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## **Hidalgo County Designated a Certified Community** *Hidalgo County one of 33 Certified Communities in New Mexico*

SANTA FE – New Mexico Economic Development Department (NMEDD) Cabinet Secretary Designate Fred Mondragón today announced that Hidalgo County has completed the requirements necessary to become certified as one of New Mexico’s Certified Communities as outlined in Governor Richardson’s Certified Community Initiative.

Secretary Mondragón presented a plaque to Hidalgo County Commission Chairwoman Louise Peterson and Commissioners Harold Kuenstler and Joey Mora at the Hidalgo County Legislative Dinner last night in Santa Fe.

“Becoming a Certified Economic Development Community is not an easy undertaking,” said New Mexico Economic Development Department Cabinet Secretary Fred Mondragón. “It requires a community, first and foremost, to come together and recognize the value of creating new jobs as a way to take control of its future. I am pleased to announce that Hidalgo County is open for business.”

Chairwoman Peterson thanked Manager of NMEDD Community Development Donnie Quintana and his staff, along with Representative Rudolfo Martinez and the Hidalgo County Chamber of Commerce for their efforts.

The Certified Communities Initiative Program (CCI) encourages and supports New Mexico communities in their efforts to create new jobs. The initiative emphasizes the importance of recruitment, as well as retention/expansion and start-up activities. The initiative recognizes that the character and needs of each community will determine how these methods are used to create new jobs. The application process emphasizes job preparedness and creating infrastructure, such as industrial parks accessible to the I-40 Energy Corridor and near active railroad spurs.

Communities work with Regional Representative Teams on the application process, which includes passing a Local Economic Development Act. Communities are then provided with a CCI grant and extra support through the Co-op Advertising Program.

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Certified Community status comes with up to \$5,000 of contractual funding for two years for special projects and 10 bonus points toward the Coop Advertising Program.

CCI assists those communities interested in taking control of their future. The initiative seeks communities who can demonstrate broad local involvement and who wish to empower their citizens, build on existing resources, and expand their capacity to facilitate economic growth.

The assistance provided by this initiative not only results in the creation of new jobs, but in the increase in community pride, and long-term, sustained success that improves the community's, as well as New Mexico's overall economic condition.

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