

Denver, Queen City of the Plains

*By Loweta Kimball*

Have you heard the City of Denver referred to as "The Queen City of The Plains?" I heard this title referenced by an elected official during an update on our business economy. We already proudly carry the banner "Mile High City." I wanted to know if residents of Denver felt "Queen City" fit so I conducted my own unofficial survey.

I donned business attire: navy blue suit, white shirt, black low-heeled shoes, and a hat covering my white hair (official attire for best results) and set out to learn what Denver citizens thought about our "Queen City of the West."

My sign read: CONDUCTING A SURVEY FOR MY CLASS, WILL YOU HELP?

No one asked what class I was taking.

My four locations were: Main branch of the Denver Public Library, Cherry Creek Mall, 16th Street Mall and Alameda Light Rail Station (diverse populations and leisure environment), 25 people per site in one hour or less.

The survey had three categories:

- 1) Number of years living in Denver? (10 to 25 years; 25 to 40 years; 40+ years)
- 2) Your main attraction(s).
- 3) What keeps you here?

The responses were so similar across the categories you would have thought I surveyed only family members. Most enthusiastic responders were: '10 to 25 years' then '40+ years.'

a) Main attractions: weather, employment, professional sports teams, outdoor recreation, affordable housing, schools, (public/private secondary were evenly divided).

b) Kept here for the main attractions and ease of travel to other major cities for entertainment (primarily San Francisco, Las Vegas, Los Angeles).

'40+ years' frequently referenced the blizzard of 1982 as a major event that showed the City was grossly negligent in providing services to the northeast quadrant, where DIA now stands. They also stated, while city services are improved, highway traffic frequently bogs down; however, with mass transit squarely under construction, travel to DIA and suburbs will be greatly improved. Need for light rail to ski areas was universal.

Is Denver the Queen City of the West? Absolutely! Residents seem interested in the neighborhoods where they live and work.

We in this room remember Denver hosting the Pope, the Democratic National Convention; we

are proud of the annual National Western Stock Show, no small efforts economically. And, aren't we proud of the resurgence of our theater district? The challenges faced building a world-class international airport are fresh in our memory yet funding has not been withheld for necessary expansion.

Several commented on Denver's housing industry. '40+' believe too much building while '10 to 25' believe not enough affordable housing.

Amazingly, each group believes with all our major league sports teams on the national scene, a major league championship by any one of them could give our city a new image that no city has achieved. Our "great city" could become "King of the Hill!" Can you think of anything better?