Rotary District 5450
Reaching for the Stars District Conference
Saturday, December 5, 2026
Green Center, Colorado School of Mines 9 AM – 4 PM.

Meet Our Speakers and Panelists!

State of the State: Colorado's Future and Rotary's Role – A look Forward with Christian Thomas, Senior Manager of Diplomacy, State of Colorado, Office of Economic Development and International Trade. Christian has his master's in public policy from the University of Denver.

Panel: Dealing with AI: How do we implement the right guardrails, what are they, and is AI coming for our jobs? With Professor Philip Beaver, PhD, University of Denver Daniels School of Business. Chief data scientist, OGX Analytics. Former senior Analyst, US Army and Joint Chiefs of Staff. Professor, applied mathematics, US Military Academy, West Point. PhD, Applied Mathematics, Naval Postgraduate School. Providing perspective on AI issues and applications from the manufacturing side will be Silicon Valley entrepreneur Derek Chase, CEO, Chase Robotics. A highly successful startup veteran and CEO, Derek was formerly VP of Robotics at Next Power, developing robots for the utility solar industry, and Onsight Technology, developing AI powered imaging systems for the renewable energy sector. **RYLA, INTERACT, ROTORACT and Rotary Youth Exchange students are as well invited to participate in this panel.**

Keynote Speaker: Erich Kirshner, Media Relations Specialist, Colorado School of Mines: How can our Clubs use todays' public relations tools to properly and effectively get the word out? How do we select and place our stories on social media, or with radio, television and print media? What are the secrets of great PR? How do best tell our clubs' story? Erich will bring his decades of award-winning experience to help provide the answers. Prior to assuming the media role at the Colorado School of Mines, Erich had his own agencies – Lasso Digital, and Kirshner Communications – specializing in full-service communications and PR for state and local government agencies and health care including Columbia Health One, Rose Medical and the Colorado Foundation for Medical Care. Erich has his MS in Journalism from Northwestern University and his BS in Journalism from the University of Wyoming.

Workshop Presentation: Putting It All Together -Practical Applications for Your Club with Deborah Sherman. Emmy award-winning investigative journalist and media personality Deborah Sherman will introduce us to safely using AI as a partner. Head of AIEZ and certified by Innovating with AI.com, Deborah is an authority on creating multi-media AI assisted presentations, publications and strategies to help in club communications – both internally and as we reach out to new members. Deborah has "taught the class" on AI in cooperation with District 5450, "giving extraordinary abilities to ordinary people" with the new skills we need to grow.

Yes, There's More! People's Choice Awards, Hall of Friendship, Continental Breakfast, Lunch, Fellowship, The Ice Cream Social and Star Trek/Sci Fi Trivia Contest. Register here!

Rotary
District 5450