



# State of New Mexico

## Office of the Governor

**Bill Richardson**  
Governor

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## **Governor Bill Richardson Announces Arts Division Receives National Recognition for Rural Economic Development Initiative**

SANTA FE- Governor Bill Richardson today announced that New Mexico Arts, the state arts agency and a division of the Department of Cultural Affairs, has received national recognition for an arts-based rural economic development initiative.

“There’s no question that artistic creativity is, and should be, a major economic engine for rural New Mexico,” said Governor Bill Richardson. “Anything we can do to create economic opportunities to keep people in our small towns preserves our heritage and our culture for generations to come. I’m very pleased to see the leadership shown by New Mexico Arts in the creative economy.”

A new *State Spotlight* by the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies touts the benefits of New Mexico Arts’ Arts Enterprise Partnerships program, which supports several rural partnerships among arts organizations and private businesses. This initiative has helped these small, rural arts organizations find statewide markets and generate earning opportunities for artists. The Spotlight is highlighted at the NASAA Web site at [www.nasaa-arts.org/spotlight/stspot\\_1205.shtml](http://www.nasaa-arts.org/spotlight/stspot_1205.shtml).

“The beauty of arts-based economic development is that it’s sustainable,” said Loie Fecteau, executive director of New Mexico Arts. “This means people can stay where they live in rural New Mexico and not have to move to find jobs. It also enhances our rich cultural traditions.”

The *Spotlight* focuses on the partnership between New Mexico Arts and the Espanola Valley Fiber Arts Center in Espanola, which provides business training and instruction in textile arts, primarily weaving, to hundreds of adults and children each year.

Through the program, local artists are learning how to turn their creative talents into profitable businesses, said Diane Bowman, executive director of Espanola Valley Fiber Arts Center.

Fecteau said New Mexico Arts also is working with Espanola Valley and other fiber artists across New Mexico to develop a pilot arts trail, or cultural tourism loop, to put artists on the map and bring the market to them. The

governor's legislative agenda includes \$250,000 in a special appropriation to support this and other rural economic development initiatives of New Mexico Arts in FY07.

The National Assembly of State Arts Agencies uses the *State Spotlights* to highlight how state arts agencies develop creative solutions to address public problems in their communities. Three to four state arts agencies are selected annually for this honor, said Jonathan Katz, executive director of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies.

“There is widespread recognition among economists, elected officials and citizens that culture is an essential ingredient to a healthy economy and a desirable quality of life, especially in rural locations,” Jonathan Katz said. “NASAA is pleased to focus national attention on New Mexico Arts for its creative public sector leadership in this area. The Arts Enterprise Partnerships program has proven remarkably effective in uniting the business, not-for-profit and government sectors to provide job and training opportunities for residents, and to help vulnerable communities sustain themselves.”

The *State Spotlight* on New Mexico Arts will remain up on the NASAA Web site for several months and printed copies are sent to members of Congress and other national, political and arts leaders.

“This is great exposure for New Mexico and our arts programs,” said Gov. Bill Richardson.

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economic prospects of the surrounding rural counties. Through instruction in the textile arts, primarily weaving, EVFAC teaches traditional and contemporary techniques to hundreds of adults and children each year.

Providing artistic education is only part of the organization's mission, however. Through its Arts Enterprise Partnerships grant, EVFAC also provides extensive business training for artists by partnering with the Small Business Development Center and the Regional Development Corporation. From navigating the tax system to marketing artwork, local artists are learning how to turn their creative talents into profitable businesses. Diane Bowman, executive director of EVFAC, explains that the center works hard to be responsive to the needs of the people it serves. "The needs they come to us with are not only how to be creative, but also how to learn to make money from that creativity," she says. During a recent three-day arts market in Santa Fe, 38 EVFAC artists earned about \$36,000 in sales, a significant sum that came home to the Española Valley. By bringing outside funds into the region, the work of these artists helps ensure that residents have earning opportunities while maintaining their way of life.

### Advancing State Goals

The Arts Enterprise Partnerships program ties in with Governor Bill Richardson's core agenda of promoting economic development and creating high-wage jobs across New Mexico, but especially in rural areas. "There's no question that artistic creativity is, and should be, a major economic engine for rural New Mexico," Governor Richardson said. "Anything we can do to create economic opportunities to keep people in our small towns preserves our heritage and our culture for generations to come. I'm very pleased to see the leadership shown by New Mexico Arts in the creative economy."

State arts agencies are uniquely positioned to encourage business development through creative partnerships. In addition to being an important source of financial support to the arts community, agencies like New Mexico Arts also provide highly valued technical assistance and training that facilitates connections between the arts community and the private sector. "This program allows us to work together with New Mexico Arts in a new way," Bowman observes. "It is much more of an interactive partnership than there usually is between a grantee and a funder."

At the same time that these partnerships are generating dollars and jobs, they are also valued for bringing cultures and generations closer together. By making connections and bridging industries, New Mexico Arts is helping to nurture the state's traditional and contemporary artistry, further economic growth, and enable rural residents to thrive in their home communities. ■

### For More Information

#### New Mexico Arts

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#### "Strengthening Rural Economies through the Arts"

National Governors Association Center for Best Practices  
preview.nga.org/Files/pdf/RURALARTS.pdf

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To learn more about state arts agency programs that have a positive impact on individuals and communities, visit the State Spotlight section on NASAA's Web site at [www.nasaa-arts.org](http://www.nasaa-arts.org).



The work of NASAA and the state arts agencies is strengthened in many ways through partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts, which believes that a great nation deserves great art.