

## COLORADO

# Governors foresee online agencies

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LAS VEGAS — Those endless, torturous lines at the Department of Motor Vehicles may soon be a thing of the past as state governments go online, allowing residents to get services through their personal computers.

Computerizing state agencies has always been a daunting task, so Western governors are joining forces now to speed their introduction into the information age. The Western Governors Association began hammering out the SmartStates initiative, as it is called, on Thursday at the start of a two-day meeting.

“Basically the idea of Smart-

States is that it makes no sense at all for Utah to undertake the task of revamping our child welfare system — creating a system to transform it — and have the state of Nebraska doing exactly the same thing 800 miles way,” Utah Gov. Mike Leavitt said in the opening address.

Leavitt’s staff demonstrated the SmartUtah home page, which is scheduled to go on the Internet today. In addition to serving as a communication tool among the different state governments, the home page will allow Utah residents to renew their driver’s licenses in an easy-to-use format.

Colorado Gov. Roy Romer echoed Leavitt’s excitement and

urged the governors and university administrators in attendance to use these new technologies to create a “virtual university” that will allow Western states to share their educational resources.

“Technology through distance learning, through the Internet, through computer learning, through virtual reality and all kinds of things is going to enable citizens to begin to acquire skills to experience the knowledge in volumes,” Romer said.

“In my vision, in 10 years eight states or maybe 18 states in the West have a location in the state and it is the virtual university provider . . . but that location is not necessarily a place where teaching occurs,” he said.