



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson

Governor

For immediate release
7/10/03

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GOVERNOR BILL RICHARDSON NAMES NEW MEMBERS TO THE STATE HIGHWAY COMMISSION

SANTA FE – Governor Bill Richardson today announced the appointments of four new members who will serve on the New Mexico Highway Commission.

Governor Richardson delivered the following remarks at a news conference:

I'm delighted today to announce four new appointments to the New Mexico Highway Commission.

As you may recall, the Legislature passed a bill, which I signed, giving the Governor the prerogative to replace members of the Highway Commission. This is an important change because I believe that, as Governor, I should be able to shape the commission in such a way that it reflects the policy priorities of my administration.

Let me give you a quick example. Later today, I will address the first-ever New Mexico Multi-modal Summit. I will emphasize my desire to design a more modernized, balanced approach to the state's transportation needs. While I believe quality highways are important for the economic development of the state, I also think we should integrate the highways, rails, bike trails, airports, walking paths and public transportation – to provide our citizens with safe, efficient transportation choices.

I want a Highway Commission that will embrace these and other innovative ideas. Perhaps just as important, I want a commission that will work with my Transportation Secretary Rhonda Faught, in order to implement a unified agenda.

The new Park-and-Ride in the Pojoaque corridor is a prime example. I want the Transportation Department and Highway Commission to work together on more of these kinds of projects.

I've already appointed two members to the Highway Commission – David Schutz of Santa Fe and Gregory Ortiz of Acoma Pueblo. They were confirmed by the state Senate.

Let me tell you a little bit about the newest members of the commission. They are:

Jim Franken, of Las Vegas, is vice president and general manager of Franken Construction Company, a general construction company that employs 75 people in northern New Mexico.



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Norman Assed, of Albuquerque, has operated various businesses in Gallup, Santa Fe and Albuquerque since 1975. he currently owns and operates Universal jewelers and Trading Company in Albuquerque.

Johnny Cope, of Hobbs, is a longtime businessman with 29 years experience as a general contractor and real estate developer. He has 15 years experience in the oilfield services industry.

Bud Hettinga, of Las Cruces, is a former state legislator who has 31 years experience in industrial construction and road, drainage and utility construction. He is president of four corporations.

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