



# State of New Mexico

## *Office of the Governor*

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### **Governor Bill Richardson Signs Agreements with Chihuahua Governor Jose Reyes Baeza on Trade, Tourism Initiatives**

*Governors promote increased trade between maquilas in Chihuahua and New Mexico businesses, announce bi-national road race and encourage 24-hour operations for Santa Teresa/San Jeronimo Point of Entry*

CHIHUAHUA, MEXICO--Governor Bill Richardson and Chihuahua, Mexico Governor Jose Reyes Baeza today signed agreements putting into motion significant trade and tourism initiatives, and met to discuss a range of other economic and cultural development issues.

“I am committed to building on the strong cultural, trade and tourist ties New Mexico has with the state of Chihuahua,” said Governor Richardson. “We are moving forward with initiatives that will improve the quality of life, enhance the business attractiveness and increase the tax base for both New Mexico and Chihuahua.”

The trip is Governor’s first visit to Chihuahua since Governor Baeza took office in October, and follows a visit Governor Baeza made to Santa Fe in November.

The Governors signed an MOU (memorandum of understanding), pledging to continue to cooperate on a unique initiative, known as the Maquila Supplier Program, to expand business relationships between Chihuahua-based maquiladora - or “twin plant” - factories, and New Mexico businesses, by working with maquiladora managers to recruit their suppliers to the New Mexico-Chihuahua. Bringing those suppliers to the region

reduces costs for the maquiladoras and improves their manufacturing flexibility. This program also gives maquilas access to New Mexico's technology and education institutions for licensing, technology transfer and training opportunities.

The Governors discussed how to implement a 24-hour schedule for the busy Point of Entry between Santa Teresa and San Jeronimo, beginning with non-commercial traffic. This POE has recently been expanded to offer full service permitting. Keeping the crossing open 24 hours would further improve its efficiency and effectiveness for both countries.

The Governors also signed an MOU to plan for a bi-national New Mexico-Chihuahua off-road race. This race, anticipated to first occur in 2006, would be from Albuquerque to Chihuahua, passing through towns and villages in both countries en route. Proposed by the New Mexico Sports Authority, it will bring visibility, economic benefits and tourists to the region.

Finally, the Governors pledged to work together to lift Mexico's federal restrictions on New Mexico beef exports. The Governors plan to communicate with Mexico's Secretary of Agriculture, Javier Usabiaga.

Governor Richardson was accompanied on the trip by New Mexico Secretary of Economic Development Rick Homans. The Governor and the Economic Development Department have made increasing trade and improving relations with Mexico a priority for the administration. Trade with Mexico has more than doubled since Governor Richardson took office.

While in Chihuahua, Governor Richardson was also expected to join Governor Baeza at a luncheon with the state's judicial branch, and to attend traditional holiday festivities in the city's main plaza.