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Contact: Caitlin Kelleher  
505-476-2299

## **Governor Bill Richardson and New Mexico Tribal Leaders Hold 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual State-Tribal Leaders Summit**

Isleta Pueblo, NM – Governor Bill Richardson and members of his cabinet joined tribal leaders from the 22 tribes, nations and pueblos in New Mexico today for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual State-Tribal Leaders Summit at the Isleta Casino and Resort. Topics discussed at this year’s Summit include Indian education, tribal infrastructure, state-tribal collaboration on DWI and tribal economic development.

“Today’s Summit reflects the high priority my Administration has placed upon strengthening state-tribal relations,” said Governor Richardson. “Coming together with the leadership of the 22 nations, tribes and pueblos of the state, in a forum that promotes open communication and cooperation, embodies true government-to-government relationships. I am confident that we have set a strong precedent that will carry the dialogue into future administrations.”

The Summit is a requirement of the State Tribal Collaboration Act, which was signed by Governor Richardson in 2009. The Act codifies a proven framework for effective government-to-government communication and collaboration. The annual Summit provides an opportunity for the governor of New Mexico and the leaders of the 22 tribes, nations and pueblos to come together to address issues of mutual concern.

“The issues and solutions discussed today will help achieve goals important to all New Mexicans: improved regional and local economies; greater public safety; sufficient community infrastructure and enhanced educational opportunity for all of New Mexico’s children,” stated Secretary of Indian Affairs Alvin Warren. “My department looks forward to building stronger collaboration between state agencies and tribal governments as we work to implement the solutions agreed upon today.”

Several mutually beneficial actions were identified by Governor Richardson and tribal leaders, including: developing a “Uniform Tribal Application Portal and Process” to enhance and streamline funding for tribal infrastructure projects; increasing tribal access to the state’s Community Development Revolving Loan Fund; establishing a permanent tribal economic development advisory committee; increasing tribal participation in DWI initiatives and programs; pursuing full and effective implementation of the Indian Education Act to support the unique education needs of Native American students; and improving implementation of existing statutes to better support the teaching of Native languages.

“We are entering a new era of state-tribal relations, and communication and collaboration is essential to building strong, long-lasting partnerships,” Isleta Governor Robert Benavides said. “The tribes and the state have many shared interests and concerns. Our goal in coming here today was to sit at the table, and engage in true government-to-government dialogue, to find ways in which we can work together and learn together, so that we can continue to improve the relationship between the state and tribal governments to benefit all people in New Mexico.”

The State Tribal Collaboration Act also requires cabinet-level agencies to develop policies that promote collaboration between the state and tribal governments; ensures such agencies designate tribal liaisons; provides for training to state agency employees to work effectively with tribes; and mandates annual reporting on each agency’s accomplishments pursuant to the Act and the programs and funding it provides that directly benefit Native Americans.

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