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# News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **High Plains Chautauqua hosts community conversation**

High Plains Chautauqua will host a special conversation Friday, August 9. The session titled *A Strong Economy and a Healthy Environment – Can We Have Both?* will be a community conversation about resource development and the environment.

The purpose of the event is to encourage informed, civil discussion of what continues to be a polarizing issue about how best to use and preserve our nation's natural resources. High Plains Chautauqua Director Gina Huett explained, "Chautauqua was founded in the 19<sup>th</sup> century on the ideals of educational enrichment and self-improvement. That experience included spirited discussion of issues of the day. We invite the community to join us to learn and share opinions about this current and relevant topic."

The conversation will be moderated by Tom Cech, co-director of the One World One Water Center at Metropolitan State University of Denver. Cech was formerly Executive Director of the Central Colorado Water Conservancy District in Greeley. He has taught water resources courses at the University of Northern Colorado and Colorado State University and has written numerous publications about water resources.

To begin the conversation, scholars Kevin Radaker, who is portraying Henry David Thoreau, and Doug A. Mishler, who is portraying Theodore Roosevelt, will present the views of their characters on resource development and the environment. Thoreau, author of *Walden* and *Civil Disobedience*, held strong convictions about preserving the environment when he wrote in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Roosevelt was a staunch conservationist and a proponent of American empire-building. In his speaking and writing, Roosevelt championed both. As President of the United States from 1901-1909, Roosevelt pursued policies pertaining to both.

"Many people don't realize that the current public argument about preserving the environment and responsible resource development has deep roots in our nation's history," said Ron Edgerton, High Plains Chautauqua program committee member and professor emeritus of history at the University of Northern Colorado. "As a nation, we have long debated the balance between creating a healthy economy and protecting our natural resources," he noted.

The conversation is scheduled for 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. at the Atlas Theater, 709 16<sup>th</sup> Street in Greeley. Parking is available on the south side of The Town Church at 716 16h Street.

Prior to the community conversation, the public is invited to participate in coffee and conversation with Chautauquans who performed the previous evening. This session will also meet at the Atlas Theater from 8:00 – 9:15 a.m.

High Plains Chautauqua is a four-day festival which offers a unique blend of live theater and history under the big tent at Aims Community College. This year's program "Encore! Celebrating 20 Years of Living History" runs August 5-8. Audiences meet and engage in conversation with personalities from the past, portrayed by professional scholars. In addition to Thoreau and Roosevelt, the program will feature John James Audubon, Harriet Tubman, Thomas Jefferson, Marie Curie, Eleanor Roosevelt and Mark Twain.

All programs presented by High Plains Chautauqua are free and open to the public. For more information, go to <http://www.highplainschautauqua.org> or call Visit Greeley at 970-352-3567.

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