



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

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Governor Richardson Announces Alcohol-Related Fatalities And Injury Crashes Fell in Five New Mexico Counties

Santa Fe – Governor Bill Richardson announced today that alcohol-related injury crashes fell in each of the counties involved in the Five Counties Program, which is an effort to counter DWI in New Mexico. Governor Richardson launched the program last year.

Alcohol-involved injury crashes declined by 33% in Bernalillo County, 41% in Dona Ana County, 17% in McKinley County, 38% in Rio Arriba County and 15% in San Juan County. Alcohol-involved fatalities declined in four of the counties as well: Dona Ana (-74%), McKinley (115%), Rio Arriba (-33%) and San Juan (-38%). Alcohol-involved fatalities increased in Bernalillo County, going from 32 in 2004 to 39 in 2005.

"This represents progress in my administration's ongoing battle against DWI in New Mexico," said Governor Richardson. "Under my administration, we have enacted some of the nation's toughest DWI laws, including mandatory ignition interlock devices in the vehicles of all convicted DWI offenders, and we have implemented a public awareness campaign—"You drink, you drive, you lose."

The Five Counties Program is designed to combat DWI in the five New Mexico counties which have historically had the highest number of alcohol-related fatalities. Under the program, specialized full-time DWI officers have been hired in each of the counties and county-wide public awareness campaigns have been put in place.

New Mexico DWI Czar Rachel O'Connor said, "Law enforcement is a key component in the battle against DWI, and the coordinated effort of police agencies in New Mexico is producing results that are reflected in the 2005 data."

Governor Richardson added, "While we are encouraged by the success we've seen in the program, we know that DWI still remains a serious problem in our state, and it requires our constant attention and commitment to solve this ongoing problem that has been with us for decades."