



Bill Richardson
Governor

Rhonda Faught
Transportation Secretary

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News Release

Governor Richardson Announces the Opening of the GRIP Interstate 40/Coors Interchange

ALBUQUERQUE – Governor Bill Richardson and State Transportation Secretary Rhonda Faught, joined by city and county officials, opened the GRIP Interstate 40/Coors Interchange for traffic during a ceremony Thursday.

The \$91 million reconstruction project completed in record time is one of the biggest Governor Richardson’s Investment Partnership (GRIP) projects in the state. Twin Mountain Construction Co. of Albuquerque is the contractor on this project.

“I am committed to continuing our aggressive program of improving highways in New Mexico,” said New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson. “Today we celebrate better transportation for the people of Albuquerque, especially for the fast growing West Side. A new and improved Interstate 40/Coors Interchange will mean less traffic and safer roads.”

The newly-reconstructed interchange can accommodate up to 200,000 vehicles per day, creating a smoother commute for West Side residents. This interchange, which was built more than 40 years ago to handle 75,000 vehicles per day, has outlived its use because of growth on the West Side.

“This is a significant step for a multi-modal transportation system in the City of Albuquerque, and I will continue to call for innovative methods to help enhance west side commuting,” Albuquerque Mayor Martin Chavez said.

“I-40/Coors is the fourth of nine GRIP projects in the Albuquerque area to be completed,” Transportation Secretary Faught said. “This was a complex job that involved shifting the route of 140,000 drivers who move through the interchange each day. We did this with the least amount of impact for motorists.”

The speed limit on eastbound and westbound lanes will be restored to 65 mph. The speed limit on north and south bound lanes on Coors Boulevard will continued to be at 35 mph as crews will continue landscaping and other minor work until the end of July.

“The speed at which we continue to complete challenging projects like this one shows our Department of Transportation is the best in New Mexico’s history,” said New Mexico State Transportation Commission Chairman Johnny Cope. “We are improving driving conditions for our citizens and the traveling public, while aggressively pursuing multimodal initiatives such as park-and-ride and commuter rail as viable alternatives to automobiles.”

District Three State Transportation Commissioner Norman Assed said, “As a businessman myself, I understand the importance of convenient access to your business. This new interchange has not only enhanced safety for our residents, but has also improved access to west side businesses.”

District Three Engineer Larry Velasquez said, “We used the design-build method for this project. With this method, we were able to save time by designing the interchange as we built it.”

The new interchange also features pedestrian bridges and bicyclist routes, along with improved lanes for public transportation. The City of Albuquerque contributed \$13 million for aesthetic elements of the reconstruction. Albuquerque-based artist Karen Yank oversaw the selection of colors and artistic themes for the project. Yank used Albuquerque’s west mesa as her inspiration for abstract sculptures that adorn the pedestrian bridges.

"The Twin Mountain/PTG team worked hard to meet the project's goals and minimize disruptions to the traveling public," said Van Groves, President of Twin Mountain Construction. "While minor landscape activities will occur after the holiday weekend, drivers should not encounter any construction-related travel delays through the interchange."

GRIP is \$1.6 billion transportation program that is improving highways in New Mexico, creating new modes of transportation like bus services and commuter rail and providing local jobs.

News teams can take live shots of the interchange Friday morning. For more information, call Marissa Stone at (505) 827-5163 or (505) 490-0492 (cell).