



## RURAL RESORT REGION

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### Interstate 70 Central Mountain Transportation Corridor Coalition

#### For Immediate Release

SILVERTHORNE, Colorado – A coalition of local governments has formed to advocate with one voice, local transportation interests concerning the Interstate 70 Central Mountain Corridor in Colorado. The local governments forming the coalition stretch from Idaho Springs on the east to Glenwood Springs on the west. The coalition also includes local governments in Grand, Lake and Pitkin counties who are dependent on I-70, although not located within the corridor.

Interstate 70 is the primary artery that moves people and goods from the Denver Metropolitan area to and through the central mountains of Colorado. The area is characterized by lofty mountains, narrow canyons, resort and resort-dependent communities and increasingly, paralyzing traffic jams. More than 1 million vehicles traveled through the Eisenhower/Johnson Tunnels on I-70 in July, making it the busiest month in its 31-year history. Daily tunnel traffic averaged 35,600 vehicles, but soared on August 1 to 46,851.

“Most local residents in the Central Colorado Mountains plan their lives around the heavy weekend traffic on I-70,” said JoAnn Sorensen, Clear Creek County Commissioner, “Locals simply do not and cannot go east on I-70 on Sunday afternoons.” Denver area residents do not have much of a choice if they work Mondays through Fridays, yet want to visit the mountains on the weekend. The choices include leaving the mountains earlier or staying later on Sundays or not coming at all. It is the not coming at all choice that has the Coalition concerned. “Most people moved to Colorado because of the recreational opportunities in the mountains” said Trési Houpt, Garfield County Commissioner and Chairman of Rural Resort Region the organization that is administering the Coalition. She went on to say, “It would be tragic if people no longer pursue the very reason that they moved to Colorado for in the first place.”

The mission of the Coalition is *“To enhance public accessibility and mobility in the I-70 Central Mountain Corridor and adjoining dependent counties through the implementation of joint public and private transportation management efforts.”* The Coalition has identified five major goals for its activities:

- A. Serve as a collective voice for the I-70 Central Mountain Transportation Corridor and adjoining dependent counties in addressing transportation issues.
- B. Develop a regionally preferred transportation plan with locally accepted solutions.
- C. Enhance employer, business entity, property owner and local government participation and investment in transportation services and programs.
- D. Increase awareness of locally preferred transportation plans among citizens and federal and state legislative bodies and transportation agencies.
- E. Advocate for the application of best practices and technologies to the regionally preferred transportation plan.

The Coalition is reaching out to private sector and not-for-profit organizations inviting their participation. “One of the first tasks of the Coalition will be to identify the areas of agreement among such a diverse group of interests spread over such a far-flung area,” said Gary Severson, Administrator for Rural Resort Region. “Although there will be differences in opinion we all agree that I-70 is the lifeblood for our communities and on that foundation we will build other agreements”, Severson said.

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