

Colorado Division of Fire Prevention & Control  
Center of Excellence for Advanced Technology Aerial Firefighting  
Attn: Interim Director Melissa Lineberger  
690 Kipling Street, Suite 2000  
Lakewood, CO 80215



January 30, 2015

Dear Ms. Lineberger,

The Rifle Regional Economic Development Corporation would like to highly recommend the selection of the City of Rifle's proposal to be the home for the Center for Excellence in Aerial Firefighting. We believe that Rifle, Colorado possesses unique attributes and partnerships that raise its ability to serve the Center above other competing locations, including:

**Public and Private Partners**

- Western Slope regional governments have a history of working collaboratively
- Experience in housing local federal government installations (BLM, USFS)
- Proximity to and partnerships with higher education
- Local non-profits
- Business community ready to support the operations of the Center and its staff

**Accessibility**

- Direct access to I-70
- Three commercial airports within 1 hour
- Central location to likely Intermountain West partner states
- Significant visitor accommodations
- Closer to majority of wildfires

**Quality of Life**

- Lower cost of living
- More affordable housing
- Quality schools
- Abundant outdoor recreation opportunities
- Diverse economy and lower unemployment rate
- Several other employment centers within 1 hour
- Average commute of 20 minutes to surrounding communities
- Small town with wilderness/outdoors recreational opportunities

We sincerely believe that Rifle presents the best location for the Center of Excellence to research and develop new technologies for aerial firefighting that will benefit all firefighters protecting our communities and resources. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Langhorne". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Michael Langhorne  
President  
Rifle Regional Economic Development Corporation