



## State of New Mexico

*Office of the Governor*

### **Governor Bill Richardson Congratulates New Mexico Lottery for Reaching \$200 Million in Education Payments**

For Immediate Release

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February 11, 2004

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SANTA FE- Governor Bill Richardson today congratulated officials of the New Mexico Lottery for reaching \$200 Million in payments to the state, all benefiting education. The Governor joined Legislators and other dignitaries at a news conference in the Capitol Rotunda, and delivered the following remarks:

“I am proud to be a part of this celebration for the New Mexico Lottery “**Success**” Scholarship Program. What a terrific milestone- \$200 Million in payments funding my top priority, and yours- education.

Since 1997, more than 25,000 New Mexico students have benefited from the Lottery “Success” Scholarship. There are now two-dozen public two and four-year colleges where New Mexico students can have their *entire* in-state tuition paid for, as long as they keep their grades up and go to school full-time.

The Lottery has returned a multi-million dollar profit every year for New Mexico, and has set records the last four years. The Lottery, and the Lottery “Success” Scholarship, are both financially strong. In fact, it’s estimated that by the end of the next fiscal year, the Lottery Fund balance will be \$63 Million.

The financial strength of the lottery fund is one reason I’m proposing to *expand* the Lottery Success Scholarship program, a plan endorsed by the Commission on Higher

Education. Let's take just two million dollars, a small fraction of the balance, to offer opportunities to low income New Mexicans who may not meet the criteria for the regular scholarship- For example, if they have to take some time off after high school before starting college. Or, if they leave the state, and want to return later and go to college. While they're cutting student aid in Washington, now, more than ever, we need to reach out and expand these opportunities. Let me be clear- THIS WILL NOT CHANGE THE CURRENT PROGRAM, which is working so well.

The value of the Lottery Scholarship Program is not just reflected in numbers. It's reflected in the faces, and in the lives of the New Mexicans who turn their scholarships into personal success.

People like Maria Barela, who attended Santa Fe Community College on a Lottery Success Scholarship just a year after the Lottery began. She graduated with a degree in Business Administration, and is now a full-time State employee at the New Mexico Commission on Higher Education. Maria's success has come full circle, since *she* now helps students and their parents with questions about the Lottery "Success" Scholarship, and other financial aid.

A moment ago you saw Michelle Lopez in the television commercial. Michelle received a B.B.A. from New Mexico State- the first in her family to graduate from college. She's now a graduate student, but still returns home on weekends to help on her family's farm near Socorro. She plans to work in higher education administration, hopefully in New Mexico!

To Tom Shaheen and his staff at the New Mexico Lottery, congratulations. To Maria, Michelle, and all scholarship recipients, we're proud of you-keep up the good work."

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