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NMDOT hires security guards to patrol rest areas and the Rio Grande Gorge Bridge

SANTA FE – To improve overall safety for the traveling public and safeguard state owned property, the New Mexico Department of Transportation has hired private security guards to patrol selected rest areas and the Rio Grande Gorge Bridge.

Recent acts of vandalism and destruction of property at the bridge and the rest areas including the theft of toilet paper and soap dispensers prompted the department to take extra security measures.

“It’s about safety. We want travelers and truckers to feel secure while stopping to rest or use the facilities,” said Transportation Secretary Mike Sandoval. “The Rio Grande Gorge Bridge has also been hit by vandals recently and while the armed guards are not trained in suicide prevention techniques, the added security may serve as an indirect benefit to suicide prevention,” adds Sandoval

The two facilities currently under full-time surveillance for an undetermined amount of time are:

- The La Bajada-Centennial Rest Area near Santa Fe
- The Rio Grande Gorge Bridge in Taos

In addition, roving patrols are providing security at rest areas along I-25 and at the Mesa and Waldrop facilities.

As more security guards are recruited and trained, additional security services will be provided at the Las Cruces Overlook Rest Area, the Lordsburg Visitor Center and along I-10.

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