

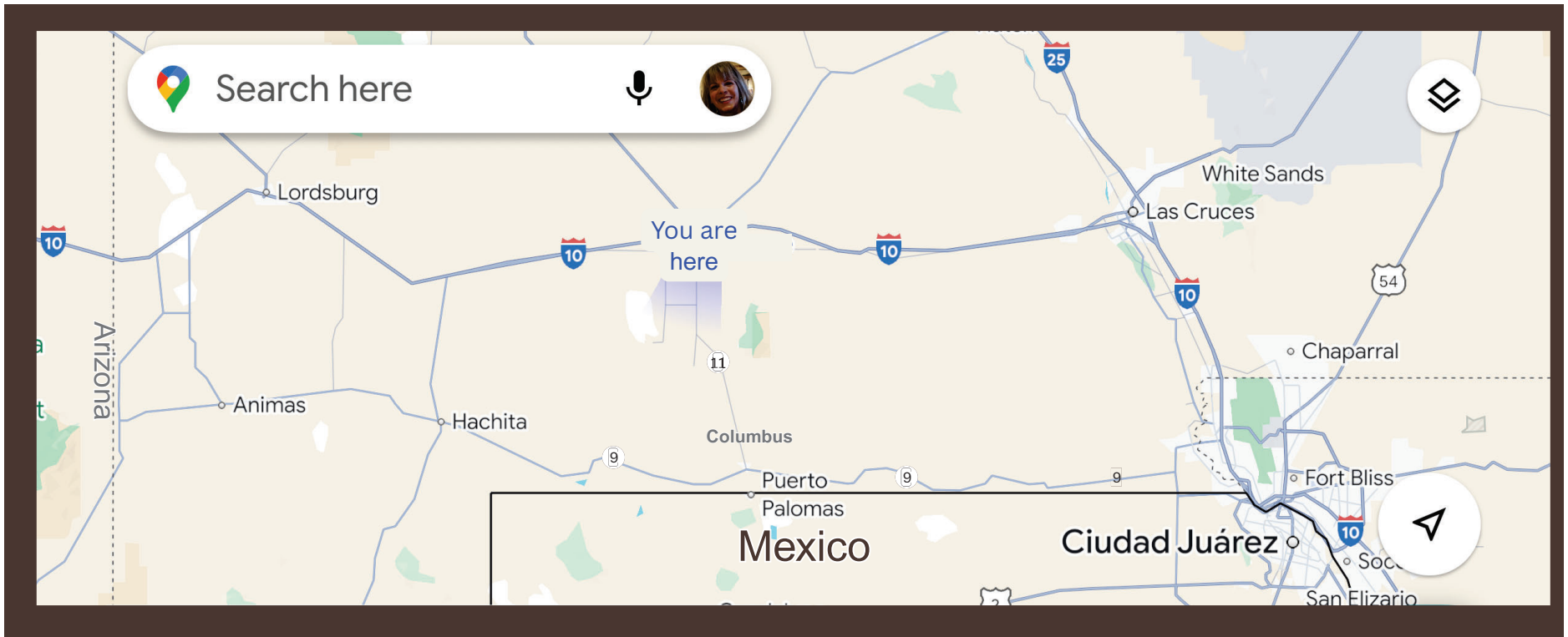
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Luna County & Hidalgo County

Safety Concerns



Highway 9 concerns



Highway 9 current conditions



- Two-lane border corridor with poor pavement conditions (PCR) rating: potholes, fractured edges, crumbled shoulders, and limited pull-offs
- Mix of local and agriculture traffic, school buses, Border Patrol/Department of Defense, and oversized wide load freight
- Complicated by limited cell coverage in long stretches → slower emergency response
- Areas with no center stripe

Unsafe and illegal practices related to wide loads

- No pilot cars
- Unsafe & illegal practices by wide loads
- Under-reported width/weight to avoid I-10
- Inadequate escorts and signage
- Speeds unsafe for pavement condition and visibility
- Long lines behind wide loads create no way to pass; no safe pull-outs

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Speaker: Russell Johnson

Who's at risk?

- School buses throughout the region
- Student drivers
- Families and farm traffic
- First responders (local, state, federal)
- Freight and cross-border commerce
- Tourists and out-of-area drivers unfamiliar with corridor risks



Columbus HWY 9 & HWY 11 Intersection

Problems

- Heavy cross-border and border patrol traffic in all directions
- Multiple school buses to/from the border each day
- Numerous accidents reported
- Wide loads funnel through during school travel windows

Possible Solutions

- Rules and enforcement for wide loads to avoid school commute periods
- High visibility traffic signage
- Lighting

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Animas School District

Problem

- Wide loads routinely near school routes
- No safe pull-outs; edge drop-offs increase rollover risk
- Road drop-offs increase rollover risk

Possible Solution

- Time-of-day restrictions for wide/overweight loads
- Mandatory pilot/escort cars with radios + advance warning signs
- Construct signed pull-outs every few miles

Animas School District



“Target Zero” for rural NM

- Expand Target Zero strategies to Highway 9
- Near-term tools: portable message signs, enhanced striping, speed management, targeted enforcement
- School-bus safety package: dynamic warning signs, enforcement blitzes, community reporting channel & license plate readers



Visibility threats from dust storms, Lordsburg across I-10

- Loss of life
- Frequent I-10 closures this season due to zero/low visibility
- Gratitude: NMDOT, NM State Police, local law enforcement and leaders — proactive, coordinated closures have saved lives
- More is needed to reduce crash risk during onset

Dust mitigation in progress

- BLM + Soil and Water Conservation Districts: windbreaks, vegetative cover, surface stabilization projects along the I-10 corridor
- Coordination with NMDOT maintenance and operations
- Need to plan construction phases to minimize disturbed desert soils and restore cover

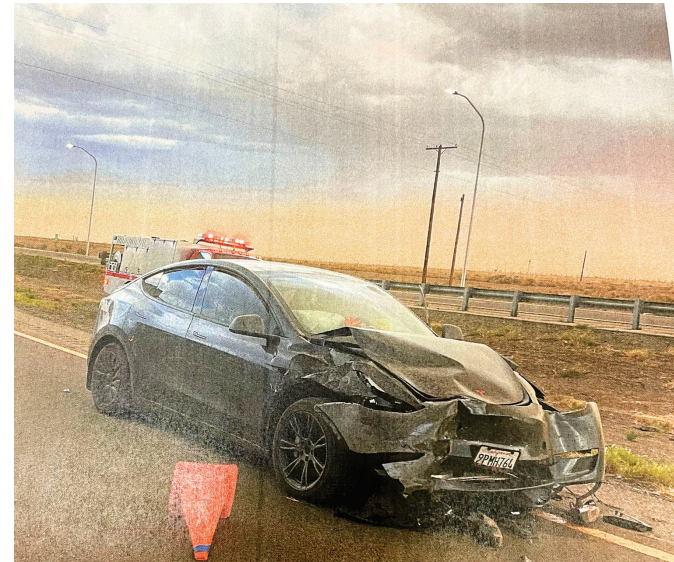
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Case study: Recent I-10 patrol car incident (Lordsburg)

- A city officer was struck and dragged while closing the freeway during a dust event and remarkably survived with only minor injuries
- Lessons learned: faster full-closure triggers, redundant units for traffic control, increased State Police presence, improved multi-agency communication when State Police are not present on-site

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Immediate actions

(Next 30–90 days)

- Enforcement surge on wide-load compliance (escorts, signage, radios, permits)
- Portable speed reductions signs in high-risk segments
- Designate/stripe temporary pull-outs
- Edge repair at critical points
- School-window curfews for wide loads near Columbus/Animas
- Increased law enforcement presence
- Improve dust mitigation protocols

Near-term projects

(3-12 months)

- Signage, and profile thermoplastic on Hwy 9 curves
- Permanent pull-outs with signage every few miles
- Support cell-coverage plan for responder corridors
- Expand vegetative cover to reduce dust with BLM/SWCD
- Add fixed vehicle mobile signage and weather sensors



What can this committee do?

- Endorse the expansion of Target Zero plan for rural New Mexico
- Implement curfews restrictions for wide loads at Columbus/Animas school zones
- Support an improved NMDOT-DPS enforcement and communication plan for dust closures on I-10
- Request BLM and Soil and Water Conservation District briefing and direct state funds to accelerate dust mitigation
- Report-back checkpoints at 30/90/180 days

Why are results delayed?

- It is crucial that we prioritize timely, lifesaving research and solutions to prevent more fatalities!

Hatch HWY (HWY-26) Safety Study results took 2-years

- Reopen I-10 west bound rest area; closed over 2-years.



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**Thank you
for your
attention**

