

**Comments of Transportation Secretary Rhonda Faught
100 Days and Nights of Summer News Conference
May 31, 2007**

I have set an important and achievable traffic safety goal for New Mexico this year: I want 2007 to be the year when we see at least a 10-percent decline in the number of overall traffic fatalities.

New Mexico Department of Transportation figures indicate that 484 people lost their lives in our state last year due to traffic crashes. That means nearly 500 families received the horrifying news that due to a traffic crash, a loved one was never coming home again. And while any single traffic fatality is one too many, I firmly believe we can reduce the number by 50 this year to reach our goal.

The 100 Days and Nights of Summer Campaign should help us achieve this goal, as it concentrates on some of the major causes of traffic crashes and injuries: DWI, excessive speed, and people not wearing seat belts.

More than 50 law enforcement agencies from throughout New Mexico including the New Mexico State Police, will be participating in the program.

As I mentioned before, seat belt enforcement will be a major element of the campaign.

1 in 10 drivers in New Mexico still don't buckle up and risk more serious injuries in case of a crash. Research shows that adults who don't buckle up often fail to buckle up their child passengers. That's why officers across the state will be issuing citations to motorists not wearing seat belts.

Fewer people buckle up at night than during the daytime. Remember that seat belts are the best defense against a drunk driver. Nighttime belt use will be a priority for enforcement officers.

Drivers of pickup trucks tend to buckle up less often than other motorists. In 2005, 66% of people killed in pickup trucks were not buckled up.

Speed...either excessive speed or driving too fast for conditions...caused more than 16-percent of New Mexico roadway fatalities last year. I'm hoping that the increased attention to speed during this campaign will reduce these numbers.

We know that many people hit the road during the summer months, so it is my hope that with the 100 Days and Nights of Summer campaign in place, this will be the safest summer ever recorded in New Mexico.