

## Gov. Hickenlooper asks lawmakers to work together

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

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Gov. John Hickenlooper asked state lawmakers to set aside divisive politics and work toward the state's common good during the annual State of the State address.

Hickenlooper's 41-minute speech on Jan. 9 recounted the state's continuing economic recovery despite a past year of fires, floods, a school shooting in Arapahoe County and the murder of his Department of Corrections chief, Tom Clements.

But Colorado's story is not about the tragedies of the past year, the governor said. "Our story is about how we came together and have been getting it done. Our story is that we have learned that we are at our best, that Colorado is at her best, when we are connected to one another, working together."

"Moving forward, our priorities are clear. We are going to remain focused on jobs, education and ensuring that we have a state that is as healthy as it is fiscally sound" through improvements in state government service and efficiency. He did ask lawmakers to pass legislation on high-speed Internet access for rural communities and other unserved parts of the state, and to extend a job-creation tax credit from five years to seven. The governor lent his support to Senate Bill 14-001, which proposes \$100 million for higher education with a 6 percent cap on tuition rate increases.

He also asked legislators to pass a bill to strengthen penalties for oil and gas companies that violate state permits and rules but did not call for expanding those rules.

The Hickenlooper administration plans to complete a Colorado water plan this year that would emphasize conservation, incremental storage and drought mitigation. "We must create alternative choices to buy-and-dry. No matter where we live, we cannot afford to let our farm and ranch land dry up," he said.

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