

The cost of doing nothing: I-70 study details congestion's impact

By [BOB BERWYN](#)
[summit daily news](#)

April 25, 2007



[Comments](#)



[Print](#)



[Email](#)

Summit County, CO Colorado

SUMMIT COUNTY — Sitting in traffic on I-70 is not only frustrating, but also very costly. The personal time alone lost to congestion on the main east-west highway through the state is valued at \$85 billion annually, according to an economic impact study released Wednesday.

Altogether, clogs and slowdowns on the Interstate are likely costing the state of Colorado about \$839 million per year, according to the report issued by the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce.

“I was surprised by the numbers. It quantifies what we’ve been saying based on instinct,” said I-70 Mountain Corridor Coalition director Flo Raitano.

“Summit County and the coalition have been saying this for a long, long time. If we don’t fix it, it’s going to be a significant economic detriment,” Raitano said.

Based on the annual economic impacts of almost \$1 billion, it would only take about 10 years to recoup the investment needed to improve I-70, Raitano said. “It makes it very clear that this is an economic development argument,” she said, explaining that the study outlines the direct costs to the mountain region’s tourism economy.

A small 1 percent decline in tourism means an annual loss of \$35 million to the mountain region, including Eagle, Summit, Clear Creek, Gilpin and Pitkin counties, according to the report. That could mean a \$1.2 million decline in state, county and city sales tax revenue, the report concludes.

The peak-period traffic jams on the highway could cause tourists to choose alternate out-of-state destinations, according to the study.

I-70 congestion will also raise government costs for emergency services, as well as personnel costs associated with hiring and retaining employees. Delaying the start of construction on improvements is also expensive. The cost for improving the road is expected to climb by 24.9 percent in 2010, from estimates generated in 2004. By 2015, costs would be 53.4 percent higher than the 2004 estimates.

Based on the analysis, the problems will likely get worse before they get better, with traffic on I-70 in Grand Junction expected to grow by 71.3 percent in the next 20 years — an average annual increase of 2.9 percent. At the Eisenhower Tunnel, Idaho Springs and Glenwood Springs, traffic will grow by about 45 percent during that same span.

“It’s costing Colorado a lot of money not to do anything,” said Breckenridge Mayor Ernie Blake. “It’s time to make some serious improvements to the situation.”

WEB EXTRAS



[Read the full report from the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce here](#)



10% OFF

Full Rack Systems

Largest Selection in Summit County.
YAKIMA products to fit any car.

PIONEER Sports

842 N. Summit Blvd. • Next to Walmart • Frisco

668-3668

SEE OUR AD IN **Name's Numbers**

Get News Feeds  

- Real Estate
- Wedding Ideas
- Community
- Petscene
- NEWSPAPERS**
- Aspen Times
- Citizen Telegram
- Grand Junction Free Press
- Eagle Valley Enterprise
- Leadville Chronicle
- Post Independent
- Snowmass Sun
- Vail Daily
- The Vail Trail
- Valley Journal

Bob Berwyn can be reached at (970) 331-5996, or at bberwyn@summitdaily.com.

Latest Comments Post Your Comment Discussion

LATEST COMMENTS

RELATED ARTICLES

- July 9, 2007 - [Eagle County seeks lower speed limit on I-70](#)
- July 3, 2007 - [Tunnel traffic number ahead of 2006](#)
- June 29, 2007 - [Fourth of July travel up despite midweek timing](#)
- June 26, 2007 - [Dam Road to close Thursday](#)
- June 22, 2007 - [Public weighs in on Summit Stage changes](#)
- June 14, 2007 - [Colorado's roadless debate revs up in Washington, D.C.](#)
- June 10, 2007 - [Big changes for Summit Stage?](#)
- June 9, 2007 - [CDOT begins paving between overlook, tunnel next Sunday](#)
- June 7, 2007 - [Aspen/Pitkin County Airport to reopen to traffic Thursday](#)
- May 31, 2007 - [Frontier's new service is not clear for takeoff in Aspen](#)
- May 23, 2007 - [A step back on I-70?](#)
- May 22, 2007 - [Truck inspection detects many dangerous vehicles](#)
- May 18, 2007 - [Colo. backs off I-70 plans; options beside widening are on table](#)
- May 8, 2007 - [Independence Pass to reopen May 24](#)
- May 3, 2007 - [CDOT begins Glenwood Canyon I-70 resurfacing Monday](#)
- April 25, 2007 - [Chain law bill headed to Ritter's desk](#)
- April 24, 2007 - [Video surveillance coming to Stage buses and facilities](#)
- April 19, 2007 - [Chain law bill moves to Senate floor](#)
- April 13, 2007 - [Speeders: Beware of troopers' traps through Vail](#)
- April 12, 2007 - [Which train works in the mountains?](#)
- April 10, 2007 - [School bus seatbelt poll drums up much response](#)
- April 2, 2007 - [High-speed train through Summit by 2015?](#)
- April 2, 2007 - [Gibbs' chain law bill moves to the Senate](#)
- March 31, 2007 - ['Giant vacuum' to clean up I-70](#)
- March 30, 2007 - [Ex-plov driver challenges CDOT working conditions](#)
- March 29, 2007 - [Extra lane doesn't doom a monorail](#)
- March 28, 2007 - [Guess what? No solutions for I-70, yet](#)
- March 28, 2007 - [Frisco town manager appointed to state transportation panel](#)
- March 23, 2007 - [New I-70 traffic channel launched](#)
- March 23, 2007 - [Loveland Pass set for CDOT upgrades](#)
- March 9, 2007 - [More CDOT money could boost Gibbs' chain law bill](#)
- March 8, 2007 - [CDOT may add another \\$1.3 million to improve chain-up areas](#)
- February 28, 2007 - [Crash closes I-70 at Wolcott](#)
- February 27, 2007 - [CDOT pledges \\$1.2 million to improve chain-up areas](#)
- February 15, 2007 - [Chain law debated in Denver](#)

- February 11, 2007 - [Wrong way I-25 driver suffered post-traumatic stress](#)
- January 30, 2007 - [Gibbs to introduce bill to stiffen chain law](#)
- January 24, 2007 - [I-70 reopened after Vail Pass closure](#)
- January 24, 2007 - [Flipped plow closes I-70 for two hours](#)
- January 21, 2007 - [I-70 closed eastbound and westbound on eastern plains](#)
- January 20, 2007 - [Ritter picks George of Western Slope to head CDOT](#)
- January 19, 2007 - [Traffic will stop on I-70 next week](#)
- January 18, 2007 - [Stats show where, why cars crash](#)
- January 18, 2007 - [Sharing the roadways with big rigs](#)
- January 17, 2007 - [Boarding passes good for free lift rides](#)
- January 16, 2007 - [Frisco Town Manager named to chair I-70 Coalition](#)
- January 11, 2007 - [Economic Summit focuses on change](#)

[← BACK](#) [▲ TOP OF PAGE](#)

[Privacy Policy](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Archives](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Site Map](#) | [RSS Feeds](#)  

Visit our other [news and portal sites](#).
All contents © Copyright 2007 summitdaily.com
Summit Daily - 40 West Main Street - Frisco, CO 80443
P.O. Box 329 · Frisco, CO 80443-0329
E-mail: news@summitdaily.com