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DENVER ? The University of Colorado Board of Regents today named Bruce Benson the 22nd president of the university?s three-campus system.

The board voted 6-3 in favor of Benson?s appointment during a special meeting held at St. Cajetan?s Church on the Auraria Campus. The final vote followed a national search and several weeks of public meetings with faculty, staff and students on CU campuses in Boulder, Denver, Colorado Springs and the Anschutz Medical Campus in Aurora.

Benson, a prominent corporate leader and higher education advocate, will succeed Hank Brown, the former U.S. senator and fellow CU alumnus who has led Colorado?s flagship university since June 2005.

?We believe Bruce will immediately be able to help CU address the significant funding challenges it faces and provide the university with critical leadership over the next several years,? said Regent Pat Hayes, who chairs the nine-member board.

As CU president, Benson will embark on a mission to increase private and public funding for the university at a time when Colorado faces an economic downturn and CU and other Colorado colleges and universities must join forces to lobby against even deeper cuts of state funding for higher education. CU ranks 48th nationally for state funding earmarked for higher education.

Benson, 69, is founder, president and owner of Benson Mineral Group of Denver. In addition to his extensive experience in the corporate arena, he has earned a statewide reputation as a tireless supporter of higher education and his alma mater. He earned a bachelor's degree in geology from CU-Boulder in 1964.

He is co-chair of Gov. Bill Ritter?s P-20 Education Coordinating Council and chaired the Governor?s Blue Ribbon Panel for Higher Education for the 21st Century under former Colorado Gov. Bill Owens. Benson has been director of the Coleman Colorado Foundation for the Coleman Institute for Cognitive Disabilities since 2001. He also has served as chairman of the Metropolitan State College Board of Trustees and was chairman of and a commissioner for the Colorado Commission on Higher Education.

In addition, Benson has contributed time and energy to his alma mater, serving as national chairman of CU?s multi-campus, \$1 billion Comprehensive Fundraising Campaign. He has been a board member for CU-Boulder?s Center for the American West since 2006, has served on the CU Foundation?s board of directors, and was a member of the CU Foundation Development Cabinet and the CU President?s Council.

As president, he will oversee a \$2 billion university system with a 132-year legacy that serves 52,000 undergraduate and graduate students on three major campuses at four locations, including CU-Boulder, UCCS in Colorado Springs, UC Denver?s downtown Denver campus and the Anschutz Medical Campus in Aurora.

The university attracts some of the nation?s top students who are studying in fields that run the gamut from business, education and journalism to law, medicine, engineering and the sciences. The university system, the state?s third-largest employer, has more than 24,000 professors and staff members and thousands of alumni working in the public and private sectors who are contributing directly and indirectly to Colorado?s economy.

The University of Colorado is a premier teaching and research university, ranked sixth among public institutions in federal research expenditures by the National Science Foundation. Academic prestige is marked by the university?s four Nobel laureates, seven MacArthur ?genius? Fellows, 18 alumni astronauts, 19 Rhodes Scholars and CU-Boulder?s ranking as 11th best public university and 34th best overall university in the world by the Institute for Higher Education.

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