



New Mexico DEPARTMENT OF  
**TRANSPORTATION**

**Michelle Lujan Grisham**, Governor  
**Michael R. Sandoval**, *Cabinet Secretary*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Feb. 8, 2021

## **Pandemic broadens NMDOT's outlook to lay groundwork for a connected future**

SANTA FE – The New Mexico Department of Transportation is committed to helping build out the information highways in New Mexico to connect rural communities to vital digital resources while enhancing mobility and safety on state highways.

“The pandemic forced New Mexico to rely heavily on internet access, making broadband even more essential,” said Transportation Secretary Mike Sandoval. “Digital expansion has been a passion project of the department for a while, but the urgent need for telecommuting, distance learning and telemedicine has fueled the drive to make internet access for every New Mexican a reality.”

The DOT is looking ahead at what it would take to piggyback fiber optic infrastructure with current and future road construction projects to achieve dig once practices and help make future broadband expansion projects more friendly for industry partners.

Additional fiber infrastructure would also enhance the department's Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) which allows DOT to install additional digital message boards, cameras, and weather sensors, to provide real-time road condition information through the NMroads application.

“As existing roads are reconstructed, there's an opportunity to install fiber conduit while the road is torn up, so you're not digging twice, which minimizes the impact on the environment,” said Sandoval. “Building both literal and digital highways will provide innovative, sustainable infrastructure that serves the entire state.”

NMDOT is also partnering with the New Mexico Economic Development Department (NMEDD) to conduct a stratospheric broadband infrastructure assessment which will not only assess the connectivity opportunities for rural New Mexico, but also identify the connectivity opportunities for transportation needs of New Mexico.

“We have a long way to go, but the department is taking immediate action, gathering data and taking the necessary steps to ensure DOT plays a significant role in broadband accessibility,” adds Sandoval.

###

**NMDOT**

*Mobility for everyone*

**Marisa Maez**, *Communications Director* | [Marisa.Maez@state.nm.us](mailto:Marisa.Maez@state.nm.us) | 505 469 8243