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New Mexico Economic Development Department and Rio Grande Community Development Corporation Announce Española Kitchen Preparing to Accelerate Food Entrepreneurs

Nationally-recognized Albuquerque Kitchen Incubator to Help Build a Statewide Model for Rural Kitchen Incubators

Española - The New Mexico Economic Development Department today announced a partnership with the Rio Grande Community Development Corporation (RGCDC) to enter into negotiations with Northern New Mexico College to re-open the Sostenga Commercial Kitchen. Together with local partners including the County of Rio Arriba, Siete del Norte Community Development Corporation, Delicious New Mexico, Regional Development Corporation, and Los de Mora Local Growers Farmer's Cooperative, the project will support food startups in Española and provide a road map for communities across the state to use underutilized kitchens to support local entrepreneurs.

"Agriculture and food production have been the heart of our state for many generations and we are pleased to continue that heritage with our investment in northern New Mexico," said Economic Development Cabinet Secretary Jon Barela. "The commercial kitchen project will assist local farmers, artisan bakers and the like to create jobs and bring about a sense of community and pride in addition to creating a model to replicate throughout the state."

"Our partners are eager to be associated with the Sostenga Kitchen and its benefit to local farmers and to the well-being of the local community and economy as a project that supports regional small farmers and fosters sustainable living through the recognition that healthy food has long been a tradition of northern New Mexico," said Siete del Norte Executive Director Todd Lopez.

The RGCDC established the Mixing Bowl kitchen incubator in Albuquerque in 2005 to help grow local food businesses. In 2012, the RGCDC founded Delicious New Mexico to support food entrepreneurs across the state. Delicious New Mexico will help grow markets for products and has already identified the need for support of businesses growing out of small incubator-type kitchens and will begin planning a co-packing facility in the Sostenga Kitchen. "A co-packing facility will help growing businesses develop

more efficient processing and packaging methods to gain access into larger markets," said Vicki Pozzebon, director of Delicious New Mexico.

The Mixing Bowl kitchen incubator in the heart of Albuquerque's culturally rich South Valley works with 250 potential entrepreneurs every year. It has 120 businesses currently in the development phase, 60 businesses currently selling products, and another 40 that have graduated from the process over the last six years. With an annualized cost per job of \$3,200, the Mixing Bowl has proven to be one of the most cost-effective job creation programs in the country. Studies have shown that for every dollar that goes to local agricultural producers, \$1.80 is circulated in the local economy.

For more information please visit:

Rio Grande Community Development Corporation - <http://www.rgcdc.org/>

Mixing Bowl Commercial Kitchen Incubator - <http://mixingbowlnm.org/>

Delicious New Mexico - <http://www.deliciousnm.com/>

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