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News Release

NMDOT Prepares For Annual Pilgrimage to El Santuario De Chimayo

Santa Fe – The highways and roads that lead to the village of Chimayo, New Mexico will be crowded next week as thousands of people begin their pilgrimage to el Santuario de Chimayo. The largest crowds will be seen on Good Friday, March 29, but road congestion and minor delays can be expected any time in this area during Holy Week, the week before Easter Sunday.

“Generations of New Mexicans have participated in the Holy Week pilgrimage to Chimayo and over the years this tradition has grown to include visitors to New Mexico as well,” said NMDOT District Five Engineer Miguel Gabaldon. “With the large number of pedestrians making the pilgrimage along our highways, we ask that everyone travelling during this time drive safely and that everyone exercise caution while driving or walking along any route to Chimayo.”

NMDOT District Five maintenance crews have begun sweeping operations and are preparing safe walking areas along U.S. Highway 84/285, NM 502, NM 503, and NM 76. Electronic message boards and other traffic signs will be placed along these routes to alert motorists to the expected large number of pedestrians on the road.

NMDOT maintenance crews will place trash receptacles along the roads and portable lighting structures will be stationed at strategic locations to aid night-time walkers.

The regulation against roadside vending on the highway right-of-way will be strictly enforced to protect the safety of pilgrims and motorists. Parking on Juan Medina Road in Chimayo will not be allowed. No open burning is permitted due to extreme wildfire danger.

Law enforcement and emergency responders will patrol all areas of the pilgrimage to enhance overall safety. Twenty-six local, state, federal, and tribal agencies have been involved in planning and preparation for emergencies that might arise during the pilgrimage. Planning is being coordinated by the Emergency Management Offices of Rio Arriba and Santa Fe Counties and the New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management.

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