

NEW MEXICO *True* ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

June 27, 2018
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New Mexico MainStreet Welcomes Two Communities to the Accelerator Program

Santa Fe, N.M. - Today, New Mexico MainStreet (NMMS) announced the communities of Santa Rosa and Taos will take part in the NMMS Accelerator Program. The selected community revitalization programs will participate in an intensive 12-18 month capacity-building process to prepare small-scale revitalization projects. Completion of stated goals and benchmarks will result in designation at both the state and national level as a Main Street America program -- Santa Rosa and Taos would join 28 Main Street America programs in New Mexico.

"Participation in the MainStreet Accelerator Process sets a strong foundation for communities to pursue asset-based economic development work and become designated MainStreet Communities," said Economic Development Cabinet Secretary Matt Geisel. "These communities will benefit from professional assistance and join a network of revitalization partners and MainStreet communities in New Mexico."

Expanded financial support from Governor Susana Martinez and the Legislature to the Economic Development Department for the NMMS budget allowed the program to accept this new round of Accelerator applications.

"New Mexico MainStreet is excited to deepen our partnerships with Santa Rosa and Taos," said Rich Williams, New Mexico MainStreet Co-Director. "We recognize incredible engagement in these communities and look forward to assisting them with their capacity building and economic development work."

More than 13 communities participated in a pre-application workshop. Selected through a competitive application process, the two finalists received an onsite Readiness Assessment from NMMS to meet with the applicant steering committee, business and property owners, elected officials and residents. The visits helped gauge each community's readiness and identified goals & projects. Both communities demonstrated widespread community engagement from local officials, public and private partners, and had a clear vision for what they hope to accomplish in their districts.

Over the next 12-18 months, the steering committees with professional technical assistance from

NMMS will work to establish a nonprofit revitalization board, build a finance plan for the organization and secure operational funds. They will identify economic revitalization goals and visible projects that can be successfully implemented through the Accelerator process. At the end of the process, they will hire an Executive Director.

The Santa Rosa Accelerator program will be facilitated through the Guadalupe County Development Corporation in partnership with the City of Santa Rosa. Santa Rosa hopes to leverage local assets that support destination tourism while enhancing the economic core of the community through the restoration of historic buildings in the downtown district. The proximity of downtown to highway exits as well as the Blue Hole/Lake Park facilities provides reuse of vacant properties that are critical to diversifying the local economy. Additionally, the community's history as a Route 66 stopover provides opportunities for capitalizing on a tourism market. Ultimately, the goal of the Accelerator Program hopes to strengthen economic opportunities for youth and residents to mediate the migration of locals to larger urban communities.

The Taos Accelerator initiative seeks to capitalize on the momentum established by the Strong at Heart efforts, a year-long public engagement process that established a unifying vision of the Taos Downtown Strategy. Key elements of the strategy includes improved walkability, a downtown bike network, infill housing, mixed-use and destination development while enhancing entrepreneurship/local business opportunities. The Strong at Heart efforts aim to crystallize Taoseños, downtown businesses and civic leaders in creating a vibrant downtown that respects and honors the culture of the community.

For more information about the Accelerator Program, please contact NMMS Co-Director Rich Williams at (505) 827-0168 or rich.williams@state.nm.us.

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. NMMS currently serves 28 affiliated MainStreet Districts, 11 Arts & Cultural Districts, more than 20 Frontier Community projects, and eight Historic Theater Initiatives. For more information, visit www.nmmainstreet.org.

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