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HICKENLOOPER BEGINS SECOND TERM WITH DETAILS ON AGENDA

As Governor John Hickenlooper began his second term as Governor, he outlined an agenda for more economic growth, investment in Colorado's transportation system, the building and connecting of statewide bike trail system and recognition of the fiscal policy challenges facing the state during his Inaugural Speech and State of the State address.

The Governor highlighted a number of the economic successes of his prior term including a reduction in the unemployment rate, attracting key employers and increasing its emergency reserve from 2% to 6.5% of the budget. "Colorado is no longer in a precarious state," Hickenlooper declared in his inaugural speech. "It is poised to be a model state."

The Governor acknowledged, however, that many areas of Colorado are not experiencing the same economic rebound as others and high unemployment still exists. He made a commitment to renewing his first-term economic development strategy "Colorado Blueprint" in the form of "Colorado Blueprint 2.0". The original Blueprint program was a bottom up approach to identifying needs and economic drivers in the various regions of the state. A similar approach will be taken in 2.0.

The Governor echoed the theme of workforce development by Speaker of the House Dickie Lee Hullinghorst (D-Boulder) and President of the Senate Bill Cadman (R-Colorado Springs) in their respective opening day speeches.

A key program will be getting the long-term unemployed back to work through a \$3 million initiative to connect businesses and business groups to Coloradans who have been unemployed for more than six months through HireForColorado.com. The program will also offer state assistance in training them for their new jobs.

"The investments we make in our workforce development programs benefit not only the long-term unemployed but also employers and the entire state," Hickenlooper argued during his state of the state address.

Noting that "targeted workforce development and a strong education system are keys to supporting a strong middle class," Hickenlooper pitched his \$480 million budget increase for K-12 education.

In the face of a split legislature, the Governor sounded his trademark theme of collaboration on issues without offering pre-determined solutions. Noting Colorado's history in water and its importance to our economic past and future, water served as the primary example of collaboration on a critical issue. "The Colorado Water Plan

represents a paradigm shift of cooperation and collaboration, and goes a long way to ensure we strategically allocate this precious resource to maximize our entire state's ability to grow and flourish," Hickenlooper lauded.

A call for collaboration on difficult issues left less clarity or no mention at all on his agenda about a number of key business issues, including transportation funding and oil and gas regulation, the budget surplus, tax incentives, and construction defects.

Without tipping his hat about his position on the impending recommendations of his Oil and Gas Taskforce, Hickenlooper acknowledged that, "One of the more fertile fields of employment in Colorado has been our energy industry. I look forward to the recommendations of this task force, and," he continued, "pledge to work with you [legislators] and other stakeholders in developing our energy resources, protecting property rights and our natural environment and public health."

On transportation funding, the Governor spoke of the successes of rebuilding flood-damaged roads and bridges and the widening of the twin tunnels along I-70 in the mountains. For the first time in his five State of the State addresses, Hickenlooper stated that, "We are committed to finding solutions that add capacity on I-25 and I-70. We need to think creatively about how we fund both I-25 and I-70." While not specific about solutions, Hickenlooper continued, "We must take action whether it be new funding sources or funding partnerships."

And finally, the Governor lauded the beauty of Colorado. To capture the beauty, and to "make sure we get more Colorado cyclists out there," Hickenlooper announced the launch of a Bike Health Initiative, which will, among other things, "create a plan to connect bike routes across communities and around the tallest mountains in Colorado."

