

2009 State-Tribal Leaders Summit

Issues and Proposed Solutions Regarding DWI Issues in New Mexico

The following issue and proposed solutions have been identified by Governor Richardson and his DWI Czar as an issue of importance to be discussed at the State-Tribal Leaders Summit on May 5, 2009. A goal of such inclusion is to continue and deepen the dialogue regarding DWI and discuss cooperative initiatives that can be started by the State and the Tribes to address this problem.

Problem Statement: Approximately 25% of all alcohol-related fatalities in New Mexico occur on tribal land. Native American fatalities caused by Driving While Intoxicated (“DWI”) incidents in New Mexico may actually be higher than the national statistics which show that Native Americans die in alcohol related crashes at a rate two to three times higher than any other ethnic group in the United States. Significant efforts in our State to address the high number of Native American fatalities caused by DWI began in 2003 when Governor Richardson signed legislation allowing the sharing of DWI conviction data between the State and Tribal governments. A more concerted effort, however, began in 2006 when Governor Richardson established the State-Tribal DWI Task Force and a Tribal DWI Coordinator was hired to work closely with the Governor’s DWI Czar to establish and enhance Tribal partnerships to reduce fatalities caused by DWI in our State. However, because of turnover in Tribal leadership, there exists a need to continually inform Leaders of the true problem that exists and the resources and cooperative initiatives that are available that could combat this significant problem.

Solution #1: Request Tribal participation (preferably through written agreement) in the NM Motor Vehicle Department’s License Revocation Program.

Solution #2: Commitment for continued or enhanced Tribal participation on the Governor’s State-Tribal DWI Task Force and related initiatives and in statewide DWI programs.

Solution #3: Development of Intergovernmental Agreements, including but not limited to Cross-Commission Agreements entered into by Tribes and Counties (and approved by the Governor) and/or Memoranda of Agreement which authorize a multi-agency Law Enforcement DWI Task Force to patrol and increase the number of DWI checkpoints and saturation patrols.