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Contact: Alarie Ray-Garcia  
(505) 231-7350

## **Governor Bill Richardson Helps Celebrate Three-Year Anniversary of the New Mexico Rail Runner Express**

ALBUQUERQUE – Governor Bill Richardson, joined by State Transportation Deputy Secretary Max Valerio and Mid Region Council of Governments Executive Director Lawrence Rael, today celebrated the three-year anniversary of the New Mexico Rail Runner Express at the Downtown Alvarado Transit Station.

“I’m proud to say that the Rail Runner has been a huge success in its first three years of operation and has become a symbol of pride for New Mexico,” Governor Richardson said. “I promised to provide an efficient and affordable commuter train system that provides a safe transportation alternative to our residents while boosting our economic growth and we’ve accomplished that and more.”

“Since we began service in 2006, ridership on the train has grown exponentially,” said Deputy Secretary Max Valerio. “It is exciting for us at the Department of Transportation to see more and more New Mexicans embrace Rail Runner service. It is a true representation of our multimodal vision—providing our citizens with clean, cost-effective transportation alternatives.”

“It’s hard to believe we’ve accomplished so much in three short years,” said Mid Region Council of Governments Executive Director Lawrence Rael. “It’s been very encouraging to watch the region ‘get connected’ each time we add a new Rail Runner station, or double our service area by opening the corridor to Santa Fe. This truly is the people’s train.”

Governor Richardson also announced the opening date of the N.M. 599 Station that will begin servicing southern Santa Fe and Santa Fe County residents on August 1. In addition, construction will soon begin on the new Lobo Station that will be located near Avenida Cesar Chavez. The station is scheduled to be up and running by the first home Lobo Football game on September 12.

The Rail Runner, which has become the fastest start-up of commuter rail service in the country during the past 20 years, currently carries about 4,700 commuters a day along the 100-mile corridor between the City of Belen and the City of Santa Fe.

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