Greetings from the Executive Director

Working with the New Mexico Economic Development Department’s MainStreet program and other partners, we had a very successful launch of our first state-authorized Arts and Cultural District in Silver City earlier this year.

A resource team led by Rich Williams, the director of New Mexico MainStreet and state coordinator for the Arts and Cultural Districts project, spent March 10-13 on-site in Silver City. I served on the resource team as did Chuck Zimmer, public art project coordinator. The team interviewed more than 110 Silver City leaders, including elected officials, artists, business and gallery owners as well as other cultural entrepreneurs in developing an initial report to the community. Ann Weisman, program coordinator for local arts councils, and I served on a similar resource team in early April to launch the Arts and Cultural District in Las Vegas, our other pilot community for this year.

Jesse Rye of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) was able to join the resource team in Silver City and provide a valuable national perspective on what is going on with Arts and Cultural Districts across the country. At NASA’s annual convention in December, the Maryland state arts agency reported that their most successful Arts and Cultural Districts were located in communities that had both a strong local arts council and a strong MainStreet program. That bodes well for our effort here in New Mexico.

This year we’re continuing to move forward with our Arts Trails, by helping to develop community-based projects. Carol Cooper, our Fiber Arts Trails manager, has been working with Tom Kennedy, project coordinator for the Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments, to develop the Ancient Way Arts Trails in the Gallup and Grants area. Kennedy says organizers plan to kick off the summer season with a region-wide Ancient Way Arts Festival May 31-June 1.

We’re also working with the newly-formed Northeastern New Mexico Arts Alliance to help develop a Treasures and Trails Trail: The Art and History of Northeastern New Mexico. The alliance was formed by the Moreno Valley Arts Council in Angel Fire, the Raton Arts and Humanities Council, the Las Vegas Arts Council and other artists and arts organizations in northeastern New Mexico. The idea for this community-based Arts Trail grew out of the Losals and the Arts Trail gathering we held for local arts councils last September in Truth or Consequences.

Organizers say the Treasures and Trails Trail will run from the Old Pass Gallery in Truth or Consequences, through Cimarron, Ute Park, Eagle Nest, and historic Shuler Theater in Raton, through Ocate, go back through Mora, and on to the Angel Fire, Black Lake, detour to highlight Ocate, go back through Mora, and on to the art spaces and historic places of Las Vegas.

I’m pleased to report that our Arts Trails effort in New Mexico is receiving national recognition. I was contacted earlier this year by officials at the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) who informed me that the NEA planned to showcase three arts programs from across the country, including our Arts Trails, at their national council meeting in late March. NEA officials said they planned to highlight our pilot New Mexico Fiber Arts Trails as “a stunning example” of what a state arts agency can do and commended New Mexico Arts for our leadership and vision in developing this arts-based economic development and cultural tourism initiative.

I want to congratulate our Poetry Out Loud State Champion April Kateri Chavez, who won our Third Annual State Finals of Poetry Out Loud: National Recitation Contest. A senior at Santa Fe Indian School, Chavez received $500 and an all-expense paid trip with chaperone to Washington DC to represent New Mexico at the national finals April 27-29. Poetry Out Loud is a program of the NEA and Poetry Foundation that encourages high school students to memorize and perform great poems.

I also want to remind you to join us at an unprecedented gathering May 16-17 of Matachines dance groups from around New Mexico and the Southwest. State Folklorist and Folk Arts Coordinator Claude Stephenson is organizing this unique celebration of Matachines dancers at the National Hispanic Cultural Center in Albuquerque using our American Masterpieces funds from the NEA. The two-day event will feature lectures by scholars as well as musicians and dancers from Matachines groups, many of whom have never seen each other perform.

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High school students from schools in New Mexico’s state capital region recited their poems during the 2008 Poetry Out Loud poetry recitation contest on February 24 at the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe. Elizabeth Stigler, a representative of the Poetry Foundation based in Chicago, attended the competition.

April Kateri Chavez is this year’s winner of the New Mexico Poetry Out Loud finals. A senior at Santa Fe Indian School, Chavez is off to Washington DC to represent New Mexico at the national finals on April 27-29. Chavez will receive $2000 and an all-expense paid trip with chaperone to attend the national finals. She will receive a $500 stipend to purchase poetry books for the school library.

The runner-up in the competition was Rebekah Reyes, a junior at the New Mexico Academy of Science and Mathematics. Reyes will receive $1000 and her school will get a $2000 stipend to purchase poetry books for the school library. Her teacher is Dr. Jeffrey Lang.

Other high school students who won their individual school competitions and competed in the New Mexico state finals were Joshua Haggard, Bridge Academy Charter School, Las Vegas (teacher Dr. Carol Winkler); and Miccoa Rosete, Taos High School, Taos (teacher Anne MacNaughton). Judges for the state finals were Gene Ceva, David Olson, and Miriam Sagan. Delphi Broady was the accuracy judge. Lorraine Schechter, Santa Fe, has been the coordinator of the project, and Anne MacNaughton of Taos conducted workshops for participating students. The New Mexico competition was managed by Ann Weisman, Arts Education Coordinator for New Mexico Arts.

Poetry Out Loud is a national program of the NEA and the Poetry Foundation. New Mexico sponsors were PEN New Mexico, Museum of International Folk Art, Albertsons Zafarano, Lumen Books, MLC Creativity Center, Sunstone Press, Trader Joe’s, Tes Chica Press, and Whole Foods.

New Mexico Arts is especially pleased to sponsor the New Mexico competition because the project supports First Lady Barbara Richardson’s literacy initiative. "The First Lady is a real champion for literacy and arts education in New Mexico," said Lois Fecteau, Executive Director of New Mexico Arts.

Poetry Out Loud seeks to foster the next generation of literary readers by capitalizing on the latest trends in poetry recitation and performance. The program builds on the resurgence of poetry as an oral art form, as seen in the slam poetry movement and the immense popularity of rap music among youth. Poetry Out Loud invites the dynamic aspects of slam poetry, spoken word, and theater into the English class.

As New Mexico’s State Folklorist, I have been asked these and other questions many times. The short answer is that I don’t real-ly know. I don’t think anyone truly does.

The only two things I know for sure about the Matachines dance are: it is the only ritual dance in the Southwest that is practiced by both Native American communities and they both have been dancing it here for a long time. However, that hasn’t stopped many other scholars from claiming that they have discovered the dance’s origins and meaning. In their seminal 1931 work on work of Native American dances, Bosile and May Evans playfully described the many conflicting theories this way:

“It is derived from a beautiful old religious ceremonial of southern Europe. It is found in Persia. It celebrates the conversion of the Indians to Christianity. It is the Indian version of the age-old, symbolic conflict between good and evil, with the ultimate victory of good. It represents the warfare against sin that began after the Resurrection. The little girl typifies the church; she is pursued by Sin and the Devil, but escapes from them; and she rescues the people, as the Church rescues those in its fold. The two grotesque mimes personify Sin and Death; they are at war with, and are finally destroyed by, the Church, or each other. It represents a Mexican bullfight. It is an old comic dance, with a mock fight, that was once well known in France and Italy. It is a Mexican dance. It came from Montezuma, last ruler of the Aztecs. It is of Moorish origin and was brought over by the Spanish. And so it goes.” American Indian Dance Steps, Bosile Evans and May Garver Evans, 1931: 74-75; A. S. Barnet and Company, Inc. I have spent many years in libraries and archives and have researched the sources of every serious theory put forth on the origins and meaning of the Matachines. As I might, I have not been able to substantiate any of them. At the moment, I have chosen to let the mystery be and just enjoy the dance for what it is: a very graceful, moving, and compelling performance.

This year, on May 16 and 17, I get to indulge my Matachines fascination further by hosting the world’s first ever gathering of Matachines dance groups at the National Hispanic Cultural Center in Albuquerque. Thanks to an American Masterpieces grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, I have the funding to bring many of these groups together. Most of them have never seen each other’s versions of the dance, so this promises to be a unique opportunity for all involved. At this point I have confirmed six New Mexican dance groups: Bernalillo, the East Mountains, Jemez, Alcalde, Tortugas, and a Jemez youth group, as well as two others, a Tarahumara group from Mexico and a Yaqui group from Tucson. I have been negotiating to bring dancers from Picuris Pueblo and hope to have them in attendance in May.

All attending groups will publicly perform on the Plaza Mayor of the Cultural Center. The two-day event will be free and open to the public. There will also be workshops and panel discussions featuring members of the dance groups and scholars of the Matachines dance. Workshops will focus on the various characters common to the dance (the Menantha, Ablato, Malinche, Toro, and Tres_eval) as well as the music that accompanies the dance. There will be panel discussions on the documented histo-ry and social significance of the dance as well as its ethno-historical origins and meanings.

Due to the sacred nature of the dance to many of the groups and in accordance with their wishes, audio recording and videotap-ing of the performances will not be allowed. In some cases, still photography may be allowed if we receive permission from the members of the group in advance.

This includes cell phone cameras. We ask all attendees to please respect the wishes of the dancers and understand that the Matachines dance is a personal and sacred commitment for them. The gathering is much different than other types of dance performances.

That said, this promises to be an unpre-cedented gathering and a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to witness several different incarnations of this ancient and mysterious dance. Look for more details about the actual schedule of performances and work-shops at www.nmarts.org/mata-chines.html. For more information, contact Claude Stephenson at 505-827-6490, 800-879-4278 (statewide), or email claude.stephenson@state.nm.us.
Organizations that receive funding from New Mexico Arts in FY2008 will need to complete their final reports soon. Here is some information in response to frequently asked questions on final reports.

Please remember to look at your organization’s cash requests before completing the Final Fiscal Report. Please make sure that the column for New Mexico Arts Share accurately reflects the totals included on all cash requests. The Final Fiscal Report should reflect the annual totals designated on the cash requests and not on the contract budget estimate. The Final Fiscal Report can be different from the contract budget estimate since the contract budget is an estimate. The Final Fiscal Report shows how funds were actually spent. Cash requests indicate actual expenditures so the Final Fiscal Report should show the totals of all your cash requests for the grant period.

The narratives are important to us. Program Coordinators learn a lot about the organizations they work with, which in turn helps staff provide organizations with more meaningful technical assistance.

We ask for a lot of numbers in the reporting. These numbers are very important. New Mexico Arts and the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) have certain performance measures set for us by the legislature and others set by the governor. In addition, since 40% of our grant fund comes from the National Endowment for the Arts, we report numbers to them because they have measures to meet given by Congress and the Executive Branch.

Numbers reported on the Final Narrative Report and on the Supplement to Final Narrative Report are critical. We compile these reports and use the information for our reports to the DCA Secretary, whose office compiles the reports from all DCA divisions and prepares reports for the legislature, the governor’s office, and the Children’s Cabinet.

We hope this brief discussion has explained the importance of final report information. Please be assured that the valuable information you provide does not disappear into a black hole, but is used in ways that will assist organizations provide vital arts services to communities statewide.
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**Prospectus #194: Eastern New Mexico University – Science Building**

Receipt Deadline: Thursday, June 26, 2008, 5 p.m.

New Mexico Arts and Eastern New Mexico University wish to commission an artwork for the newly renovated Science Building located on the University’s campus in Portales. Artists submitting qualifications should be experienced in creating environments or installations on a large scale. The committee seeks an artist able to create a project that will unify the entire Science Building and elements from all branches of science. Up to five finalists will be chosen. Open to all artists who are residents of the United States.

Project amount $70,000.

For more information or to receive a prospectus, visit our website at www.nmarts.org, or contact New Mexico Arts at 505/827-6490, 800/879-4278 (statewide), or email chuck.zimmer@state.nm.us.

**LAND/ART**

In summer and fall 2009, several New Mexico arts organizations will join together to present LAND/ART, that will explore relationships of land, art, and community through exhibitions, site-specific art works, lectures, and a culminating book. Focusing on environmental art, the collaboration seeks to address our changing relationship to nature and offer a new or previously unconsidered understanding of the place in which we live. LAND/ART is coordinated by 516 ARTS. For more information on the project and for calls for entries, please call 505/242-1445 or visit www.landartnm.org.

**AIPP ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Prospectus #192: TIME - Carlsbad (Deadline Extended)**

Receipt Deadline: Thursday, June 12, 2008, 5 p.m.

The Art in Public Places program (AIPP) will commission up to ten temporary environmental artworks to be exhibited in various locations in and around Carlsbad. The proposed artworks should relate to this year’s theme Cielo.

This project is only open to artists who are residents of New Mexico. Up to ten artist/artist teams will be selected. Artists in all stages of their careers are encouraged to apply.

Project amount is $1,500 per artist/artist team plus a travel per diem. Artists must receive a prospectus to apply. The prospectus can be downloaded from the website at www.nmarts.org or contact AIPP staff at New Mexico Arts, telephone 505/827-6490, 800/879-4278 (statewide), or email aipp@state.nm.us.

**OTHER OPPORTUNITIES**

**Gulch** | Melvin Johnson | Acrylic on Canvas | 48” X 48” | Rio Grande Theater, Las Cruces

**Lalo Irrigating** | Sharon Stewart | Silver Gelatin Print | 13” X 13” | Silver City Workforce Development Center

**Untitled #26** | Jyoti Schon | Sandstone | 24” X 24” X 1.5” | Bloomfield Aquatic Center, Bloomfield

**Bearable** | Mark Yale Harris | Italian Translucent Alabaster and Utah Orange Alabaster | 15” X 11” X 12” | The Nest: Lincoln County Domestic Violence Center, Ruidoso

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