



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson
Governor

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Contact: Gilbert Gallegos
(Santa Fe) 505-476-2217

Governor Bill Richardson's transportation financing plan wins national recognition

SANTA FE - Governor Bill Richardson's \$1.6 billion transportation and economic stimulus plan, known as GRIP, received national recognition for being innovative and fiscally responsible.

"When I campaigned for Governor, I promised to invest in solutions that help move New Mexico forward," Governor Bill Richardson said. "With GRIP, we're improving highways in every corner of the state, investing in commuter rail and pumping billions of dollars into our economy. This national award validates our efforts to improve New Mexico, while being fiscally responsible with taxpayer dollars."

The financing plan that used an innovative debt structure by using both state and federal money for 40 highway improvement projects across New Mexico was named Bond Buyer Deal of the Year, Honorable Mention for the Southwest Region. More than 6,000 financial deals vied for this prestigious award given to the best financial plans each year.

This plan also allowed the state to refinance its existing transportation debt at lower interest rates and maintain its current bond rating, while realizing a savings of \$117 million for New Mexico taxpayers. Under this plan, the state effectively leveraged its federal revenues to start GRIP construction projects sooner than would otherwise have been possible.

Transportation Secretary Rhonda Faught and New Mexico Finance Authority Executive Director Bill Sisneros received The Bond Buyer award in New York this month.

“This is the largest transportation financing package this year and the innovative credit structure should serve as a model for other transportation agencies across the country,” Faught said. “I am really pleased with this outcome because it allows us to make the much-needed improvements to our highways in a fiscally responsible fashion.”

Several highway improvement projects under GRIP have already started, and a majority of them have been awarded to New Mexico contractors or firms with strong New Mexico ties. GRIP is expected to create thousands of jobs each year for the next six to eight years, enhance safety on New Mexico roads and highways, employ hundreds of New Mexico business and have a \$10.9 billion direct savings impact on the residents of New Mexico in terms of commuter cost, safety and vehicle operating costs.