



# NEW MEXICO PUBLIC REGULATION COMMISSION

FROM THE OFFICE OF DISTRICT 3 COMMISSIONER VALERIE ESPINOZA

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### Fire education and safety a priority for PRC's Valerie Espinoza *Tour of firefighter training academy reveals exemplary leadership at state level*

SANTA FE, N.M. — In the wake of multiple forest fires that devastated hundreds of home and property owners in northern New Mexico, Public Regulation Commission Vice-Chair Valerie Espinoza (District 3) has made it her mission to stay up-to-date on fire safety and regulation around the state.

Part of that mission included a recent visit to the New Mexico Firefighters Training Academy in Socorro, where Espinoza met with State Fire Marshal John Standefer to review and take part in some of the academy's safety training exercises.

The academy was created through legislative action in 1987 with the goal of providing high-level training programs to help emergency responders statewide.

Courses are designed to meet standards created by the National Fire Protection Association and to assist the local fire departments in complying with mandatory training requirements set by the State Fire Marshal's Office. The academy's certification programs are accredited by the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress.

Based on her experiences, Espinoza said the training academy is a state government jewel and deserves high praise for its operations and successes at the local level.

Approximately 4,000 first responders are trained each year at the academy. Although the majority of the students are members of the 367 fire departments in New Mexico, many come from other states, Indian Nations and the private sector.

"The state fire marshal and his staff have created one of the best and most important fire training facilities in the United States," she said. "New Mexico should be proud it has this high-level resource available to its first responders."

Espinoza also recently spearheaded a 25-member wildfire task force that includes representatives from government agencies, law enforcement units and utilities from around the state.

The group's mission is to achieve best practices for wildfire management as it relates to utility lines in forested areas, utility easements, and to gain helpful insight into fuel clearing and other vegetation management plans.

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