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For Immediate Release

State Looks to Valencia County for Health and Human Services Transportation Initiative

Santa Fe, April 28, 2004 – The Human Services Department, the Department of Transportation and several other state agencies that fund statewide transportation services will hold a meeting **Tuesday, May 4, in the Los Lunas Village Hall from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.**, to discuss transportation options with Valencia County elected officials. Millions of state and federal dollars are funneled into Valencia and other counties each year by state agencies that provide transportation for the elderly, the disabled, school districts and for job search and non-emergency health-related activities.

Legislation (HB 412) signed into law in 2003 by Governor Richardson has the Human Services Department taking the lead in finding better ways to share resources devoted to health and human services-related public transportation through pilot projects or by other means. The Intrastate Human Services Transportation Coordinating Committee (IHSTCC) has been meeting since August 2003 to do this, and is looking to Valencia County to take the lead in this collaborative effort.

“What we have learned is that transportation services for many low-income and elderly families are often confusing and not cost effective, and it shouldn’t have to be this way,” said Liz Stefanics, a Deputy Secretary for the Human Services Department and member of the IHSTCC. “One option is for all state agencies to work together with one transportation provider that serves all Valencia County residents.”

At the meeting on Tuesday, county leaders will be offered information on ways to pilot a program that finds better ways to use state-funded transportation services. “We would like Valencia County to be a part of this effort because the county has a mix of urban, rural and tribal populations,” said Stefanics. The pilot project could serve as an example for other counties across the state.

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