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NEWS RELEASE

Governor Bill Richardson Announces Selection of State Parks Ranger Chris Bolen for Western Boating Officer of the Year Award

T or C, N.M. –Governor Bill Richardson announced today that Chris Bolen, marine enforcement officer at Elephant Butte Lake State Park, has been named the 2009 “Western Boating Officer of the Year” by the western states affiliate of the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA). This is the first time a New Mexico officer has received the award. The award makes Bolen one of three finalists for NASBLA’s 2009 “National Boating Officer of the Year” award. Governor Richardson made the announcement and congratulated Ranger Bolen this afternoon at the Richard Cooper Training Center at Elephant Butte Lake State Park.

“Chris Bolen is a great public servant and an example of how New Mexico is striving to have the best boating program and state park system in the nation,” said Governor Richardson.

“Officer Bolen is an excellent State Parks employee who has done so much to support ‘boat smart, boat safe’ programs,” said State Park Director Dave Simon. “He also represents well the men and women of New Mexico State Parks who work so hard to provide outdoor recreation opportunities for the public.”

Bolen was recognized for his discipline, courtesy and professionalism in boating education, law enforcement and community service. He helped rewrite training curriculum, revise policies for boating law enforcement and has coordinated numerous community safety programs. Ranger Bolen has served as marine enforcement officer at Elephant Butte Lake State Park for nine years and also serves the community as coach and volunteer for numerous service organizations.

Bolen will formally receive his award on June 22 at the Western States Boating Administrators Association Conference in Boise, Idaho. The winner of the NASBLA 2009 “National Boating Officer of the Year” award will be announced at the NASBLA annual meeting held Sept. 26 -30 in Corpus Christi, Texas.

Governor Richardson is a strong supporter of outdoor recreation and boating safety. Under his administration, new laws to improve boating safety and combat boating under the influence have been passed, and numerous state park projects have been completed to improve boating access facilities for the public. In 2006, Governor Richardson signed the New Mexico Boating Safety Law, which requires all motorboat operators who were not 18 years old as of January 1, 2007 to complete a safe boating education course and requires all children 12 years old or under to wear a lifejacket while on the deck of a moving vessel. The law won an award of recognition in September 2006 from the federal National Transportation

Safety Board.

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The Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department provides resource protection and renewable energy resource development services to the public and other state agencies.

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