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Review of "Colorado's Government: Structure, Politics, Administration and Policy" by Robert Stuart Lorch

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Colorado's Government: Structure, Politics, Administration and Policy. Robert Stuart Lorch. Niwot, CO: University Press of Colorado, Fifth Edition, 1951. vii + 328 pp. Bibliographical references and index. \$34.95 cloth (ISBN 0-87081-245-9).

For some decades a number of sponsoring agencies have sought to provide a standardized work on each state's government and politics; thus far this goal has proven to be unattainable. In the meantime, studies such as this one have appeared in nearly all the states; this serves to inform interested readers about a particular state's politics, and Lorch's contribution has been a handsome one over these past years.

Lorch recounts the quite old—how Colorado was settled, got its name, and achieved statehood—and the very new—adoption of the state's first presidential preference primary for the 1992 election cycle, and the approval of two initiated constitutional amendments, one limiting the terms of state (and purportedly federal) legislators, the other imposing restraints on the legislature's bill consideration process (e.g., public hearing for every bill). In between these historical extremes, the reader is treated to a fast-moving,

often breezy, occasionally irreverent, but always informative commentary on the major political institutions and processes in Colorado state (and local) government. The author is obviously a close and careful follower of the political scene in Colorado. We learn, for instance that some 60-65% of the state's expenditures go to education; that a Joint Budget Committee in the legislature is the decisive actor in the process; and that there is a system of courts that deal exclusively with water rights disputes.

I was particularly interested in the thorough treatment given to Colorado's unusual (perhaps unprecedented) party nominating system. State law entrusts a major voice to the party leaders during the very crucial initiatory stage of the candidate recruitment process. This means prospective nominees need to win significant support among party activists if they are to do well; it also reduces the role of the primary voters who typically affirm the leaders' choices rather than make them themselves.

Another strength of the book is the broad consideration given to local governmental activity. American government has evolved into an intricate overlapping of relationships between and among the state, local, and federal levels. Exclusive consideration of the state role would leave the reader only partially informed, so Lorch skillfully injects large chunks of programmatic information on Colorado's city, county, and school governance. To a lesser extent he does the same with federal-state interactions.

Additionally, the author includes an annotated bibliography for those wishing to probe further into Colorado's politics. All in all, Lorch provides us with a balanced treatment of a complex subject. It is well that his efforts come to us in this excellent, up-to-date source. **Robert Sittig**, *Department of Political Science, University of Nebraska-Lincoln*.