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## **Roaring Fork Transit Authority Moves to CNG** *GEO supports alternative fuel vision*

**Denver, Colorado – April 12, 2012** The Roaring Fork Transit Authority (RFTA) has announced plans to purchase 22 fleet buses that will operate using compressed natural gas (CNG) instead of diesel. A ground breaking ceremony marking the beginning of the project will be held on Saturday April 14, 2012.

The Governor's Energy Office (GEO) is working on an initiative to diversify the State's transportation fuels portfolio which includes finding solutions to barriers that prevent the adoption of alternative fuels. In summer 2011, GEO's Director TJ Deora and Transportation Fuels Manager Alex Schroeder met with RFTA CEO Dan Blankenship to explore the viability of investing in compressed natural gas buses for their fleet rather than diesel. This began a collaborative effort between local organizations, Clean Energy Economy for the Region (CLEER), and the Aspen Strategy Center, which ultimately led to RFTA's decision to go with CNG.

RFTA received a grant to purchase buses from Encana, and an offer for a long-term fuel contract from Chesapeake Energy. \$6,706,000 in Qualified Energy Conservation Bonds (QECBs) awarded through a competitive application process managed in Colorado by the GEO. QECBs provide a federally subsidized, low-cost financing option that was authorized by the US Congress in 2008, and was expanded in 2009 by the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA). Several Colorado counties, cities and tribes received an initial, direct allocation from the federal government; House Bill 1346 moved the management of all unspent funds to the GEO.

"This is a great example of leadership by RFTA in providing a cutting edge transit service to the Roaring Forks Valley that will operate exclusively on an alternative fuel produced right here in Colorado. RFTA is proving that CNG can work at altitude as a clean, cost-saving fuel that supports energy security for our State, and will create jobs," said GEO Director TJ Deora. "It is also important to recognize our industry partners for investing in these projects and in the future."

The decision to go with CNG rather than diesel was driven by economics and the volatility of the price of diesel. For RFTA, the cost of diesel has risen 15% since January 1, 2012, while CNG averages about \$2 dollars per gallon equivalent nationally.

"This is the first rural Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system in the nation and the decision to fuel our buses on domestic natural gas is expected to save approximately \$350,000 per year in fuel costs," said RFTA CEO Dan Blankenship. "Fuel savings are expected to be even greater in the future, as we replace the remaining 65 diesel buses in our fleet with ones that operate on CNG. Natural gas is an abundant, domestically produced fuel source that will help RFTA become more energy independent, while contributing to the U.S. economy."