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COLORADO RIVERS A MAJOR STREAM OF REVENUE IN 2010

– Visitor Numbers Surpass Half-Million Mark; Rafters’ Spending 2nd Highest Total Ever –

GRAND JUNCTION, CO (Feb. 8, 2011) – As traditional economic indicators such as unemployment and foreclosures continue to send mixed signals regarding Colorado’s recovery from the national recession, commercial rafting figures told a bold tale of resurgence in 2010.

According to the annual “Commercial River Use in the State of Colorado” report issued by the Colorado River Outfitters Association (CROA), commercial rafting companies in the state hosted 507,392 user days during the 2010 season, up 16,500 user days, or 3.4 percent, from 2009. (A “user day” is defined as a paying guest on a river for any part of a day.) The visitor figures exceed a half-million for four straight years from 2005-2008 before taking a temporary dip in 2009 during the heart of the national downturn. The rebound was warmly welcomed.

“Rafting has always been a cost-effective way for outdoors enthusiasts to indulge themselves in nature and for families to vacation together – not to mention a great venue for team-building outings by everyone from corporate groups to scout troops,” said newly-elected CROA chairman Johnny Cantamessa. “When times and budgets are tight, the thrill-per-dollar ratio becomes that much more important, as evidenced by our industry’s strong 2010.”

As the CROA report indicates, every user day contributed much-needed revenue to state coffers and local businesses. The combined economic impact of commercial river rafting in 2010 was \$150.3 million, up 4.9 percent, or \$7 million, from 2009. That was the second-highest total since CROA began tracking these statistics in 1988, trailing only the banner year of 2007.

Over a season that runs from April to September, CROA’s outfitters collectively raft more than 20 rivers across eight major basins. The Colorado and Arkansas rivers saw the largest increases from 2009 to 2010 and still have excess capacity to allow for more visitors. Many other rivers in the state have limits to increased use and therefore have seen their numbers stabilize. Overall, notes Cantamessa, the diversity of opportunity means that most Coloradoans – and many in neighboring states – are within an easy day’s drive of a rafting vacation that suits their tastes.

For a complete copy of “Commercial River Use in the State of Colorado,” please visit <http://www.croa.org/site/media.html>.

About CROA

The Colorado River Outfitters Association (CROA) is a non-profit trade association representing over 50 licensed professional whitewater rafting outfitters across the state of Colorado. CROA’s mission is to: (1) promote Colorado as the premier river rafting destination in the United States, (2) support members’ efforts to attract visitors to Colorado and (3) provide a reasoned voice on industry developments and matters of policy affecting commercial boating and Colorado’s tourism economy as a whole. In 2010, Colorado’s river outfitters hosted 507,392 visitors and contributed \$150.3 million to the state’s economy. For more information on arranging a river adventure, please visit www.croa.org.

