



For Immediate Release
July 16, 2008

Contact: Rachel O'Connor, DWI Czar
505-699-0748

Governor Bill Richardson Announces New DWI Initiatives in San Juan County

FARMINGTON – Governor Bill Richardson today announced new DWI initiatives targeted at San Juan County during a visit to Farmington. The first is an update to the successful public awareness campaign focused toward Native American communities. The second is a new pilot program that uses a non-invasive alcohol-testing system to identify drunk drivers quickly and effectively.

“Innovative programs like these have been instrumental in reducing DWI in New Mexico,” said Governor Richardson. “This expanded DWI public awareness campaign and new cutting edge alcohol testing tool are new weapons in the fight against drunk driving in San Juan County.”

The Governor kicked off Phase II of a billboard and print media campaign against drunk driving in Native American communities. Phase I of the campaign featured Navajo and other Native American celebrities with the simple message of *“I care if you are in a drunk driving crash.”* In Phase II of the campaign, two respected Navajo women: activist Grandma “Marjorie” Thomas and Miss Navajo 2007-2008 Jonathea Tso echo this message.

“The Native American billboard and poster campaign have been so well received that we decided to expand the billboards statewide in September to include these important new spokespersons,” said DWI Czar Rachel O’Connor.

Posters and handouts have been distributed throughout the Four Corners region. Billboards first went up in San Juan and McKinley County in January 2008.

San Juan County will also be one of five New Mexico counties to get new alcohol-testing technology. New Mexico company TruTouch is the maker of the cutting edge tool that tests for alcohol levels by shining light on the skin. Experimental results show that TruTouch’s alcohol testing results compare in accuracy and precision to those of evidentiary breath monitoring, while offering built-in identity verification.

The San Juan County pilot is one of five to be tested in New Mexico, with other pilots located in Bernalillo, Dona Ana, Sandoval and Lea Counties. The cost of the pilot project is approximately \$80,000.

Governor Richardson also announced he is adding a full-time court monitor for San Juan County. Mothers Against Drunk Driving will implement the court monitoring program to make sure that our courts remain in compliance with existing DWI laws.

###