**May 19, 2014**

## Press Release

**NMDOT Announces “Click It Or Ticket”**

**Seat Belt Enforcement Operation**
State, Local, and Tribal Law Enforcement Agencies Partnering to Save Lives

**Rio Rancho** - The New Mexico Department of Transportation is announcing New Mexico’s participation in the national “Click It Or Ticket” seat belt enforcement program. State, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies across New Mexico have joined the nationwide effort focusing on seat belt enforcement through the Memorial Day weekend.

“There is a simple thing we can all do to better protect our families,” said Governor Susana Martinez. “Buckle up, every time. It takes just a few seconds, and those seconds can save a life.”

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, approximately 43,000 people are killed in motor vehicle crashes throughout the U.S. each year, and traffic crashes are the leading cause of death for people under the age of 34. More than half of the children killed in crashes were not restrained. When child safety seats are used correctly they can reduce fatal injuries in infants by just over 70% and by 54% percent for toddlers. Also, motorists are 75 percent less likely to be killed in a rollover crash when wearing a seat belt. Under New Mexico law, all drivers and passengers are required to wear seat belts.

Nighttime vehicle occupants are among those least likely to buckle up and most likely to be killed in crashes when unrestrained. Therefore, nighttime enforcement has become a priority of the State of New Mexico and part of this “Click It or Ticket” mobilization.

The New Mexico Department of Transportation will also be coordinating their efforts to keep children safe by providing onesies, baby outfits with the BKLUP logo, to all New Mexico hospitals. These will be given to new parents to remind them about the importance of keeping their children safe.

New Mexico employs a diverse spectrum of resources and tools to encourage and enforce seat belt use. These include participation in national child safety restraint campaigns, education through media, public child passenger safety clinics, and law enforcement agencies enforcing the law. In addition to “Click It or Ticket,” New Mexico also participates in “Operation Buckle Down” and national nighttime enforcement programs. New Mexicans have already responded overwhelmingly to the effort to get people to buckle up. Studies have shown that New Mexico drivers and passengers had a combined seat belt use of 92%, six percentage points higher than the nationwide seat belt usage rate of 86%.

The NMDOT is also running a television commercial called *Buckle Up Baby* to coincide with the Click It Or Ticket operation. (see attachment)

###

Melissa Dosher, NMDOT Public Information Officer, 827-5526 (office), 469-5698 (cell) melissa.dosher@state.nm.us