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NEW MEXICO ARTS AND PARTNERS ANNOUNCE
RECIPIENTS OF TWO PLACEMAKING GRANTS

Santa Fe, NM – New Mexico Arts, a division of the Department of Cultural Affairs, announces that two organizations have been selected for $2,500 placemaking grants. The recipients are Embudo Valley Library and Community Center in Dixon, and Manzano Mountain Art Council in Mountainair. The grant opportunity is an outgrowth of the highly successful 2015 Building Creative Communities Conference held in partnership with Department of Cultural Affairs’ Historic Preservation Division, and New Mexico’s Economic Development Department’s MainStreet Program. Applicants were asked to propose a project for the historic commercial core of a town using the principles and practices of creative placemaking.

The Embudo Valley Library will renovate an alley among a cluster of creative spaces including a new library, community center, and general store. The alley already features a landmark mural by artist Shel Neymark and local youth artists. The alley, now closed to vehicle traffic, will be transformed from a gravel driveway to a space with paved terraces featuring colorful picnic tables, ramp for disability access, and shade cloth for a 70’ long area, to create a comfortable and inviting space. Flower pots will be added to enliven the area. The new gathering space will serve patrons of the library, center and general store.

The Manzano Mountain Art Council (MMAC) will create three concrete benches featuring mosaic art to be located both in front of the art center, and in the center’s rear garden. The rear garden will be revitalized, cleared and cleaned up, with new landscaping, art and sculptures along with the new artistic seating areas. The benches will draw attention to the historic downtown as people enter the historic district. The benches will highlight historic themes- the railroad, ranching, and Spanish settlement, based on photographs. The public art project will create gathering spaces, engage community members, and enrich the area’s artistic offerings.

“We are very pleased to support these rural communities in their efforts to create spaces where local arts and culture can thrive,” said Department of Cultural Affairs Secretary Veronica N. Gonzales. “These projects highlight the creativity that exists across New Mexico.”
Placemaking projects were sought that demonstrated transformation of underutilized public or private spaces or properties to create vibrant usable space through clean-up activities, landscaping, temporary or permanent enhancements, streetscape improvements, signage, lighting, community garden, and public art. The selected projects will create community gathering spaces and invigorate underused locations. The grant opportunity was offered with support from New Mexico Arts, and program partners the New Mexico Economic Development Department’s MainStreet Program, and New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs’ Historic Preservation Division. The New Mexico Resiliency Alliance is providing administrative support for the grant.

“It has been exciting to see how our collaborative work on the Building Creative Communities Conference has evolved into financial support of hands-on projects in two of our state’s smaller communities, “ said New Mexico Arts Executive Director Loie Fecteau. “Arts and culture are important drivers of community building and economic development in our state.”

New Mexico Arts, a division of the Department of Cultural Affairs, is the state arts agency. New Mexico Arts administers the state’s One Percent for Public Art program, awards grants to nonprofit organizations for arts and cultural programs in their communities across the state, and provides technical assistance and educational opportunities for organizations, artists, and arts educators throughout New Mexico.

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