

New Mexico State University News Release

ATTN: CITY DESK -

April 28, 2008

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NMSU plans to put Las Cruces art on the map

Faculty and students from the New Mexico State University College of Business are working with the City of Las Cruces and local artists to let the world know about the Las Cruces arts scene. They believe the community is missing out on what could become a major enterprise and the revenue that a vibrant art scene would generate.

"Arts and culture is a major employment source for the State of New Mexico," said David Boje, management professor at NMSU. "Right now, Las Cruces is under the shadow of Santa Fe and Taos. Las Cruces should have that same potential."

The group is working to create an artistic identity for the City of Las Cruces by developing an infrastructure to promote local art and artists.

"Las Cruces probably has just as many, if not more artists than Santa Fe," said Las Cruces Mayor Ken Miyagishima. "From a business standpoint, it would be huge to have that kind of attraction here."

"A prominent art scene is an additional reason to visit Las Cruces," said Virginia Maria Romero, a local artist. She has lived in Las Cruces for 18 years.

"This would help generate the same kinds of opportunities for artists to sell their works in this area rather than traveling to other parts of the state," she said.

As part of the plan, the group has established a number of goals including creating a Las Cruces arts and cultural affairs commission. The commission would advise the city on investing in the arts. This group would be composed of member arts organizations along with representatives from the Las Cruces mayor's office, the Las Cruces Convention and Visitor's Bureau, the Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce, New Mexico State University and other community and regional leaders. The group would also

be responsible for keeping a comprehensive artist's directory and arts calendar.

The plan also calls for developing funding sources to purchase arts for Southern New Mexico; fostering live/work/retail space, studios, and arts facilities in available, vacant properties in Las Cruces; and recruiting a Las Cruces entrepreneur to do tours of the Las Cruces Arts Scene.

Artists Ruth Drayer and Virginia Maria Romero along with David Boje and MBA student Rafella Moskhalis presented their proposal to the Las Cruces City Council last week. They plan to do the same in future meetings with NMSU Regents, local chambers of commerce and other government and community organizations in the coming months.

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