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EDD Officials and State of Chihuahua Representatives Travel to D.C. in Support of Extended Hours at Santa Teresa-San Jerónimo Port

SANTA FE, NM – The New Mexico Economic Development Department and New Mexico Border Authority today announced that they will send a joint delegation to Washington, D.C. along with representatives of the State of Chihuahua to formally recommend to United States Customs and Border Protection that extended hours of operation for crossings at the Santa Teresa-San Jerónimo Port of Entry remain in effect through August 31, 2008. The delegation is expected to meet with U.S. officials tomorrow, Friday, February 15. Extended hours at the crossing went in to effect on September 3, 2007 for a six-month trial period. The current trial period ends February 29, 2008.

Under the extension, hours for commercial import-export, normal entries and empty trailer crossings have been from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

“The goal was to increase usage of the Santa Teresa Port of Entry, especially for commerce, and we’ve seen extraordinary results,” said New Mexico Economic Development Department Cabinet Secretary Fred Mondragón. “Extending hours of operation at this point of entry has been a major boon to the economies of New Mexico, Juárez and Chihuahua.”

Record numbers of commercial crossings at the Santa Teresa-San Jerónimo Port of Entry were recorded for the consecutive months of October, November and December of 2007

Jaime Campos, Executive Director of the New Mexico Border Authority, stated: “The number of crossings has increased almost exponentially, and it is our hope that U.S. and Mexican Customs officials will see the benefit of the hours extension and eventually make it permanent. Doing so will provide greater development opportunities to industry in the region.”

Previous to September 3, 2007, operations at the Santa Teresa-San Jerónimo Port of Entry ceased daily at 6:00 p.m. Under the extended schedule, a large number of trucks have been able to utilize the Samalayuca-San Jerónimo Bypass at a reduced toll, thus avoiding Juárez traffic, and which takes them directly to the San Jerónimo Customs Facility.

“We’re nearing the end of our six-month trial period, and we believe the results have been adequately positive to warrant another six months with the extended hours so we can continue to collect data and evaluate the outcomes for commerce on both sides of the border,” said Juan Massey, Director of the NMEDD’s Office of Mexican Affairs. “I think we’ll have an even stronger case for making the extension permanent in six months time.”

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