

The story of the West is one of innovation, entrepreneurship, problem-solving, and love of the land. It is also one that includes conflict, over-use of resources, and unequal access to opportunity. The intention of the NWC is to leverage the site's rich history, while telling a new story of what the American West is today, and what our region means to its own people, as well as our increasingly connected global community.

The National Western Stock Show is a beloved Denver institution, and its reinvention at the National Western Center will allow the vibrant January event to thrive and grow. Simultaneously, the National Western Center is envisioned as a place where year-round activity ensures this area becomes an asset to surrounding neighborhoods and the entire Denver metro, improving connections, health, and recreation opportunities, while fostering economic development in a important part of the City.

A typical day at the new National Western Center might include a local family visiting the urban farm after riding along a healthy South Platte River. The farm might be overlooked by a CSU-Coors Western Art artist in residence, who is splitting her time between teaching students of all ages her craft and creating new works of Western art, in both new and traditional media. Nearby, a class might be using an online library and courses to advance their careers in the food industry.

It might also include CSU or collaborative researchers working in labs, test fields, and barns, partnering with agricultural business to seed new innovation that will help improve human and animal health, while helping to feed an increasing global population. CSU veterinarians and vet students might be treating an injured competition horse using state-of-the-art equipment and techniques, while a group of middle-school students looks on and begins to understand new educational and career paths in science, technology, and health they may not have yet considered for themselves. These students might also stop at the solar panels, wind turbines, and innovative stormwater management areas to learn about the site's commitment to regeneration.

Across the Colorado Commons plaza, Denver residents might mix with researchers, professionals, students, rodeo competitors, performers, and trade show exhibitors over lunch in the restored 1909 Stadium Arena Market, where they can also buy groceries to take home via commuter rail. Tourists may be roaming the market, looking for Western artisan products, both traditional and new, some of which might have been born in the National Western Center's business incubation programs.

The evening at the National Western Center might include a concert in The Yards, where earlier in the day, a outdoor basketball tournament was held, hosting youth from around Colorado and the West. Visitors might be enjoying dinner at a farm-to-table restaurant, and then a stroll along the River, past the Water Resources Center, where earlier in the day, a bus-load of elementary school students learned how to measure water quality in a lab, after exploring the South Platte with an environmental education program. A NWC community meeting might be ongoing in the CSU/Partner Center, where new ideas for

programs that meet community needs are being discussed by neighborhood residents and other community stakeholders.

At any time, people from around the world might visit the NWC's website to learn about the best-in-class research, partnerships, and industry practices fostered during conferences, professional meetings, and lectures hosted here, a site considered the "go-to" for innovation around food systems and related issues.

Through imagining a "day in the life" at the National Western Center, we can begin to see how this new chapter in the site's history puts the next generation of its traditional activities in a dramatically new context. It also highlights the values and principles of the National Western Center partners—the National Western Stock Show, Colorado State University, the Denver Museum of Nature & Science, History Colorado, and the City and County of Denver—and how they might be applied to the physical spaces and programs of the NWC.

As the partners have considered the driving forces that should shape the NWC, both physically and programmatically for the next 100 years, an awareness of the hopes and challenges of younger generations has been critical. Studies of younger populations indicate they are very much aware of and concerned with global challenges. Theirs is the generation that will have to feed nine billion people, solve the issue of fresh water shortages and respond to climate change. The interface of food, water, energy and the environment is incredibly important to them – even as many traditional labels such as "agriculture" and "science" fail to resonate with them.

At the interface of all of these issues lies a rare and precious opportunity for all of us around the National Western Center. The NWC partners imagine a NWC dedicated to addressing the challenges of food, water, energy and the environment, representing partnerships between the public and private sectors, and blurring the line between entertainment, education and industry. We see collaborative research and development that will deliver outcomes that can be broadly applied and scaled to address challenges globally. We envision the NWC helping to apply best practices for immediate benefit to our community and society, and simultaneously creating an incredibly exciting educational center impacting the entire K-12 population along the Front Range of Colorado and beyond. The NWC Partners, all of whom have a significant educational mission, see the NWC as an opportunity for youth to be introduced to 21st century career paths and to see new possibilities, pathways, and roles for themselves in creating global solutions.

At the same time, the NWC is about having fun. With its year-round activities, the NWC will attract both out-of-town tourists, as well as providing daily amenities and attractions to the Front Range. International horse shows, junior livestock events, fairs, concerts, trade shows and conferences will ensure that there is always something to do and see at the NWC.

The most diverse and productive places on the planet are frequently at the edges of two different areas, whether they be biological or cultural mixing grounds. The NWC's combination of education and entertainment, research and commerce, public and private organizations, history and innovation, science and art, and young and old demonstrate the best thinking about how successful places serve and connect diverse audiences to foster creativity. The NWC is poised to be a global example of how this thoughtful design and programming can bring together natives and transplants, cowboys and computer programmers, CEO's and kayakers to have tremendous impact and to showcase the pioneering spirit and promise of the West.