



(U) SID Around the World: Peak Conditions in Denver

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(U//FOUO) After spending nearly two decades at NSAW, I can truly say that having an assignment at Field Station Denver has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my career. The position I accepted was working in the Mission Operations Group (MOG) as a Mission Planner. On a daily basis I influence the scheduling, live execution, tasking and collection for a specific geographic area. It has required that I expand my professional horizons, and has given me the chance to regularly team with the operators and collection managers who conduct the live mission as well as interact with the SID organizations, the RSOCs and Intelligence Community customers.

(U) While I have been very satisfied with the job here in Denver, I have been at least as pleased with the living conditions in the area. Denver's wonderful climate is a big contributor. Denver gets over 300 days of sunshine a year, which is more than any other U.S. city except one. Thanks to the many days of sunshine and extremely low humidity, those living in Colorado love taking advantage of outdoor sporting activities. There are hundreds and hundreds of miles of bicycle trails and walking paths all over the metropolitan area. My family was pleasantly surprised to find a path only about 100 yards from our house, which actually connects with trails and paths that can take one to Denver International Airport, approximately 35 miles away. Some of these trails can also take one into the city as well as further into the suburbs. The best part is that these trails are accessible nearly year round. Having access to many state parks as well as national parks for hiking and mountain climbing is another benefit to being in this area.

(U) It would be an injustice to talk about a tour in Denver without mentioning the mountains and opportunities to enjoy the winter activities. One can drive to many of the ski resorts within one or two hours or take the weekend ski train from downtown Denver. The resorts provide many opportunities to ski, snowboard, snowshoe, tube, ice skate and more. In fact for parents with children in elementary school, field trips to take skiing or snowboarding lessons are regularly offered when classes are not in session. (Year-round schools are very popular here.) Finally I should point out that Denver really does not get the snowfall that many believe. Even though it frequently snows, it usually melts within a day. The biggest snows come to the mountains, and Denver is on the western edge of the Great Plains. The mammoth snowfall (3-4 ft) we saw in 2003 was highly unusual and was apparently the biggest since about 1913.

(U) The year round schools in the Denver area that I mentioned earlier are actually only for elementary school students. There are at least two excellent possibilities in the area, the Cherry Creek Public Schools and Douglas County Public Schools. In addition to traditional schools, both districts also offer options in charter



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schools, which often have a particular specialty. In addition to good schools, finding that Denver had a higher locality pay than the Baltimore-Washington area was a pleasant surprise. While housing costs are higher in the Denver area than in Maryland, we were pleased with the neighborhoods, communities, and selection of housing available within a reasonable distance of the site at Buckley Air Force Base.

(U) Well, it should be obvious by now that I can go on and on about my experiences here. However I must come to a close. In sum I will say, take a chance and try it out. A field tour may be more than what you expected. The Denver field experience for my family and me has truly exceeded our expectations.

(U//FOUO) *If you are thinking of applying for a field position, see the [Extended Enterprise Vacancy Announcements](#).*

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