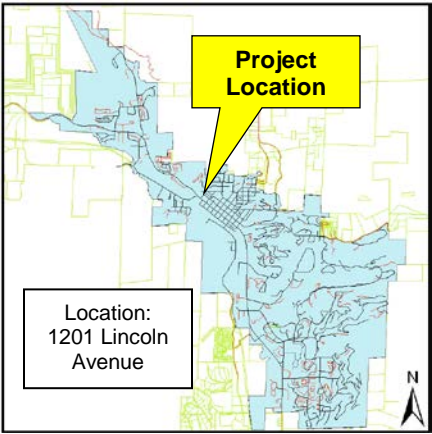


DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STAFF REPORT

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM 4:	
Project Name:	Butterfly Building- 1201 Lincoln Avenue
Prepared By:	Jake Rosenberg, Planner (Ext 214)
Through:	Tyler Gibbs, AIA, Director of Planning & Community Development (Ext. 224)
Historic Preservation Commission (HPC):	September 15, 2016
Planning Commission (PC):	NA
City Council (CC):	NA
Zoning:	Open Space and Recreation (OR)
Applicant:	City of Steamboat Springs
Request:	City of Steamboat Springs Historic Register Application



Staff Report - Table of Contents		
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I. CITY OF STEAMBOAT SPRINGS HISTORIC REGISTER- STAFF ANALYSIS SUMMARY

Staff finds that the Butterfly Building (a.k.a. the Yampa Valley Land Trust Building) located at 1201 Lincoln Avenue is eligible to the City's Historic Register as a Historic Resource. The resource is significant under Criterion 2 as a local example of Usonian architecture in Steamboat Springs by a locally influential architect. Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission approve listing of the Butterfly Building as a Historic Resource.

1201 Lincoln Avenue



II. BACKGROUND

The City of Steamboat Springs Historic Register was created in 2009. The Historic Preservation Policy Review Committee reviewed historic preservation policies in 2007 and 2008 and recommended the creation of the City's historic register. An application for inclusion on the Historic Register as a Historic Resource has been submitted for the resource located at 1201 Lincoln Avenue. Historic Preservation Staff for the City of Steamboat Springs prepared the nomination for the property owner.

III. PRINCIPAL DISCUSSION ITEMS

Principal Discussion items should include:

Qualification for inclusion on the City of Steamboat Springs Historic Register.

Is the resource significant under Criterion 2 in the area of Architectural Importance?

IV. NOMINATION DESCRIPTION

See attached nomination.

V. HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

The Historic Preservation Commission will review the nomination for the Butterfly Building located at 1201 Lincoln Avenue to the City of Steamboat Springs Historic Register on September 15, 2016.

VI. PROJECT ANALYSIS

The following section provides staff analysis of the application as it relates to nomination criteria as outlined in Ordinance 2230. It is intended to highlight those areas that may be of interest or concern to HPC, staff, or the public. For a comprehensive list of designation criteria, standards and requirements applicable to this proposal please refer to Ordinance 2230 or contact the staff planner.

A) KEY ISSUES

Ordinance 2230, Sec. 26-84(f)

- 1) *Staff Analysis:* **Eligible;** the attached historic register nomination suggests that the Butterfly Building at 1201 Lincoln Avenue qualifies for listing on the City of Steamboat Springs Historic Register as an Historic Resource. The resource is nominated under Criterion 2 in the area of Architectural Importance as significant to the community of Steamboat Springs. The resource is representative of Usonian architecture by a locally influential architect.

VII. STAFF FINDING

Recommended Resolution

The City of Steamboat Springs's Historic Preservation Commission hereby resolves that the Butterfly Building located at 1201 Lincoln Avenue, which is more particularly described as SW corner of Lincoln and 12th, Original Addition to Steamboat Springs, is eligible for listing on the Steamboat Springs Register of Historic Places as an Historic Resource under Criterion 2 in the area of Architectural Importance as representative of Usonian architecture by a locally influential architect and approves inclusion of the Butterfly Building in the Steamboat Springs Register of Historic Places.

VIII. ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Historic Resource Application

**STEAMBOAT SPRINGS HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
APPLICATION FOR HISTORIC RESOURCE DESIGNATION**

Property Identification

1. Address of Resource: 1201 Lincoln Avenue, Steamboat Springs, CO 80487

2. Legal Description of Property: "Along Yampa River Betw. Howelsen and Town." SW corner of Lincoln and 12th, Original Addition of Steamboat Springs

P.M.: 6th Township: 6N Range: 84W
NE ¼ of SE¼ of SW ¼ of SW ¼ of Section 8

3. Historic Name: Chamber of Commerce Building
Current Name: Yampa Valley Land Trust Building

4. Historic Use: Chamber of Commerce offices
Present Use: Yampa Valley Land Trust offices

Historical Data Summary

5. Year of Construction: 1960
Source of Information: "Index to Projects, Alphabetical, Numerical, and Project Type." Eugene Sternberg, Architectural Records, WH1003, Western History Collection, The Denver Public Library.

6. Architect or Builder: Eugene D. Sternberg
Source of Information: "Index to Projects, Alphabetical, Numerical, and Project Type." Eugene Sternberg, Architectural Records, WH1003, Western History Collection, The Denver Public Library.

7. Original Owner: Steamboat Springs Chamber of Commerce
Source of Information: "Index to Projects, Alphabetical, Numerical, and Project Type." Eugene Sternberg, Architectural Records, WH1003, Western History Collection, The Denver Public Library.

Photographs

8. Attach at least two (2) 5x7 or larger photographs (black and white or color) showing the views of the property from the public right-of-way(s) and any important features or details. Polaroid photographs are not adequate. If available, attach copies of historic photographs of the structure.

See attached.

9. Provide a sketch map of the property that includes the boundary of the property, a basic footprint of the resource, and additional relevant features (such as outbuildings, significant landscape features, etc.)



Statement of Significance

10. Explain how the resource meets at least one criterion in one or more of the following categories. Please cite specific criteria in the summary.

Historic Resource Designation Criteria

- 1. History.** To have historic importance, the resource shall be at least 50 years old and:
The building, site, structure or object has character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, State or Nation; is the site of an historic event with an effect upon society; is identified with a person or group of persons who had some influence on society; or, exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historic heritage of the community.
- 2. Architecture.** To have architectural importance, the resource shall be at least 50 years old and:
The building, site, structure or object portrays the environment of a group of people in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style; embodies those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural-type specimen; is the work of an architect or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of the City or contains elements of architectural design, detail, materials and craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation.

This distinctive building is architecturally significant because it was designed by Eugene D. Sternberg, and because it embraces at least some elements of the Frank Lloyd Wright inspired Usonian style of architecture. The building is integrated with the surrounding landscape of Lincoln Park in that it is oriented toward Soda Creek (rather than Lincoln Avenue), and it

includes the use of natural materials which help blend the building with its site. Particularly notable are two elm trees which extend through the porch floor and roof, and are incorporated into the building's overall design. The building also features dominant horizontal lines, integrated windows, and a nearly flat inverted-pitched roof with widely-overhanging eaves. This is probably a relatively rare example of a non-residential Usonian style building. This property is included National Register of Historic Places, under Criterion C, based on its architectural significance. The building is also included on the State Register of Historic Properties.

3. **Geography.** To have geographical importance, the resource shall be at least 50 years old and: The building, site, structure or object, because of being part of or related to a square, park or other distinctive area, should be developed or preserved according to a plan based on an historic, cultural or architectural motif; or, due to its unique location or singular physical characteristics, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or City.

Include the history of the resource and its associations with important individuals, groups, events, or historical trends.

- a. Provide details about the circumstances of construction including the date of construction, architect, builder, and owner for the original structure and any significant additions.

The architect, Eugene D. Sternberg, was born in Czechoslovakia on January 15, 1915 and earned a degree in architectural engineering in Prague. While pursuing graduate work in architecture at Cambridge University in England, World War II began. He remained in London during the war, teaching part time at Cambridge. He then joined the firm of Sir Abercrombie, where he was involved in rebuilding many of the homes and buildings destroyed by German bombing. While in England, he met and married his wife, Barbara. In 1945, the couple immigrated to the United States, where Sternberg had accepted an offer to teach at Cornell University. Shortly after, he became the first faculty member at the University of Denver's new School of Architecture. In 1949, Sternberg became associated with developer Edward Hawkins in the creation of the Arapahoe Acres development in Englewood (National Register listed). Steinberg was attracted to the project because of his interest in the creation of "socially conscious modern housing, combining quality architectural design and economical construction." He is best known for the many civic, educational and commercial buildings he designed. His list of accomplishments includes Arapahoe Community College in Englewood; Heritage High School, the Bemis Public Library, and the Arapahoe County Courthouse Building and Law Center in Littleton; and the major medical building at Denver General Hospital. Altogether, Sternberg is responsible for over 400 buildings in Colorado, Wyoming and Nebraska.¹

At the end of 1957, the Steamboat Springs Town Board minutes detail the hiring of Eugene Sternberg to serve as planning consultant and architect to the newly formed Planning Commission. By early 1958, Sternberg began examining the town's fringe areas to determine the suitability of subdivisions and a junior college. Sternberg guided the efforts of the Beautification Project and worked directly with the Kiwanis and Lion's Clubs on park projects. In 1959, the Town instructed Sternberg to develop plans for a permanent home for the Chamber of Commerce.

Established in 1907 as the Commercial Club of Steamboat Springs, with an organizational mission to support the businesses of Steamboat Springs and other nearby communities in the Yampa Valley, the group fostered economic vitality within the region. In 1941, the Commercial Club's name was changed to the Chamber of Commerce of Steamboat Springs. Over time, the

Chamber organization played an important role as the local economy evolved from one based primarily on agriculture to one based on tourism and in particular, skiing. As a result, the Chamber of Commerce is now known as the Steamboat Springs Area Chamber Resort Association.²

The Chamber of Commerce existed at a number of locations in the years prior to 1960. In 1956, it was located at 507 Lincoln Avenue, but by 1959, it had moved to 703 Lincoln Avenue (the no longer extant Harbor Hotel), and then 926 Lincoln Avenue where it existed for a short time before moving into its new Sternberg-designed building in 1960. ³ The Chamber operated at the 1201 Lincoln Avenue location until 1984.

During the late 1950s and early 1960s, Eugene Sternberg served as architect and planning consultant to the Town of Steamboat Springs. Projects in Steamboat Springs documented to have Sternberg direction at the time include the Methodist Church on Oak Street, the 1956 Yampa Valley Electric Association, the 1958 Steamboat Apartments, the Soda Creek Elementary addition (demolished 2007), and the never executed Bristol Hotel and Howelsen Hill redesigns.

In 1959, the Town directed Sternberg to develop plans for a permanent home for the Chamber of Commerce. An announcement for the new building appeared in the March 26, 1959, *Steamboat Pilot*:

At the annual Chamber of Commerce meeting and banquet March 19, it was disclosed that a new home for the Chamber will be built in the front part of the city park. By using volunteer labor and obtaining material at cost, George Fick, chairman of the planning commission, said the new building could be constructed for \$1,500. The building would include a work room, office, basement and storage room.

A subsequent article described the building and notably the setting with the creek flowing "past the site where settlers once built the town's first homes and where their children played under the willows and cottonwoods. Two of the latter trees figure prominently in Architect Eugene Sternberg's plans."

Newspaper coverage of the groundbreaking for the new building on June 11, 1959, detailed the expenses and volunteer effort. The project budget was \$2,500.00, low even for Sternberg standards (Sternberg strived for affordable, cost-effective construction on his projects). Completed within one year, the grand opening celebration for the Usonian inspired Chamber of Commerce Building occurred on June 18, 1960.

- b. Describe specific historical associations including why this structure has direct association with the individual, group, event, or historical trend.

Typically associated with modern residential architecture of the 1940s through the 1960s, Usonia as a concept actually goes back to the turn of the twentieth century. Conceived by Frank Lloyd Wright around 1900, the Usonia design philosophy evolved over many years, coming to fruition in the 1930s. As his commissions for large, grand houses dropped off with the onset of the Great Depression, Wright looked for a way to address the need for .affordable middle-class housing while employing a simple design. The result was an architecture he termed "Usonian," which focused on the residents of a culturally reformed United States of North America. The Usonian houses were smaller than his sprawling Prairie style residences, contained little ornamentation

and lacked basements or attics. These houses were arranged in zones, typically with three areas: living space, small bedrooms, and a kitchen-dining area. Built-in components and furniture allowed homeowners to appreciate the simpler, integrated space Wright intended.

Usonia constitutes more than just an idea for designing smaller houses and other buildings. It encompassed planning, nature and simple design on a human scale. Wright's concept for Usonia came about due to his increasing focus on community, planning, and serving human needs. He advocated decentralized communities with commercial, residential, educational, industrial, cultural and recreational facilities. While his early concepts of these communities remained just that, many of the components were applied in a handful of places across the country, though not on the scale that he originally envisioned. As Wright did with the Prairie style of his earlier fame, he also incorporated the smaller Usonian house with the site. Wright integrated the house with the landscape and nature in an attempt to get away from box-like structures. Walls extended beyond the interior to the outside, intermingling the two. Large windows brought the outside in. Natural materials blended the building with the site and warm colors on the interior further contributed to the feeling of bringing the outdoors inside. Usonian houses were quite unlike the boxy, stark International Style houses that appeared to be dropped onto, rather than a part of, their location. Also called Wrightian, numerous architects across the country adopted and adapted the Usonian style. General characteristics of associated buildings include: dominant horizontal lines; flat roofs with large overhangs; integrated windows; organic siting (a private side and an open side, usually facing south); concrete slab floors with integral gravity heating; built-in components; and inside-outside walls.⁴ The Chamber of Commerce Building exhibits many of these elements.

Located within a park with the nearby flowing Soda Creek, the Chamber of Commerce Building is integrated into the landscape. The two cottonwood trees figure prominently in the design, and while the building was constructed around the existing landscape feature, the building's design is respectful of the trees and does not attempt to become the dominant feature. The two components, natural and man-made, complement and serve each other. The building's form is an organic and integrated whole. Dominant horizontal lines, including the band of windows and over-hanging eave, further serve to incorporate the building into the site. Natural materials and warm colors and textures bring together and complete the entire design.

Sternberg's simple design eschews traditional detail, yet results in a building integrated with the landscape. At the same time, the Chamber of Commerce Building's design presents a human scale. The smaller building fits the site, is incorporated into the setting through form and materials, and focuses on the community. The building is uniquely Steamboat Springs and defines the local architecture of the period.

- c. Describe other structures that have similar associations and the relationship of this structure to them.

During the late 1950s and early 1960s, Eugene Sternberg served as architect and planning consultant to the Town of Steamboat Springs. Projects in Steamboat Springs documented to have Sternberg direction at the time include the Methodist Church on Oak Street, the 1956 Yampa Valley Electric Association, the 1958 Steamboat Apartments, the Soda Creek Elementary addition (demolished 2007), and the never executed Bristol Hotel and Howelsen Hill redesign.

Architectural Description

11. Concisely describe the resource and its surrounds.
 - a. Describe location and setting including physical context and relationship to neighborhood and other historic structures.

Located within a Little Toots park with the nearby flowing Soda Creek, this distinctive building is located just within Lincoln Park, at the western corner of Lincoln Avenue and 12th Street, at the northwest end of downtown Steamboat Springs. The building is sited at a slight angle to the two streets, and a short distance from Soda Creek which begins its flow through Lincoln Park as it passes the northwest elevation. The Bud Werner Library and other city facilities lie across the Creek to the northwest. Little Toots Park, and the confluence of Soda Creek and the Yampa River lie to the southwest.

- b. Architectural description including mention of major features, uncommon design features, ancillary structures, and important landscape or site features. Also describe interior spaces with extraordinary design features (if any).

The 1960 Chamber of Commerce Building is a one-story, 23' x 34' rectangular plan, inverted gable-roofed structure which is sited slightly askew at its corner location at 12th Street and Lincoln Avenue (US Highway 40) at the western end of the downtown commercial core. The building stands in a turf covered, irregularly-shaped corner lot that extends back from Lincoln Avenue toward the Yampa River known as Little Toots Park. Mature landscaping is present, with the City park featuring a playground, gazebo, and log building (formerly a community center, now used as storage). Soda Creek flows to the northwest of the Chamber of Commerce Building and meets the Yampa River at the western edge of the park. The Bud Werner Memorial Library features to the northwest of the park parcel and completes the block.

This modest-sized, but distinctive building is located at the western corner of Lincoln Avenue and 12th Street. The building is sited at a slight angle to the two streets. Instead of a front Lincoln Avenue entry, the building's facade (northwest elevation) is oriented toward Soda Creek as it begins its flow through Little Toots Park as it passes the northwest elevation. A notable architectural feature is the building's nearly flat inverted pitch roof, which, in essence, appears as two shed roofs placed back to back. With some imagination, the roof gives the visual impression of a butterfly in flight, so that locally, the building is known affectionately as the "Butterfly Building." The roof is broadly-pitched with an extensive overhang on all four sides. The building is also sited on a slope, with a walk-out basement level on the southwest elevation. The basement area originally served as restrooms for the park and was closed to the public at an unknown date. A poured concrete foundation supports the walls that are clad with a variety of materials, including stone, half-round log siding, and both horizontal and vertical wood siding. The stone veneer, with flagstone capping, covers the lower portions of the southeast and northeast elevations, ranging in height from approximately 4' above grade to approximately 6.5' above grade. A band of three single-light fixed windows, topped by three painted beige wood panels, penetrate the northeast (Lincoln Avenue) elevation. The southeast elevation features a band of four single-light fixed-pane windows (topped by painted beige wood panels), two horizontal sliding windows, and a single light fixed-pane window, all with painted brown wood surrounds. Above the stone veneer, the southeast elevation wall is clad with painted beige vertical wood siding. A high poured concrete

foundation is exposed on the southwest (rear) elevation. The northwest end of the foundation wall is penetrated by a doorway, which has been filled with plywood and is no longer in use. Another similar door, also filled with plywood, penetrates the foundation wall near the southwest end of the northwest elevation. The foundation wall is also penetrated by a 1x1 horizontal sliding window. The northwest elevation faces Soda Creek. Here, a glass-in-wood-frame door enters the building from a large concrete porch which is covered by the extended roof overhang at the northeast end of the facade. The porch is flanked by a wooden railing, while two steel poles support the roof overhang. Originally, the porch was built around two narrow-leaf cottonwood trees which extend through two holes in the porch roof. The entry door is flanked on its northeast side by a single, narrow, fixed-pane window, and on its southwest side by two single-light fixed-pane windows, all with painted beige wood surrounds. To the southwest of the porch, the lower facade wall is clad with a 3'-wide section of half-round log siding, while the upper wall is clad with painted beige vertical wood siding. (Carl McWilliams, Architectural Inventory Form)

The building retains its historic integrity in terms of setting, location, design, materials, workmanship, association, and feeling. There have been virtually no exterior alterations to the original Chamber of Commerce Building and the 1960 photograph from the building's grand opening reveals that the building looks much the same today as when designed and constructed.

c. Describe alterations to the exterior of the building.

The exterior of the building has been repaired and maintained over time but is otherwise unaltered. Originally, the porch was built around two narrow-leaf cottonwood trees which extend through two holes in the porch roof. The tops of the trees have been removed to prevent damage to the building.

Bibliography

12. Provide a list of research sources used in compiling this application.

- ¹ Carl McWilliams, "Architectural Inventory Form for Chamber of Commerce Building, Steamboat Springs, Routt County, Colorado, 5RT.1044," recorded in 2007.
- ² McWilliams.
- ³ McWilliams; Steamboat Pilot, April 2, 1959.
- ⁴ "Unsoian Style," Guide to Colorado's Historic Architecture and Engineering, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society, <http://www.coloradohistory-oahp.org/guides/architecture/usonian.htm>, accessed May 2, 2008.

Application Information

13. Owner: City of Steamboat Springs

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 7755088, Steamboat Springs, CO, 80477

Telephone: 970-819-8214

14. Owner Consent to Designation:

I / We, the undersigned, acting as owner(s) of, the property described in this application for Historic Resource designation do, hereby, give my consent to the designation of this structure as an Historic Resource.

Signature: _____

Printed name: _____

Date: _____

15. Applicant/Preparer Name: Jake Rosenberg

Affiliation/ Interest in Property: Planning Department Liaison to the Historic Preservation Commission

Address: 124 10th Street, Steamboat Springs, CO 80487

Telephone: 970-819-8214





United States Department of the Interior National Park Service National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determination for individual properties and districts. See instruction in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Chamber of Commerce Building

other names/site number Butterfly Building; 5RT.2616

2. Location

street & number 1201 Lincoln Avenue [N/A] not for publication

city or town Steamboat Springs [N/A] vicinity

state Colorado code CO county Routt code 107 zip code 80477

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer Date _____

Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- other, explain
 See continuation sheet.

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Chamber of Commerce Building
Name of Property

Routt County, Colorado
County/State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not count previously listed resources.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing.
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: organizational

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT
Other: Usonian

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation	<u>CONCRETE</u>
walls	<u>STONE</u>
	<u>WOOD</u>
roof	<u>ASPHALT</u>
other	_____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Chamber of Commerce Building
Name of Property

Routt County, Colorado
County/State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Periods of Significance

1960

Significant Dates

1960

Significant Person(s)

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Sternberg, Eugene D.

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:
Colorado Historical Society

Chamber of Commerce Building
Name of Property

Routt County, Colorado
County/State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than 1

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

- | | | | | |
|----|------|---------|----------|---------|
| 1. | 13 | 344144 | 4483417 | (NAD27) |
| | Zone | Easting | Northing | |
| 2. | | | | |
| | Zone | Easting | Northing | |
| 3. | | | | |
| | Zone | Easting | Northing | |
| 4. | | | | |
| | Zone | Easting | Northing | |

The UTM reference point was derived by the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation from heads up digitization on Digital Raster Graphic maps provided to OAHP by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management.

[] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Laureen Schaffer/ Historic Preservation Coordinator
organization City of Steamboat Springs date November 17, 2009
street & number PO Box 775088 telephone (970) 879-2060
city or town Steamboat Springs state CO zip code 80477

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name City of Steamboat Springs
street & number PO Box 775088 telephone (970) 879-2060
city or town Steamboat Springs state CO zip code 80477

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to range from approximately 18 hours to 36 hours depending on several factors including, but not limited to, how much documentation may already exist on the type of property being nominated and whether the property is being nominated as part of a Multiple Property Documentation Form. In most cases, it is estimated to average 36 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form to meet minimum National Register documentation requirements. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, 1849 C St., NW, Washington, DC 20240.

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**Chamber of Commerce Building
Routt County, ColoradoSection number 7 Page 1**DESCRIPTION**

The 1960 Chamber of Commerce Building is a one-story, 23' x 34' rectangular plan, inverted gable-roofed building sited slightly askew at its corner location at 12th Street and Lincoln Avenue (US Highway 40) at the western end of the downtown commercial core in Steamboat Springs. The building stands in a turf covered, irregularly-shaped corner lot known as Little Toots Park extending back from Lincoln Avenue toward the Yampa River. Mature landscaping is present with the park featuring a playground, gazebo and log building (formerly a community center, now used as storage). Soda Creek flows to the northwest of the Chamber of Commerce Building and meets the Yampa River at the western edge of the park. The Bud Werner Memorial Library stands to the northwest of the park parcel and completes the block.

This modest-sized, but distinctive building is located at the western corner of Lincoln Avenue and 12th Street. The building is sited at a slight angle to the two streets. Instead of a front Lincoln Avenue entry, the building's façade (northwest side) is oriented toward Soda Creek as it begins its flow through Little Toots Park as it passes the northwest side. A notable architectural feature is the building's nearly flat inverted gable roof, which, in essence, appears as two shed roofs placed back to back. With some imagination, the roof gives the visual impression of a butterfly in flight, so that locally, the building is known affectionately as the "Butterfly Building."

The roof is broadly pitched with an extensive overhang on all four sides. The building is also sited on a slope, with a walkout basement level on the southwest side. The basement area originally served as restrooms for the park until closed to the public at an unknown date. A poured concrete foundation supports the walls that are clad with a variety of materials, including stone, half-round log siding, and both horizontal and vertical wood siding. The stone veneer, with flagstone capping, covers the lower portions of the southeast and northeast side, ranging in height from approximately 4' above grade to approximately 6.5' above grade. A band of three single-light fixed windows, topped by three painted beige wood panels, penetrates the northeast (Lincoln Avenue) side. The southeast side features a band of four single-light fixed-pane windows (topped by painted beige wood panels), two horizontal sliding windows, and a single light fixed-pane window, all with painted brown wood surrounds. Above the stone veneer, the southeast sidewall is clad with painted beige vertical wood siding. An exposed high poured concrete foundation appears on the southwest (rear) side. A doorway, which is covered with plywood and no longer in use, penetrates the northwest end of the foundation wall. Another similar door, also filled with plywood, penetrates the foundation wall near the southwest end of the northwest side. A horizontal sliding window exists on the foundation wall.

The northwest side faces Soda Creek. Here, a full light door with a wood frame provides access to the building from a large concrete porch, which is covered by the extended roof overhang at the northeast end of the façade. A wood railing flanks the porch, while two steel poles support the roof overhang. As originally designed by the architect, the porch was built around two narrow-leaf cottonwood trees that now extend through two holes in the porch roof. The entry door is flanked on its northeast side by a single, narrow, fixed-pane window, and on its southwest side by two single-light fixed-pane windows, all with painted beige wood surrounds. To the southwest of the porch, the lower façade wall is clad with a 3'-wide section of half-round log siding, while the upper wall is clad with painted beige vertical wood siding (McWilliams 2007).

The building retains its historic integrity in terms of setting, location, design, materials, workmanship, association and feeling. There have been virtually no exterior alterations to the original Chamber of Commerce Building and the 1960 photograph from the building's grand opening reveals the building looking much the same today as when designed and constructed.

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Routt County, ColoradoSection number 8 Page 2**SIGNIFICANCE**

The 1960 Chamber of Commerce Building in Steamboat Springs is eligible to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C in the area of *architecture* as a superior local example of the Modern Movement's Usonian design philosophy. Integrated into the surrounding landscape and oriented toward the nearby Soda Creek and Little Toots Park, the building embodies many of the defining characteristics of the design philosophy, including the use of natural materials, which help blend the building into the site, dominant horizontal lines, integrated windows, and an inverted gabled roof with wide overhanging eaves. Notable are two cottonwood trees extending through the porch floor and roof and incorporated into the overall design. Architect Eugene Sternberg designed the Chamber of Commerce Building as one of several commissions he received in the Steamboat Springs area. The building's small-scale is unusual within the architect's broad body of work but typifies his interest in economical construction through its utilization of donated materials and volunteer labor. The period of significance is 1960, the year of construction.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Born in Czechoslovakia on January 15, 1915, Eugene D. Sternberg earned a degree in architectural engineering in Prague. While pursuing graduate work in architecture at Cambridge University in England, World War II began. He remained in London during the war, teaching part time at Cambridge. He then joined the firm of Sir Abercrombie, where he was involved in rebuilding many of the homes and buildings destroyed by German bombing. While in England, he met and married his wife, Barbara. In 1945, the couple immigrated to the United States, where Sternberg accepted an offer to teach at Cornell University. Shortly after, he became the first faculty member at the University of Denver's new School of Architecture. In 1949, Sternberg joined developer Edward Hawkins in the creation of the Arapahoe Acres development in Englewood, Colorado (5AH.1434 National Register Historic District listed 11/3/1998 NRIS. #98001249). The project appealed to Sternberg because of his interest in the creation of "socially conscious modern housing, combining quality architectural design and economical construction." He is best known for the many civic, educational and commercial buildings he designed. His list of accomplishments includes Arapahoe Community College, Heritage High School, the Bemis Public Library, the Arapahoe County Courthouse Building and the Law Center, all in Littleton, and the major medical building at Denver General Hospital. Altogether, Sternberg is responsible for over 400 buildings in Colorado, Wyoming and Nebraska.¹

At the end of 1957, the Steamboat Springs Town Board minutes detail the hiring of Eugene Sternberg to serve as planning consultant and architect to the newly formed Planning Commission. By early 1958, Sternberg began examining the town's fringe areas to determine the suitability of subdivisions and a junior college. Sternberg guided the efforts of the "Beautification Project" and worked directly with the Kiwanis and Lion's clubs on park projects. Projects in Steamboat Springs documented to have Sternberg direction at the time include the 1959 Methodist Church at 718 Oak Street, the 1956 Yampa Valley Electric Association, the 1958 Steamboat Apartments, the 1956 Soda Creek Elementary addition (demolished 2007), and the never executed Bristol Hotel and Howelsen Hill redesigns.

¹ Carl McWilliams, "Architectural Inventory Form for Chamber of Commerce Building, Steamboat Springs, Routt County, Colorado, 5RT.2616," recorded in 2007.; "Sternberg, Eugene D." *Architects of Colorado* biographical sketch, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society, 2001.

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Established in 1907 as the Commercial Club of Steamboat Springs, with an organizational mission to support the businesses of Steamboat Springs and other nearby communities in the Yampa Valley, the group fostered economic vitality within the region. In 1941, the Commercial Club changed its name to the Chamber of Commerce of Steamboat Springs. Over time, the Chamber organization played an important role as the local economy evolved from one based primarily on agriculture to one based on tourism and in particular, skiing. As a result, the Chamber of Commerce is now known as the Steamboat Springs Area Chamber Resort Association.²

The Chamber of Commerce existed at a number of locations in the years prior to 1960. In 1956, it was located at 507 Lincoln Avenue, but by 1959, it had moved to 703 Lincoln Avenue (the no longer extant Harbor Hotel), and then 926 Lincoln Avenue where it existed for a short time before moving into its new Sternberg-designed building in 1960.³

In 1959, the Town directed Sternberg to develop plans for a permanent home for the Chamber of Commerce. An announcement for the new building appeared in the March 26, 1959, *Steamboat Pilot*:

At the annual Chamber of Commerce meeting and banquet March 19, it was disclosed that a new home for the Chamber will be built in the front part of the city park. By using volunteer labor and obtaining material at cost, George Fick, chairman of the planning commission, said the new building could be constructed for \$1,500. The building would include a work room, office, basement and storage room.

A subsequent article described the building and notably the setting with the creek flowing "past the site where settlers once built the town's first homes and where their children played under the willows and cottonwoods. Two of the latter trees figure prominently in Architect Eugene Sternberg's plans."

Newspaper coverage of the groundbreaking for the new building on June 11, 1959, detailed the expenses and volunteer effort. The project budget was \$2,500, low even for Sternberg standards (Sternberg strived for affordable, cost-effective construction on his projects). Completed within one year, the grand opening celebration for the Usonian-inspired Chamber of Commerce Building occurred on June 18, 1960.

Typically associated with modern residential architecture of the 1940s through the 1960s, Usonian as a concept actually goes back to the turn of the twentieth century. Conceived by Frank Lloyd Wright around 1900, the Usonian design philosophy evolved over many years, coming to fruition in the 1930s. As his commissions for large, grand houses dropped off with the onset of the Great Depression, Wright looked for a way to address the need for affordable middle-class housing while employing a simple design. The result was an architectural style he termed "Usonian," which focused on the residents of a utopian culturally reformed United States of North America. The Usonian houses were smaller than his sprawling Prairie style residences, contained little ornamentation and lacked basements or attics. His designs arranged these houses in zones, typically with three areas: living space, small bedrooms, and a kitchen-dining area. Built-in components and furniture allowed homeowners to appreciate the simpler, integrated space Wright intended.

Usonian constitutes more than just an idea for designing smaller houses and other buildings. It encompassed planning, nature and simple design on a human scale. Wright's concept for Usonian came about due to his increasing focus on community, planning and serving human needs. He

² McWilliams.

³ McWilliams; *Steamboat Pilot*, April 2, 1959.

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advocated decentralized communities with commercial, residential, educational, industrial, cultural and recreational facilities. While his early concepts of these communities remained just that, many of the components applied in a handful of places across the country, though not on the scale that he originally envisioned. As Wright did with the Prairie style of his earlier fame, he also incorporated the smaller Usonian house with the site. Wright integrated the house with the landscape and nature in an attempt to get away from box-like structures. Walls extended beyond the interior to the outside, intermingling the two. Large windows appeared to bring the outside to the interior space. Natural materials blended the building with the site and warm colors on the interior further contributed to the feeling of bringing the outdoors inside. Usonian houses were quite unlike the boxy, stark International Style houses that appeared to be dropped onto, rather than a part of, their location.

Also called Wrightian, numerous architects across the country adopted and adapted the Usonian style. Bruce Goff of Oklahoma, Alden Dow of Michigan, and John Lautner of southern California are well known for contributing to the style. Colorado architects influenced by the style included Edward Hawkins, engineer and developer of Arapahoe Acres subdivision and Joseph E. Dion who was an architect and Hawkins' assistant. They designed, among other buildings, many houses in Arapahoe Acres after Sternberg ended his Arapahoe Acres association and business relationship with Hawkins. Sternberg was the original architect of the site plan for the subdivision designing over 20 houses there. General characteristics of associated buildings include: dominant horizontal lines; flat roofs with large overhangs; integrated windows; organic siting (a private side and an open side, usually facing south); concrete slab floors with integral gravity heating; built-in components; and inside-outside walls.⁴ The Chamber of Commerce Building exhibits many of these elements.

Located within a park with the nearby flowing Soda Creek, Sternberg integrated the Chamber of Commerce Building into the landscape. The two cottonwood trees figure prominently in the design, and while the building was constructed around the existing landscape feature, the building's design is respectful of the trees and does not attempt to become the dominant feature. The two components, natural and man-made, complement and serve each other. The building's form is an organic and integrated whole. Dominant horizontal lines, including the band of windows and overhanging eaves, further serve to incorporate the building into the site. Natural materials and warm colors and textures bring together and complete the entire design.

Sternberg's simple design eschews traditional detail, yet results in a building integrated with the landscape. At the same time, the Chamber of Commerce Building's design presents a human scale. The smaller building fits the site, is incorporated into the setting through form and materials, and focuses on the community. The building is uniquely Steamboat Springs and defines the local architecture of the period.

The Chamber of Commerce continued operating in this building until the mid-1980s when it relocated to 625 S. Lincoln Avenue. In recent years, the Yampa Valley Land Trust has leased and occupied the building. It is a non-profit organization focusing on facilitating the conservation of agricultural properties and other natural open space lands.

⁴ "Usonian Style," *Guide to Colorado's Historic Architecture and Engineering*, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society, <http://www.coloradohistory-oahp.org/guides/architecture/usonian.htm>, accessed May 2, 2008. Whiffen, Marcus, *American Architecture Since 1780*. Cambridge, MA: The M.I.T. Press, 1969, third printing 1976, p. 276.

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The Chamber of Commerce Building is located in Block 1 of the Springs Addition to Steamboat Springs, Section 17, Township 6 North, Range 84 West, known as 1201 Lincoln Avenue. The boundary includes the building and the property extending fifteen feet in each direction to form a rectangle from the footprint of the building.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary includes the land historically associated with the Chamber of Commerce Building.

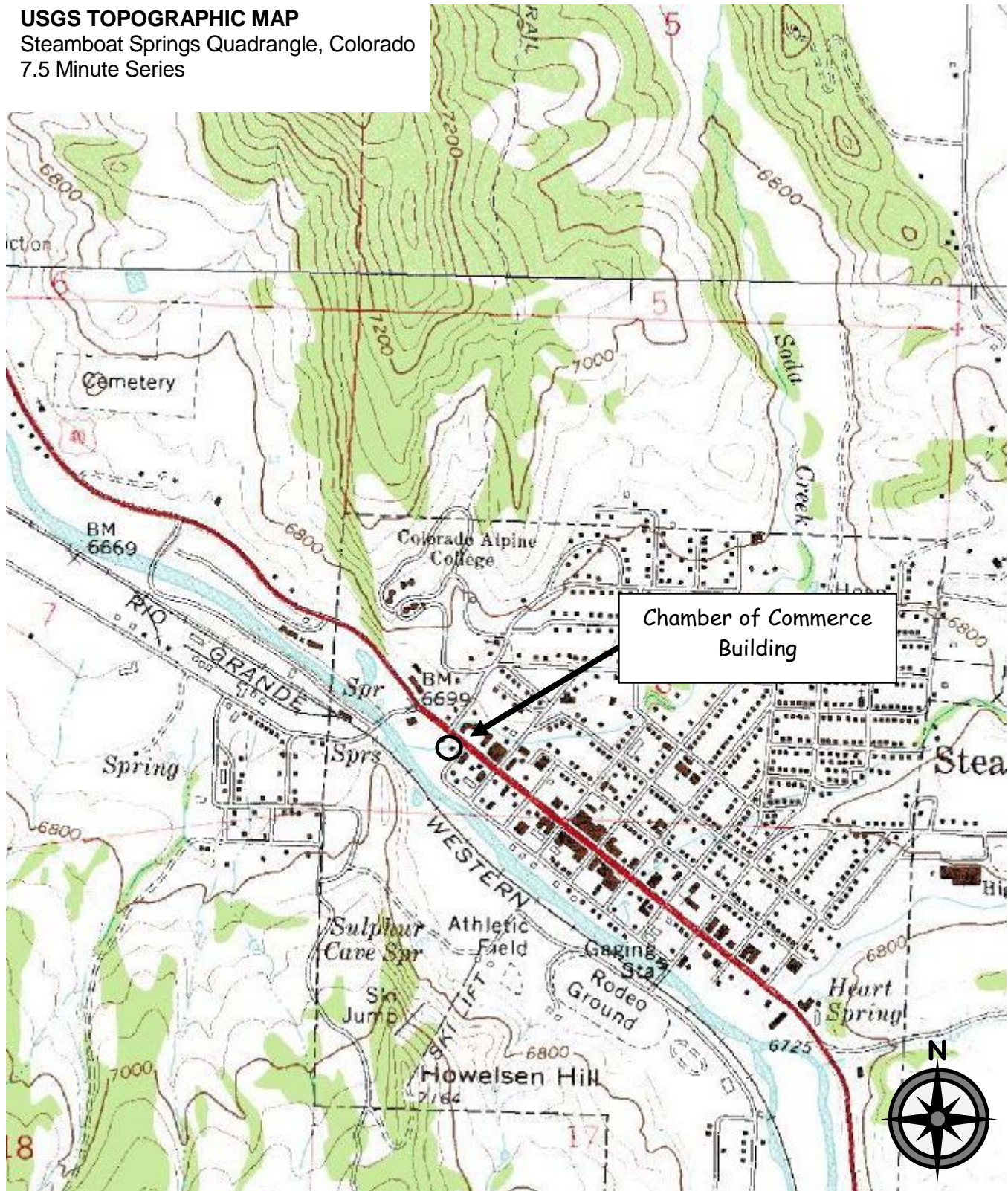
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USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAP
Steamboat Springs Quadrangle, Colorado
7.5 Minute Series



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PHOTOGRAPH LOG

The following information pertains to photograph numbers 1-6:

Photographer: Ginger Scott
Date of Photographs: May 15, 2008
Negatives: Digital files submitted to the National Register

Photo No.	Photographic Information	Digital Files
1	Northeast & southeast sides, camera facing west	CO_RouttCounty_Chamber1.tif
2	Southeast side, camera facing northwest	CO_RouttCounty_Chamber2.tif
3	Southwest side, camera facing north	CO_RouttCounty_Chamber3.tif
4	Southwest & northwest sides, camera facing east	CO_RouttCounty_Chamber4.tif
5	Northwest side, camera facing southeast	CO_RouttCounty_Chamber5.tif
6	Northeast side, camera facing southwest	CO_RouttCounty_Chamber6.tif

Photo numbers, locations and views

