

State of New Mexico
Office of the Governor

Susana Martinez
Governor

Contact: Scott Darnell
(505) 819-1398
scott.darnell@state.nm.us

For Immediate Release
March 13, 2012

**GOVERNOR SUSANA MARTINEZ, STATE TRANSPORTATION AND
LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS KICK OFF DWI SUPERBLITZ**

Impaired Drivers Targeted during St. Patrick's Holiday Weekend

SANDOVAL COUNTY – Governor Susana Martinez today launched the St. Patrick's Holiday Mini Superblitz, a statewide collaborative enforcement effort targeting drunk drivers in New Mexico. The Governor was joined by Transportation Secretary Alvin Dominguez, Public Safety Secretary Gordon Eden, Sen. Lynda Lovejoy (D-Crownpoint), Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly, Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), and other law enforcement officials involved in combating DWI.

The St. Patrick's Holiday Superblitz begins March 14th and will run daily through March 19th, 2012. The Superblitz includes an increase in law enforcement efforts statewide and features an ad campaign showing the impact of alcohol and the dangerous consequences of driving while impaired.

Unfortunately, for the second year in a row, the legislature failed to act on proposed bills that would have cracked down on repeat DWI offenders, helping to take dangerous drivers off the roads and dangerous weapons out of their hands. Before the recent legislative session, Governor Martinez announced bi-partisan support for measures that would have increased penalties for repeat offenders, seized vehicles from individuals after a second DWI offense, and made felony DWI count when courts sentence a habitual offender.

“The high visibility of law enforcement statewide should serve as strong notice to these dangerous drivers; anyone who gets behind the wheel after drinking will face the full force of the law,” said Governor Martinez. “It’s unfortunate that lawmakers once again failed to act on proposed laws that would have made New Mexico’s roads safer and cracked down on repeat offenders, but I’m committed to ensuring that our officers and engineers are utilizing innovative and effective strategies to continue our fight to keep our roads safe and stop drunk drivers.

“Holiday weekends such as St. Patrick’s Day are typically a dangerous time on our roadways,” said State Transportation Secretary Alvin Dominguez. “It is our hope that along with the combined efforts of law enforcement, the citizens of New Mexico will make the right decision and will not choose to drink and drive.”

Today’s announcement came on U.S. 550 in Sandoval County, a corridor historically hard hit by DWI. Crash records indicate 28 alcohol-related fatalities have occurred on the highway over the past five years. Senator Lovejoy sponsored Senate Memorial 36, approved during this year’s legislative session, which prompts a study of increased safety measures for this stretch of highway along the northwest New Mexico arterial.

The New Mexico Department of Transportation, Traffic Safety Division has designated approximately \$75,000 in federal funds through the end of this year to support DWI enforcement on U.S. 550. Overall, \$2.4 million in federal funding from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) will support overtime enforcement for 89 law enforcement agencies statewide.

MADD’s Lora Lee Ortiz, who works daily with families forever impacted because someone made an irresponsible decision to drive while under the influence of alcohol, added, “One death is one too many, and that is why we must work together to put a stop to DWI. This Superblitz brings this message home.”

For additional information contact NMDOT Public Information Officer Manon Arnett at (575) 201-8283, or NMDPS Public Information Officer Lt. Robert McDonald at (505) 470-5662.

###