

DENVER LIFE

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Colorado PROUD

CELEBRATING OUR
STATE'S SUCCESS



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Colorado PROUD

Celebrating the success of Front Range businesses.

BY JULIE BIELENBERG



Livestock Drive photo by Elena Drazev



Crocs

The Front Range is an international gold mine of businesses. Discover our riches in natural food and beverages, healthier quick-service restaurants, film production and outdoor lifestyle brands. *Denver Life Magazine* explores some of the many companies that make our home a global gem.

IT'S ONLY NATURAL

In Boulder Valley—the Napa Valley of natural food—you will find some of the most diverse organic products in the marketplace. Go to any natural food store around the nation and half the shelves are full of everything Colorado Proud. This label from the Colorado Department of Agriculture says it all; we are proud of our natural lifestyle.

Yes, the farm-to-table movement has swept the country, but we knew about this lifestyle choice long ago. Just look at our repertoire of industry leaders: IZZE sparkling juice, Udi's gluten-

“While other cities host thriving concepts as well, I think the draw to Denver has to do with the entrepreneurial spirit among our residents...There is also a deep sense of community in Denver and support for local businesses.”

-Alon Mor, Garbanzo Founder,
President and CEO

Felsom Custom Skis



Dazbog Coffee



Chipotle Mexican Grill



Image Brew

It Takes a Village

Sure, we've heard of local chambers of commerce and the state's business development office, but there are some other key players that help make our Colorado companies thrive.

Developed in 1999 by the Colorado Department of Agriculture, **Colorado Proud** is a free marketing program designed to help consumers, restaurants and retailers identify and purchase products that have been grown, raised or processed in Colorado. There are more than 1,700 Colorado Proud members. Spot them at farmers' markets, grocery stores, corporate businesses and beyond. coloradoproud.org

Naturally Boulder is a nonprofit organization with a mission to nurture the natural products industry in Boulder. Established in 2005, this initiative promotes natural and organic products and services in the Front Range through networking, recognition events and educational opportunities. naturallyboulderproducts.com

The **Colorado Film and Video Association (CFVA)** works to strengthen Colorado's media production efforts through educational programs, special events, digital media and social networking opportunities. CFVA members include media professionals throughout the state. Even film students and aspiring filmmakers are encouraged to join as a way to expand their professional network. cfva.com



Photo by Randall Eickelens

free baked goods, WhiteWave Foods and their Horizon Organic milk and Silk soymilk brands, Earth Balance products, Boulder Canyon Natural Foods chips and snacks, Celestial Seasonings tea, Justin's nut butter and candy, Lärabar, 34° Crisps and dozens more have paved the road for up-and-comers in the business. Healthier soda and snacks are what we do best. Oogavé natural soda, Rocky Mountain Popcorn Company, Bobo's Oat Bars, MM Local harvest and jarred goods, Snikiddy snacks, Dazbog Coffee, Rudi's Bakery, mix1 natural nutritional shakes, Noosa Yoghurt, KOLAT Superfood Fusions and many more are all becoming national and international icons in their proper food categories.

And don't forget the dairy, cheese, meat and poultry products that are made locally and offered nationally. Some have been here for decades. Leprino Foods, Purina pet food, Colorado's Best Beef Company and Great Harvest Bread Company. Organic producers such as WhiteWave Foods and Colorado Proud members, Justin's, Palisade Peach Company and Berry Patch Farms, are part of our culture and now the upbringing of our youth.

"Coloradoans have always appreciated high quality food and beverage and are known for supporting local brands, making this a great place to start a business." - Leonid Yuffa, Founder, Dazbog Coffee

"Colorado is blooming as one of the most health-conscious states and I wanted to be a part of that. We are setting an example for the rest of the country in terms of health awareness and environmental ethics."
- Jess Weiswasser-Goldstein, M.A. Board Certified Holistic Nutritionist and Founder, KOLAT Superfood Fusions

"Only in Colorado would we be able to find a small, family-run dairy farm where we could make our products on-site with fresh, all-natural milk from happy cows, and work with a family of beekeepers to source local honey for Noosa Yoghurt. Add to that the most conscientious food consumers in the nation, and Colorado is a haven for all-natural food companies like ours." - Koel Thomae, Founder, Noosa Yoghurt



Photo by Cheryl Jacobson



Rudi's Organic Bakery

Noosa Yoghurt



First Place Agritourism photo by Katrin Anderson



Celestial Seasonings



Kolat Superfood Fusion

HURRIED BUT HEALTHY

Colorado owns the market on healthier, quick-service restaurants. We are the nation's premiere location for the movement. And, as the best test market in the country, you better tempt our taste buds because we are becoming more discerning every day.

Just look at our bounty of corporations that call the Front Range home: Larkburger, Quizno's, Chipotle, Noodles & Company, Red Robin, Garbanzo, Boston Market, Einstein Bros. Bagels, Good Times, Smashburger, Qdoba and Mad Greens, among many others.

"While living in Edwards, I worked my way up to become the General Manager of Larkspur Restaurant. The 'Larkburger' was the most popular item on the menu, and Chef Thomas Salamunovich, Nancy Sweeney and I spun off to create what is now Larkburger. The first location was in our backyard of Edwards, and we're continuing to grow in Colorado where residents have really embraced our better burger concept and eco-friendly mantra: Keeping It Natural. - Adam Baker, President, Larkburger

"We started here because it was home for the founder, Steve Ellis. He was a Boulder guy and wanted to come home after cooking school in New York and work in San Francisco. Today, we've got 1,350 restaurants across the nation and a handful in Europe and Canada."

- Chris Arnold, Communications Director, Chipotle Mexican Grill



Sweet Tooth

Coloradoans certainly aren't exempt from a sweet tooth! Hammond's Candies has been around for generations. Now look out for JJ's Sweets, the originators of coconut milk caramels known as Cocomels, and Sushumna Chocolat, the makers of artisanal chocolates inspired by chakras; both will serve up a healthier sweetness nationwide in 2013.

"While other cities host thriving concepts as well, I think the draw to Denver has to do with the entrepreneurial spirit among our residents and their strong interest in food. There is also a deep sense of community in Denver and support for local businesses."

- Alon Mor, Garbanzo Founder, President and CEO

MADE FOR TV

While the natural food and soda industry feeds you healthfully, the video production here feeds you visually with awesome outdoor, design, cooking and lifestyle programming. We supply HGTV, Food Network, PBS, TLC, DIY Network and so many more with great television, specials and films. Most are shot nationally and abroad, and edited right here where people want to live.

The reason for this industry boom could be answered by following a toddler. People go where they want to play. It helps that these video production teams are extremely talented and educated. Big names such as Citizen Pictures, High Noon Entertainment and newer or more boutique companies such as Image Brew, Futuristic Films, Definite Productions, Postmodern Company and JSP Broadcast are based in the Denver and Boulder area.

"When Great Divide Pictures was formed in 1996, the local film community was not nearly as prevalent as today. As filmmakers, we prefer to live in Colorado. Whether we're creating films for Crater Lake National Park in Oregon or Shiloh National Military Park in Tennessee, it's nice to know we can come home to the beauty and tranquility of Colorado."

- Holly Johnson, Associate Producer, Great Divide Pictures

"Companies like us thrive on the energy of being a small start-up in a community surrounded by so many others like ourselves. We're thriving here and it's because of the talented people who come here for the balanced lifestyle. They see what we're trying to do; something edgy, unique, and meaningful in our work. We get people applying every week."

- Ben Jones, Owner, Image Brew



The Support Staff

The right business environment is key. Companies like Denver's The Desk are promoting the lifestyle/work balance. "Denver is becoming a magnet for the creative class who work best when they are inspired as opposed to traditional office hours. The Desk offers a place where people can get work done, whether they are trying to get away from the distractions at home or the office," says Kristian Barowsky, Owner, The Desk.

"Even as we have expanded into China and Europe we want to live and work amongst clients that share our passion for the outdoors. Our clients represent the true core consumer; Oakley, The North Face, Callaway and Aspen/Snowmass among others, have a pure focus on the authentic needs of their most passionate athletes. Here in Denver, that messaging is supported by a great local ecosystem of technology, creative, production, print and video service vendors that enable our solutions." - Scott Mellin, CEO, Factory Design Labs.

Photo courtesy of The Desk

COLORADO COOL

If we eat, play and even film our lifestyles, then we need to look good doing it. Just walk down the street in any urban center in the Front Range and check out the sleek outdoor gear worn for everyday attire. We're the thinnest state and we know how to show it well in lifestyle brands.

Whether its shoes, skies, yoga pants or any other outdoor accessory, we make it locally. Some of our favorites for athletic women include Skirt Sports, ISIS and Body Bark. Brands such as Crocs, GSI Outdoors, Sierra Designs, Icelantic Skis, GoLite, Be Present Yoga and Neve Designs are all headquartered on the Front Range. And don't forget backpacks, yoga bags, tote bags and gear bags. Gaiam, Sherpani, Osprey Packs, Topo Designs, OG Sack and others find the metro Denver market prime real estate to set up shop.

With Coloradans' skin exposed to the elements, it's no wonder Whole Foods needs three aisles for their stock of natural body products. The Denver and Boulder area is exploding with well-made beauty and skincare brands including MyChelle Dermaceuticals, Rocky



Sports Shares



Skirt Sports

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- Ben Jones, Owner, Image Brew

Mountain Sunscreen, Osmotics Cosmeceuticals, Osima Organics, Pangea Organics, Hey Honey, Sciote Skin, Sanitas Skincare and fragrances such as eMperfumes. These only touch on the vast amount of products, especially for dry, irritated and over-sunned skin.

and distribute our product all over the country, while being able to test our products' performance first-hand on the slopes within an hour from the city.”

- Ryan Prentice, Director of Sales and Marketing, Folsom Custom Skis

BRONCOS, ROCKIES, NUGGETS AND MORE

Whether it's our sporting goods or sports teams, we love athletics in Denver. We've got some nice championships and series finals to be proud of. From the gear at Sports Authority to the luxury suites at sporting events, many companies celebrate our passion.

“This is an extremely educated, entrepreneurial, dedicated and hard-working community. We just celebrated our 10th birthday and have overcome some obstacles along the way. The community has always been receptive and supportive, especially to local businesses like ours.”

- Katie Gvazdinkas, Director, Global Talent Management Initiatives, Crocs

“We started Sports Shares in Denver because it is one of the best overall sports towns in the country. We knew that the fans are passionate and loyal to the local franchises in both good times and bad. Moreover, it is a progressive place where people aren't afraid to challenge the status quo.” - Todd Lindenbaum,

President, Sports Shares, a luxury suite membership provider

“Denver is a great place to launch and grow a ski business. We can efficiently manufacture

“As a brand that is focused on outdoor products rooted in a classic mountain style, Colorado is the perfect environment. We feel really lucky to be in a place where it's so easy to get away from town and be outdoors just about every day.”

- Jedd Rose, Owner, Topo Designs.