2019 Colorado Section Annual Dinner and Mentoring Session

Geology students networking and having a great time at the Annual Meeting. More photos on pages 5 and 6

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The Board normally meets the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 AM; all members are invited to attend. Please contact a Board Member to confirm time and location.

Letters, articles, announcements, ads, etc. must be received by the Editor by the end of the fourth full week of the month preceding publication. Articles may be submitted via e-mail to the editor at: summitdatasvcs@msn.com (Microsoft Word format is preferred.)

Change of email:
change of email notices and other contact information changes for the CPG should be sent directly to:

AIPG National Headquarters
1333 West 120th Ave, Suite 211
Westminster, CO 80234
303-412-6205
Email: aipg@aipg.org

(The National office maintains the address list for all
Letters, articles, announcements, ads, etc. must be received by the Editor by the end of the fourth full week of the month preceding publication. Letters, articles, ads, announcements, etc. accepted on a space available basis. Submission of articles, etc. via e-mail is the preferred method; copy can be accepted in most PC formats, but DOC or DOCX are preferred. Call or e-mail James Russell for details on submission of copy or advertising at 303-815-3901, summitdatasvcs@msn.com.

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Back issues: available in PDF at https://www.dropbox.com/home/CO%20AIPG
President’s Letter
Ron Pritchett

How would you respond to 16-year-old Greta Thunberg in a recent TED talk as she spoke against fossil fuels? Greta spoke bravely and passionately, swaying opinions to her point of view. Impressionable like-minded young adults will vote to drive extractive industries out of business in the next decade, unless they are persuaded otherwise. For perspective, illustrating the challenge we have in defending AIPG professional geology: Greta has more than 800,000 "hits" for her 11 minute TED Talk. In comparison, this Colorado Section email goes to 800 recipients.

I’d say to Greta (critical only of her teachers and coaches): Your authenticity adds to a well-delivered and confident presentation. Lacking guidance toward perspective, your teachers have done little more than inculcate you with suspicion—judging from your content. You ask an important question, ‘What if humans are capable of changing the earth's climate?’ You seem convinced that fossil fuels are dangerous to the point of crisis - causing mass extinction and disturbing warming. Toward action, you want change and restrictions right now. You believe the 'finest scientists' provide the basis for your conclusion. Greta - there is much more information for your impressions!

First, hydrocarbon use has, and continues to raise life quality for billions of people of the world - this is the "impact" of hydrocarbons. In doing so, the physical environment has been altered or disrupted. Disruption is inevitable as people seek to improve conditions with ANY energy choice. Consider materials in renewables and hybrid cars: Wind - concrete, rebar, rare-earths, copper, neodymium, battery-metals; Solar - battery metals, copper, silver, silicon, construction-installation-maintenance energy; Hybrids - battery-metals, rare-earths, nickel, cobalt, lithium, aluminum, copper. Consider the risks of mining these materials from countries with less-stringent environmental standards than the United States.

Second, as you study comparative political history, you will find the free enterprise system, (guided and encouraged by law) is proved best for environmental damage repair. You say: "Do not hope - act." I say: "Have hope - understand and adapt."

We in Colorado adapted to the recent strike by public school teachers. Someday, if objective scientists have input¹, teachers will give students a look at reasoned arguments in a few critical publications: for example:

2: Dr. Ed Berry: "Contradictions to IPCC's Climate Change Theory"
3: Dr. Arthur Robinson: "Environmental Effects of Increased Atmospheric Carbon Dioxide"

¹: See references for more detailed information.
Editor’s Remarks
James Russell.

With this issue I will be taking over the reins from Dave Abbott who has done a great job as editor of the Colorado Geologist for many years. The annual dinner and mentoring session was a success. This year promises to be an active one for state legislative activities. At least one of the proposed bills (HB19-1113, "Protect Water Quality Adverse Mining Impacts") could have a direct or indirect impact on natural resource extraction and management. Since the Colorado General Assembly will adjourn on May 3, any bills that may affect our membership will be discussed in the next issue of this newsletter.

In this issue there is a copy of the Colorado Section AIPG position statement on state severance taxes and news on the Colorado Supreme Court reversing the Appellate Court decision on the Martinez case. The plaintiffs petitioned the COGCC for a rule requiring that public health and environmental safety of oil and gas wells be independently verified before drilling is permitted - including whether or not the wells contribute to climate change.

If you have any suggestions or ideas that you would like to see in the next issue, please drop me an email. I am open to any new ideas that our membership may wish to see in following issues.
This year’s annual section meeting and mentoring session was a great success. The following photographs give a good idea of what went on for those who missed the fun. Our keynote speaker was Susan Morrice, the chairman of Belize Natural Energy (BNE) who discussed the EDUCO Holistic Business Model. The holistic business model represent a desire in BNE for a win/win situation for all parties involved; the government, the community, BNE and the investors.

Susan Morrice at mentoring session with students

Dorothy K. Combs at the AIPG National Booth
Annual Section Meeting and Mentoring Session 2019

Section members enjoying dinner

Keynote presentation by Susan Morrice
Colorado Supreme Court Reverses Appellate Court Decision

Martinez Case and AIPG Public Relations for Colorado Professional Geologist
Ron W. Pritchett President Colorado Section 2019 and Logan MacMillan

The "Martinez Case" is described by Greg Avery of the Denver Business Journal:

"The Martinez case (named that for then-15-year-old lead plaintiff Xiuhtezcatl Roske-Martinez) began in 2013 when a group of children affiliated with the Boulder-based Earth Guardians environmental group petitioned the COGCC for a rule requiring that public health and environmental safety of oil and gas wells be independently verified before drilling is permitted — including whether or not the wells contribute to climate change."

CAMRO, the Colorado Alliance of Mineral and Royalty Owners, said in its review (Jan. 2019) that the Supreme Court decision focused on three issues in reversing the Court of Appeals ruling: 1) extreme deference to the COGCC in interpreting its own statute, 2) the COGCC’s inability to place one policy above another, 3) COGCC is working with CDPHE to address concerns raised by the plaintiffs. CAMRO goes on to say the Court carefully reviewed the Act itself, by legislative history and purpose so that it “will be instructive if more challenges come up regarding the scope of the Commission’s authority.” The CO Supreme Court decision was unanimous.

CAMRO also advises, “...to watch with interest as the administration changes, and new interpretations possibly arise....Unless this portion of the legislative mandate changes, the Commission remains tasked with considering multiple legislative priorities, including its original purpose to encourage the responsible development of CAMRO members’ minerals.”

The argument according to the petitioners fails to acknowledge a real condition in management and regulation of petroleum properties: protections for human health and the physical environment are already in place by the COGCC and geologists, engineers, and other professionals at work in the petroleum industry. The COGCC made the point in rejecting the petition, explaining that the COGCC constantly works with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (“CDPHE”) to address the concerns to which the rule was directed.

The Martinez complaint was frivolous in light of real work of the COGCC. Courts took the case, leading to waste of time and human resources.

Professional behavior for certified geoscientists (engineers and geologists), includes codes of behavior pointing to public protection and safety. Best-practice business behavior has evolved across decades of lessons-learned from disasters and loss. A zero-incident goal in accidents and loss is already in place among geologists and engineers. The safety record is not perfect, yet an accident-free record is the oil-field goal among managers and workers.

Contrast the grim statistics of the Colorado petroleum industry with the transportation industry: count fewer than six "mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction" deaths in 2017 (U.S. Dept. of Labor); count 630 highway deaths (fatal crashes and fatalities - CDOT). If concerned environmentalists are desirous of life-and-limb protection by petition to a state agency, their ire would be better directed at CDOT; perhaps all highways in Colorado should be shut down immediately. But highways remain open. The truth in modern society: deaths are accepted in selected activities. The courts and the Martinez case revealed the social phenomenon that some industries are more equal than others in loss of life. AIPG professionals, as guardians of essential industries, must defend against forces that impose fear-based rules, ignoring hard-won industry safety codes and disciplines already in place.
Colorado Section’s Position Statement on Proposed Rate Increases on Severance Tax

American Institute of Professional Geologists
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January 10, 2019

Colorado General Assembly
Colorado State Capitol
200 East Colfax Avenue
Denver, Colorado 80203

Re: Position Statement on Proposed Rate Increases on Severance Tax (Adopted November 16, 2017)

Dear Colorado Senators and Representatives,

In November 2017, the Executive Committee of the Colorado AIPG Board adopted the following position statement regarding Severance Tax. We present this statement again for your consideration. The Colorado AIPG Board:

1. Opposes proposed rate increases on severance tax;
2. Opposes new categories of severance tax;
3. Opposes severance tax allocation reductions to the Department of Local Affairs; and
4. Supports uses of severance tax to include:
   a. Teacher and student education opportunities on the importance of short-and-long term advantages of encouraging energy, mining, water resources, remediation and sound business practices;
   b. “Orphan” well plugging (subject to Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission report);
   c. Home test kits for methane and other gases such as carbon monoxide and radon;
   d. Studies for future resource extraction directed by the Colorado Geological Survey, which may include hiring of professional mining and petroleum geoscientists (or contracting specific studies on mining, petroleum, and water resource potential); and
e. Energy innovation feasibility studies and associated reports, such as:
   i. Modular nuclear facilities
   ii. Hydrogen fuel cell energy
   iii. Hydroelectric options
   iv. Home energy storage

AIPG members recognize principles of professional responsibility and public service, including a duty to supply natural resources for communities. We support responsible use of resources based on sound scientific principles and best management practices for the future of Colorado citizens. We recognize maintaining a high standard of health and safety and national interests as topics integral to any energy, mining, and water resources legislation.

We appreciate your consideration in this matter and encourage your response. Should you have any questions or require additional information regarding our position, please contact Mr. Ron Pritchett, AIPG Colorado Section, at pritchett61@msn.com.

Sincerely,

Ronald W. Pritchett, CPG -7063
President, Colorado Section

Response: