in each of the past two years. This includes a few days when ozone reached the level considered by the EPA to be a threat to people with health problems and potentially damaging to the general public.<sup>5</sup> While there has not been a violation in Boulder County, ozone levels were close to the standard in 2002, and a monitoring station just south of the Boulder County boundary exceeded it.

### QUERIES:

*Were you aware of the summer ozone problem and how you could help? Do you know anyone whose health is affected by air pollution? Do you heed the air pollution advisories during winter and summer months? Have you made arrangements to carpool, bus or work at home on high pollution days? Have you noticed the enhanced nozzle covers at the gas station to help reduce ozone pollution? Did you know your mechanic can easily check your gas cap to assure a tight seal?*



## Trend 6: High Alcohol and Drug Use Continues

Alcohol is often an underlying cause of many people's social, legal and/or health problems and contributes to automobile accidents, domestic violence and child neglect. Colorado has the second highest rate of alcohol problems in the country, according to a report issued in 2000 by a Harvard Medical School researcher. On a per-capita basis, Coloradans consume 20% more alcohol than the national average. Locally, the problem is just as alarming. Boulder County has the dubious distinction of leading Colorado in chronic and binge drinking, especially in the 18-24 age group. Binge drinking (defined as five or more drinks in one sitting—almost certain to result in intoxication) was reported by 20% percent of all Boulder County adults in 2001, compared with 17% of adults in Colorado and 14% nationally. Seventeen percent of the women who had babies in Boulder County in the last five years reported drinking during pregnancy; thirteen percent smoked cigarettes while pregnant.

Alcohol abuse is a major health problem for both adults and youth. In cooperation with the Boulder County Public Health, both St. Vrain and Boulder Valley School Districts track the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs among middle school and high school students. The results of these surveys are not encouraging. Nearly three out of four high school students have tried alcohol at least once, including 58% of ninth graders. Forty-seven percent of high school students and 60% of 11th and 12th graders reported drinking within the past month, and 32% reported being drunk or binge drinking in the previous month—rising to 40% for 11th and 12th graders. Ten percent of students report having driven a motor vehicle after drinking. The rates are similar for boys and girls.

Statewide, 80% of Colorado teens report having ever tried alcohol, with 51% drinking and 34% being drunk within the last month.

Asked about marijuana, 43% of high school students report trying it, and 27% used marijuana within the last month. The rate for boys is higher than for girls. Colorado

statistics are 49% of high school students who have tried marijuana and 30% who currently use it. Nationally, those reporting ever trying marijuana increased from 31.3% in 1991 to 47.2% in 1999.

Early initiation of tobacco, alcohol or marijuana use is associated with stronger addiction to those substances. In Boulder County, 14% of students smoked a cigarette before age 13 and 24% tried alcohol. These numbers are lower than the Colorado rates of 26% for cigarettes and 34% for alcohol.

### QUERIES:

*Are there elements in the overall culture in Boulder County that contribute to the inclination of our youth to use alcohol, drugs and tobacco? What are factors that result in drinking as recreation by 18-24 year olds? Has alcohol abuse affected your family or friends? Do you talk to your children about tobacco, alcohol and other drugs? Do you think you have accurate information about the latest research on substance abuse?*

### 2002 Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Use Among Boulder County Teens

	Ever Tried	Used in the past 30 days	Current Frequent Use*
<b>Cigarettes:</b>			
BVSD	64%	32%	17%
SVSD	51%	n/a	13%
Colorado	67%	27%	13%
<b>Alcohol:</b>			
BVSD	87%	58%	42%
SVSD	82%	53%	n/a
Colorado	78%	51%	34%
<b>Marijuana:</b>			
BVSD	57%	37%	n/a
SVSD	57%	28%	n/a
Colorado	49%	30%	n/a

BVSD = Boulder Valley School District, 12th graders  
SVSD = St. Vrain Valley School District, 11th graders

\*For cigarettes, current frequent use means smoked 20 out of the past 30 days (BVSD) or daily (SVSD).

\*For alcohol, current frequent use means more than 5 drinks in one sitting in past 30 days.

## Sources

### TREND #1:

US Census Bureau 2000 census and 2002 Supplementary Survey  
"A Decade of Change: Births in Boulder County 1990-2000," Boulder County Public Health  
"2001 Latino Task Force of Boulder County Community Assessment"

### TREND #2:

Colorado Department of Local Affairs, Demography Section.  
Colorado Department of Labor and Employment  
Longmont Area Economic Council

### TREND #3:

Boulder County Public Health  
Avista Adventist Hospital  
Longmont United Hospital  
Boulder Community Hospital  
Salud Clinic, Clinica Campesina, People's Clinic  
City of Longmont "Quality of Life Benchmark," August 6, 2002  
Colorado Center on Law and Policy "The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Colorado 2001" [www.cclponline.org](http://www.cclponline.org)

### TREND #4:

Denver Regional Council of Governments  
US Census Bureau  
Colorado Department of Local Affairs, Demography Section

### TREND #5:

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment  
Regional Air Quality Council

### TREND #6:

Boulder County Public Health "Behavioral Risk Factors 2001" Report  
Boulder Valley School District  
St. Vrain Valley School District

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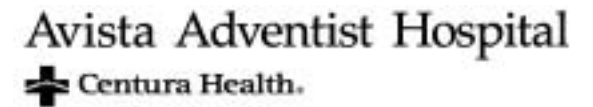
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## Endnotes

1. The population of the portion of Broomfield that was formerly part of Boulder County is about 21,000. Broomfield became its own county in November 2001 and is not included in this 2002 population data. In some sections of this report where comparisons of past years are used, a combined population figure of 299,651 is used.
2. Many observers believe that the 2000 Census significantly undercounted people of color and the poor by as much as 20%. Until more analysis is done, we will use the official Census numbers.
3. Final 2002 employment numbers are not yet available from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and Broomfield and Boulder County 2002 jobs data are combined for comparison purposes.
4. For comparison purposes, population numbers include the portion of Broomfield that was formerly in Boulder County. Without Broomfield residents, the 2002 Boulder County population is 280,672.
5. The US Environmental Protection Agency standard for ozone is 0.08 parts per million averaged over eight hours. A violation occurs when there are more than three "exceedences" in three years.

The 2002 Community Indicators Report was made possible by the generous support of the following organizations:



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Our thanks to the following people who conducted research for this report:

Peter Bliss

DeAnne Butterfield

Cate Donald

Leslie Durgin

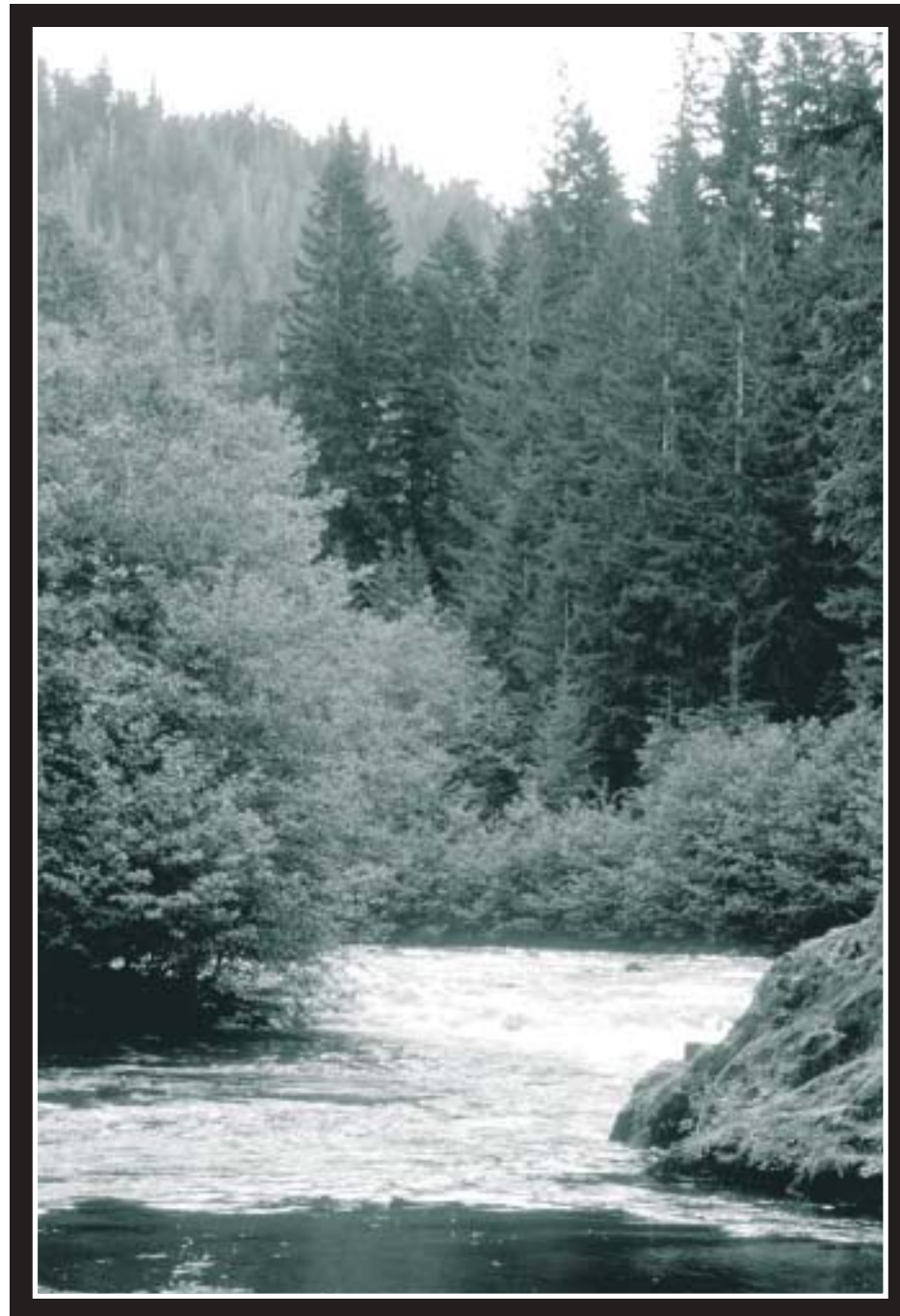
Katherine Kramer

And to the wonderful professionals at:

Standing Stone Design

Tri-Digital Internet Services

MIDO Printing



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