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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 7, 2014

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New Mexico IDEA Recognizes Five New Mexicans for Their Contribution to Economic Development

Socorro - Five individuals were recognized for their contribution to economic development in New Mexico this week at the New Mexico IDEA annual meeting, held at New Mexico Tech in Socorro. Among the five individuals who received awards were the New Mexico Economic Development Department's (NMEDD) Mark Roper and Therese Varela.

"New Mexico has many talented and hardworking professionals, both in the Economic Development Department and in other organizations, dedicating countless hours to creating an environment where businesses can thrive and I thank NM IDEA for recognizing these individuals for their great work," said New Mexico Economic Development Secretary Jon Barela. "I am grateful to their efforts and count on them as partners as we continue growing our private sector and creating jobs for New Mexicans."

Mark Roper, who is a Community, Business & Rural Development Team representative for the Economic Development Department serving southeast New Mexico, received the "New Mexico First" award. Roper played a significant role in creating and implementing the department's Business Retention & Expansion program. His work with the aviation cluster in Roswell led to two bills in the 2014 Legislative session that support the industry and facilitated job growth in his region. The legislation was signed into law by Governor Susana Martinez earlier this year.

Therese Varela, Economic Development division director for the Economic Development Department, was recognized with the "Public Servant of the Year" award. Varela has made a career serving the people of New Mexico through her more than 20 years at NMEDD. She served as director of the Job Training Incentive Program for many years prior to being appointed division director by Secretary Barela in January 2011. Varela works with communities of all sizes to administer NMEDD's key programs. She is also a leader in Santa Fe, the city where she was raised, and she devotes many hours of volunteer time to a number of organizations.

Others receiving awards were:

- Mark Van Wormer, M.D., executive director of the Union County Economic Development Corporation, received the "Dallan Sanders Award" for his instrumental work in the development of the Clayton Industrial Park and the Clayton bio-fuels project and as the president of Clayton MainStreet.
- Paul Jenkins of Raton, received the "Volunteer of the Year" award for efforts resulting in the creation of the Greater Raton Economic Development Corporation and the seven-county North East Economic Development Organization (NEEDO). He also participated in the creation of an

economic development strategic plan for Raton and the region, and he has worked to create a marketing alliance between Trinidad, Colorado and Raton.

- Myra Pancrazio, executive director of the Estancia Valley Economic Development Alliance, received the "Developer of the Year" award for working to bring economic growth to her rural region. She played an instrumental role in not only retaining Titan Aerospace in Moriarty but helped them continue to grow there as a Google company. She also chairs the NMEDD's Rural Economic Development Council.

The awards were presented by Deborah Breitfeld, Brycon Construction, president of IDEA, and George Bootes, past president. New Mexico IDEA is an organization of economic development professionals, and community and business leaders dedicated to bringing new jobs and investment to the state.

The New Mexico Economic Development Department's mission is to enhance and leverage a competitive environment to create jobs, develop the tax base, and provide incentives for business development. For more information visit goNM.biz.

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