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New Mexico Arts and Cultural District Open Application Process Announced

Applications due December 12, 2007

SANTA FE, NM – In a joint, interagency economic development initiative, Economic Development Department Cabinet Secretary Fred Mondragón and Department of Cultural Affairs Cabinet Secretary Stuart Ashman announced the opening of the application process for the state’s first two pilot New Mexico Arts and Cultural Districts.

“I want to thank Secretary Ashman for his cooperation and support of yet another economic development feather for New Mexico’s cap,” said Economic Development Cabinet Secretary Fred Mondragón. “Interagency collaboration always results in positive outcomes for the state, and I look forward to more and farther-reaching partnerships within state government.”

An initiative of Governor Bill Richardson, the new program will be administered by the New Mexico MainStreet Program and local partners to enhance community-based economic development by placing an emphasis on the indigenous arts and culture of each district. One rural and one urban downtown will be chosen as pilot projects this year.

“New Mexico’s \$2.8 billion cultural industry fuels our economy, expands educational opportunities and generally boosts the quality of life for families and communities across our state,” said Cultural Affairs Secretary Stuart Ashman. “This creative new economic development initiative recognizes a powerful engine in New Mexico, and I want to thank the program’s eager partners – the Tourism Department, Museum of New Mexico Foundation, McCune Charitable Foundation and, of course, our New Mexico Arts and Historic Preservation Divisions.”

“Collaborations between state agencies for the improvement of the lives of New Mexicans are a keystone of the Richardson Administration,” Ashman added.

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Coordinated by Rich Williams, Director of the New Mexico MainStreet Program, and authorized by the New Mexico Arts Commission, the collaborative partnership brings state incentives, resources and technical assistance to the selected downtowns in partnership with municipal and local resources.

State partners also include the Tourism Department, New Mexico Arts, the Historic Preservation Division, The New Mexico Museum Foundation and the McCune Charitable Foundation.

Applying communities will develop a cultural plan to support, develop and enhance the districts arts and cultural opportunities as a market niche for economic development. This will be done in collaboration with each community's local MainStreet Program, arts councils, cultural organizations, institutions and related agencies.

Applications must be received at the New Mexico Economic Development Department by 5 p.m. Wednesday, December 12, 2007.

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