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*Press Release*

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## **NMDOT Provides Safe Walking Routes To El Santuario de Chimayò**

*SANTA FE* -- The New Mexico Department of Transportation is committed to creating safe passages along state highways for the annual Pilgrimage to El Santuario de Chimayò. The National Historic Landmark carries religious significance and is said to have sacred soil within its walls containing miraculous healing powers. The Northern New Mexico shrine draws thousands of people during the week leading up to Easter Sunday. NMDOT Sec. Mike Sandoval says, “The pilgrimage to Chimayò is a special, longstanding New Mexico tradition. NMDOT will do everything possible to make sure walkers have a safe journey.”

Some pilgrims will begin their journey from as far away as Albuquerque (91 miles) to visit the site during Holy Week, with the largest crowds on Good Friday, April 19. Pedestrians will be walking on high-traffic roadways. Maintenance crews have been preparing for large crowds coming from all directions leading to the village of Chimayò.

Most pilgrims travel along Highway 84/285 which runs from Santa Fe to Espanola, through Pojoaque and Nambe. Crews are also preparing N.M. 503, 103, 599 and 76. Pedestrians walking at night can expect portable lighting structures stationed at specific locations. Trash receptacles will also be placed along the routes. Traffic signs and electronic message boards will alert motorists to be aware of people walking along these roads.

NMDOT wants to remind drivers to watch for walkers and expect road congestion and minor delays on roads leading to the church.

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