

# Colorado's Most Endangered Places

## 2009 Nomination Form

The Town of Saguache is nominating the 4<sup>th</sup> Street Business District, from Highway 285 south to Pitkin Avenue, for Colorado Preservation Inc.'s "Most Endangered Places" list. The District consists of privately owned buildings, the Saguache Post Office, and the Saguache County Courthouse. Within the Town of Saguache, 4<sup>th</sup> Street is the principal commercial street of the community, along the two blocks from Denver Avenue on the north to Christy Avenue on the south. Within the town, streets form a grid, with numbered streets running north-south and named avenues aligned east-west. Lots face onto 4<sup>th</sup> Street, and there are no alleys behind the properties. Odd numbered addresses are on the west side of north-south streets and even-numbered addresses on the east side; for east-west avenues, odd-numbered addresses are on the south side while even-numbered addresses are on the north side.

### **Site Name/Address/Ownership:**

Town of Saguache 4<sup>th</sup> Street Business District, Saguache County. Following is the ownership list and designations:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Property Address/Description</b>	<b>Designation</b>
Elvie & Annette Conley	235 4th Street	
Michael Cassidy & Paulette Tilden	305 & 307 4th Street	
RDJ Farms LLC	309 4th Street	
Dean Coombs	316 4th Street - Crescent	
Masonic Lodge	317, 319, 321, 323 and 325 4th Street - Dunn's Block/ Means & Ashley Mercantile Co.	State Register 8/31/2006, 5SH.1901
Jose & Leticia Villagomez	333 W 4th Street	
First Southwest Bank	400 4th Street - Bank	
John Callaghan	401 4th Street	
Eric Barandes	407 4th Street - Saguache Properties	
Laura P. Nehls	410 4th Street	

Susan Crutchfield	411 4th Street	
Gregory & Karen Cox	413 & 415 4th Street - Hotel	
Saguache County Courthouse	504 4th St.	State Register 8/11/1993, 5SH.1392
Susan Jean Renaud	Sag Blk 14, Lot 4	
Eric Barandes	Sag Blk 15 Lot 3	
Saguache Abstract Co.		

**Mayor and County Commissioners:**

Milton Jones, Mayor, Town of Saguache

Mike Spearman, Linda Joseph, and Sam Pace, Saguache County Commissioners

**Threats to the District:**

There are several factors that threaten the 4<sup>th</sup> Street Business District. Most importantly, several of the buildings have been abandoned, neglected and have begun to decay. There are severe structural issues with many of the sites including façades that are crumbling; brickwork that is falling off; and windows that are broken or damaged.

In addition, several of these “Main Street” businesses have been converted into residences further threatening the economic development aspects of this 4<sup>th</sup> Street Business District. For many years now there have been only a hand-full of viable businesses on 4<sup>th</sup> Street; very few, if any, start-up businesses have come to downtown. The Town of Saguache in partnership with ScSEED (Saguache County Sustainable Environment and Economic Development) has begun a Downtown Revitalization Initiative. This effort will work toward beautification of the downtown area possibly including façade restoration, cityscape investment, street and sidewalk restoration (cobblestone, etc.), adding planters and new light posts (with banners), etc. It is our hope that this beautification effort will attract interested businesses to the area thus creating a more vital downtown district. In turn, we anticipate that this will encourage property owners to address issues with their building sites and perhaps reconvert their properties back into businesses.

In the following section you will learn more about the historical significance of this town. The small town, ranching way of life and culture that is part of the Town of Saguache is also being threatened. As more and more small towns and communities turn into tourist

towns or resort communities this authentic, small town, western culture is lost. The people of this area value the history and cultural significance of this type of lifestyle; we need to protect these valuable resources.

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### **Historical significance:**

In 2000, Front Range Research Associates, Inc. (Denver, Colorado) completed a report called the TOWN OF SAGUACHE AND COCHETOPA CORRIDOR HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEY. The project was known as the **Saguache County, Colorado, Survey and Planning Project** (2001). This project prepared a historic preservation plan and conducted a survey of selected historic resources for the County of Saguache, Colorado. The firm surveyed resources in the Town of Saguache and along the Cochetopa corridor. Front Range team members worked with community representatives to identify significant historic resources and complete a preservation plan. The following information is from the final report:

On February 7, 1874, the Saguache Town Company was organized, and the company filed its articles of incorporation on February 20, 1874. Officers and trustees of the town company included: D. Heimberger, president; David Downer, secretary; D. Herbert Dunn, treasurer; and R.H. Jones, H.K. Prior, S.W. Hodding, I. Gotthelf, A.W. Settle, trustees. Land for the townsite, which included 110 acres, was donated by seven ranchers: A.W. Settle, Otto Mears, Nathaniel Russell, E.R. Harris, Prudencio Garcia, Enos Hotchkiss, and R.H. Jones. Surveyor I.S. Rowell platted the town with streets running east and west. The company set deadlines for the construction of buildings in the town which varied according to structure size and cost. One hundred lots were given away to settlers, who were required to erect buildings valued above a set minimum amount. By February 25, it was reported in Denver that "a town has been laid out at Saguache for a trading point, and over forty buildings have already been contracted to be erected by the first of June, costing not less than \$250 each."

Cottonwood trees were to be planted by lot owners. The town company ordered one hundred trees in May, and irrigation ditches were constructed so that the trees could be watered. Isaac Gotthelf oversaw the planting of trees and construction of ditches, with water taken from Nathaniel Russell's water right. By August, fifteen business houses had been erected, and the construction of a school and church was being contemplated. Carpenters Frank Townsend, J.M. White, and S.H. Tucker had arrived in Saguache two years earlier to take advantage of the building boom. In October 1874, the *Rocky Mountain News* reported that "public spirited citizens have. . . built up a city

at Saguache, which promises to rival in growth, wealth, character of its people, buildings and business many of its older and more pretentious sister cities."

Early buildings in Saguache were principally erected of adobe and log. The first post office was erected of adobe and had no floor. The first county courthouse was a plain adobe building which had been owned by Nathaniel Russell and had only two or three rooms. The building served a variety of purposes in the early years. County meetings were held in the building, the rooms on the south were used for judicial proceedings, and rooms on the north held school rooms for some students during 1876-77. In November 1875 an interesting description of Saguache was provided: "It is wholly unlike Colorado's other new towns in that the flimsy frame business and dwelling houses generally occupied at first are the exception here. The substantial-looking lead-colored "doby" structure has been the style most in vogue thus far, an admirable clay in the neighborhood furnishing the material. Taken in connection with several fine brick blocks, these low, thick-walled buildings give the place an air of age and long-established stability, quite at variance with its brief history."

A description of the town's early adobe buildings is also provided by Fred B. Agee and Joseph M. Cuenin in their history of the Cochetopa National Forest. They report that the houses built by the first American settlers in the area were patterned on those of the early Mexican residents:

. . . they were made of adobe brick with dirt roofs. Most of the early houses had walls from eighteen inches to two feet thick and the walls were extended about four feet above the flat roofs, so that they could be used in case of necessity as forts for protection against any marauding parties of Indians. Two of those old houses, one on the I.L. Gotthelf ranch [Coleman Ranch] and the other on the Gotthelf & Noland ranch, just west of Saguache still stand and are used as dwellings. The upper part of the walls have been removed to the level of the roofs, but they still have much the appearance of small forts.

Not all buildings in early Saguache were adobe, however. Some buildings rivaled commercial blocks being erected in much larger cities. The large, Italianate style Dunn Block was built at 323-325 4th Street, reflecting the early architectural sophistication of the town. The building was owned by D. Herbert Dunn, who moved to the Saguache area in 1870 and established a ranch known as Willowdale, as well as acquiring other land. *The Rocky Mountain News* reported in 1876 that the Odd Fellows of Saguache had dedicated new lodge rooms in the Dunn Block, which were described as "a hall, of which almost any lodge in Colorado might well feel proud. It is in the second story of Dunn's brick block . . . The main hall is richly carpeted, the windows are draped with beautiful curtains, a chandelier and side lamps will furnish abundant light, and altogether it is one of the finest rooms in southwestern Colorado." The building

subsequently housed one of Saguache's most prominent businesses, the Means and Ashley Mercantile, known for its huge selection of goods.

In the 1870s, Saguache served as the supply center and stopping place for prospectors and teamsters heading for the San Juan country. Virginia Simmons reports that a significant amount of the "tons of mining equipment, supplies, and ore in and out of the San Juan mines" passed through Saguache and over Cochetopa Pass. Growth in business translated into diversity in the commercial district. On September 8, 1874, Saguache was selected as the county seat, winning the honor over Milton and La Loma (which lost by eight votes). By 1874, the town included a newspaper, saloons, groceries, a mercantile, a blacksmith, a meat market, a restaurant, a hardware store, a hotel, livery stables, a saw and grist mill, and such trades and professions as lawyers, a shoemaker, a jeweler, a carpenter, a stonecutter and bricklayer, a music teacher, and milliners and dressmakers.

Although some residents felt there were too few students for a school, Lawrence and Woodson had established School District 1 in 1871 and started a school on their ranch the following year. A school at the Samuel Ashley place in 1874 was taught by Thomas Ellis and later a Miss Wall. Subsequently, a private tutor was hired by the local residents, with school conducted in the Ashley residence. In 1880, a school was erected in Saguache, a two-story brick building with a belltower. The school had four rooms: one on the upper story for the high school students, and three downstairs rooms to accommodate grades one through eight. In 1901, a frame high school was erected, which burned down in 1906 and was replaced the following year.

Throughout Colorado, connection to a railroad was considered a major factor in the viability of a newly established town. As early as 1867, investigations of the possibility of a rail route over Poncha Pass had been explored, but no actual work was undertaken. The Pueblo and Arkansas Valley Railroad Company incorporated in March 1875 with plans to extend rails to Saguache and Del Norte. The Canon City & Saguache Railway Company also projected a line to the town in 1877. Neither railroad became a reality. In the case of Saguache, however, this lack of railroad connections benefitted the toll road companies operated by citizens such as Otto Mears. An advertisement in the Saguache Crescent in 1876 announced that the Saguache and San Juan Wagon Toll Road was complete, and was the only route that was open year-round to the San Juans. By the time the inability to attract a railroad began affecting Saguache's status as a freighting center, the town had evolved into a supply center for the surrounding agricultural community.

In the spring of 1878, cattlemen on the east side of the valley stopped two large herds of sheep from migrating into the area from New Mexico. By the following year, however, sheep had established a foothold in the area, with prominent settlers such as Isaac Gotthelf raising sheep. In subsequent years, sheepraising continued to gain

prominence, with large operations, such as that of Dr. I.L. Gotthelf in the early twentieth century, encompassing huge flocks.

The 1880 U.S. Census, the first to record a population for Saguache, counted 325 people in the town. An elaborate two-story brick courthouse completed in 1881 had county offices on the first floor and a court room on the second. By that date, Saguache was the hub of a thriving agricultural area and the supply center for mining and livestock operations. In 1884, the *Rocky Mountain News* described the town:

"Its surroundings are almost purely agricultural and pastoral, while its location has made it of easy access from the mines of the hills above. It has had and still retains a good reputation as a business center. It may be counted among the reliable towns of the country and liable at any time to become a booming trade center."

Crofutt listed the agricultural production of the area the following year, citing the raising of large quantities of hay, wheat, and vegetables, in addition to the principal occupation of raising sheep and cattle. Ranching grew in importance in the northern San Luis Valley, with homesteads gradually consolidated into larger agricultural operations. Crofutt reported that the town still consisted principally of adobe and log buildings, together with a few "good brick and stone buildings for business purposes, and a few good wooden private residences."

The town more than doubled in population during the 1880s, with a population of 660 recorded in 1890. Saguache's facilities included livery stables, banks, a school, churches, and restaurants. By 1891, the town included three churches, several fraternal organizations, two newspapers (the *Colorado Weekly Herald* and the *Saguache Crescent*), and two hotels. In that year the layout of the town was described:

"The principal avenues, which run east, west, are lined with stately and growing cottonwoods, and give the town somewhat the appearance of a grove. Irrigating ditches, filled with clear, sparkling water from the Saguache Creek, flow on either side of the avenues."

By 1897, Saguache was eighteen miles from the nearest railroad, but connected to that terminus by daily stage lines and a just-completed telephone line. The community was served by four churches: Catholic, Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian. Fraternal lodges included the Odd Fellows, Masons, and Woodmen. The town's status as a supply center continued, with offerings such as the Saguache County Bank, the Saguache County Abstract Company, the Saguache County Telephone Company, bakers, a barber, a billiard hall, the Saguache Pharmacy, a taxidermist, and two physicians.

The population of Saguache dropped dramatically by 1900, descending to 389, a total only slightly higher than that of 1890. The principal reason for the decline was presumably the nationwide depression which started in 1893 and profoundly affected

silver mining states such as Colorado and impacted all sectors of the economy. By 1910, the town had recovered sufficiently to record a population of 620 persons. The decade was a prosperous one, and the period before World War I represented a significant era of construction for Saguache.

On 2 March 1910, the 1881 county courthouse was destroyed by fire. The Saguache Crescent reported that almost the entire populace responded to the fire alarm, but since the courthouse was so far from the town hall where the fire apparatus was stored, the fire had time to burn unhampered before the engine and hose arrived. The courthouse was replaced in the same year by a \$36,110 two-and-a-half-story brick building in the Classical Revival style designed by Denver architect John J. Huddart.

In 1910, local investors, including Horace Bailey "Boss" Means, W.T. Ashley, Dr. O.P. Shippey, and George Curtis, erected a new hotel on the site of an older building, the American House. Means later acquired the interests of the others and operated the hotel until his death in 1926. Means was born in Indiana in 1855 and came with his parents to Saguache in 1875. He formed a partnership with his brother George which raised cattle and acquired land. Horace Means became one of the town's most prominent citizens, serving several terms as mayor, organizing the First National Bank and serving as its president, and completing four years as county commissioner. He was also president of the Saguache Cattle Growers Association and a director of the San Luis Valley Dairy Association. Means reportedly built the fine two-story brick hotel to "put Saguache on the map." About 1920, an addition was constructed on the north, increasing the hotel's capacity by ten rooms.

The prosperity of the town was also evident in the new facade completed for the Saguache County Bank. The bank started as a private enterprise in the back of the Gotthelf and Mayer Mercantile and moved to a modest one-story brick building at 311 4th Street before 1886. In 1913, the bank's board of directors solicited bids for a \$7,500 remodeling of the building. Denver architect John J. Huddart was selected to design the new facade and contractor M.J. Kenney, also of Denver, completed the construction. The Denver Terra Cotta Company produced the new front, which included cast stone, limestone, and marble. The American Sash and Door Company of Denver fabricated the glass for the new facade, including stained glass ornamentation. The Classical Revival frontispiece included columns supporting a pediment and made the small building one of the most distinguished in town.

Another architectural gem was added to the town's built environment in 1915, when a two-story H-shaped brick elementary school with Mediterranean style influences was designed by Denver architects Manning and Frewen and erected by contractor T.J. Faires. The school reportedly operated with separate classes for the first and second grades, dividing those whom were spanish-speaking from those who spoke English. After two years, the children were believed to have learned enough English to succeed

in combined classes. The school was utilized for more than half a century before becoming part of the county facilities. A Saguache County High School was built in 1907 and torn down in 1967.

A new Saguache Town Hall to replace an 1874 adobe building had been proposed as early as 1908. The new Town Hall, completed in 1915, was designed by Denver architect Harry W.J. Edbrooke. The Saguache County Lumber Company served as contractor. The \$4,000 building featured red brick walls twelve inches thick. In 1916, C.W. Briggs completed an addition to the north end of the building to house the town's fire engine.

The First National Bank erected a fine new building at 400 4th Street in 1915. The bank had been founded by Dallas Stubbs, Horace B. Means, and Adam Shellabarger, among others. Some local historians speculate that the institution was started in competition between rival mercantile operators Horace Means and Isaac Gotthelf. In 1927, the two banks consolidated, forming the Saguache County National Bank, reportedly the only bank in the San Luis Valley to survive the Great Depression.

Automobiles impacted the built environment of Saguache by the 1910s. In 1916, the first Model T agency in the northern San Luis Valley was erected at 501 3rd Street in Saguache. Charles Coleman was the original owner of the agency, and the building was later utilized as a garage, followed by other automotive agencies.

Another important event which occurred before World War I was the arrival of Mary and Charles Ogden in Saguache. Charles Ogden had worked on a variety of newspapers in Wisconsin before moving to Colorado in 1910. In Colorado, he met and married Mary, and they lived in several towns in the southern part of the state and in New Mexico before moving to Saguache. The Ogdens acquired the Saguache Crescent newspaper in 1917 and their descendants continue to operate the paper today. Following the death of Charles in 1935, daughter Marie became the editor, assisted by her mother and sister, Irene. Marie's husband, Robert Coombs, became publisher. Following his death in 1979, their son, Dean, became publisher and, in 1992, owner. The Crescent states that it is the last hot metal newspaper being printed in Colorado.

Population growth continued through the post-World War I period. The 1920 U.S. Census recorded 948 people, while 1,010 persons were residing in Saguache in 1930. In 1935, Florence Means took over the operation of the Saguache Hotel, which was then in disrepair. Mrs. Means felt that the hotel was a vital component of the town. She reopened the restaurant and fixed up the rooms, turning it into a financial success "with total hospitality and great warmth." When the Means family moved to Pueblo in 1938, the building was sold in exchange for \$5,000 and the titles to three buildings in town.

By 1940, 1,219 citizens were counted in the town. Saguache gained an entertainment venue when the Ute Theater was created in a remodeled garage on 4th Street in the

late 1940s by Rose Labart. In 1939-40, the Saguache Ranger Station of the Rio Grande National Forest was built at the corner of 5th Street and Christy Avenue. Population figures decreased slightly in 1950, to 1,024, and declined further, to 722, by 1960. The town's population appears to have stabilized during the 1990s: in 2000, the community's population was 578, versus 584 in 1990. During the same period the county's population rose by 28.1 percent for a 2000 total of 5,917.

## **Describe the property and surrounding area, include any adjacent landmarks:**

This section explains the findings of the survey (cited above), including the number of resources recorded, listings of the resources with addresses and site numbers, an assessment of National and State register eligibility, and recommendations for future work.

### ◆ Number and Types of Resources Surveyed

The 2000 Historic Resources Survey of Saguache and the Cochetopa Corridor documented thirteen resources: eight in the Town of Saguache and five along the Cochetopa Corridor. The eight resources documented in the town were all commercial in function and were located along the main business thoroughfare of Saguache, Fourth Street. The historic usages of the buildings included: two banks, a newspaper office, a hotel, two mercantiles, a mercantile warehouse, and a saloon. The five resources of the corridor included the adobe dwelling of one of the town's founders, a historic ranch, a Forest Service guard station, a livestock dipping vat, and a livestock driveway.

### ◆ Period of Construction

The dates of construction for the buildings in Saguache ranged from 1874 to 1915. The dates of construction for the buildings along the corridor ranged from the 1860s to about 1920.

### ◆ Architectural Styles

Architectural styles for buildings within the town encompassed a variety of styles popular during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including: Italianate, False Front Commercial, Classical Revival, and Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Commercial. Along the corridor, the buildings surveyed included a linear plan adobe house, vernacular frame and log ranch buildings, a vernacular agricultural structure, and a guard station with a porch with Queen Anne influences.

### ◆ Analysis of Historic District Potential

The survey of selected historic resources in the commercial district of Saguache identified a potential National Register historic district along Fourth Street. As only eight buildings in the area were surveyed, no exact boundaries were identified for the district. Specific boundaries and a complete survey of the resources along Fourth Street should be the task of future work. The historic district potential extends approximately from the site of the County Courthouse north to Denver Avenue, including all the lots facing Fourth Street. It is unknown whether there are any residential areas of the town which could logically be combined with the commercial district to form a larger district. That question should also be examined in future work.

◆ SURVEYED HISTORIC RESOURCES, 2000

RESOURCE NAME	ADDRESS STATE	ID NUMBER
Saguache Hotel	415 4th St.	5SH384
Saguache Crescent	316th St.	5SH1898
First National Bank/ Saguache County	400 4th St.	5SH1899
Saguache County Bank	311 4th St.	5SH1900
Dunn Block	325 4th St.	5SH1901
Bon Ton Saloon	315 4th St.	5SH1902
Gotthelf & Mayer Mercantile	301 4th St.	5SH1903
Gotthelf & Mayer Warehouse	305-07 4th St.	5SH1904

The following properties are located in and around the 4<sup>th</sup> Street Business District. This substantial list of buildings demonstrates the historical significance found in this community.

**DUNN'S BLOCK / MEANS & ASHLEY MERCANTILE COMPANY** - 317-325 4th St. – (State Register 8/31/2006, 5SH.1901)

The property consists of an 1874 building with a ca. 1910 addition. The older portion is representative of the Italianate style, reflected in its brick walls with quoins, the projecting metal cornice, and the tall, narrow arched window and door openings marked with hood molds and keystones. It is the most architecturally sophisticated of Saguache's early buildings. A variety of businesses occupied the building, contributing to the commercial success of Saguache. The building subsequently housed one of the town's most prominent businesses— Means & Ashley Mercantile. The building's history

typifies the pattern of commercial activity experienced in the first fifty years of Saguache's development. Early on, the building hosted important political meetings and social gatherings, and served as the meeting lodge for several of the town's fraternal organizations, including the Odd Fellows, Masons, and Woodmen. The Masons continue to meet here.

**SAGUACHE COUNTY COURTHOUSE** - 504 4th St. (State Register 8/11/1993, 5SH.1392)

Designed by John J. Huddart, this Classical Revival style 1910 brick building includes 2½ stories and a raised basement.

**SAGUACHE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL** - 605 Christy Ave. (State Register 8/11/1993, 5SH.1393)

The architectural firm of Manning & Frewen designed this two-story H-shaped brick building that was constructed in 1915. The building is a good example of the Mediterranean style, as evidenced by its tile roof, restrained ornamentation, and round arched windows and entrance.

**SAGUACHE FLOUR MILL** - County Rd. 57 (National Register 9/18/1978, 5SH.458)

Constructed in 1873 by Enos Hotchkiss, a prominent Colorado pioneer, the wood frame three-story building is a lone survivor of an important early industry in Saguache County. It is believed to be one of the few remaining water powered grist mills in Colorado.

**SAGUACHE SCHOOL & JAIL BUILDINGS** - US Hwy. 285 & San Juan Ave. - (National Register 5/2/1975, 5SH.124)

One of the oldest buildings in Saguache, the adobe school was constructed in 1874. The adjoining jail was built in 1908. The buildings have served as the Saguache County Museum since 1959.

**ST. AGNES MISSION CHURCH** - 505 Gunnison St. (State Register 9/10/2003, 5SH.1658)

The 1947 building is an unusual vernacular expression of Pueblo Deco, a melding of Art Deco with Southwest Indian designs. The church possesses the distinctive characteristics of this style as evident in its angular composition, vertical emphasis, stepped parapet, corbelled cut-outs, and geometric designs.

**HAZARD HOUSE MUSEUM** - 807 Pitkin Avenue

This home depicts the affluent lifestyle and furnishings of the wealthier Saguache families of the 1920s and 1930s

**Describe how the site is known at a local, regional, or state-wide level:**

Information provided in the previous two statement sections address this topic.

**What is the community commitment for saving the site? What groups or individuals are involved? Is there a future vision for the site?**

The Town of Saguache has formed a public-private partnership (Saguache Downtown Revitalization Partnership) which includes the following organizations and individuals:

Town of Saguache Board of Trustees  
Saguache Planning Commission  
Saguache County Commissioners  
Saguache County Public Library  
San Luis Valley Small Business Development Center  
ScSEED – Saguache County Sustainable Environment & Economic Development  
Saguache County Economic Vitality Task Force (SCEVTF)  
Mountain Valley Schools Community Garden and Greenhouse  
Saguache Camp & Lodge

The Saguache Downtown Revitalization Partnership (see attached letters of support from each of the partners) had its first meeting on July 28, 2008, and brought together community members, business owners and Saguache Town and County officials to discuss the possibilities for revitalization and visioning for the future. A total of fifty-five (55) community members attended the July 28<sup>th</sup> meetings. There was a significant interest in both the nomination of 4<sup>th</sup> Street Business District as well as interest in the overall revitalization initiative. The partnership will begin to develop a plan for the Town of Saguache with a strong emphasis on the 4<sup>th</sup> Street Business District.

**Why is this place endangered and why should it be saved?**

As mentioned above and throughout the nomination form, it is obvious what a substantial historical and cultural resource the Town of Saguache has along its 4<sup>th</sup> Street Business District. Community members, Town and County officials, 4<sup>th</sup> Street property owners, and organizations throughout the area have come together to make a statement about the need to not only preserve, but revitalize, this gem. By preserving this historic gem we ensure that future residents and visitors can experience an authentic western, rural, small town (something that is dying throughout the country).

Saguache County, population of roughly 7,000, has an agribusiness income providing 31.8% of the economic base. There are 1,439 (22.7%) people living below the poverty level in Saguache County. The average per capita income is \$16,075, it is the third poorest county and the unemployment rate is nearly twice that of the state of Colorado. Saguache County alone is the size of Delaware and Rhode Island combined and a drive to a full service grocery store or hospital averages 50 miles one way. This

isolated rural region is under severe economic stress. Families struggle to make ends meet, business owners are challenged to stay viable and the environment is stressed by drought and haphazard development.

The historic Town of Saguache is a Statutory Town that is the county seat. As of the census of 2000, there were 578 people, 262 households, and 160 families residing in the town. The population density was 1,510.7 people per square mile. There were 328 housing units at an average density of 857.3/sq mi. The racial makeup of the town was 79.93% White, 2.60% Native American, 0.17% Asian, 13.15% from other races, and 4.15% from two or more races. Hispanic or Latino of any race were 34.43% of the population.

There were 262 households out of which 26.0% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 45.4% were married couples living together, 12.2% had a female householder with no husband present, and 38.9% were non-families. 33.6% of all households were made up of individuals and 17.2% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 2.14 and the average family size was 2.73.

In the town the population was spread out with 23.0% under the age of 18, 5.2% from 18 to 24, 25.8% from 25 to 44, 28.5% from 45 to 64, and 17.5% who were 65 years of age or older. The median age was 41 years. For every 100 females there were 99.3 males. For every 100 females age 18 and over, there were 91.0 males.

The median income for a household in the town was \$21,544, and the median income for a family was \$30,221. Males had a median income of \$24,306 versus \$17,917 for females. The per capita income for the town was \$14,139. About 13.7% of families and 18.7% of the population were below the poverty line, including 23.6% of those under age 18 and 16.5% of those age 65 or over.

As evidenced by the census information provided above, Saguache is a very ethnically and culturally diverse, poor, rural community. It has an amazing history and culture that needs to be preserved for future generations and people from other places to experience. It also needs to be revitalized and valued so that businesses and community members can increase their economic status and live a viable and sustainable life.

**Provide names and phone numbers of others supporting this nomination:**

Town of Saguache Board of Trustees  
221-3047  
Saguache Planning Commission  
719-655-0203

Milton Jones, Mayor

719-

Kathy Geddes, Chair

Saguache County Commissioners 655-2231	Wendi Maez, County Administrator	719-
Saguache County Public Library 655-2551	Penny Bruce	719-
SLV Small Business Development Center 719-587-5151	Donna Wehe, Director	
ScSEED 655-2775	Liza Marron, Chair	719-
Mountain Valley School Community Garden 655-2011	Leigh Mills	719-
And Greenhouse		
Saguache Camp & Lodge	Faith O'Reilly	719-655-2264
Colorado Office of Economic Development & 754-2373	Stephanie Steffens	719-
International Trade		

### **Additional Comments:**

In addition, the Historic Preservation Program at Colorado Mountain College would be able to provide students another location for 'hands on' experiences in preservation techniques and be able to provide technical assistance to the Downtown Revitalization effort.

### **How did you hear about the CPI list?**

Katy Chadbourn, CPI Staffperson, contacted Margaret Finnerty at the Saguache Museum, since this region has been under-represented on the list of Colorado's Most Endangered Places. Margaret contacted Linda Joseph, Saguache County Commissioner, and she recognized how wonderfully this effort would fit with activities that are underway to revitalize downtown. In June, Jonas and Katy (from CPI) came to Saguache and made a presentation to members of the Saguache Town Board of Trustees, Saguache Planning Commission, ScSEED, and members of the community (including several 4<sup>th</sup> Street property owners). The Town Board decided to nominate the 4<sup>th</sup> Street Business District at that meeting and subsequently approved that nomination at a Board meeting in July.