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## **New Mexico MainStreet Announces Two Communities Selected for the Second Round of Great Blocks on MainStreet Design Initiative**

**Santa Fe, NM** - New Mexico MainStreet, a program of the New Mexico Economic Development Department, announces, MainStreet de Las Vegas and Tucumcari MainStreet were selected for the second round of "Great Blocks on MainStreet," award. Both communities will renovate and reinvigorate historical railroad districts and support other significant work taking place in their MainStreet districts. They will receive \$50,000 worth of services from a team of landscape architects, architects and design professionals to revitalize a section within their MainStreet and Arts & Cultural District.

"MainStreet is an innovative program working to improve the quality of life, preserve historic buildings and public art and drive economic growth in our rural communities," said Economic Development Secretary Jon Barela. "The Great Blocks award will be a significant boost to MainStreet de Las Vegas and Tucumcari MainStreet in the area of redevelopment and further the already great work taking place in their historic downtowns."

The competition was open to MainStreet and Arts & Cultural Districts to develop an innovative intensive-design project within the district. The success of the pilot project in Raton in fiscal year 2015, supports a second round selection for fiscal year 2016. Applicants to Great Blocks on MainStreet had to address design and economic impact criteria to compete for the award, demonstrating a major re-design of one to two blocks within the applicant's district.

"MainStreet de Las Vegas and Tucumcari MainStreet demonstrated in their proposals how upgrades to their districts would be achieved through innovative projects," said New Mexico MainStreet Director Rich Williams. "These projects will support historic preservation while increasing economic vitality and engaging the commercial properties, businesses, and improving pedestrian and street environments."

Las Vegas will work on an infrastructure project on Railroad Avenue that includes the Railroad Multi-modal Depot and the Castañeda Harvey House Hotel. Las Vegas has an excellent collection of historic and architecturally significant structures dating from the Rail Road period in their designated Historic Downtown District. The Las Vegas' "Great Blocks on MainStreet" project will revitalize the area by preserving and restoring existing building storefronts, creating pedestrian improvements, streetscape enhancements, and wayfinding signage. The project will consist of historically appropriate design in the areas of façade improvements, wayfinding that creates linkages with the other commercial corridors within the MainStreet District, lighting/signage improvements, street and pedestrian enhancements and public art installations.

Tucumcari builds on its founding as a Rail Road community and connection to historic Route 66. Their "Great Blocks" project is for the south side of Main Street between 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Streets. They will put

together planning with community input to include comprehensive design that includes exterior cleaning, maintenance and repair work, wayfinding and street lighting improvements, pedestrian enhancements, and public art in the area, including partnering with Mesalands Community College of Fine Arts & Bronze Program. The project will introduce and support a positive examples of historic preservation and building renovation to continue to increase downtown economic vitality.

Qualifying projects need to be on the adopted MainStreet District Master Plan or Metropolitan Redevelopment Plan or an adopted Arts & Cultural District's municipally adopted Cultural Economic Development Plan. Bonus points were awarded if the specific project was part of the organization's annual work plan and if it was on the municipality's ICIP priority plan (Infrastructure and Capital Improvement Plan). Applicants were also considered for demonstrating public and private sector support, partnerships, and preservation-based elements, as well as identified funding sources.

A program of the New Mexico Economic Development Department, New Mexico MainStreet works throughout New Mexico 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, ten Frontier Community projects, and six Historic Theater Initiatives.

For more information about New Mexico MainStreet, visit <http://gonm.biz/> or <http://nmmainstreet.org/>.

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