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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
September 8, 2014

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## **Governor Susana Martinez and Secretary Jon Barela Announce Funding for the Historic Lea Theater as Part of the MainStreet Historic Theater Initiative**

*Funding for Lea Theater will Provide Improvements to Allow for Digital Movie  
Conversion to Show High-Quality, First-Run Movies and Serve as Anchor for  
Commerce in Downtown Lovington*

**Lovington** - Today, Governor Susana Martinez and New Mexico Economic Development Secretary Jon Barela announced the City of Lovington was awarded \$100,000 in Local Economic Development Act (LEDA) funding for the Lea Theater as part of the MainStreet Historic Theater Initiative. The Historic Theater Initiative was established by the Administration to help restore New Mexico's historic theaters and provide upgrades to show digital, first run movies.

"Historic theaters are unique assets in New Mexico's MainStreet districts and can serve as vital economic development anchors in rural communities to attract business and commerce," said Gov. Martinez. "Lovington will benefit greatly from these improvements as the theater will become a cornerstone of economic development for the MainStreet district and have a spillover effect into other businesses."

The Lea Theater, built in the late 1940s, has many unique features characteristic to that era. Its design includes post-World War II modernistic elements, a façade consisting of brick and ceramic tile with a recessed entry leading to a ticket booth flanked by paired doors. A marquee overhangs the sidewalk with a wall-mounted sign rising above it.

"New Mexico's historic theaters are architectural gems and were once centers for entertainment, family activity, and recreation in our rural communities," said Sec. Barela. "The Historic Theater Initiative seeks to recapture the theater's glorious history and bring to life downtown districts."

Historic Theater funding will support the infrastructure improvements related to digital conversion of the Lea Theater. The owners of the Lea Theater closed it and the City of Lovington purchased the theater as a cultural facility. This enabled Lea Theater to become

part of the MainStreet initiative and for the public/private partnership to take place. The Towns of Clayton and Silver City have also benefited from the Historic Theater Initiative.

The Historic Theater Initiative was officially launched in June 2013 by Secretary Barela to increase business in MainStreet districts while preserving the state historic theaters. The Historic Theater is an initiative of New Mexico MainStreet and the only one of its kind in the nation.

For more information about New Mexico MainStreet visit <http://gonm.biz/Mainstreet.aspx>.

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