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Governor Bill Richardson Announces 100 Days and Nights of Summer Kickoff

ALBUQUERQUE – Governor Bill Richardson was joined by actor Erik Estrada today to announce the kickoff for the 3rd Annual 100 Days and Nights of Summer, the intensive summer-long effort to keep New Mexico roads safe by cracking down on drunk and reckless drivers. Estrada is starring in the state’s new safe driving media campaign.

“Holidays and summer months are historically the deadliest on New Mexico roadways,” said Governor Bill Richardson. “Putting a stop to drunk driving remains our number one priority and that’s why we are increasing patrols in order to enforce our DWI, seat belt and speeding laws are crucial during this time.”

The 3rd Annual 100 Days and Nights of Summer campaign will run day and night from June 1st through September 7th. Law enforcement officers around the state will be increasing patrols and enforcement zones, focusing their efforts on drunk drivers, speeders and seat belt use.

“Checkpoints and saturation patrols are a valuable and effective deterrent,” said DWI Czar Rachel O’Connor. “Through 100 Days and Nights of Summer, we strive to prevent drinking and driving by conducting these highly visible enforcement campaigns.”

In 2008 traffic crashes claimed the lives of 118 during June, July, August and September, 56 of which were alcohol-related. In overall fatalities, that’s a 16% decrease, from a total of 141 deaths during the summer months in 2007.

“Through these intense efforts, we have seen a significant reduction in fatalities,” said Transportation Secretary Gary Giron. “We are committed to continuing this trend and encourage everyone to slow down, buckle up and drive sober this summer.”

In the state’s continuing efforts to make its public outreach efforts both educational and entertaining, this year officials recruited actor Eric Estrada to help out. Estrada will appear in a new DWI commercial, viral videos, billboards as well as radio commercials. The campaign will begin run alongside the campaign from June 1 through September 7. Estrada, known for his role as Officer Frank Poncherello, “Ponch,” in the 1970’s hit show CHiPs, was chosen because of his popularity and his association with law enforcement organizations.

