

**Joint Statement by President of Mexico Vicente Fox  
and New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson  
Santa Fe, New Mexico  
November 5, 2003**

President Fox has just concluded a very successful visit to New Mexico – his first to the state and the first of a sitting Mexican President here. He came as a result of my invitation. I visited the President in Mexico City in June. The visit further deepened our cultural and economic ties through the President’s meetings with educators, business leaders and the legislature.

In our meetings, we built on the agenda we had outlined in Mexico City. We both strongly welcomed the increase in trade between New Mexico and Mexico, brought about in part due to the attention the President has paid to New Mexico and in both the President’s and my efforts to bring their communities and business leaders together. Through August, New Mexico exported 127-million dollars of goods to Mexico, compared with 72-million dollars in the same period in 2002 – the highest rate of growth of any state.

A major factor in our increased trade is the improvements both sides have made to border infrastructure. I thanked the President for making Mexico’s border with New Mexico a priority. In particular, the Mexican federal government fulfilled a commitment made in June to move a checkpoint on Highway 45, allowing traffic to more easily flow through the San Jeronimo-Santa Teresa port. We agreed today to continue infrastructure improvements. In addition, I shared with the President my support of technologies that would continue to increase the speed by which commercial traffic flows between the state and Mexico. Finally, I gave the President an update on the progress that has been made on moving the rail lines from El Paso-Juarez to San Jeronimo-Santa Teresa, which would relieve congestion from downtown Juarez and help increase even more trade between New Mexico and Mexico.

We also recognize that the bond between our people is deeper than just trade. Our histories are intertwined and, for that reason, we should welcome each other. The President recognized that I was the first border governor to recognize the Matricula Consular, and he was pleased with New Mexico’s newly established “Paisano program” that will provide additional staff and facilities at New Mexico’s border crossings during the holidays to better welcome Mexican citizens visiting New Mexico. In addition, the New Mexico Department of Health has, since June, begun providing its Mexican counterpart with bilingual materials about immunization; diabetes and disease management; nutrition; epidemiology and environmental health. The Department of Agriculture is cooperating with its Mexican counterparts on bio-terrorism in the border region to ensure that all our peoples are safe.

We also welcomed the progress that has been made between Sandia National Lab and CONACYT on the Bi-National Sustainability Laboratory.