



For immediate release
Aug. 2, 2007

Contact: Allan Oliver
(505) 795-3548

Governor Bill Richardson Orders Inspection of Key New Mexico Bridges

SANTA FE –Governor Bill Richardson today directed the Department of Transportation to conduct a comprehensive inspection of key New Mexico bridges as a result of the tragic bridge collapse on I-35 in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

“Today, I have directed our bridge inspection teams to immediately review the safety of four steel-truss bridges in New Mexico that have a similar construction to the bridge in Minneapolis,” Governor Bill Richardson said.

“We have an exhaustive bridge inspection program in New Mexico that identifies bridges in need of repairs or replacement every two years. When necessary, we conduct additional inspections and take action on bridges identified as deficient,” Governor Richardson said. “In light of the bridge collapse in Minneapolis, I’m ordering the Department of Transportation to take proactive steps to ensure our bridges are safe.”

The four steel-truss bridges include:

- I-25 near Nogales Canyon (Northbound and Southbound)
- US-64 Gorge Bridge near Taos
- US-54 near Logan on the Canadian River
- US-64 near Shiprock

“On behalf of the people of New Mexico, let me also express my deepest condolences to the family and friends of the victims of the tragic bridge collapse in Minnesota,” said Governor Richardson. “As always, the state of New Mexico stands ready to offer any assistance the state of Minnesota may require.”

“I want to assure all New Mexicans that our bridges are safe,” Transportation Secretary Rhonda Faught said. “If we have even a slightest of doubts on the structural integrity of a bridge, we conduct a thorough inspection to ensure we do not endanger public safety. If we determine if a bridge is not safe we either post weight restrictions or we shut it down.”

According to the Better Roads National Survey, New Mexico's bridges are ranked in the top twelve in the country. New Mexico's 15% deficiency average remains well below the national average of 22%.

Under Governor Richardson's leadership, the state is investing \$1.6 billion in transportation infrastructure programs known as GRIP. This program paved the way to construct and renovate bridges across our state and in high-traffic zones such as I-40 and Coors, I-40 and Washington, I-40 and Pennsylvania, I-40 and Louisiana, and I-40 and Tramway. Under Grip I, the state of New Mexico will also be building eight new bridges on US-54 and eight new bridges on US-491.