

POST-COWBOY ECONOMICS



*Pay and
Prosperity
in the
New
American
West*

THOMAS MICHAEL POWER AND
RICHARD N. BARRETT

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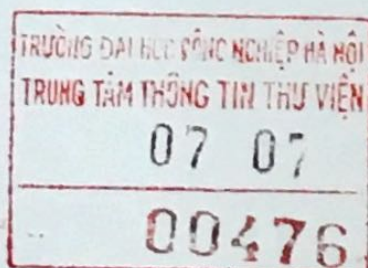
**THOMAS MICHAEL POWER
AND RICHARD N. BARRETT**

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Preface

During the 1980s and 1990s, the people of the Mountain West shared a particular, pessimistic understanding about how their economy worked, how it was changing, and why it was failing. In this book we challenge that popular understanding and its implications and propose a new way of looking at the economy of the region.

GROWTH AND ANXIETY IN THE MOUNTAIN WEST

Since at least the 1970s, the American Mountain West—the region made up of the states of Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming—has been in the thrall of sweeping economic, political, and social change. In particular, once-important natural resource industries have declined dramatically as sources of jobs and income. Since these industries—mining and metal processing, logging and lumber products, and agriculture—historically supported European settlement and are widely believed still to be the economic lifeblood of the region's rural areas and small cities, their decline has provoked deep economic anxiety: the fear that large parts of the region will become depressed and its residents will be forced to move elsewhere. And because the federal government controls a significant part of the Mountain West's natural landscapes and resources, federal government policies, especially those intended to protect the environment, are often blamed