



**Bill Richardson**  
Governor

**Rhonda Faught**  
Transportation Secretary

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## **Transportation Secretary Rhonda Faught, along with state and local officials, break ground on Phase II of the New Mexico Rail Runner Express**

LA BAJADA— State and local officials including Transportation Secretary Rhonda Faught, Santa Fe Mayor David Coss and former Governor Toney Anaya broke ground on Phase II of the New Mexico Rail Runner Express to bring the commuter train from Albuquerque to Santa Fe.

“Today marks a major milestone in New Mexico transportation as we start construction to finally bring the New Mexico Rail Runner Express to Santa Fe,” Secretary Faught said. “With the addition of the Rail Runner we are providing thousands of New Mexicans a quick and easy way to commute to and from work. The train service will not only save people time and money, but it will help alleviate some of the stress on our roads by reducing the amount of vehicle miles traveled.”

State Transportation Commissioner David Schutz from Santa Fe said, “With the Park and Ride system celebrating its 1 millionth rider and the Rail Runner breaching 500,000 riders this summer, it is clear New Mexicans are eager to use alternative modes of transportation when given the opportunity.”

“The Commission and the Department are committed to providing New Mexicans an outlet for multimodal transportation,” said State Transportation Commission Chairman Johnny Cope. “Along with the extension of the Rail Runner to Santa Fe, we are also looking at ways to better serve the community with the addition of shuttle service and trails at stations.”

About 4,500 workers commute from Albuquerque to Santa Fe every day, with the average driver spending about \$13,500 per year on gas and maintenance. In the next 20 years, the estimated commute time from downtown Albuquerque to Santa Fe is expected to breach two hours. The extension of the Rail Runner will not only cut costs for commuters, but it will reduce the time they spend in traffic.

“With the projected growth of the central part of New Mexico, it is essential that we have an alternative transportation system to provide the convenience and ease of travel for those who work and recreate in this corridor”, said Lawrence Rael, Executive Director for the Mid-Region Council of Governments. “We cannot simply rely on the road system to solve all of our transportation needs. It has to be a multifaceted approach, and the Rail Runner serves the masses in the area. Future generations are going to be grateful to us for providing them with an alternative form of transportation.”

In August, the design-build contract was awarded to design firm HNTB, Twin Mountain Construction II Company and HERZOG Group. The completion of the project, that will bring service from Albuquerque to Santa Fe, is set for December 2008.

The second phase of the Rail Runner will run on existing BNSF track from Bernalillo to the base of La Bajada. The project will call for the construction of 22 miles of new track, where it will then connect to existing Santa Fe Southern track at St. Francis Drive and I-25. Construction will also include additional safety measures such as installing warning signals, quad gates, or a raised median and single gate between traffic lanes at each of the rail road crossings within city limits. These measures will also qualify crossings for quiet zones, which will prohibit trains from sounding their horns unless necessary. Additionally, track coming into Santa Fe will be fenced and posted.

During the construction phase, some lane closures are anticipated during overnight hours and traffic will be slowed in the work zone. Detailed information will be posted at [www.nmroads.com](http://www.nmroads.com) as soon as it becomes available.

Rail Runner is an important part of Governor Richardson's Investment Partnership (GRIP). GRIP is a \$1.6 billion transportation and infrastructure initiative that is improving highways in New Mexico, creating new modes of transportation like commuter rail and creating high-wage jobs.

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