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Article published Oct 27, 2006

## Ritter's vision for Colorado makes sense

Bill Ritter should be the next governor of Colorado.

Ritter, a Democrat, was able to communicate his vision for the future of Colorado effectively.

His opponent, Republican Bob Beauprez, offered a thoughtful, though less detailed, approach in defining his leadership.

In addressing the state's transportation-funding shortfall, Ritter would put the funding stream for transportation on the table in his first 90 days of office to study all options. Nor does the term transportation signify only highways for him, Ritter said. Instead, it includes freight and passenger/commuter rail, as well.

He also sees severance taxes for the booming oil and gas industry on the Western Slope as a potential revenue source to address development impacts felt through the state.

In a refreshing acknowledgement that a new direction is needed when it comes to resource allocation, Ritter is an advocate of early childhood education programs. He told the editorial board that getting children ready to learn is one of the biggest goals for the state's economic well being.

Beauprez, too, supports early childhood education, but primarily with an aggressive initiative to work with parents. He suggests faith-based groups could increase participation in school-readiness programs.

On immigration, Beauprez suggests that Western states develop a coalition to address immigration issues. Yet, some of his solutions seem more appropriate for his role as a congressman.

Ritter says that immigration is primarily a federal issue, and we agree. States are limited in their ability to change national immigration policy, as Colorado found out in the last General Assembly.

Both major party candidates, each of whom grew up on farms, have done a good job in recognizing the diverse demographics of the state, including the Western Slope.

Ritter also was adept at connecting higher education to technology to economic development for the state, with an eye toward supporting small businesses.

Energy independence is clearly on the minds of both candidates. Beauprez wants to build wind power transmission lines and increase ethanol production; he would use incentives to encourage transition to ethanol. Ritter also seeks to integrate alternative energy into the state's energy policy via wind, biodiesel and solar, and is a supporter of the state participating in a climate change program.

Their approach toward the state's budget system provided perhaps the biggest contrast between the candidates. Ritter supported Referendum C, which provided a temporary, yet effective, funding solution for cash-strapped Colorado. Referendum C also restored some funding for higher education. He would consider a constitutional convention to study the state's conflicting tax policies. Beauprez opposed Referendum C, but he has yet to articulate an economic plan that would revive the state's economic health.

Vote for Bill Ritter for governor.

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