

Governor Bill Richardson, President of Spain Jose Maria Aznar Make Historic Visit to The Palace of the Governors And The Cathedral of Santa Fe

For Immediate Release
July 12, 2003

Contact: Pahl Shipley
505.476.2202

SANTA FE- New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson and President of Spain Jose Maria Aznar attended a brief ceremony today at the Palace of the Governors in Santa Fe, the oldest continuously occupied building in the United States. It is the first time a sitting Spanish President has visited New Mexico.

The ceremony was hosted by Ruben Smith, New Mexico Secretary of Cultural Affairs, and was a celebration of the deep, common roots of art and culture shared by Spain and New Mexico.

Following the event at the Palace of Governors, President Aznar and Governor Richardson walked to the Cathedral of Santa Fe, where President Aznar placed a wreath at the base of a sculpture in the courtyard of the Cathedral.

Here are Governor Richardson's prepared remarks for the ceremony at the Palace of the Governors:

"President Aznar, distinguished guests, I welcome you to the oldest and most historic building in a city, and a state overflowing with history, and culture.

It is symbolic that we meet today in the place of my inauguration, and the inauguration of many past Governors- an important link to our past that we must continue to treasure, and to preserve.

We must honor, and preserve our past to prepare for a brighter future. Our common heritage and history must never be forgotten.

Our cultural bonds run deep, with the influence and effect of Spanish art, architecture, and design seen throughout Nuevo Mexico.

This weekend Spain is once again prominently on display in Santa Fe- two prestigious Spanish galleries and the ten artists they represent are exhibitors at the annual Art Santa Fe celebration. This is just one exciting and gratifying example of the artistic exchange and collaboration between our two countries that has been forged over centuries, is strong today, and will continue to grow in the future.

Senor Presidente, it is impossible to stand here with you in this place, and not feel the overwhelming sense of history and the significance of your visit, and the strength of the friendship our countries share.

Once again, thank you for coming to New Mexico, and thank you for your unwavering support of the United States.

It is my honor, and privilege to present to you the President of Spain, Jose Maria Aznar.”