



# State of New Mexico

## *Office of the Governor*

**Bill Richardson**  
*Governor*

For Immediate Release  
November 4, 2005

Contact: Yasmine Mogharreban  
Santa Fe: 505-476-2299

## **First Lady Barbara Richardson Announced Over 21,000 Ornaments Collected for the Capitol Holiday Tree**

*Local 1<sup>st</sup> grader will attend Washington, D.C. tree lighting ceremony*

SANTA FE – First Lady Barbara Richardson announced today that over 21,000 holiday ornaments were collected during the Capitol Holiday Tree project, exceeding the original goal of 5,000. This year, New Mexico was chosen to provide the tree that will stand on the lawn of the Capitol Building in Washington D.C. during the holiday season. Mrs. Richardson also announced the name of the student who won a drawing for a trip to attend the lighting ceremony for the tree in December.

Mrs. Richardson served as the Honorary Chairperson of the Capitol Holiday Tree Ornament effort. The capitol holiday tree is being provided by Santa Fe National Forest in partnership with Tree New Mexico, Inc, a non-profit organization. The ornaments were collected from around the state by Rotary International 5520.

“The overwhelming response clearly shows that people across New Mexico are filled with the holiday spirit,” Mrs. Richardson said. “From what I have seen, people around the state have done a beautiful job creating ornaments that proudly reflect our history and culture.”

“The ornament effort has been a true partnership. With the work between the First Lady’s Office, New Mexico Department of Education and Rotary International 5520 and the Santa Fe National Forest the job got done over and beyond what we hoped for,” said Gilbert Zepeda, Santa Fe National Forest Supervisor.

The decorations were made by New Mexico school children, civic organizations, Girl Scout Troops, Native American groups, and senior citizen groups. They will adorn the large 80 foot Capitol Holiday Tree to be displayed in Washington, D.C. on the west front lawn of Capitol Hill. Additional ornaments will grace the 65 “companion trees” that will be displayed in the Supreme Court, Department of Agriculture, Department of Interior, the National Arboretum and other government offices.

At the drawing held today, Mrs. Richardson picked 1<sup>st</sup> grader Steven Castillo to attend the tree lighting ceremony. The student was originally registered at Pecos Elementary school where he made an ornament in his 1<sup>st</sup> grade class. Steven is currently attending Gonzales Elementary School in Santa Fe.

Steven, his parents Maria and Raul Castillo, and his teacher from Pecos Elementary school, Maria Martin, each receive a free trip to Washington, D.C. The non-profit group Tree New Mexico Inc. is sponsoring the trip and Southwest Airlines is providing free air transportation.

Also on display was a painting by New Mexico artist Pola Lopez, which was voted as the artwork that best represented the Capitol Holiday Tree. The painting will be auctioned off in January 2006 with proceeds going to aid Tree New Mexico in their efforts to help the environment.

Individuals can “track the tree” through the website at [www.capitolholidaytree2005.net](http://www.capitolholidaytree2005.net) as it makes its way to 16 communities in New Mexico, across the U.S. and to the nation’s Capitol. Photos, daily trip diaries, and a webcam will track the progress of the tree.

#30#