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## **Governor Susana Martinez Welcomes California Manufacturer Expanding to Las Cruces, Bringing 160 New Jobs**

*NM's Increased Tax Competitiveness, Business Friendly Environment  
Continue to Show Results*

**Las Cruces** - Governor Susana Martinez announced today that California-based tortilla producer Franco Whole Foods, will expand its operations into Las Cruces, bringing 160 new jobs with an average salary of \$37,000 plus benefits.

"As we continue to work to diversify and grow New Mexico's private-sector economy, we are proud to welcome California-based Franco Whole Foods to Las Cruces," said Governor Martinez. "Results like this show that diversifying our economy by competing for jobs and attracting new businesses pays off for our families and communities."

In 2011, professional services firm Ernst and Young rated New Mexico third worst in the region for taxing manufacturers. In 2013, Governor Martinez signed single sales factor legislation, allowing manufactures the option of paying corporate income tax on goods sold only in New Mexico. Governor Martinez also signed legislation reducing New Mexico's corporate income tax by 22 percent, from 7.6 to 5.9 percent over five years, making New Mexico more competitive with other Western states. Governor Martinez also signed legislation ending the practice of "tax pyramiding," an unfair practice which often resulted in double and triple taxation of finished projects in the construction sector. As a result of these much-needed reforms, in January 2014 Ernst and Young upgraded their rating of New Mexico's taxation of manufacturers to best in the west. During the most recent legislative session, Governor Martinez signed legislation beginning the process of making the Job Training Incentive Program (JTIP) permanent. Previously to this legislation, JTIP's funding had been haphazard and unpredictable.

"We appreciate the support of Governor Martinez and the City of Las Cruces in working with Franco Whole Foods as we expand in New Mexico," said Gus Franco, president of Franco Whole Foods LLC. "New Mexico has become especially welcoming to manufacturers through reforms made in the state's tax policies that encouraged us to set up shop and grow here."

"What is great about Franco Whole Foods is that they are a producer and exporter of tortillas which means they don't compete with our local tortilla makers, and they bring dollars into New Mexico from

out of state," said New Mexico Economic Development (EDD) Cabinet Secretary Jon Barela. "We are proud to help Franco Whole Foods through our department's initiatives as they create good-paying jobs for New Mexicans and grow our state's economy."

"We are extremely excited that Franco Whole Foods has decided to call Las Cruces home to its new operations," said Mayor Miyagishima. "In addition to their product line complementing our rich agricultural heritage, their investment will bring renewed vitality and employment opportunity to the city center and downtown areas."

Secretary Barela, the Mesilla Valley Economic Development Alliance (MVEDA), Las Cruces Mayor Ken Miyagishima, and Mike and Gus Franco of Franco Whole Foods joined Governor Martinez for the announcement. The New Mexico Economic Development Department will contribute \$75,000 in Local Economic Development Act (LEDA) funds to help offset costs of upgrading their warehouse to meet the needs of manufacturing tortillas and food safety standards. Franco Whole Foods will also qualify for JTIP, which assists companies by reimbursing 50 percent of wages while training New Mexico workers for new positions. The City of Las Cruces will also complement training dollars through its Wage+ Program.

Franco Whole Foods is a national supplier of uncooked tortillas for Whole Foods and Costco. The company will convert the long-vacant warehouse on 875 W. Amador Ave. into a modern manufacturing facility that will meet food safety standards. Positions include quality assurance, packaging, mechanics, production workers, and manufacturing and food processing jobs. Franco Whole Foods was founded by Angel Franco in El Paso. In the 1980s his sons Gus and Mike Franco launched a tortilla manufacturing business in San Diego. Gus developed the uncooked flour tortilla recipe in 1993.

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