



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DENVER ISSUES APOLOGY FOR PAST ANTI-CHINESE RACIAL VIOLENCE AND DISCRIMINATION

Asian American and Pacific Island (AAPI) leaders applaud the apology as a first step towards recognizing reconciliation and honoring the community's contributions

DENVER – The City and County of Denver today formally apologizes for its role in the anti-Chinese riot that took place on October 31, 1880, and for racial violence and discrimination that has occurred since then.

The anti-Chinese riot resulted in the near destruction of Denver's Chinatown. Dozens of Chinese residents were severely injured, and a 28-year-old Chinese man, Look Young, was lynched.

In passing the resolution, the city resolves to work with community organizations, such as Colorado Asian Pacific United (CAPU) and the University of Colorado Denver to educate residents about the historical contributions of the AAPI community to the Denver area.

Denver is the first city outside of California and the fifth in the country to issue such an apology. The cities in California include Antioch, San Jose, Los Angeles, and San Francisco.

“We applaud the mayor and the city for taking this historic step in issuing the apology,” said CAPU Chair Joanne Liu. “While the city cannot erase past injustices against the AAPI community, an acknowledgement of the wrongs committed is a necessary step towards racial reconciliation and a way to honor their contributions to the development of Denver and Colorado.”

CAPU, which initiated the request for the apology resolution, believes it will also serve to educate those who are unaware of this shameful chapter in Colorado's history and bring some closure to the families whose loved ones suffered racial violence and abuse.

“The tragedy of the 1880 Chinatown riot demonstrates what can happen when hate and prejudice are allowed the fester,” Denver Mayor Michael B. Hancock said. “When that history is not properly acknowledged, and wrongs remain unreconciled, it adds to a trauma that becomes generational. With this apology, we acknowledge that painful history and pledge our ongoing partnership to ensure that history is never forgotten and never again repeated.”

The announcement of the apology was made by Mayor Hancock at CU Denver’s Terrace Room in the Lawrence Street Center. CU Denver, which is hosting the apology event, is an emerging Asian American Native American Pacific Islander serving institution. In addition to AAPI representatives and community members, others in attendance included CU Denver’s Chancellor Michelle Marks and Vice Chancellor of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Antonio Farias. In addition to Joanne Liu, the CAPU Board members present at the event included Joie Ha, Shauna Medeiros-Tuilaepa, Kai Vong, Ben Niamthet, Dr. William Wei, and Dr. Soon Beng Yeap.

About CAPU

Colorado Asian Pacific United (CAPU) is a coalition of Asian American and Pacific Islander leaders, creatives, and allies in Denver. We strive to enhance and enrich the Asian American and Pacific Islander experiences in Colorado, and is committed to advancing racial diversity, solidarity, and equity through collaboration, celebration, and education.

About the University of Colorado Denver

The University of Colorado Denver is the state’s premier public urban research university and equity-serving institution. Globally connected and locally invested, CU Denver partners with future-focused learners and communities to design accessible, relevant, transformative educational experiences for every stage of life and career. Across eight schools and colleges in the heart of downtown Denver, our leading faculty inspires and works alongside students to solve complex challenges through boundary-breaking innovation and impactful research and creative work. As part of the state’s largest university system, CU Denver is a major contributor to the Colorado economy, with 2,000 employees and annual economic impact of \$800 million. For more information, visit www.ucdenver.edu.

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