**August 20, 2014**

## Press Release

**Governor Susana Martinez Directs NMDOT**

**To Initiate Suicide Prevention Measures at the Rio Grande Gorge Bridge**

**Santa Fe**- Governor Susana Martinez has directed the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) to initiate suicide prevention measures at the Rio Grande Gorge Bridge near Taos.

The NMDOT is currently designing a plan to install ten telephones located at or on the bridge that will be answered by the New Mexico Crisis Access Hotline. The design should be done by the end of August and will then be submitted out to bid for approximately thirty days, with construction to begin as soon as possible.

“Installing crisis prevention phones to help anyone considering hurting themselves is a step in the right direction,” said Governor Susana Martinez. “My hope is that connecting those individuals with prevention experts will help them decide that suicide is not the solution to whatever problems they are facing.”

Studies have shown success rates with installing phones on high bridges in other parts of the country. In particular, the mid-Hudson bridge in upstate New York has had phones connected to a suicide hotline for over two decades. According to a report on the New York State Bridge Authority’s website, more than 50 people have used the phones and have been persuaded to reconsider their actions.

The NMDOT will also update its 2009 study entitled *Rio Grande Gorge Bridge: Evaluation for Potential Suicide-Prevention Apparatus Installation.*

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