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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 11, 2016

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NM MainStreet and Partners Announce Dixon and Mountainair to Receive Grants to Improve Community Gathering Spaces in Historic Districts

Santa Fe, NM - New Mexico MainStreet announced today that two organizations were selected for \$2,500 placemaking grants to help revitalize gathering places in historic commercial centers. The recipients are Embudo Valley Library & Community Center in Dixon and the 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' partners, [New Mexico Arts](#) and [New Mexico Historic Preservation Division](#), and with support from [New Mexico Resiliency Alliance](#).

"Encouraging the revitalization of underused areas in historic districts in rural communities is a great way to spur commerce and cultural activities in our historic centers," said Economic Development Secretary Jon Barela. "Creative projects fostered by MainStreet programs create a sense of community and improve quality of life."

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, a 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

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.

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 MainStreet, and program partners New Mexico Arts Division, New Mexico Historic Preservation Division, and New Mexico Resiliency Alliance, who will be administering the grants.

"We are delighted to be able to work with our program partners to encourage creative thinking and innovation as these two communities work to transform their public spaces," said Rich Williams, New Mexico MainStreet Director. "Creative placemaking can have an important role in reinvigorating our downtowns and commercial areas."

A program of the New Mexico Economic Development Department, New Mexico MainStreet works throughout the state to help affiliated local organizations create an economically viable business environment while preserving cultural and historic resources. New Mexico MainStreet currently serves 27 affiliated MainStreet Districts, eight state-authorized Arts & Cultural Districts, 14 Frontier Community projects, and eight Historic Theater Initiatives. For more information about New Mexico MainStreet, visit www.goNM.biz or nmmainstreet.org.

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