



STATE OF NEW MEXICO
GOVERNOR BILL RICHARDSON



For Immediate Release
March 5, 2008

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Governor Bill Richardson's Vetoes Veterans Museum Act; Plans Task Force to Study Best Location for Museum

SANTA FE - Governor Bill Richardson today vetoed Senate Bill 349, the Veterans Museum Act and announced he will convene a task force to fully consider the most appropriate location for a state Veterans Museum. Veterans from around the state will serve on the task force.

"I strongly support building a museum to honor New Mexico's veterans and rich military history," Governor Richardson said. "Unfortunately, this isn't the bill to do it, because it discounts the input of our veterans statewide by designating a specific county as the location for the museum."

SB 349 stipulated that the Veterans' Museum be built in Dona Ana County. Veterans' Services Secretary John Garcia has heard from veterans all across New Mexico expressing concern that the bill was drafted without comprehensive input from the state's veteran community. Cultural Affairs Secretary Stuart Ashman noted that it is highly unusual for legislation to dictate the location of a state museum.

"Both Secretaries agree that the museum location requires further review," Governor Richardson said. "But I want to assure the veterans of Dona Ana County that the task force will strongly consider it as a location for the museum."

The task force will be comprised of Secretaries Garcia and Ashman and veterans from around the state, including Dona Ana County.

"While I still believe Dona Ana County is the best location of the museum, I support the Governor's decision to pay due diligence in selecting the best location," said JR Turner, Dona Ana County's field services officer of the New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services.

Governor Richardson also expressed his support today of the New Mexico Military Museum of History planned for Rio Rancho by signing SB 471, Severance Tax Bond Projects, which includes \$145,000 for the project.

