

CAMPAIGN AD WATCH

With 'Sheriff' Bill at the reins, times are changin'

*Governor parodies Western
movies to relay his message*

By Steve Terrell
The New Mexican

Editor's note: *This is one in a series of stories examining political advertisements for the Nov. 7 general election.*

Everyone knows Gov. Bill Richardson loves Hollywood, but his latest commercial shows the governor trying his hand at acting. It's a light-hearted spoof of Western movies, complete with soundtrack music from *The Magnificent Seven*.

In the ad, Richardson portrays a Western sheriff. A campaign e-mail describes it as a "tongue-in-cheek parody of Western movies," and says, "the commercial offers New Mexico voters a fun look at the serious changes we've seen around the state since Bill Richardson became governor."

While Richardson is playing cowboy, an unseen narrator brags about several issues including crime, job creation and the new commuter rail system. Even the punch line of the ad, "Next time, let's make a space movie," is an obvious reference to Richardson's plans to build a spaceport in Southern New Mexico.

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Bill: Shown on horseback chasing bad guys

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Title: *Western*

Duration: 30 seconds

Sight and sound: You see the governor in full Old West regalia — complete with sheriff's badge. He's shown on horseback supposedly chasing bad guys, waiting at an Old West train station, walking into a saloon and, in a gruff voice, ordering a milk.

The effect is supposed to be comical, though it also shows Richardson comfortable on a horse, a possible appeal to rural voters.

Most music in modern political commercials — including most of Richardson's — features soft, soothing piano or guitar when someone speaks of the candidate who is paying for the ad and pensive minor-key drones when someone speaks of the candidate's opponent.

But on *Western*, there's faux flamenco, suggesting old "spaghetti western" soundtracks at the beginning when "Sheriff" Richardson is standing on a dusty Old West street and up-tempo piano music — suggesting stereotypical "chase" music from silent movies — when Richardson's horse is galloping. In the last scene as Richardson and his "posse" ride into the sunset, the theme of the classic western *The Magnificent Seven* plays.

In the last scene as Gov. Richardson and his "posse" ride into the sunset, the theme of the classic western 'The Magnificent Seven' plays.

Text: Narrator: "Since Bill Richardson became governor, we've seen some changes."

Cowboy: "There's a new law man in town."

Richardson: "We'll head 'em off at the pass."

Narrator: "Doubled the violent offenders in prison. Over 400 meth labs shut down."

Richardson: "Gimme a milk."

Narrator: "72,000 more jobs and a new commuter rail system."

Richardson: "Times are changin'."

Narrator: "And six hundred million dollars worth of movie production. Governor Bill Richardson. Moving New Mexico forward."

Richardson: "Next time, let's make a space movie."

Accuracy: The number of meth labs shut down — also touted in a previous Richardson campaign ad — is based on Public Safety Department statistics covering the past three years and five months, up to May 2006 for state and local police agencies. The exact number is 436.

The \$600 million figure for "movie production" is not the actual amount of money Hollywood film companies have spent in New Mexico, but the estimated financial impact of movie productions, compiled by the state Film Office.

State Economic Development Department spokeswoman Katie Roberts said that figure is based on a "multiplier" of three to determine how film dollars circulate in the state. In other words, the actual money spent on films here since 2003 is closer to \$200 million. Most states use multipliers to determine the impact of film and other industries. Some states use higher multipliers; some use lower.

The claim of about 72,000 jobs created is based on state Labor Department statistics, which includes 22,800 jobs The University of New Mexico forecasts to be created here.

However, one prominent state advocacy group argues that increases in raw job numbers aren't necessarily good news for the state's economy.

A 2005 report by New Mexico Voices for Children titled *The State of Working New Mexico*, notes that "New Mexico's economy is producing a disproportionate number of low-wage jobs."

More than half of the new jobs projected to be created in New Mexico in the next few years are in the low-wage category, the report says, which also says this state has a larger proportion of its work force earning the \$5.15 per hour minimum wage than any state in the nation.

"Low job quality may explain why, in spite of moderate job growth, there is no improvement to New Mexico's ranking in wage and salary growth, or in per capita personal income," the report says.

Gerry Bradley, research director of New Mexico Voices for Children, said Monday that he believes a big factor in the growth in jobs is high oil and gas prices.

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