



STATE OF NEW MEXICO
GOVERNOR BILL RICHARDSON



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Governor Richardson Highlights \$31 Million Recovery Act Award to Reconstruct U.S. 491

SANTA FE — Governor Bill Richardson today applauded the news that the Navajo Nation has been awarded \$31 million to continue reconstruction of U.S. 491 in McKinley and San Juan counties. The reconstruction includes expanding the highway from two to four lanes.

The award from the Federal Highway Administration is one of the competitive grants available via the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, known as a TIGER grant -- Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery. The agency was allocated \$1.5 billion to fund road, bridge, rail, and other projects nationwide.

The award was announced Wednesday afternoon by Federal Highway Administrator Victor Mendez in Albuquerque. The U.S. Department of Transportation received more than 1,400 applications from all 50 states, territories and the District of Columbia requesting funds for almost \$60 billion worth of projects. A total of 51 projects throughout the country will be funded through TIGER.

"This project is a major boost for Western New Mexico, and our state overall," Governor Richardson said. "This transportation project will create jobs, improve highway safety and contribute to the overall economic health of the region."

"This competitive grant award will add to the roughly \$1.2 billion in infrastructure New Mexico is expected to see over the life of the Recovery Act," said former Governor Toney Anaya, executive director of the New Mexico Office of Recovery and Reinvestment. "Stimulus spending is well underway in New Mexico, putting thousands of people to work."

Last year, the State Transportation Department broke ground on two projects along U.S. 491 funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act at a total cost of about

\$33 million. Work throughout the corridor includes adding an additional lane in each direction and rehabilitation of existing roadway.

“This highway is a vital regional roadway that has a significant impact on the lives of the people of the Navajo Nation, the residents of McKinley and San Juan counties and the Four Corners area,” said Transportation Secretary Gary L.J. Girón. “Completing the work along the corridor will provide these citizens with jobs now, a safe and efficient transportation upgrade for the future and long-term economic benefits.”

Current estimates show that New Mexico will receive more than \$3.4 billion from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, plus additional tax breaks and bond and loan authority. The Recovery Act includes money for education, transportation projects, the environment, Medicaid and local infrastructure, among other categories.

To learn more about the Recovery Act in New Mexico, visit www.recovery.state.nm.us. To view the announcement from the White House visit www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room.

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