

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 21, 2006

CONTACT: Co-Chair Harry Dale, 303-679-2312 Co-Chair Bill Wallace, 970-453-3413
Clear Creek County Commissioner Summit County Commissioner

Vice-Chair Stan Zemler, 970-479-2106
Vail Town Manager

**I-70 COALITION HIRES CEO OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT SPECIALISTS AS NEW
COALITION DIRECTOR**

(I-70 Mountain Corridor)— The Interstate 70 Mountain Transportation Corridor Coalition (I-70 Coalition) has selected Dr. Florine Raitano to become the first-ever I-70 Coalition Director. Raitano will be responsible for coordinating meetings, recruiting new members, acting as a liaison for the Coalition with public and private entities and development of a budget and working plan for the Coalition.

Raitano was selected from a field of more than 30 candidates during a statewide search that began in December 2005. A 24-year resident of Dillon, Raitano, who has extensive experience working at the grassroots, regional, statewide and national level addressing issues and challenges for rural communities, was among six finalists interviewed by the Coalition's executive committee in February. Coalition Co-Chair and Clear Creek County Commissioner Harry Dale said Raitano not only brings a background of organizational management and leadership to the Coalition, but she also brings a great deal of experience in building partnerships and advocating for communities in Colorado. "We're excited to bring Flo on board to serve as director," said Dale. "Her expertise in community and economic development and her passion for the communities along the I-70 mountain corridor will be invaluable to the Coalition. She'll be a tremendous asset in bringing focus, structure, consensus and success to the Coalition and its members."

Raitano has 20 years of experience in local and statewide government including working on information technology infrastructure for rural Colorado. For the past three years, Raitano has served as CEO for Rural Development Specialists, LLC, a consulting firm dedicated to helping rural communities. Prior, from 1993 to 2003, Raitano served as Executive Director of the Colorado Rural Development Council working as a representative for rural consumers and their technology needs. Raitano also served as Town of Dillon Mayor from 1986 to 1993 and served on numerous boards and

commissions including president of the Colorado Municipal League Region 12, vice president of the Colorado Association of Ski Towns, vice president and founding member of the Summit Leadership Forum and vice-chair and founding member of the Colorado River Headwater Forum. Raitano also was appointed to two terms by former Governor Romer on the Colorado Water Quality Control Commission and awarded Vice President Al Gore's Hammer Award for "Reinventing Government" for her work with the Colorado Ecosystem Partnership. Raitano says she is excited to be part of such a forward-thinking group as the Coalition. "Being director for the Coalition is an amazing opportunity," said Raitano. "As an advocate and liaison for the Coalition, I look forward to assisting and watching the Coalition progress in finding transportation solutions for the I-70 mountain corridor."

Additionally, the Coalition is reporting a productive year for 2005. Most notable, the Coalition unanimously agreed on a preferred transportation alternative for the I-70 mountain corridor, following review of the Colorado Department of Transportation's (CDOT) Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS), which outlines possible improvement alternatives for I-70 between C-470 and Glenwood Springs. The preferred alternative addresses transportation issues in the corridor for the next 50 years. The alternative was derived from portions of the PEIS and includes concepts to enhance public accessibility and mobility in the corridor via highway, transit, aviation, alternate routes and non-motorized components, while also meeting transportation goals of the Front Range, mountain corridor and adjoining communities.

According to Coalition Co-chair Bill Wallace, the Coalition is making large strides in organizing itself to be a very powerful voice for local transportation interests concerning the mountain corridor. "This is an amazing organization and all the political jurisdictions and private partners are coordinating their efforts to make long-term improvements in the I-70 mountain corridor," said Wallace. "With the hiring of Raitano, we're excited to move forward and grow the Coalition into a strong force that will see transportation projects through from conception to completion in the mountain corridor."

During 2006 the Coalition will concentrate its efforts on information distribution about its preferred alternative and invite other public entities and private sector organizations to participate. Part of this includes a community outreach program that includes

presentations throughout the I-70 mountain corridor and in the Front Range, which provides information about the Coalition's preferred alternative and its ability to enhance public accessibility and mobility in the I-70 mountain corridor. The Coalition will also respond to CDOT's Final PEIS, which is scheduled to be released in August. Additionally, during the year, Raitano will be responsible for coordinating a feasibility study for forming a transportation management organization or association, plus plan, organize and conduct a transit symposium on behalf of the Coalition.

Raitano will work out of the Northwest Colorado Council of Governments' office, which is based in Silverthorne. For more information on the Coalition's meeting schedule or to schedule a presentation for your organization, call Raitano at 970-393-2394.

#

About I-70 Coalition

The coalition was formed through an intergovernmental agreement in January 2004 to address transportation issues in the I-70 mountain corridor and to respond to CDOT's Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement. The local governments involved in the coalition include the counties of Clear Creek, Eagle, Garfield, Lake, Pitkin, Gilpin, Grand, Park and Summit, plus the cities and towns of Aspen, Avon, Breckenridge, Dillon, Empire, Fraser, Frisco, Georgetown, Glenwood Springs, Grandby, Grand Lake, Gypsum, Hot Sulphur Springs, Idaho Springs, Kremmling, Leadville, Minturn, Montezuma, Red Cliff, Silverthorne, Silver Plume, Steamboat, Vail, Walden and Winter Park. The 2006 Co-Chairs are Clear Creek County Commissioner Harry Dale and Summit County Commissioner Bill Wallace, with Vail Town Manager Stan Zemler acting as Vice-chair for the coalition. More information is available at <http://www.nwc.coq.co.us/>.