

Governor Bill Richardson's Introduction of Mexican President Vicente Fox
to Joint Session of New Mexico Legislature
Tuesday November 4, 2003

For Immediate Release
November 4, 2003

Contact: Pahl Shipley
505.476.2299

SANTA FE- Here is Governor Bill Richardson's prepared introduction of Mexican President Vicente Fox to a joint session of the New Mexico Legislature today in Santa Fe:

"This is truly an historic day. For the first time in the history of our state, we are honored to welcome into the chamber of the New Mexico House of Representatives, and it is fitting that it is in this--- The People's House, the distinguished President of Mexico, President Vicente Fox, his wife, La Senora Marta de Fox. President Fox---You are a true champion of Democracy and a strong voice for equality, for human rights, for governmental reform and economic progress for all your people. Those are the ideals that brought you to power and those are the principles for which you will always be remembered.

Although New Mexico and Mexico share a common history, share a common culture, a heritage we are all proud of, this is the first time a sitting President has visited New Mexico.

New Mexico is home to more than three-hundred-thousand Mexican nationals. Our history is one of mutual respect and cultural pride. From the language many of us speak to the border we now share, we are joined today in a common goal----greater prosperity for all our peoples.

This day will forever mark a new beginning in cooperation between our two peoples and forever shut the door on a time when relations between our two peoples suffered from a lack of focus and direction. Mr. President-welcome to a new-New Mexico.

I also, want to welcome four of my colleagues from Mexico, distinguished governors:

I am honored to welcome four of my esteemed colleagues- distinguished Governors Pablo Salazar Mendiguchia of Chiapas, Juan Carlos Romero

Hicks of Guanajuato, Lazaro Cardenas Batel of Michoacan, and Tomas Yarrington Ruvalcaba of Tamaulipas. Bienvenidos.

I also want to honor my good friend, the honorable Luis Ernesto Derbez, Foreign Secretary of Mexico.

This visit sends a strong signal to the businessmen and women in New Mexico and throughout Mexico that now is the time to increase trade, increase economic cooperation, increase our educational exchanges, our student exchanges, and our border cooperation. If we are courageous, if we are bold, if this day truly marks a new beginning, if we stay the course, the Mexico and the New Mexico border economies will continue to grow.

I was proud to be the first border state to pass a law in support of the Matricula Consular, and nearly 7-thousand licenses have been issued under this program.

Make no mistake- trade with Mexico is a priority for my administration.

Mexican-New Mexican trade is the fifth wheel in my trade plan for New Mexico. I am proud to report that trade between us has nearly doubled this year over last. By the end of August, we had exported \$127 million, vs. \$117 million for all of last year. If this pace continues, we will export over \$200 million this year for the first time;

And I want to see it double every year. Technology, vehicles, agriculture, there is so much opportunity for us to expand our trade, create jobs and deepen our ties.

I have injected millions of dollars into Border infrastructure projects: Upgrading each port of entry and preparing to open a fourth border crossing at Sunland Park and establishing an intermodal facility at Santa Teresa;

I am supporting innovative technology developed in the state to increase the speed of border crossings.

We are discussing expansion of our energy relationships and exploring two cross-border gas projects.

I signed a border health agreement that is already making a difference in the quality of health care for our two peoples.

We have come a long way since January, but we have much to do. We must build on our momentum.

But Mr. President, distinguished guests--- this day, this visit will never be forgotten.

I am proud to introduce to you, Senor Vicente Fox, El Presidente de Mexico.”