

KEY FACTS ABOUT NEW MEXICO'S INTERSTATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM

The Dwight D. Eisenhower National System of Interstate and Defense Highways, which has been called the most ambitious public works project built since the Roman Empire, is the most critical link in New Mexico's transportation system.

- New Mexico has 1,000 miles of Interstate routes running the length of the state and connecting the state's major urban areas.
- New Mexico's Interstate system, which includes three percent of all roadway lane miles in the state, carries 29 percent of all vehicle travel in the state.
- Since funding of the Interstate system was approved in 1956, vehicle miles of travel in New Mexico have increased by 490 percent, the state's population has increased by 126 percent from approximately 840,000 million to 1.9 million and the number of vehicles in New Mexico has increased by 326 percent.

The state's Interstate Highway System saves the average New Mexico resident \$2,086 per year – approximately \$4 billion statewide -- in reduced accident costs such as medical expenses and lost productivity, the value of saved time and fuel, and reduced apparel, food, housing and transportation costs.

- By reducing travel times, the Interstate system saves each New Mexico resident 43 hours of travel time annually – 82 million hours statewide.
- New Mexico's Interstate system annually reduces statewide motor fuel consumption by 39 million gallons.
- Consumer costs have been significantly lowered by the Interstate Highway System. The cost of transporting goods has been reduced because the time it takes to make trips has been decreased.
- The following chart indicates the total annual savings per person and statewide of the Interstate system.

	Per Person	Statewide (millions)
Safety	\$246	\$468
Time and Fuel	\$690	\$1,313
Reduced Consumer Costs	\$1,150	\$2,189
Total	\$2,086	\$3,970

Traffic levels on New Mexico's Interstate highways are increasing as travel growth continues without the addition of new lanes.

- Between 1990 and 2004, vehicle travel on New Mexico's Interstates increased by 53 percent, while lane miles on the system increased by one percent.
- Between 1990 and 2004, the average annual amount of travel per Interstate-lane-mile in New Mexico increased by 52 percent.

Travel on New Mexico's Interstate highways is safer than travel on all other roadways in the state. New Mexico's Interstates provide travelers with a network of highways with a variety of safety designs that greatly reduce the likelihood of serious accidents.

- New Mexico's Interstate highways have saved approximately 3,700 lives in New Mexico since 1956. This estimate is based on assuming that, if there were no Interstates, traffic would be carried by other major roads in the state, which have higher traffic fatality rates.
- The features that make Interstates safer than non-Interstate routes include: a separation from other roads and rail lines, a minimum of four-lanes, gentler curves and often paved shoulders, median barriers and rumble strips to warn drivers when they are leaving the roadway.

The Interstate system is the backbone of the New Mexico economy and has played a critical role in improving business productivity in the state.

- Every year, \$15 billion in goods are shipped from sites in New Mexico and another \$34 billion in goods are shipped to sites in New Mexico, mostly by truck.
- Seventy-five percent of the goods shipped annually from sites in New Mexico are carried by trucks and another eight percent are carried by courier services, which use trucks for part of the deliveries. Similarly, 70 percent of the goods shipped to sites in New Mexico are carried by trucks and another 16 percent are carried by courier services, which use trucks for part of their deliveries.

Data from the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the U.S. Census Bureau was compiled and analyzed by TRIP, a nonprofit transportation research group based in Washington, D.C. Information is the latest available.

