



**Operation RE/MAX Boosted by New Initiative
Launched by Departments of Labor and Defense**

(November 14, 2007) - Operation RE/MAX, which assists military spouses in launching careers in real estate, is among various programs in the private sector that will be affected by a dramatic new partnership announced today at the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. by the U.S. Departments of Labor and Defense.

Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao jointly announced the Military Spouse Career Advancement Initiative. The \$35 million program will assist military spouses in pursuing educational opportunities that will lead them to rewarding careers. The three-year pilot program will begin in January 2008, in eight states, including Colorado. 18 military installations in those eight states, including Fort Carson and Peterson Air Force Base in Colorado Springs, will participate.

"We owe it to our brave men and women in uniform, to assist their families, as they do their job, often thousands of miles from home and family, and under extremely hazardous conditions," said Gates.

"Support back home means so much to our military," said Chao. "Knowing that their spouses are keeping things together at homes alleviates a lot of stress and allows our service men and women to focus on their jobs, and that saves lives."

Military spouses suffer an unemployment rate that is three times their civilian counterparts, while nearly 77 percent of them report that they want or need to work. Almost three-fourths of military spouses say the cost of continuing their education is more than they can afford.

Funding through the new initiative will make it possible for eligible candidates to receive Career Advancement Accounts in the amount of \$3,000 for one year, and renewable a second year for an additional \$3,000. The money can be used for postsecondary education and training, tuition, books, licensing fees and related expenses.

Operation RE/MAX, which was launched by real estate franchisor RE/MAX International in August 2006, assists military spouses in starting careers in real estate, ranging from office support staff to real estate agents. More than 1,000 RE/MAX offices across the United States have enrolled in the program, and hundreds of military spouses have obtained employment at RE/MAX offices. Those individuals, and future enrollees, will be eligible for financial assistance via the new initiative.

LaVerne Bintner, vice president of Corporate Training at RE/MAX International, who manages

Operation RE/MAX, attended the announcement ceremony and said he was excited about the benefits that would be available to Operation RE/MAX participants through the Initiative.

"We are proud to help military spouses launch careers in real estate and we are excited about how Operation RE/MAX integrates perfectly into this new initiative," said Bintner.