

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact: James Hallinan

August 5, 2015

(505) 660-2216

Attorney General Balderas Convenes First Multidisciplinary Violent Crime Review Team Meeting

Attorney General Balderas, Mrs. Benner, U.S. Marshal, cabinet secretaries, district attorneys, judges, sheriffs, police chiefs, the APS superintendent and 23 agencies participated in review team meeting

Albuquerque, NM – Today, New Mexico Attorney General Hector Balderas convened the first meeting of the Multidisciplinary Violent Crime Review Team at the National Hispanic Cultural Center in Albuquerque. Attorney General Balderas and Julie Benner, wife of Rio Rancho Police Officer Gregg Nigel Benner, opened the meeting attended by agency heads to review Andrew Romero’s background and violent history leading up to the homicide of Officer Benner. The third phase of the Multidisciplinary Violent Crime Review Team will include Community Heroes like Mrs. Benner.

“Today is a critical step forward in working to make New Mexico a safer place for our children, families and law enforcement,” said Attorney General Balderas. “The violent, inexcusable death of Officer Benner was a sentinel event and the breaking point for public consciousness about how our systems intervene with habitual and violent offenders. The Andrew Romero case is an opportunity to learn, an opportunity to strengthen, and an opportunity to improve our systems and our system responses. I want to thank Mrs. Benner and all of our esteemed participants for their commitment to improving public safety in New Mexico.”

The Attorney General has gathered agency heads to participate in a review of Andrew Romero’s background and violent history leading up to the homicide. The goal of this comprehensive review is to find and implement systematic improvements to benefit the state and the criminal justice system. However, the formation of this review team is not intended to be reactionary to one case. The team is expected to continue meeting through the end of the year in this three-tiered review process.

The following officials participated in today’s Multidisciplinary Violent Crime Review Team meeting:

Attorney General Balderas
Mrs. Julie Benner
U.S. Marshal Conrad Candelaria
Albuquerque Public Schools Superintendent Luis Valentino
Rio Rancho Police Department Chief Michael Geier

Bernalillo County Sheriff Manny Gonzales
New Mexico State Police Chief Pete Kassetas
Albuquerque Police Department Chief Gorden Eden
New Mexico Crime Victims Reparation Commission Director Frank Zubia
New Mexico Department of Education Secretary Hanna Skandera
New Mexico Children, Youth & Families Department Secretary Monique Jacobson
New Mexico Department of Corrections Secretary Gregg Marcantel
New Mexico Department of Public Safety Secretary Gregory Fouratt
Seventh Judicial District Attorney Clint Wellborn
Second Judicial District Attorney Kari Brandenburg
Bernalillo County Metropolitan Detention Center Chief of Corrections Phillip Greer
Juvenile Public Safety Advisory Board Director Heidi Alvarez-Wynn
New Mexico Sentencing Commission Director Tony Ortiz
New Mexico Administrative Office of the District Attorneys Director Henry Valdez
Violent Crime Review Team Facilitator Dr. Danielle Albright
Special Guest Ms. Lynda Johnson
Office of the Attorney General Chief Deputy Elizabeth Glenn
Office of the Attorney General Deputy Attorney General for Criminal Affairs Sharon Pino
Office of the Attorney General Director of Special Prosecutions Clara Moran
NM Criminal Defense Lawyers Association President Matthew Coyte
City of Rio Rancho Mayor Greg Hull

The following agencies participated in today's Multidisciplinary Violent Crime Review Team meeting:

U.S. Marshals Service, New Mexico Department of Public Safety, New Mexico Department of Corrections, New Mexico Children, Youth & Families Department, New Mexico Department of Education, Seventh Judicial District Attorney's Office, Second Judicial District Attorney's Office, Second Judicial District Court, New Mexico State Police, Albuquerque Police Department, Bernalillo County Sheriff's Department, Rio Rancho Police Department, New Mexico Administrative Office of the District Attorneys, New Mexico Sentencing Commission, New Mexico Crime Victims Reparation Commission, Administrative Office of the Courts, Juvenile Public Safety Advisory Board, Albuquerque Public Schools, NM Criminal Defense Lawyers Association, Bernalillo County Metropolitan Detention Center, Second Judicial District Children Court, New Mexico District Attorney's Association.

###