

# THE STAPLETON *Front Porch*

DENVER, CO

WINTER 2000-01



STAPLETON

## *Season's Greetings*



*From  
Forest City*

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# A Note from Greg Vilkin...

President, Forest City Stapleton, Inc.

Since signing an agreement earlier this year with the Stapleton Development Corporation (SDC) to purchase all of the 2,935 acres of land available for development at Stapleton, Forest City has been busy. We have worked with Mayor Wellington Webb and the Denver City Council, SDC and its Citizens Advisory Board, employees throughout city



Greg Vilkin, President, Forest City Stapleton, Inc.

government, and you, members of our community, to prepare to build the new neighborhoods we all envision at Stapleton. Construction should begin early in 2001, and we can't wait to get started!

## This year has seen much accomplished: Demolition And Environmental Remediation

Forest City is paying a market price for the land at Stapleton that assumes certain buildings and runways have been removed and environmental remediation has been completed before each parcel of land can be transferred to us. The City will soon complete the environmental remediation and the demolition of the buildings and pavement in the areas earmarked for our first development.

## First Neighborhoods And Retail Centers Designed

Our first town center (located at 29<sup>th</sup> and Quebec) is the epitome of a mixed-use, pedestrian-scale, urban neighborhood. It is also an entryway to the new neighborhoods to the east envisioned by the citizens who created The Stapleton Plan. Anchored by a grocery store, the town center will have residential development above retail along a pedestrian friendly "Main Street" that leads to a two-and-a-half acre town green. That town green will be a popular gathering place lined by office uses, a health club and other elements that reflect the best traditions of Denver's most livable neighborhoods. The town center transitions gracefully into residential neighborhoods to the east with their pocket parks, linear greenways and a unique, educational campus shared by a new Denver Public Schools elementary school, the Odyssey Charter School, and an early childhood education program. The neighborhood retail center is scheduled to open in summer of 2002.

Also designed and ready for construction early next year is a regional retail center to the north at Smith Road and Quebec. This retail center's urban street grid, tree lawns and pedestrian-friendly sidewalks provide linkages to the hotels and the neighborhoods to the west, the

United Airlines training complex to the south, and future office developments to the east. Adjacent to the north is the multi-modal transportation center proposed for the "Airtrain" corridor linking Downtown and DIA along Smith Road. Retail contracts are now being finalized for the center, which is scheduled to be under construction early next year and completed in the late summer of 2002.

Working closely with the transportation planning staff of the City of Denver, RTD, the Stapleton CAB

and surrounding neighborhoods, we have developed a Master Infrastructure Plan that will "knit" the Stapleton property into the surrounding neighborhoods through new roads and sidewalk improvements, bus service, bicycle routes and the Smith Road transportation center.

## Selecting Homebuilders

We have also been busy selecting the ten homebuilders who will construct the first multi-family and single-family housing to be built at Stapleton. These homebuilders will help set the tone for the pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods that reflect the quality and diversity of Denver's most livable neighborhoods. Although traditional in their design and architecture, these neighborhoods will have housing that is energy efficient and fully wired to enjoy the benefits of rapidly advancing technology. Over the next fifteen years, 4,000 units of rental housing and 8,000 units of for-sale housing will be built at Stapleton.

As we prepare for our first residential development, we are working with the City of Denver, the Stapleton Foundation, affordable housing providers and members of the community to provide a diversity of housing that is affordable to the widest possible range of household incomes. Our for-sale housing, for example, will range in pricing from the low \$100,000s for modestly-sized attached units near our town center, to more generously-sized

single family detached housing to the east that will be priced at a half a million dollars or more.

## Financing the Infrastructure

With all of its tremendous potential, Stapleton also poses significant challenges, not the least of which is funding and constructing the necessary infrastructure of roads, utilities and facilities that are critical to the community. In this past year, we have worked with city officials and the Denver Urban Renewal Authority (DURA) to set up the financing districts that will enable growth at Stapleton to



The first phase development plan.

pay its own way. Forest City has agreed to go beyond a developer's typical obligation to provide only neighborhood or "intract" infrastructure by also agreeing to advance to the City of Denver the funds necessary to create the "trunk infrastructure" that will connect the Stapleton property to the region.

## Contributing to Our Community

Perhaps most important of all, everything we have done in this past year has been done with the intention of working for the good of our new community. Forest City is a family owned company that believes strongly in becoming part of the communities in which it builds and contributing at every level to the quality of life in those communities. As you will see in the "Community Report" printed elsewhere in this edition of *The Front Porch*, Forest City has a particular interest in supporting our communities' efforts to provide a sound education and a bright future for young people. If we do our job right at Stapleton, our children and children yet to come will enjoy the quality of life that has always made Denver such a special place to live.

We can't wait to get started.



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# STAPLETON HISTORY – FROM NATIVE AMERICAN TRAILS TO “THE UNION STATION OF THE AIR”

By Alice Kelly, Boardmember, Stapleton Development Corp. and the Stapleton Citizens Advisory Board



While many are familiar with the history of Stapleton International Airport in the latter years prior to its 1995 closure, not as many are aware of the airport's earlier history around the time it opened in 1929 as the Denver Municipal Airport.

## Early History

Archeological excavations in the Stapleton area have uncovered grinding stones and pieces of fire-blackened cooking hearths that were thought to have been left by native Americans in the area between 3500 BC and 1000 AD. Among the tribes were the Apache and Pawnee in the 1500s and the Cheyenne and Arapahoe in the 1700s. Three historic trails utilized by traders crisscrossed the property.

According to records of the Bureau of Land Management, Section 21 of the Stapleton property, which was under the ownership of the U.S. Government, was given to the State of Alabama as payment for soldiers who fought in the Civil War. Certificates of scrip, usually 160 acres, were given to those soldiers. The amount of acreage depended on length of service, rank and whether or not a recipient had been wounded. It is not known what the soldiers did with this land.

In 1886, a parcel of land that encompasses much of the modern day Park Hill Neighborhood was purchased for development by Baron Eugene Von Winkler. When the developer died before he could begin work on the property, the land was sold to investors who envisioned high-priced homes for the site. The construction on those homes began in 1900.

On the eastern side of the future airport was the city incorporated in 1801 as the town of Fletcher. Named after a former president of the Denver Chamber of Commerce, it later became the City of Aurora. To the north, was a farming community settled by Danish farmers. Grain elevators were erected on that property in 1938 by the Hungarian Flour Company. In 1952, it was incorporated as Commerce City.

Another neighbor of the future Stapleton was a farming community settled in the mid 1800s. In 1942, the U.S. Army acquired that land to make weapons for WWII at a facility named

The Rocky Mountain Arsenal. In 1992, that land was designated by the U.S. Congress to become the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge.

Other communities in the vicinity included Roydale, Berlin, Independence, Sandown and Sable. Most of these communities grew up along the railroad. Sable was originally known as Schuyler (1880) and later (1892) Magnolia. Independence, located between 51<sup>st</sup> Avenue and 56<sup>th</sup> Avenue, stretching from Yosemite to Havana, was vacated in 1890. The community south of the airport property was Montclair, which was annexed to Denver in 1902.

## Early Airfields

Nearly a decade after the first airplane flight occurred in Denver in 1910, the Curtiss-Humphrey Airport (also known as the Western Flying Service Airport) opened at 26<sup>th</sup> and

Western History Department, Denver Public Library



Nevertheless, the Denver City Council approved purchase of the Sand Creek site for Denver Municipal Airport on March 19, 1927 and later appropriated \$175,000 to purchase the 640 acre site. Following the dedication

This photo taken in May 1931 shows people walking among airplanes parked at Denver Municipal Airport during a visit by the 95th Pursuit Squadron of the U. S. Army.

Oneida. Its name was later changed to “Park Hill Airfield.”

Lowry Airfield, also known as Combs Air Park, was built in 1923 at 38<sup>th</sup> and Dahlia. Other airfields in the area included Sky Ranch Airfield on E. 40<sup>th</sup>, and Higley Field on 26<sup>th</sup> Ave., which was used by the Civil Air Patrol.

## Denver Municipal Airport

In the late 1920s, Mayor Ben Stapleton cited the economic benefits for creating a municipal airport that “could become the ‘Union Station of the Air.’” While a number of sites were suggested for the new airport, the mayor preferred a site known as “Sand Dune” or “Rattlesnake Hollow.” The boundaries of the property were present day Ulster Street on the west, 26<sup>th</sup>

of the airport in October 1929, \$287,000 was spent on the construction of four gravel runways, lighting (which reportedly illuminated the ground but also blinded the pilots), a terminal building, and a hangar thought to be one of the largest in the nation. Air shows were held frequently and one of the most popular tenants of the new airport was “Mom Williams’ Skyline Buffet.”

Under the guidance of Denver city planner Saco Rienk DeBoer, beautiful floral displays were planted at the entrance to the airport, much like those at Union Station. The new airport was fast becoming the place for the family to come on Sundays.

True to his reputation as a “penny-pincher,”

Mayor Stapleton ordered coin-operated turnstiles for the observation deck and the installation of vending machines that sold everything from combs to flight insurance. Nearly \$45,000 a year was raised by pay toilets until a group of activist women successfully forced the city to end the practice in 1974. Mayor Stapleton also added to city coffers by allowing wheat to be grown on the site. The wheat was sold and the proceeds went (See “History” on page 8)

## BEA BRANSCOMBE 1925-2000

The Greater Park Hill Community west of Stapleton and the entire City of Denver lost a great champion of diversity in our community with the recent death of Bea Branscombe.

Ms. Branscombe passed away at the age of 75 after a heroic battle with cancer. Bea and her husband Art Branscombe were



among the community leaders responsible for making the Park Hill Neighborhood one of the nation’s most respected, stable and racially diverse urban neighborhoods. The new

neighborhoods to be constructed on the former Stapleton property will be shaped by the example set by the Park Hill Neighborhood.



# TRAFFIC PROJECTIONS FOR REDEVELOPMENT OF STAPLETON

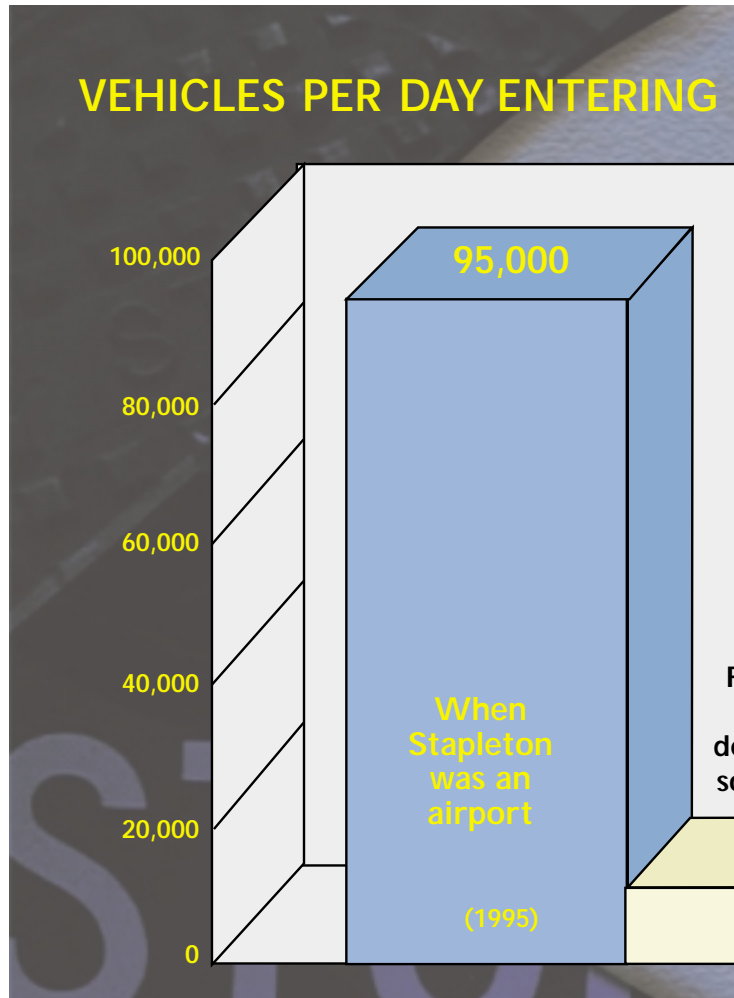


## REDUCING NEIGHBORHOOD TRAFFIC

The extension of the surrounding neighborhoods' street grid on to the former airport property will spread traffic over a number of streets, in some cases, **reducing** the burden on existing streets such as Montview Boulevard south of Stapleton. The regional retail center was sited at Smith Road and Quebec to provide easy access from Interstates I-70 and I-270 that will reduce traffic on neighborhood streets.

**RTD SERVICE** in the neighborhoods surrounding Stapleton will be extended on to the former airport property. The popular RTD Transfer Station at Stapleton will continue to serve numerous local and express routes either at its current location or at a new transit center on the Smith Road rail corridor.

The redevelopment of Stapleton is guided by the creation of pedestrian-scale, mixed-use urban neighborhoods that will be within walking distance of each other, thereby giving residents, workers and visitors convenient



## LESS TRAFFIC

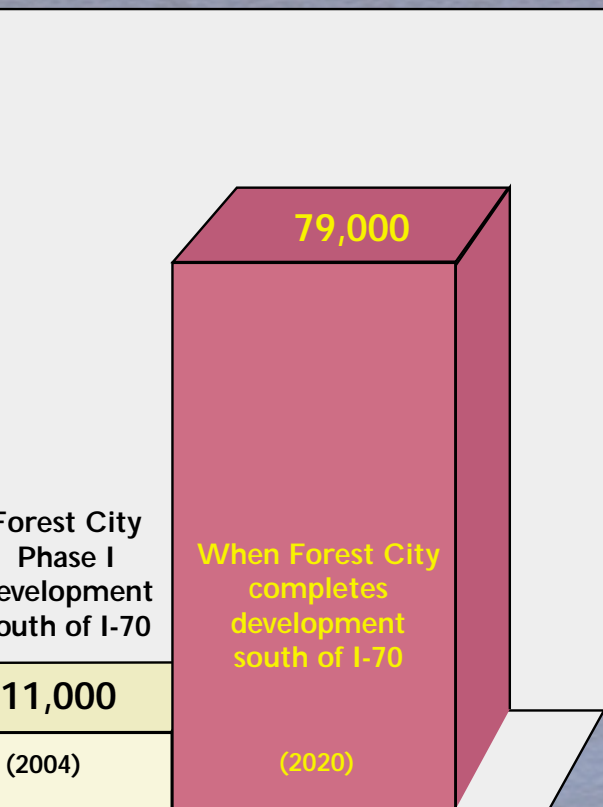
Off-site daily vehicle traffic on I-70 is projected to be in **its final years**. Although single occupant vehicles account for a large portion of the traffic will not be located near the site. The site locates housing, retail, and

# PROJECTIONS

## STAPLETON SOUTH OF I-70

by the Stapleton Plan, which creates pedestrian-friendly, walkable communities. Housing, retail, and employment centers are clustered together or linked by public transit and bike paths, providing convenient alternatives to the automobile.

### ENTERING AND LEAVING STAPLETON SITE



### LESS THAN STAPLETON AIRPORT

The traffic created by the new development south of I-70 will be **less than the former airport generated in Stapleton**. About one-third of all trips will use modes other than single-occupant vehicles (bus, carpool, bike, walking). Approximately 25% of all trips will never leave the site because of the mixed use plan that includes housing, retail and employment in convenient proximity to each other.



### ALTERNATE TRANSPORTATION

A transportation management authority is being considered to coordinate and improve the convenience of public transit, ride-sharing, telecommuting, bicycle use and walking as alternatives to the single occupant automobile.

### TELECOMMUTING

All homes and apartments at Stapleton will be fully wired to take advantage of the latest communication technology, making it convenient for residents to “telecommute” as they work from home.



# Sustainable Development Shapes Stapleton

A guiding principle behind the redevelopment of Stapleton is sustainable development which meets the needs of our generation without compromising the quality of life for future generations.

In order to create the sustainable development envisioned in The Stapleton Plan (commonly called "The Green Book"), Forest City has engaged the world-renowned Rocky Mountain Institute in Snowmass, Colorado to develop a Sustainable Development Master Plan that builds on the work already done by the Stapleton Redevelopment Foundation (now the Stapleton Foundation for Sustainable Urban Communities), the Stapleton Development Corporation (SDC) and its Citizens Advisory Board, the City of Denver, and Forest City. That work includes:

## Mixed Use Zoning

- Stapleton's mixed use zoning creates pedestrian-scale neighborhoods in which jobs, housing and retail are within walking distance and public transit is a convenient alternative to the automobile.

## Residential Development

- Homebuilders will be required at a minimum to meet HBA "Built Green" standards. Additional opportunities to create energy-efficient housing utilizing renewable energy are being explored.

## Transportation

- The popular Stapleton Transfer Station serves seven local bus routes and six express routes.
- Planning for the regional retail center and nearby office development includes an adjacent site for a multi-modal transit station.

- Pedestrian-scale development, bicycle paths, and public transit will offer residents and visitors alternatives to the automobile.
- The trails along the Sand Creek Regional Greenway comprise both a transportation corridor and a recreational amenity.

## Education

- The non-profit Friends of Bluff Lake provides educational classes on the environment and ecology to schoolchildren at the 123-acre Bluff Lake Natural Area at Stapleton.
- At the Urban Farm at Stapleton, children learn how food is grown, help to raise farm animals, and ride and care for horses.

## Recycling

- Over 6 million tons of concrete runways are now undergoing demolition and recycling.
- Approximately 200,000 tons of asphalt have been recycled.
- More than 50% of the debris from the terminal demolition has been recycled and reused, including rebar, sheet metal and concrete.

## Parks and Open Space

- Wetlands will be created to address water quality goals while simultaneously creating wildlife habitat and open space amenities.
- The 1,100 acres of regional parks and open space will include 175 acres that will blend traditional urban parkland with restored prairie and riparian landscapes.

Future editions of *The Front Porch* will carry more information about the sustainable development at Stapleton.



**Left:** A herd of deer now living on Stapleton north of I-70 should continue to thrive in the open space after completion of the re-development project.  
**Above:** Six million tons of runway are being recycled—much of it to be used on site.

## FOREST CITY STAPLETON COM



Landri Taylor

Development announced that an agreement had been reached for the redevelopment of Stapleton. Under the direction of Forest City Stapleton's Vice President of Community Affairs, Landri C. Taylor, and well ahead of the first shovel of dirt being turned to begin this projected 25-year project, Forest City Stapleton has worked to become a stakeholder in our community. This report summarizes the community activities Forest City Stapleton has supported during the first year of operation in Denver.

Forest City Stapleton began the year by hosting the January luncheon of the Rocky Mountain Minority Supplier Development Council. Nearly 100 people attended this luncheon and received a presentation on entrepreneur opportunities.

Forest City Stapleton was a silver sponsor at the Gala 2000 Celebration for the Latin American Educational Foundation, featuring keynote speaker Sammy Sosa. In celebration of Black History Month, Forest City Stapleton, AT&T Broadband, and Media One were primary sponsors of the BET documentary "24 Hours With Diana Ross".

Forest City Stapleton was also a major sponsor of dinners or events benefiting the Urban League, the Hispanic Contractors of Colorado, the NAACP, the Mizel Museum of Judaica, and the Cleo Parker Robinson 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration. To date, Forest City Stapleton has been pleased to contribute to the Climb for the Cure 2000, Up With People, the Colorado Association of Black Journalists, and the Sand Creek Jamboree. Other recipients include the Denver Health Foundation, the National Council of Negro Women, The Gathering Place, the Denver Chapter of the Links, the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Wines for Life Celebration, and Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado. Forest City also provided financial support for the Macedonia Baptist Church



Nancy Relihan, one of the Forest City employees who tutors at Ashley Elementary School in the Stapleton neighborhood.

Community Awards Dinner, the Conference of the National Association of Latin American Elected Officials, and the Public Education & Business Luncheon.

Forest City Stapleton was the underwriter for the Black United Fund of Colorado Celebrity Golf Tournament 2000. This year's event was held in memory of the late Hiawatha Davis, Denver City Councilman. The Black United Fund of Colorado is one of twenty affiliates of the National Black United Fund, which operates under the premise that collectively we can make a difference in our community.



# Stop! Look! And Listen! As Parks, Recreation and Open Space Develop at Stapleton

By Emilie Ailts  
Consultant, Stapleton  
Parks and Environment

Sometimes it's hard to imagine the long and integrated process involved in planning and developing parks and open space. We look around Denver at some of the premier park facilities with which we are familiar: Washington Park, City Park, Sloan Lake, Confluence Park, and aren't aware that citizens, designers, and planners spent time discerning a style for each park and appropriate recreational amenities for each park. That process has been taking place at Stapleton since July of this year.

In July, a public process began to determine desired park facilities for the projected 1,100 acres of parks and open space. It was called a *Needs Assessment* and had three parts: a market analysis, bi-lingual park user surveying and neighborhood presentations. When the surveying and presentations were completed in October, over 1,000



**Top:** First and second graders at the Odyssey School draw Stapleton parks.  
**Bottom:** "Young at Heart" members at the Macedonia Baptist Church talk about parks.  
**Right:** Parks and open space will be easily accessible to residential areas.



Photo by John Ross

children, families, seniors and teens, among others, had had a chance to express their views on how parks at the Stapleton site could meet their recreational needs. Information was also distributed by way of television, neighborhood newsletters, and the website, set up (and still available) especially to communicate information about park development to the public, [www.stapletonparks.org](http://www.stapletonparks.org).

Some of those things we learned from you were: 1) more *simple comforts*, restrooms, water, benches, shade and picnic facilities;

2) most people drive (sometimes long distances) to regional parks; 3) you want family areas like children's play areas, multi-purpose trails and multi-purpose sports fields. We also heard that relaxation and quiet, bird watching, wildlife viewing, contemplation of nature and solitude are sought frequently at parks along with active park uses.

The next piece of the planning for site parks was the development of a *Program Plan*. A program plan is one in which the collected data is analyzed and recommendations are made about what we need in a new park system and where should it go. It builds on the needs assessment by 1) creating an inventory of existing recreational facilities surrounding the site (2-mile radius); 2) evaluating public opinion, 3) examining local, regional and national trends in recreation, (See "Parks" on page 8)

## THE SHOW'S ON THE ROAD!

For any neighborhood or community group interested in having a short presentation on the planning of parks at Stapleton or the progress made on creating the first regional park at Stapleton, please contact Emilie Ailts at 303-777-2325 as soon as possible; we're putting them on the schedule for January and February 2001.

## MUNITY REPORT CARD 2000

Photo by John Ross



Youth programs supported by Forest City include The Urban Farm at Stapleton

Forest City Stapleton has maintained a strong, special commitment to youth, not only through monetary support but also the personal commitment of time by members of our staff. Forest City Stapleton proudly supported the following youth organizations/events in 2000: the J. P. Beckworth Youth Foundation, the Colorado Ballet for Youth Program, the Montbello Falcons Youth Foundation, and the Young American's Bank Youth Foundation. Other worthwhile causes supported by Forest City included TIAA-CREF/Denver Public Schools Foundation, Summer Scholars, the Five Points Cultural

Dinner Celebration, Montbello United Neighbor's "Breakfast with Santa" Program, Young Adults for Positive Action, The Urban Farm at Stapleton, and the Shaka Franklin Youth Foundation.

Also included in Forest City's commitment to young people in our community were the Aurora Public Schools Youth Foundation, "I Have A Dream" Foundation, the Northeast Denver Safe Night Colorado, Black Star Communication Television, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Scholarship Luncheon, and the Tiger Woods Youth Golf Foundation. Forest City also contributed to the Slippers & Sliders Youth Ski Program, the Denver Chamber of Commerce Youth at Work Program, the Spiral Educational Foundation of Colorado's 4th Annual "Colorado Men Who Cook" Charity Gala, and the Gold Crown Foundation athletic programs for boys and girls.

Forest City Stapleton is very excited about its "Adopt-a-School Program" and the relationship it has established with Ashley Elementary School, which is located across

the street from Stapleton. This program, designed by Forest City Stapleton, will bring added resources to Ashley Elementary to improve student achievement by providing additional staff, volunteers, and teaching materials for the 3rd graders. Several members of the Forest City staff serve as tutors in the weekly mathematics and reading programs.

And, Forest City Stapleton donated to the Thanksgiving food basket programs for needy families in Denver operated by NEWSED Community Development Corporation and The Northeast Women's Center.

Forest City Stapleton is a proud member of the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce, Colorado Black Chamber of Commerce, Asian Chamber of Commerce, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Aurora Chamber of Commerce, Colorado Women's Chamber of Commerce, and the Rocky Mountain Minority Supplier Development Council.

Forest City Stapleton is very pleased to be part of the Denver community. We look forward to maintaining a high level of support in 2001!

# THANK-YOU

Forest City thanks the Stapleton Foundation and the Stapleton Development Corporation Staff and Citizens Advisory Board for their help hosting the successful information fair shown in these photos, which was held at the Park Hill Golf Course on October 18, 2000.



## HISTORY (continued from page 3)

into the city's general fund.

In 1933, Amelia Erhart stopped at Denver Municipal Airport on her cross-country flight with her "Autogiro," an early version of the helicopter. By 1945, the Airport had increased its acreage to 1,435 acres, composed of four runways serving as many as 50 commercial flights a day.

In August 1944, Denver Municipal Airport was renamed "Stapleton Airport" in honor of Mayor Stapleton. The word "International" was added to the name in 1964 at the suggestion of the Denver Chamber of Commerce even though it would be another four years before Western Airlines began the first international flights to Calgary, Canada.

During the early history, ten subdivisions were platted on the site but were not developed. Historic maps show that the site was in the process of being developed in grid form during the early period of the airport. As the airport expanded over time, the platted land was vacated.

The Stapleton Citizens Advisory Board would like to hear from our readers who have information or memorabilia about the early days of Stapleton. Please contact me by leaving a message at the Offices of the Stapleton Development Corporation 303-393-7700.

## PARKS (continued from page 7)

and 4) collecting expert opinions from professionals working in local recreation in the public and private sectors.

The goal of the program plan for this site is to balance the needs expressed and the resources available for parks, recreation and open space, while respecting the guiding principals for parks and open space developed in the original Stapleton master plan, "The Green Book."

Starting in October of this year, a series of public meetings were held at the campus of Johnson and Wales University, 7150 Montview Blvd. At the first two public *workshop* sessions almost 100 citizens worked in small group sessions to begin to: 1) understand the physical opportunities and constraints of the site; 2) *envision* the nature of a new regional park, and 3) plot the actual locations of active or passive recreational activities. From that work the consultant, EDAAW INC., will prepare design alternatives for the park, which will emerge over the next few months.

The final workshop session for the year 2000 was held at Johnson and Wales on December 13th. If you would like to get involved or acquire more information on the process call, 303-777-2325, or get onto the web, either at home or at any public terminal (like schools and libraries) connected to the web, [www.stapletonparks.org](http://www.stapletonparks.org). We'd love to have you!