



First Lady Barbara Richardson Participates in “DWI Bewareness Day” at State Capitol

First Lady commends efforts to educate youth about alcohol abuse

For Immediate Release
January 20, 2005

Contact: Pahl Shipley
505-476-2202

SANTA FE- First Lady Barbara Richardson today participated in “DWI Bewareness Day” at the State Capitol. This is the fifth consecutive year for the event, which highlights statewide and nationwide efforts to reduce DWI and underage drinking.

“DWI receives most of the attention, and rightly so,” said Mrs. Richardson. “Drunk drivers kill and injure hundreds of New Mexicans each year. What I am glad to see is the attention now being paid to educating our young people *before* they develop problems with alcohol.”

The First Lady is a member of Leadership To Keep Children Alcohol Free, a unique coalition of governor’s spouses, federal agencies, and public and private organizations focused on preventing the use of alcohol by children aged 9-15.

“The average age that kids in New Mexico begin using alcohol is **12**. That’s *the average*. That means there are some who start later, but many who start at an even younger age. That’s not acceptable,” said Mrs. Richardson.

The First Lady toured the many exhibits and met with members of the various groups participating.

“Together, we are making a difference in New Mexico. The number of people dying in alcohol-related crashes is down. DWI arrests are up. The Governor has passed tougher penalties for DWI and providing or selling alcohol to minors. He’s back at this year’s session, looking for still tougher laws, including stronger penalties for repeat offenders,

and mandatory use of interlock devices for everyone convicted of DWI. More than ever before, we are united in our efforts to solve this problem.,” the First Lady added.

#30#