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Governor Bill Richardson and Tribal Leaders Hold Historic State-Tribal Leaders Summit

Fulfills Provision of New State-Tribal Collaboration Act

Pueblo of Acoma – Governor Bill Richardson and Tribal Leaders from 22 tribes, nations and pueblos met today for the 1st Annual State-Tribal Leaders Summit at Sky City Hotel Casino. The newly created annual summit will promote dialogue and collaborative problem-solving among the state’s executive and tribal leadership.

“Together, we have paved the way for future cooperative and productive state-tribal relationships between the state and 22 sovereign tribes, nations, and pueblos and, through our collaborative efforts, I am honored our 1st historic State-Tribal Leaders Summit was a success,” said Governor Richardson. “During my administration, we have made significant improvements on how the state and tribes work together and today was a high point in the history of state-tribal relations in New Mexico.”

The State Tribal Collaboration Act provides the framework for the state and tribes to work together to develop successful programs and services to benefit New Mexico’s Native American citizens. It also mandates a yearly Summit. The Act requires cabinet-level agencies to develop policies that promote beneficial collaboration between the state and tribal governments; designate agency tribal liaisons; provide for culturally appropriate training to state agency employees who work with tribes; and, provide annual reporting that accounts for each agency’s accomplishments pursuant to the Act.

“As evidenced in the success of today’s Summit, the State-Tribal Collaboration Act is already working to further strengthen the relationship between the state and the 22 sovereign tribes, nations and pueblos here in New Mexico,” said Secretary of Indian Affairs Alvin Warren. “From the ambitious agenda set out by our leaders today, a course of action has now been determined to jointly address some of the most pressing concerns and needs of tribal communities and improve government-to-government relations.”

Topics discussed at the 1st Annual Summit include tribal infrastructure, tribal economic development, Indian education and Indian healthcare. Joint priorities and solutions emerged as a natural outcome of the Summit dialogue including: enhancing the state’s Tribal Infrastructure Fund; exploring incentives for tribal economic development; increasing Native American student retention and success; implementing additional

prevention measures for chronic ailments and increasing the numbers of Native American health practitioners; and, further augmenting collaboration on DWI prevention and enforcement efforts.

Acoma Pueblo hosted the 1st Annual Summit at the Sky City Hotel & Casino. Governor Chandler Sanchez of Acoma Pueblo said, “It is a great opportunity to come together here today to address issues of mutual concern and continue to improve intergovernmental cooperation and coordination. This Summit brings us face to face, leader to leader, and sovereign government to government, to promote sustainable state-tribal collaboration and partnership. It is a proud day for us here at the Pueblo of Acoma and for the state as we partake in this unprecedented gathering.”

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