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MIDTOWN SANTA FE: COMING BACK TO LIFE

GREEN FIRE TIMES

News & Views from the Resilient Southwest









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COVER: MASS DESIGN GROUP AND CHAINBREAKER FACILITATING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FOR THE HOPEWELL MANN NEIGHBORHOOD STABILIZATION PLAN; ARCHITECT RICARDO LEGORRETA-DESIGNED BUILDING THAT IS PART OF THE SANTA FE ART INSTITUTE'S AND MIDTOWN SOL'S HUB; ASPECT MEDIA VILLAGE SOUNDSTAGE, RENDERING OF A PLANNED NEW MEXICO INNOVATION HUB FACILITY

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In order for GFT to build on its accomplishments and stay alive, we really need to upgrade our operations. We have reached out to potential funders and foundations, as well as advertisers. Mostly, we receive small donations from devoted readers. We have been operating on a shoestring for a long time—and it's not sustainable. As you're aware, this is an especially critical time for independent, nonprofit, community-centered journalism.

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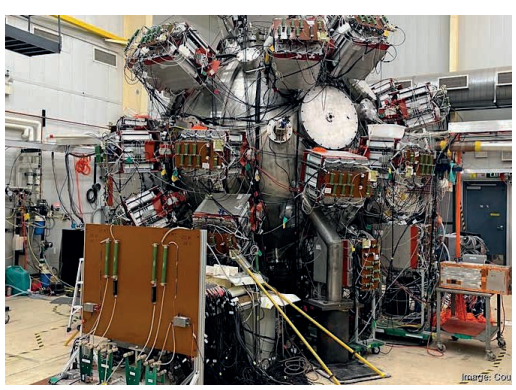




Model of the Santa Fe Arts Institute and Midtown Sol buildings with remodel renderings; Aerial photo of nearby Hopewell Mann neighborhood; LANL fusion research



Midtown: From Campus Closure to Creative Community

BY **DANIEL HERNÁNDEZ**

The Midtown redevelopment area is strategically located at the geographical center of Santa Fe. Within the broader area of Midtown are a series of historic communities that have had a vital role in defining the city's culture. These neighborhoods are adjacent to heavily trafficked commercial corridors and transportation networks that link the historic plaza with newer Southside developments. Today, the Midtown District as a whole is considered a bridge between the north and south and the place where Santa Fe's communities are coming together to create a new center of the city.

With the closing of the Santa Fe University of Art & Design in 2018, an unprecedented opportunity arose to establish a mixed-use district for the future of Santa Fe. The redevelopment plans were guided by the interrelated triple-bottom-line principles of sustainable development: people (social responsibility and community impact), planet (environmental protection) and profit (economic value and financial returns).

HISTORY

For decades, the Midtown Campus was one of Santa Fe's most important places for arts education and creative exchange. This began with two neighboring institutions: the College of Santa Fe (CSF, founded in 1966) and the Santa Fe Art Institute (SFAI), founded in 1985 as an independent nonprofit dedicated to the intersection of the arts and social change. In the late 1990s, CSF expanded its commitment to the arts with the construction of the Visual Arts Center, a distinctive complex designed by Mexican architect Ricardo Legorreta. Completed in 1999, its colorful buildings and courtyards became home to studios, classrooms and galleries.

Together, CSF and SFAI helped make the campus more than an educational institution. It was a place where young people in Santa Fe could see artists working, encounter new ideas, and imagine a future for themselves in the arts.

That mattered in a city whose creative economy has long been closely associated with tourism. Galleries, museums, markets and cultural attractions are central to Santa Fe's identity and economy, but the Midtown campus offered another point of entry. It was a place to learn, make, experiment, teach, organize and build a creative career. For generations of students, artists, educators and community members, it demonstrated that participating in Santa Fe's cultural life could mean more than producing for or serving the visitor economy.

CSF became the Santa Fe University of Art and Design (SFUAD) in 2010, but the institution struggled financially. When SFUAD closed in 2018, the loss extended well beyond the students and faculty. A 64-acre educational and cultural campus suddenly went quiet. Its closure was devastating, but it also opened a much larger civic conversation.

Midtown: a place for community, culture, education and opportunity.

WHAT SHOULD MIDTOWN BECOME?

By 2018, Santa Fe had grown around the campus. What had once occupied the edge of the city now sat near its geographic center. Sixty-four acres of publicly owned land presented an extraordinary opportunity, but also a difficult question: Who should determine its future?

SFAI remained on the campus, occupying its existing city-owned building, while much of the property around it became vacant. The organization had become an island within an island. Rather than waiting for a redevelopment proposal to answer the question, SFAI began working with community organizations including Chainbreaker Collective, Earth Care, YouthWorks, Little Globe, Santa Fe Indigenous Center and others to engage the neighborhoods surrounding Midtown.

The concept of what Midtown should become did not begin with a building proposal. It emerged through years of community engagement.



Public infrastructure investments, private development and nonprofit programming are gradually bringing activity back to the campus.



Midtown Sol CEO Daniel Hernández

Between 2018 and 2022, more than 3,000 people got involved through community conversations, events, planning exercises and other forms of participation. A 2021 Midtown Block Party brought more than 1,000 people onto the campus. The process asked Santa Fe residents, not simply what should be built at Midtown, but what the redevelopment of such a significant public asset could do for the people already living around it.

The answers reflected needs extending well beyond the arts. Community members identified priorities around housing, education, youth opportunities, economic development, transportation, public space, cultural preservation and access to resources. Those conversations helped shape recommendations developed through UNM's Design and Planning Assistance Center and ultimately informed the City of Santa Fe's Midtown planning process. Two landmark redevelopment plans were unanimously approved by the City of Santa Fe's governing body—the Midtown Master Plan, and of great importance to the communities that participated in the planning process—the Midtown Community Development Plan.

In other words, what became known as "the People's Plan" established the future of Midtown—that it should remain a place for community, culture, education and opportunity. They ensured that redevelopment did not begin with a building proposal. It would emerge through years of community engagement about what this publicly owned campus should become.

... CONTINUED ON PAGE 29

MIDTOWN HISTORY

1859–1966

St. Michael's College, originally founded as El Colegio de San Miguel in 1859, began as a small school for boys operated by the Christian Brothers next to the San Miguel Mission in downtown Santa Fe. In 1874 it was chartered as the College of the Christian Brothers of New Mexico. After World War II, the college relocated to the former Bruns Army Hospital campus on what is now the Midtown district, where it grew into a full liberal arts institution. In 1966 it was renamed the College of Santa Fe.

1943–1946

The Bruns Army Hospital was established in 1943. Built to treat World War II soldiers, including survivors of the Bataan Death March, it housed over 2,500 beds and employed more than 1,000 staff. The facility became a hub of wartime care and morale, hosting visits from figures like Helen Keller and Groucho Marx. After decommissioning, much of the land was repurposed for educational institutions, though remnants of the hospital remained on-site for decades.

1966–2009

In 1966, St. Michael's College transitioned into the College of Santa Fe**,** a coeducational, nonprofit institution. It hosted a partnership with the Institute of American Indian Arts and became an important center for higher education in Santa Fe. The campus expanded its creative offerings, including arts and performance spaces, but by 2009 mounting financial difficulties forced it to declare a state of emergency.

2010–2018

The Santa Fe University of Art and Design emerged in 2010 after the College of Santa Fe was purchased by Laureate Education Inc. It offered degrees in fields such as film, photography, graphic design, performing arts and digital arts, and was known for facilities like the Greer Garson Theatre and Garson Studios, which housed the largest permanent green screen in New Mexico. Despite notable collaborations, including scholarships sponsored by Robert Redford, the school faced ongoing financial struggles and closed in 2018.

FROM PLANNING TO IMPLEMENTATION

BY **JOSEPH KUNKEL**



Hopewell Mann neighborhood

Immediately north of the Midtown District, Hopewell Mann is Santa Fe's lowest-income neighborhood, home to a majority renter population, longstanding businesses and community organizations. Its strong social networks and cultural roots coexist with aging housing, inadequate infrastructure and growing pressure from rising costs. As significant public investment and redevelopment advance next door, residents face an urgent question: Will they be able to remain and benefit from the changes coming?

The Hopewell Mann Neighborhood Stabilization Plan emerged from years of community organizing and advocacy, including Chainbreaker Collective's work to make displacement pressures visible. The city's Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency commissioned my organization, Model of Architecture Serving Society (MASS), to develop the plan with support from Chainbreaker and the Santa Fe Indigenous Center. Research and community engagement brought residents' priorities into an integrated framework for housing stability, neighborhood businesses and the public realm. The city council's unanimous adoption of the plan in September affirmed that these needs deserve coordinated action.

The plan is especially consequential for Midtown. New housing, creative spaces, businesses and infrastructure can expand opportunity, but investment can also increase pressure on nearby rents and property values. Midtown's success must include the ability of neighboring residents to stay and participate in the district's future.

Residents have described buildings in need of repair, perennial flooding and streets that feel unsafe after dark. Addressing these conditions requires protection and investment together. Housing rehabilitation, safer streets and better drainage must advance alongside measures that preserve affordability and support neighborhood businesses.

As a community designer, I have learned that a plan's value depends on the relationships, resources and responsibilities that carry it forward. Hopewell Mann's implementation framework provides specific mechanisms for keeping neighborhood priorities active through budget cycles, elections and changes in city leadership.

The first is dedicated staff capacity. The plan calls for funding the equivalent of a half-time position within the Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency to manage implementation. Someone must coordinate departments, track commitments, pursue funding and follow up when progress stalls. This work needs assigned time and authority.

The second is a recurring table for coordination. Quarterly meetings among lead implementers and community partners would connect housing, public works, economic development, parks and other efforts that often operate separately. Residents and neighborhood organizations should help shape priorities, with Midtown development partners participating where their decisions affect the neighborhood. Chainbreaker and the Indigenous Center's relationships will remain essential to keeping this work grounded in community needs.

Third, progress must be publicly reviewable. The plan recommends annual implementation reports and annual review by the city council or another governing body. Each priority should have a named lead, supporting partners, a timeline and a clear next step. Reports should explain what was completed, what remains delayed and what resources are needed. Neighborhood meetings and accessible printed materials should bring that information back to residents.

Funding must follow those commitments. Existing city programs, state and federal grants, philanthropic support and redevelopment resources offer potential pathways. Annual budgets and capital improvement plans should show how neighborhood priorities are advancing, while a shared funding calendar helps partners prepare for upcoming opportunities.

Ultimately, success must be measured against residents' lives: whether families can stay, businesses can survive, and public spaces become safer and more useful. Community feedback should guide adjustments as Midtown and Hopewell Mann change together.

The plan established a shared direction. Implementation requires sustained attention, honest reporting and resources. Midtown's future and Hopewell Mann's future are connected. Our investments and accountability should reflect that. ■



Joseph Kunkel (Northern Cheyenne) is the director of MASS Design Group's Sustainable Native Communities Design Lab in Santa Fe. He is a community designer and educator.



The Hopewell Mann neighborhood sits in a triangle of land between Cerrillos Road, St. Michael's Drive and St. Francis Drive and is adjacent to the 64-acre Midtown campus. Photo courtesy of Joseph Kunkel

Chainbreaker: Development Without Displacement

BY **CATHY GARCÍA**

Chainbreaker Collective is a member-led, Santa Fe-based economic, environmental and racial justice organization, founded in 2004. Through community organizing, Chainbreaker builds clout for low-income people of color. Chainbreaker's work is rooted in the belief that the people most affected by injustice are also the most effective at changing it.

Chainbreaker entered the Midtown story upon the closure of the College of Santa Fe in 2009. At that time, to many, the idea of development without displacement was unfathomable. But as a result of Chainbreaker members' efforts, the vision of an equitably resourced community, integrated across income, race, age and ability, has become much more of a reality.







Events organized by Chainbreaker included transit advocacy, support for a Residents' Bill of Rights Resolution and equity in the city's budget proposals.

Chainbreaker had roots in the Hopewell/Mann neighborhood, Santa Fe's lowest-income area. From there we built a membership of hundreds of people. When the organization started, many people faced transportation hardships. Then, as now, car dependency meant that one-third of a paycheck went toward transit costs.

The financial crisis of 2008 led to governments across the country embracing austerity, even as public and nonprofit organizations struggled to stay afloat. In Santa Fe, one of the targets was transit service. Our city council wanted to make sweeping service cuts and hike fares. Chainbreaker gathered hundreds of petition signatures and written testimonials, and packed City Hall. Our members have been able to stop every proposed major service cut and fare increase since 2009. Without our efforts, it is possible that today Santa Fe would not have a bus system.

Success is measured by housing stability, economic opportunity, neighborhood investment, cultural vitality and quality of life.

In 2015, Chainbreaker expanded its focus to housing, and hosted dozens of meetings where people discussed ongoing problems. We created a comprehensive Resident's Bill of Rights, later adopted by City Resolution as a guide for planning and housing policy. Two years later, Chainbreaker hosted the Development Without Displacement Symposium, where our members released a list of 10 policy goals that the City Council could enact. In that year's budget cycle, we were able to win our top four priorities. But there was still much work to be done.

Under the backdrop of the global financial crisis, the College of Santa Fe closed its doors, the city purchased the parcel and found a new tenant. But the Santa Fe University of Art and Design suddenly left in 2018. Our members across the city recognized two important realities: First—the years of disinvestment in the surrounding areas meant that no matter what eventually happened to the property, pressures of gentrification were likely to bear down on the adjacent neighborhood; Second—city ownership of the 64-acre parcel represented a tremendous opportunity for stewardship of public land and community development in perpetuity.

In 2019, Chainbreaker focused on the proposed commercial development of Midtown. As the global COVID19 pandemic took hold, the challenges and stakes escalated. The five pillars of the Resident's Bill of Rights are the same values that the Hopewell/Mann Neighborhood Stabilization plans are built upon. Those official city documents stand today as a way to hold elected officials accountable. For Chainbreaker's members, those documents are also the roadmap for future efforts. Ultimately, success will be measured by whether residents experience greater housing stability, economic opportunity, neighborhood investment, cultural vitality and quality of life over time, across the entire city.





We will continue working to ensure the next decade of development also occurs without displacement. Chainbreaker has taken the next big step toward realizing another goal: the purchase of a building and the establishment of a community land trust to keep these public lands and other, private lands affordable. What was a vision then, is a reality now. Together, we can help shape the future of the heart of Santa Fe. ■

Cathy García is a community organizer and spokesperson *for the Chainbreaker Collective. www.chainbreaker.org*

HOPEWELL MANN STABILIZATION PLAN

On Sept. 30, Santa Fe's City Council approved a resolution creating the Hopewell Mann neighborhood stabilization plan, a comprehensive strategy designed to minimize the effects of gentrification in the area that has some of the city's lowest household incomes. Hopewell Mann is the triangle of land between Cerrillos Road, St. Michael's Drive and St. Francis Drive that is adjacent to the 64-acre Midtown campus. Hopewell Mann's residents are concerned about the new development pushing out existing residents and businesses.



Last summer the city entered into a contract with Chainbreaker Collective, MASS Design Group and the Santa Fe Indigenous Center to create the stabilization plan. The plan includes policy recommendations such as improving access to public transit, pathways to jobs at the revitalized Midtown for residents, stronger tenant protections, pathways to homeownership for residents, and reuse of existing buildings for commercial space and rental housing.



Top (l-r) Former City Councilor (and current mayor) Michael García; Cathy García and Tomas Rivera of Chainbreaker Collective; Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency Deputy Director Carly "Cav" Venditti; Bottom row: Joseph Kunkel of MASS Design Group; Karen Buller, Chair of the Santa Fe Indigenous Center; and (now former) Mayor Alan Webber

CITY OF SANTA FE RELEASES RFI PRIOR TO REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The City of Santa Fe is designing a massive $54-million-to-$70-million core infrastructure package (roads, water lines, utilities and stormwater networks) that is required before Midtown projects such as a central park, public plaza and 98-unit workforce housing complex with a ground-floor grocery store can break ground.

In August, the city issued a Request for Information (RFI) to solicit industry feedback in advance of a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) for infrastructure improvements. The city hosted an industry outreach event at the site in September to provide design drawings and answer questions. The city's RFI says, "The Midtown Redevelopment Site is planned as a high-density, mixed-use development that will support commercial and residential uses consistent with the adopted Midtown Master Plan. The city is seeking industry input to help refine the project scope, procurement strategy and contract requirements prior to issuing a formal solicitation."

The RFI also says, "The Midtown Redevelopment Site represents one of the city's most significant redevelopment initiatives and is intended to create a vibrant, mixed-use district that supports residential, commercial, civic and public spaces. The associated infrastructure program has been designed to promote multimodal mobility, environmental sustainability and long-term resiliency through integrated utility systems, green stormwater infrastructure, complete streets and enhanced public amenities." To read the full RFI, visit: HTTPS://PROCUREMENT.OPENGOV.COM/PORTAL/SANTAFENM/PROJECTS/285638 .

In recent months, the Santa Fe Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency has been taking competitive proposals for a major affordable housing development on one of the city-controlled portions of the Midtown campus. The city also has received a proposal for a live-work arts space on the campus called the Blue Mesa Center for the Arts. That project would include 43 townhouse-style, live-work units.



Crossing St. Michael's Drive is currently very challenging for pedestrians. Photo © Seth Roffman

ST. MICHAEL'S DRIVE RECONFIGURATION STUDY

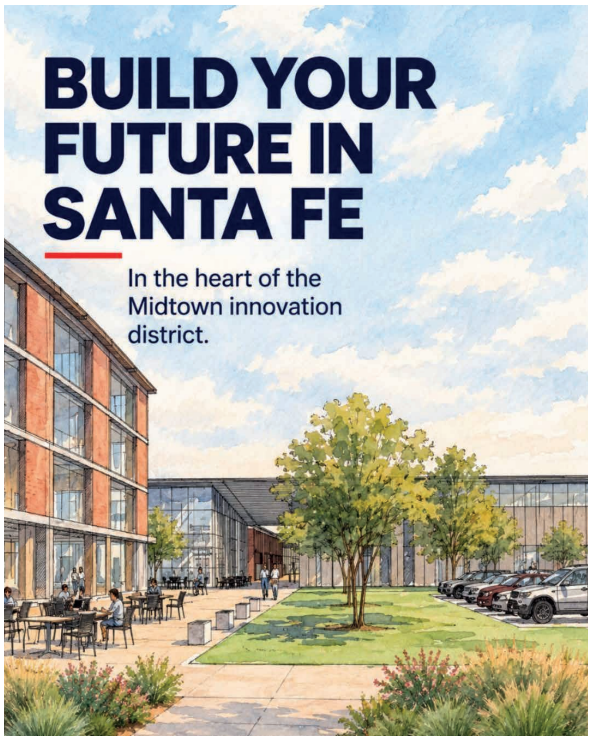
This summer, Santa Fe entered into an agreement with the state Department of Transportation for a study to assess the feasibility of reconfiguring St. Michael's Drive to make it safer for pedestrians and cyclists and to reduce speeding, possibly by narrowing it from seven lanes to five lanes. The road is adjacent to the Midtown campus, which could eventually include more than 1,000 homes. It is also adjacent to other important facilities, including Santa Fe High School and St. Vincent Regional Medical Center. The Rail Trail, a popular bike trail, currently does not have a crossing on the busy thoroughfare.

St. Michael's Drive was constructed in the 1950s as a "bypass highway" connecting Cerrillos Road with Old Pecos Trail. It was widened in the 1970s. In 2018, ownership of the road between Pacheco Street and Galisteo Road was transferred from the state to the city. The city now considers the St. Michael's corridor a residential and economic hub.

The $400,000 study, funded by the Federal Highway Administration, could take 12 to 18 months. It will be used to propose a project to the city for the "overbuilt and underused" road. Public input will be sought.

The Promise of Midtown

BY **WESTIN GLASS**



What makes Santa Fe the enchanting place it is? The architecture, the art, the food, the music, the traditions? What makes these things possible? All of them have the same source: the people. How can we ensure that Santa Fe continues to be a world-class cultural destination?

First and foremost, by ensuring that the people who create and carry on our one-of-a-kind culture can afford to live here. Furthermore, we must ensure that there are accessible, affordable places for artists, performers, musicians and other creative people to explore and develop their craft. This is the promise, and the vision, of Midtown.

The Midtown campus, at the geographical center of Santa Fe, is poised to become a new cultural and urban center that will provide homes, jobs, amenities and cultural spaces for current and future generations of Santa Feans—with a focus on the creative current that sets our city apart. It shows the power of public-private partnership at its best. The exciting plan for Midtown would not be possible without bold, courageous actions by local government, private developers and cultural institutions working hand-in-hand.

The Midtown campus shows the power of public-private partnership at its best.

Take a walk on the campus today and you can already see a glimmer of its potential. Aspect Media Village represents a microcosm of what Midtown will eventually become. It includes film production studios and support spaces, creative space, modern and energy-efficient homes, gourmet pizza and coffee, and a yoga-pilates studio, all integrated by safe and beautiful outdoor spaces.

Planned projects around the campus expand on the theme. Midtown Sol will renovate several existing buildings into an innovative complex of facilities to support the next generation of creators. The Blue Mesa Center for the Arts combines studios, galleries, performance space, a café and, crucially, housing for artists.

The city's planned infrastructure improvements will go beyond simply making possible the private-sector developments that will bring Midtown to life. The plan sets an example for what good urban design can accomplish in the desert Southwest. Streets place emphasis on safety and convenience for pedestrians and bicycles while ensuring that parking is plentiful and vehicular circulation is easy. Public parks make smart use of available space and views, providing spaces to relax, exercise and socialize. The central plaza—similar in scale and function to the historic Santa Fe Plaza—provides a focal point for public life in the

The Master Plan was developed in collaboration with the community.



Underlying it all is an excellent system for harvesting and reusing rainwater.



Renderings of Homewise's proposed townhomes on the Midtown campus

Midtown campus and surrounding neighborhoods, with a stage for performances and flexible space for year-round activities. Underlying it all is an excellent system for harvesting and reusing rainwater.

Homewise is honored to participate in the Midtown project by doing what we do best: building homes for Santa Fe residents across a range of incomes, family sizes and life stages. Our proposed development includes 74 townhomes for home ownership, of which 42 percent will be sold at affordable prices (more than double the city's standard affordable housing requirement), as well as commercial spaces for local businesses serving the surrounding community, such as childcare, cafés or shops. As always, our goal is to help our neighbors get onto the home-ownership ladder, allowing them to feel the pride of owning their own home and begin to build wealth that they can pass on to the next generation.

It took courage and vision for the City of Santa Fe to designate Midtown as a Metropolitan Redevelopment Area and to put its future in the hands of the Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency (made up of expert professionals), under the advisement and guidance of the Metropolitan Redevelopment Commission (made up of community members).

The Midtown Master Plan is equally bold, proposing a district that accomplishes a critical mass of people and activities. This relatively dense, mixed-use type of neighborhood only exists in one other part of Santa Fe—the historic downtown. It is worth noting that while downtown is the most desirable and highest-priced part of the city, Santa Fe's current zoning code does not allow anything like it to be built today, not even within downtown itself.

The Master Plan was developed in collaboration with the community. The public engagement conducted by the City of Santa Fe and its partners was exemplary, reaching out proactively to community organizations and individuals who live and work close to the campus and across the city. Special care was taken to establish a plan to prevent displacement of longtime residents in the surrounding neighborhoods.

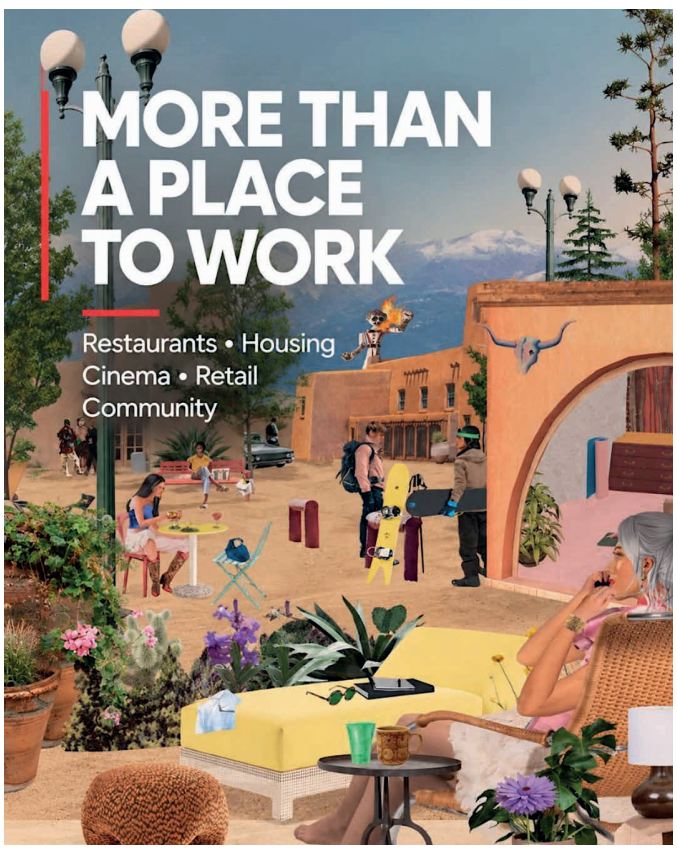
Midtown shows what a city—even the City Different—can accomplish with an expansive, trusting, collaborative mindset that puts people at the center of a fearless vision for the future. For the potential of Midtown to be realized, our elected officials will need to continue being brave—allocating funds for the required infrastructure improvements, and taking risks on partnering with private-sector businesses, for-profit and nonprofit alike, to build the homes, businesses and arts facilities that will make the Midtown community a place of pride for the entire city. ■

Westin Glass is a real estate development project director for Homewise.

Midtown: Santa Fe Builds a Neighborhood for the Next Century

How a shuttered college campus is becoming a walkable, mixed-income community where people can live, work, learn and create

BY **PHILIP GESUE**



Promotional artwork for Aspect Media Village

When the City of Santa Fe took on debt to buy a defunct college campus in the heart of town, it was a bold call. Governments are rightly cautious about stepping into real estate, but here the stakes were too high to leave to chance. Sold off to the highest bidder, the land could easily have become another subdivision: a couple hundred suburban tract homes in the middle of the city. Instead, Santa Fe kept the land in public hands and asked its residents what it should become. That decision is now paying off.

The city brought in Opticos Design, one of the country's most forward-thinking urban planning firms, and spent more than a year in community engagement. The plan that came out of those conversations rests on four commitments: equity, inclusion, diversity and sustainability. It is the kind of experiment that fits Santa Fe, a place people have come to for centuries to find a new way to live, from the Pueblo communities who built here first, to Spanish and Mexican settlers, to travelers on the Santa Fe Trail, to the artists and seekers of the 1960s and '70s.

ASPECT MEDIA VILLAGE

In December 2022, the city issued a request for proposals for the campus's film facilities. The winning proposal came from the owner of the adjacent Shellaberger Tennis Center, which had recently been converted into a sound stage. Its vision, Aspect Media Village, pairs the largest film studio in northern New Mexico with homes, shops and offices.

Construction began in early 2025. Rather than clearing the site, the development team has adapted aging campus buildings, many of them architecturally distinctive, kept the campus's existing art and sculpture in place, and offered job training to local residents. The result is a community even more ambitious than the original plan imagined.

NEIGHBORS, NOT "PROJECTS"

Midtown's plan calls for hundreds of units of inclusionary affordable housing. That word "inclusionary" matters. Affordable homes are woven into market-rate buildings rather than concentrated in separate complexes, so a teacher, a line cook and a software engineer can share a hallway. It's how American neighborhoods used to work, and it's how strong communities still do.

LIVING CLOSE TO WORK

Affordability is only half the equation. When working families are priced out to the edges of the region, they pay in long commutes, gas money and time away from home. Midtown puts new homes within walking or biking distance of new jobs, so people who might never have afforded a new apartment in the center of the city can now live near where they work. And a neighborhood that draws people of different backgrounds, incomes and talents becomes more than the sum of its parts.

The land could easily have become another subdivision.

THE CORNER STORE COMES BACK

After the 1970s, much of the country traded walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods for car-dependent suburbs that separated homes from shops. Santa Fe was once peppered with corner bodegas; most are gone now. Midtown is designed to bring them back, mixing homes with groceries, shops and services so that picking up a gallon of milk doesn't require a car trip. Walkable streets are healthier, safer and friendlier. More people on the sidewalk means more neighbors who know each other and more eyes on the street.

The sustainability commitments go beyond the street grid. Existing campus buildings are being reused rather than demolished, keeping the energy and materials already built into them out of the landfill. Rooftop solar arrays and bike stations are built into the plan, moving the neighborhood toward renewable electricity and away from fossil fuels.

Development has also made room for wildlife. A prairie dog colony has been kept on site, anchoring a small urban ecosystem that now draws falcons, Cooper's hawks, coyotes, roadrunners and lizards.

The plan rests on four commitments: equity, inclusion, diversity and sustainability.

A HOME FOR CLEAN-ENERGY WORK

As the village took shape, New Mexico's young renewable-energy industry was taking off, and several of those companies chose to make Aspect Media Village their home, bringing well-paying jobs with them. Many of their employees have since moved into Midtown's newly completed apartments. Santa Fe Community College's Innovation Center has opened a machining lab here, returning education to the former campus alongside the nearby Higher Education Center.

Next comes the New Mexico Innovation Hub, now in development, which aims to bring hundreds more jobs to the area along with internship and training partnerships with higher-education programs. The goal is simple: Local residents, especially young people, should be able to build careers in clean-energy technology without leaving home.

A NEIGHBORHOOD BOTH NEW AND OLD

What is emerging at Midtown is something Santa Fe has seen before and is now building again: a place where people can live, work, learn, create and play, all within walking distance of one another. The city took a risk by holding this land for the public good. The neighborhood growing there today shows that the risk was worth taking. ■

Phillip Gesue is principal of PE Real Estate Holdings LLC, Aspect Media Village's developer, the company contracted to develop the first phase of the Midtown campus.



Film, television and digital-media soundstages and production facilities at Aspect Media Village

Aspect Media Village
Innovative Mixed-use Development

In 2024, the City of Santa Fe sold one of its Midtown parcels to PE Real Estate Holdings LLC and awarded the company the right to develop the first phase of the neighborhood pursuant to a Request for Proposal. The 23-acre site is being transformed into Aspect Media Village (AMV), an innovative, mixed-use development featuring media, technology, housing and retail uses. It will anchor Midtown's film, television and digital media production. Post-production facilities currently include Bernlore Studios and Deadeye Post.

Aspect Media Village is home to northern New Mexico's largest soundstages: Garson Studios and the Shellaberger and Driscoll facilities, totaling 44,000 square feet, as well as a 10,000-square-foot outdoor stadium and 21,000 square feet of administrative offices and production support that draws on a deep local talent pool and onsite craft and catering services.

Current tenants include the Art House, a 129-unit apartment and workforce housing complex. Plans are underway for a second housing complex and grocery store. Other on-site enterprises include Sky Cinema/La Rana Café; Tender Fire Kitchen; Herbs, Etc.'s manufacturing facility; Dirty Laundry yoga/pilates; and Wise Fool Circus Arts. Benildus Hall, where the New Mexico Innovation Hub is based, includes 34,000 square feet of executive offices and post-production suites set on what will be a landscaped park with 30 parking spaces.











ASPECT MEDIA VILLAGE

AMV's website says, "Every decision we make reflects a corporate commitment to diversity, inclusivity and sustainability that ensures we make a positive impact on our community." Developer Phillip Gesue said, "The community has voted with their dollars to invest and settle in Midtown. I am confident this talented group will delight Santa Feans with what they are doing here. Midtown is coming back to life for the people of Santa Fe to enjoy." ■

AMV PROFILES



DEAD EYE POST PRODUCTION

Dead Eye Post-Production is a boutique design studio offering filmmakers, studios, creatives and agencies tailored services and workflows to enhance their creative process, from dailies to final color. Services include visual effects, editing, animation and picture finishing. "I established Dead Eye in 2022 to expand opportunities in post-production and design for New Mexicans pursuing careers in film, television and advertising," said owner/creative director Vince Rose. "We work in documentary, entertainment and advertising with a consistent focus: to tell compelling stories." Dead Eye's new post-production facility in Benildus Hall is designed to attract major film and TV projects.



BERNLORE
STUDIOS | RECORDS | FILMS

BERNLORE STUDIOS

Bernlore Studios is an independent, post-production studio. "My studio brings music composition and film production together under one roof," founder Luke Carr said in a press release. "I'm excited to bring that work back to Midtown—and especially back to Benildus Hall, a space that has resonated with creativity for me and many others over the years." Carr's studio has worked on projects with a variety of clients, such as the Santa Fe Opera and the Institute of Functional Medicine, among others.

In addition to Bernlore Studios, Carr has two other groups that operate under the Bernlore name: Bernlore Records, which focuses on music productions, and Bernlore Films, which creates a variety of films, including documentaries and music videos.

ART HOUSE APARTMENTS

Art House Apartments is a 129-unit development featuring one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments, opened in August. By the end of October, 60 percent had been leased. It is the first residential development on the Midtown property. When complete, it will include a fitness center, a yoga and tai chi room, daily fitness classes, a fireplace lounge, a bike room with outdoor access, a dog-washing room, coworking facilities, a fourth-floor sunset roof deck and a 200-kilowatt rooftop solar farm.





SKY CINEMA MIDTOWN

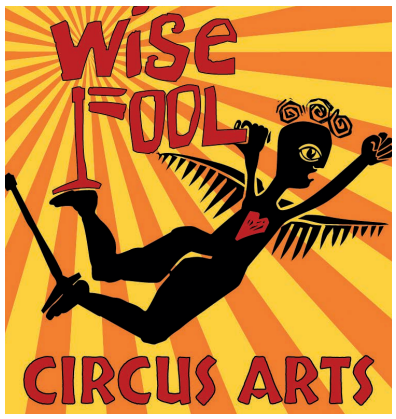
Sky Cinemas is a dedicated theater for screenings, premieres and special events. It provides filmmakers with a professional venue while offering the Santa Fe community a place to experience a curated mix of independent, foreign language and documentary films, along with the occasional blockbuster. There are two screening rooms. Guests can relax into luxury seating to view films all day long while enjoying their favorite coffee drinks. Owner Bill Banowsky, a film and theater veteran, said, "We are excited to be part of the effort to revive the Midtown campus as a mecca for the arts and artists."



LA RANA COFFEE

La Rana Coffee has a 525-square-foot space in the lobby of Sky Cinema Midtown, with an approximately 20-seat capacity and outdoor patio tables. The business operates seven days a week from 8 a.m to 3 p.m. It offers craft espresso and specialty drinks, as well as pastries and sandwiches.

WISE FOOL CIRCUS ARTS





Wise Fool Circus Arts is an innovative program for youth that teaches circus skills such as trapeze, lyra, partner acrobatics, flexibility, juggling, unicycling, handstands, conditioning and more. "Wise Fool serves 2,000 youth and adults with hands-on activities and 14,000 audience members annually with experiences built upon our core values of community, arts accessibility and social justice," said Executive Director Alishiya Kapoor. "Our move to the Garson Building at Aspect Media Village gives us a fabulous space all our own to implement our circus program for youth and adults in a wonderful and imaginative way."

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TENDER FIRE KITCHEN

Tender Fire Kitchen, founded by chef Ben Crosky, has served the Santa Fe community with organic, locally sourced food since 2020. Its recent expansion at Aspect Media Village into its first brick & mortar site builds on a loyal following developed as a food truck and catering operation. "Our goal is to create a warm, inviting space offering an elevated yet approachable dining experience rooted in quality ingredients and fire-driven cooking," Crosky said.

Tender Fire aims to become a neighborhood gathering spot. The new space includes an open kitchen centered around a wood-fire oven, a large, greenery-filled patio, a spacious private dining room for events and celebrations, and plans for live music, community-driven events and sports gatherings. There is ample parking that includes four electric-vehicle charging stations.

The menu blends Mediterranean, Italian and Mexican influences and features a variety of fermented sourdough pizzas with farm-fresh toppings. Seasonal vegetables, salads, appetizers, entrées and desserts showcase globally inspired flavors.



DIRTY LAUNDRY HOT YOGA

dirty laundry

Dirty Laundry Hot Yoga is opening a 3,400-square-foot yoga studio with an acai and smoothie cafe in Aspect Media Village's Driscoll Building, the same building that houses Tender Fire Kitchen. Lauren Roberts owns the "modern wellness destination." It is open daily, offering high-energy movement classes for all levels, ages and abilities, in multiple modalities. You can immerse yourself in an experience designed to rejuvenate both body and mind. https://www.dirtylaundryhotyoga.com/



Herbs, Etc.

A New Chapter at Midtown

Founded in Santa Fe more than 50 years ago, Herbs, Etc. has grown from its roots in traditional Western herbalism into a nationally distributed manufacturer of herbal supplements. Now the company is beginning a new chapter at Midtown, bringing its manufacturing, production and office operations together under one roof.

The company is bringing its manufacturing, production and office operations together under one roof.

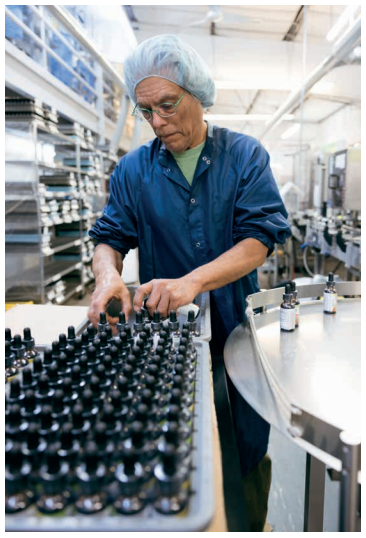
Herbs, Etc. will occupy approximately 29,000 square feet on the west side of the Shellaberger building, more than twice the size of its current primary manufacturing facility on Rufina Circle. The move will consolidate operations that have been spread across four Santa Fe buildings and bring the company's nearly 50 employees together in one location.

That consolidation is about more than additional space. Herbs, Etc. currently spends considerable time and resources moving raw herbs, ingredients and materials between facilities. Bringing those operations together will create more efficient production and reduce waste. The new facility is being designed to support higher manufacturing standards and certifications as Herbs, Etc. continues to grow.



Longer term, the company is exploring the possibility of opening portions of its operations to public tours, giving visitors a behind-the-scenes look at how herbs move from raw plant material through extraction and production to the finished product. For a company rooted in herbal education, that would be especially meaningful. A tour experience could provide a tangible connection between the plants, the people and the processes behind the products, and create another way for Herbs, Etc. to participate in the Midtown community.

SINCE 1969
HERBS ETC.®



It was important for Herbs, Etc. to remain in Santa Fe. The company's roots stretch back to 1969 and renowned Southwest herbalist Michael Moore, whose work helped shape modern Western herbalism. Herbalist Daniel Gagnon, a student of Moore's, later carried that tradition forward through Herbs, Etc., building a company centered on thoughtful formulation, high-quality plant material and careful extraction.

For generations of Santa Feans, Herbs, Etc. may be most familiar as the shop that operated on Cerrillos Road for more than five decades. While the retail store closed in 2025 following Gagnon's retirement, the Herbs, Etc. brand and manufacturing business continued, and today its products are sold through retailers and online to customers across the country. The move to Midtown represents the next chapter.

Today, Herbs, Etc. produces nearly 100 herbal wellness products, including ChlorOxygen®, Deep Sleep® and Lymphatonic™. The company works with growers and wildharvesters, including a local farm at Tesuque Pueblo, sourcing approximately 80 percent of its plants domestically and prioritizing fresh plant material whenever possible. Fresh aerial plant parts are processed within 24 hours of harvest, alongside specialized techniques such as cryogenic grinding, kinetic maceration and cold processing.

Under current president Dan Coyle, Herbs, Etc. refreshed its brand look and feel in 2025, while beginning the search for a larger facility. Midtown offered that opportunity. The new facility places Herbs, Etc. within a developing mix of businesses, technology, film, food, entertainment and housing at Aspect Media Village. For employees who have worked across multiple locations, it also creates something the company hasn't had in years: one shared home. The move represents both continuity and change—allowing a company with deep roots in Santa Fe's herbal tradition to potentially create a more public-facing relationship with the community. ■

Top: Herbs, Etc. team; manufacturing and packaging facility



THE NEW MEXICO INNOVATION HUB

Filling Empty Buildings with the Future

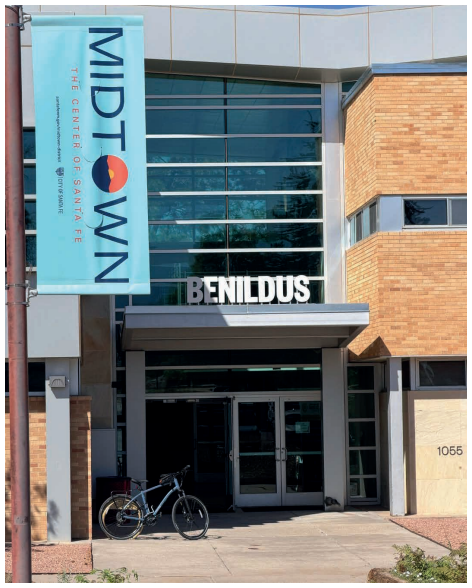
BY **SETH ROFFMAN**

In February 2026, Santa Fe's emerging Midtown District got a major boost from the New Mexico Economic Development Department's (NMEDD) Technology and Innovation Office, which, through the City of Santa Fe, awarded the New Mexico Innovation Hub a $700,000 grant to develop a state-of-the-art innovation campus.

A new home for the scientists, entrepreneurs, researchers, makers and companies working on the ideas that will shape our future

The award was part of the state's inaugural Innovation Infrastructure Grants, a program designed to expand the physical spaces startups and researchers need to grow and stay in New Mexico. The awardees were selected through a competitive evaluation process based on their expected contributions to economic growth and diversification, as well as their alignment with one or more of the division's priority sectors.

"How do we use the substantial assets this state has to grow and diversify our economy so we are less dependent on oil and gas, especially as New Mexico moves toward carbon-free electricity by 2045?" asked David Perez, founder/CEO of the *New Mexico Innovation Hub* (NMIH). "Turn tech-transfer into companies." NMEDD's investment supported renovation of the former Santa Fe University of Art and Design's 32,000-square-foot Benildus Hall, which is anchoring the NMIH. The Hub has fast become a center of gravity for the local innovation economy to support startups, drive technological advancements and accelerate economic development. "This investment reflects what we're seeing on the ground in Santa Fe," said Johanna Nelson, director of the City of Santa Fe Office of Economic Development. "There is growing demand for space where ideas can turn into businesses, talent can connect to opportunity, and innovation can take root locally."



Top: Rendering of the New Mexico Innovation Hub; Above: Benildus Hall, where the NMIH is currently based

NMIH's campus, including space in other Aspect Media Village buildings, is providing essential infrastructure and supportive programming to help local companies thrive, while also attracting talent and innovative companies from across the country and around the world. "Santa Fe is a unique, deeply cultured place and that is already a global destination," Perez said. "We want to use all of those assets to attract entrepreneurs and technologists to build their companies here, and to build their lives here too."

Since January, more than 70,000 square feet of previously vacant buildings, an old gymnasium and an old tennis club—all within a two-minute walk of each other—has been leased to 11 organizations, and the Hub hosted events for the city, universities, national labs, nonprofits and industry associations. Perez says these results prove there is demand from local companies that are seeking to be part of a community, not just rent space.

That community is taking shape at the NMIH. *Prometheon Power* is developing localized geovoltaic power. *Liberty Fusion* is commercializing fusion technology born at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL). *Bandelier Technologies,* a quantum-sensing startup, began operations after raising more than $2 million. *Slazer AI* is bringing LANL algorithms to real-estate valuation. In May, the *New Mexico Climate Investment Center* relocated



its headquarters to the NMIH. Other enterprises include *Woodruff Engineering, New Mexico Fusion Igniter, New Mexico Angels,* and the *New Mexico Consortium,* a nonprofit formed by the University of New Mexico, New Mexico State University and New Mexico Tech to facilitate research and increase interaction between universities, industry and LANL.

Local people will benefit. The *New Collar Network Fab Lab* is training the next generation of technicians and makers for high-paying jobs without requiring a college degree. Santa Fe Community College's nonprofit, Mosaica, is working with the Hub to bring an advanced machining lab and related programs to campus, connecting students with startups and employers. Mosaica will occupy nearly 4,800 square feet, with two full-time employees and two adjunct faculty members. About 25 students will initially be enrolled in courses.

For Santa Fe, the Hub means vacant buildings are productive again. It also means that technology developed at the national labs can become companies headquartered there, and that founders like Bandelier's Stephen Buchanan, who moved his young family from the East Coast, are choosing Santa Fe as home. For the business community, it means a growing network of customers, partners, talent and investors in one place.



Renderings of planned New Mexico Innovation Hub facilities. Courtesy of NMIH





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EXPANSION PLANNED

NMIH's Phase 2 expansion has secured financing from the New Mexico Finance Authority through its Enterprise Commercial Development Fund. The project is expected to begin construction early in 2027 and open in mid-2028. Companies are asking to hold space before the buildings even exist. Pre-leasing has begun for four structures, constituting approximately 85,000 square feet of flex, lab and maker spaces. Flex spaces can blend office, storage and industrial usage in a single, adaptable unit.

Fusion supply-chain companies need more than an office: 22-foot ceilings, mezzanines and layouts will be built to suit each tenant, and ample three-phase power will be provided. Roughly 10 MW of power will serve NMIH's campus. Perez expects to have space for up to 10 tenants. Some will be tech startups in the advanced energy, quantum or manufacturing sectors, but the developer has also been in talks with a gym and a physician's practice. A 50,000-square-foot office building is expected to open in late 2029, along with a café run by a local restaurant. Multifamily apartments are also planned.

Perez told *The Albuquerque Journal* that the land acquisition and development are "honestly secondary" and more of a byproduct of the community NMIH is building. "We are creating an ecosystem where scientists, academics, students, entrepreneurs, investors and state agencies gather. This community on the same 5-acre campus will generate economic momentum. In addition, we are working with the state to obtain funding to build labs with equipment to be shared by members on campus, instrumentation that no single startup could justify on its own."

"We are 36 miles south of Los Alamos and 40 miles north of Sandia," Perez said, "so we are a natural meeting point for people from both labs, and both are interested in leasing space and working closely with the companies here. Los Alamos in particular is the anchor that makes the whole ecosystem work, the magnet that draws students, industry and companies that want to be close to the science. The talent concentrated at the labs, and at University of New Mexico and New Mexico Tech, is the raw material for everything we are building."

"Just as important," he added, "the Hub is an unclassified, entrepreneurial environment, so private industry can meet openly with lab employees and students. The Feynman Center for Innovation, the office that helps Los Alamos commercialize its technology, is a sponsor of the Hub, and we work closely with them through programs like their Lab Embedded Entrepreneur Program. One of those companies, Bandelier Technologies, is already a tenant here, and our job is to help companies like that grow and stay in New Mexico."

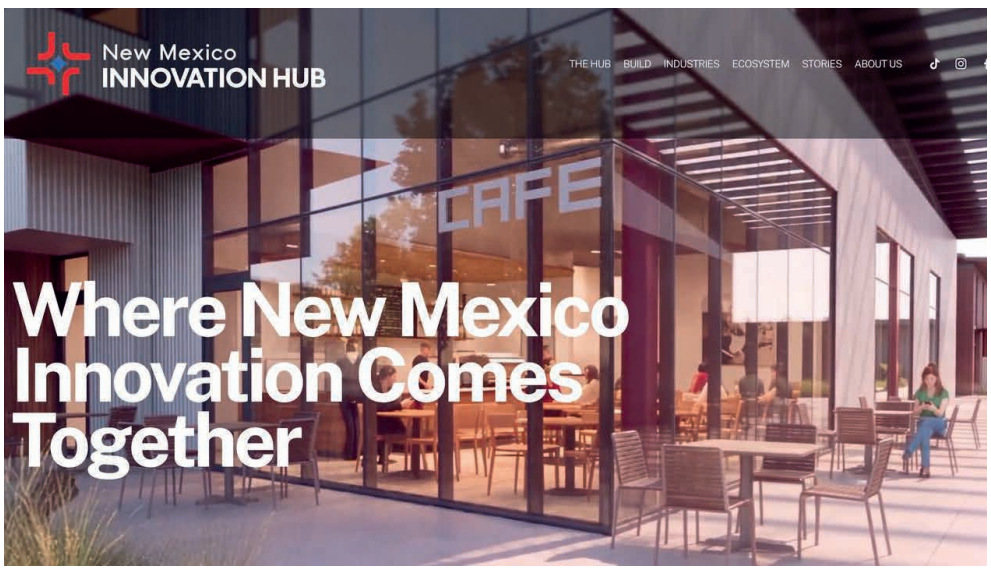


David Perez, founder and CEO of the New Mexico Innovation Hub

Kelly Stanhope, NMIH's operations director, said, "For anyone building something in Santa Fe, or wanting to support those who are, the Hub's doors are open. The Hub has a limited number of desks available in our co-working space—putting you right in the middle of one of Santa Fe's most exciting and growing innovation communities." For availability, details and rates, email KELLY@NM-IH.COM. For more information on the NMIH, visit NEWMEXICOINNOVATIONHUB.COM .

"Local companies are seeking to be part of a community, not just rent space."
– David Perez

A network of customers, partners, talent and investors in one place







Bandelier Technologies team

BANDELIER TECHNOLOGIES – QUANTUM SENSING AND IMAGING

"New Mexico is becoming the 'next frontier' for advanced technology and innovation, particularly in future-forward sectors like quantum, fusion, space tech, aerospace and defense," said Economic Development New Mexico (EDNM) Cabinet Secretary Rob Black. The state's startups are commercializing decades of research from national labs and universities.

Bandelier Technologies, founded by former Army Rangers Stephen Buchanan and Josh Heebner, is a deep-technology company that develops breakthroughs from Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) into systems for both defense and commercial industries. "We are the future of integrated sensing and communications," the company's website (HTTPS://WWW.BANDELIERTECH.COM) states. Bandelier's quantum sensing hardware is integrated with artificial intelligence for critical infrastructure applications. Bandelier is also an aerospace and hardware robotics firm that utilizes laboratory and fabrication space at the New Mexico Innovation Hub to build and test advanced drones.

State programs including the EDNM's Job Training Incentive Program (JTIP) are supporting development of this technology and have helped Bandelier attract 10 full-time employees. In August, the company was awarded $117,616 for three job trainees and $33,462 in September for one trainee. The program reimburses expanding businesses for 50 to 90 percent of employee training and wages for up to six months. Bandelier has also received aid from LANL.

PROMETHEON DEVELOPMENT GROUP, LLC



Craig Wycoff, managing director of Prometheon Development

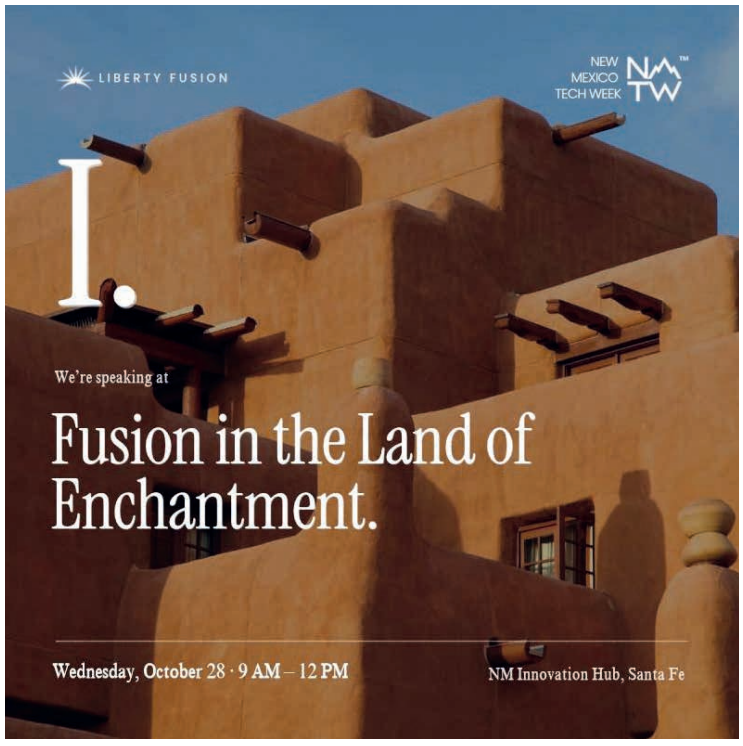
"The solution to America's developing electropocalypse!" proclaims the cover of a pamphlet that Prometheon Development Group, LLC has produced. The solution the company is developing is Geovoltaic™ localized power systems, a new form of advanced thermo-voltaic technology that converts shallow, low-temperature geothermal heat directly into electricity. "This harnesses the Earth's naturally occurring geothermal energy to create a perpetual source of power," says Craig Wycoff, Prometheon's managing director. "Our modular multi-Megawatt facilities generate clean, continuous, utility-scale, base-load power. These plants represent a paradigm shift to localized generation (distributed generation), producing electricity directly near the source of consumption."

Key advantages of these systems are rapid implementation: utility-scaled power in months, not decades; that they are weather-independent, delivering power 24/7, regardless of sun or wind; that local generation reduces grid strain, minimizing transmission losses and grid bottlenecks; and that they don't require on-site water resources.

An initial 1-MW pilot project will be located where the Río Grande Rift runs through a ranch near Albuquerque. The site offers favorable geology and accessible geothermal resources. There will also be a pilot in Santa Fe.

"We chose to locate at the Innovation Hub because we want to be embedded in the vibrant community and activities happening on this campus," Wycoff said. "The Hub will give us additional visibility to investors and industry stakeholders."

LIBERTY FUSION

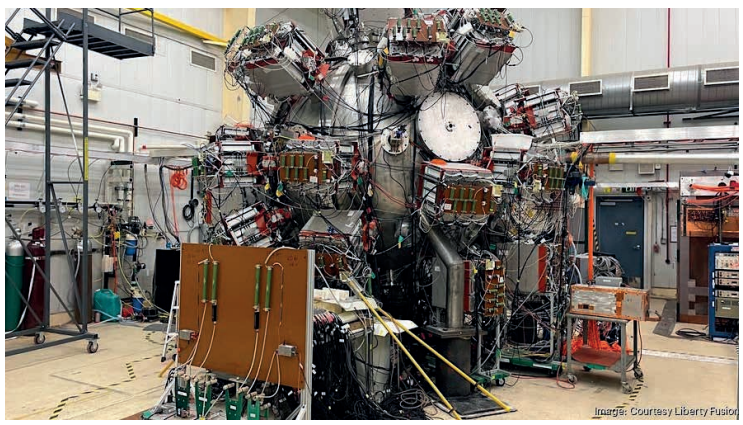


Fusion has the potential to transform the future of clean energy. Fusion is the concept of combining light elements like hydrogen and releasing a lot of energy. Liberty Fusion founder/CEO Koichi Masuda, a veteran of the tech industry, says that just six water bottles of fusion fuel could generate enough energy to power the entire state of New Mexico for an entire day.

The New Mexico-based startup, is developing next-generation fusion energy at the New Mexico Innovation Hub. Liberty Fusion is commercializing the Plasma-Jet Magneto-Inertial Fusion (PJMIF) approach with a one-of-a-kind device called the Plasma Liner Experiment (PLX), developed at Los Alamos National Lab—"an elegant, cost-first path that avoids the billion-dollar traps of lasers and magnets."

"We're building a path to zero-carbon fusion energy that can replace fossil fuels—for the U.S. and allied markets and for the countries in the developing world that need affordable power most," said Masuda. The company raised $2 million in pre-seed funding and received $625,000 from New Mexico.

Referring to the Innovation Hub, Masuda told *Albuquerque Business First,* "We get a very centralized location of access to the right types of people and collaboration."



Plasma Liner Experiment (PLX) at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) Courtesy Liberty Fusion

NEW MEXICO INVESTS $17.3M IN GEOTHERMAL ENERGY

The New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department has awarded $17.3 million in grants to four projects that will help expand geothermal energy resources across the state. The projects range from initial feasibility studies to industrial development and installation. New Mexico currently has one operating geothermal power plant. The four projects are expected to support the creation of additional facilities.

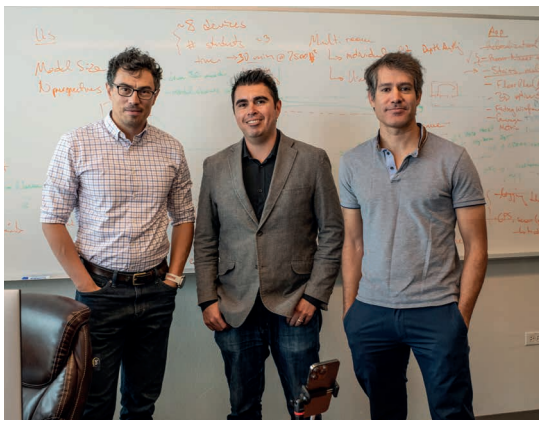
The funding is part of the Geothermal Projects Development Fund included in House Bill 91, passed during the 2026 legislative session. The fund, managed by EMNRD's Energy Conservation and Management Division (ECAM), is aimed at supporting local communities, educational institutions and other entities seeking to advance geothermal power generation.

"These projects will expand scientific understanding of our geothermal resources and ensure that tribes and academic institutions are central in shaping the future of renewable energy in our state," said ECAM Division Director Rebecca "Puck" Stair. "We look forward to the discoveries, partnerships and opportunities these projects will create for communities across New Mexico." Entities eligible for geothermal development projects are municipalities, counties, state agencies, public schools, universities and Native American nations, tribes and pueblos. Stair said the state should know if the areas are viable for building further infrastructure by June 30, 2027, and will publish the data for the public. From that point, the timeline will be in the hands of private developers, where there is "a lot of interest."

The projects approved for funding:

- Jicarilla Apache Nation, $2.5 million, characterizing the area around Dulce for geothermal potential
- New Mexico State University, $2.85 million, geologic and geophysical characterization of geothermal features outside of Las Cruces
- New Mexico Institute of Technology, $10 million, drilling of a stratigraphic test well for geothermal potential in Socorro County
- San Ildefonso Pueblo, $2 million, conducting geothermal modeling and exploration

SLAZER AI



LANL scientists/partners Zig Hampel and Juan Castorena with Slazer AI CEO Nick Salazar (center)

Slazer AI is an advanced computing company commercializing Los Alamos National Laboratory algorithms to bring next-generation accuracy to real estate valuation.

Most decisions about a house are still made from a few photos, public records and a tape measure. That goes for the listing price, a remodel bid and an insurance inspection alike. Slazer measures the inside of a home. With a five-minute scan from a LIDAR sensor and cameras built into an iPhone, Slazer captures a home's rooms, dimensions and condition and turns them into quantifiable data. That gives real estate agents, contractors and insurers the same measured picture of a property. And the homeowner gets better information.

The company is starting with listing agents in Santa Fe, who use the scan to price homes on evidence instead of guesswork. Slazer is also working with local partners in construction and insurance on measuring properties for remodeling and wildfire risk.

"I'm from Santa Fe," said Slazer's founder/CEO Nick Salazar, a three-time New Mexico entrepreneur and real estate agent. "I'm building this company here and I want it to create jobs here. Building a tech company can be isolating, and the New Mexico Innovation Hub solves that. We share knowledge, contacts and resources with other founders doing hard things. The people down the hall have introduced us to investors, mentors and partners we wouldn't have found on our own." Learn more at slazer.ai .

WOODRUFF ENGINEERING

Woodruff Engineering's expertise is in advanced magnets and high-precision power supply systems. CEO Simon Woodruff relocated the company to Santa Fe in 2017. The company, which recently moved into the Shellaberger Center in Midtown, collaborates with local enterprises and educational institutions. The new facility will allow the company to expand its operations while tackling ambitious energy and infrastructure projects worldwide.



Photo caption word word word

THE NEW COLLAR NETWORK



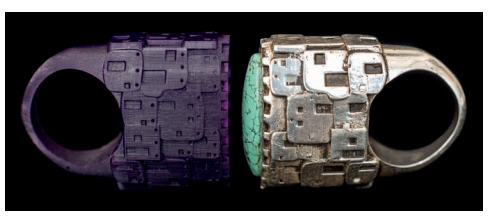
J.C. Ramirez interned at NCN while a student at SFCC. With the experience he gained, he landed a job at the EV company Rivian.

The nonprofit New Collar Network provides pathways to good, well-paying digital jobs that don't require a college degree.

Workforce training programs in computer-aided design, 3D printing, laser and CNC machining, AI, lean leadership and more are operated in two Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Fab Lab locations that New Collar operates on the Midtown campus:

1. Classes are held at the Santa Fe Higher Education Center in collaboration with Santa Fe Community College's (SFCC) Mosaica, Inc. Classes range from half-day topic introductions to a three-month bootcamp. Students earn digital badge micro-certifications that are industry-recognized by America Makes, the national 3D Printing Institute.

2. Practical experience is provided in a Fab Lab embedded in the New Mexico Innovation Hub. From internships for high school students to full, one-year U.S. Department of Labor registered apprenticeships, attendees get paid on-the-job training. The Fab Lab works with local entrepreneurs to design, test and manufacture prototypes and short production runs. In addition to applying technical skills, participants engage with customers in quoting, communication, troubleshooting and quality control.



Jeweler Mayte Cardenas used a high-resolution 3D printer to create a new mold, which was then cast in sterling silver.

Many of the classes are free through the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions' Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program or SFCC's New Mexico Higher Education Department grants.

New Collar founder Sarah Boisvert believes that these new-collar—digital blue-collar—jobs are essential to bring back manufacturing in the USA, and more importantly, that careers in New Collar fields can start to lay the foundation of a financially stable new middle class.

NEW MEXICO ANGELS



New Mexico Angels is an organization of accredited angel investors that support start-up and high-growth companies. The angels' mission is to catalyze entrepreneurs, investors and community partners to thrive in New Mexico through access to capital, "deal flow," mentorship and advocacy.

For more than 25 years, New Mexico Angels has been investing in New Mexico-based early-stage and seed companies. NMA is not a venture fund, and does not make direct investments; it serves as an intermediary between its members and potential investment opportunities. Members make direct investments through the vehicle of New Mexico Angels. NMANGELS.COM

SPARK LABS STUDIO

SparkLabs.studio, founded by Santa Fe's Ron Dimon, describes itself simply: a decision design studio. The idea is that most teams and organizations don't fail from a lack of ideas; they stall because no one can see how value actually moves through the system, or because there's no "decision operating system" that helps people commit to outcomes that matter.

Spark Labs' process runs the same three steps whether the client is a single founder or an entire city: Map-make the system visible, often using the studio's proprietary "Blueprint," a large-format tool charting 189 value drivers across a business or organization and how they align to key outcomes; Convene—bring the people who actually own that system into one room, facilitated Socratically rather than lectured at; and Commit—co-create an action plan, with owners and dates attached, as a way to execute the outcomes.

That approach has shown up across New Mexico this year through a Santa Fe Economic Development-backed program, delivering strategic plans for clients, helping companies position the value of their offerings, as well as in civic work like mapping how a city's homelessness-response organizations connect to one another. Dimon, who spent three decades building enterprise-planning practices at Hyperion, Anaplan, and Deloitte before focusing on strategy, facilitation and co-creation, also teaches at UNM's Center for Responsible Entrepreneurship and serves on the board of Creative Santa Fe.

As the studio puts it: bring a hairy problem or a wicked opportunity, leave with a committed action plan.



Ron Dimon, Sen. Martin Heinrich, David Perez at Spark Labs Studio

IS NEW MEXICO BECOMING THE SOUTHWEST'S NEXT MAJOR TECH AND CLEAN-ENERGY POWERHOUSE?

When people think of regional tech and energy booms, places like Austin, Phoenix or Salt Lake City often dominate the conversation. But looking closely at the data across the Albuquerque–Santa Fe–Los Alamos corridor, a compelling economic story is unfolding.

• National Lab Expansion & Tech Defense Investments—With substantial federal funding and expansion around Sandia National Laboratories and Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), engineering, cybersecurity and research professionals are streaming into northern and central New Mexico.

• The Clean Energy & Manufacturing Surge—From solar manufacturing to grid infrastructure, clean=energy investments across the state are generating long-term job opportunities—attracting both direct hires and supporting contractors.

• Relocation and Housing Demand Shifts—As professionals move in to support these sectors, there is increased demand for single-family homes near commuter corridors between Santa Fe and Albuquerque; rental and multi-family units in suburban areas; and commercial real estate development to support the expansion of light industrial and service industries.

Building Alongside One Another, on Purpose

BY **RON DIMON**

What becomes possible when organizations, businesses, developers and communities build alongside one another? And why does Santa Fe need more of it, by design?

Some of the best work I do doesn't start with a meeting. It starts in a hallway at the New Mexico Innovation Hub, or over coffee with someone who needs 10 minutes to think out loud. A founder stops me between rooms with a pricing question. A student in the UNM Center for Responsible Entrepreneurship (CRE) accelerator asks who she should talk to about a manufacturing partner. Fifteen minutes later, I've either answered it myself or I know exactly who in the building can.

That's my answer to the question above. What becomes possible? A lot. More than any single program, grant or curriculum can produce on its own. And right now, most of it happens by accident. I want to make the case that it shouldn't.



Entrepreneurial mentoring session at the UNM CRE accelerator

THE SAME PROBLEM, AT A DIFFERENT SCALE

For about 30 years I worked in global management consulting, much of it on something called Connected Planning. The idea is simple. When finance, sales and operations each plan in their own spreadsheet, everyone makes decisions with half the picture. Connect them, and the whole organization gets smarter and faster.

A regional economy has the same problem. Dozens of good organizations support founders in their own way, often without knowing much of what the others are doing. So the founder ends up doing the connecting, usually by accident, and usually late.

PROXIMITY CHANGES THE WORK

I see the alternative every day. My company, Spark Labs Studio, is a tenant at the Innovation Hub in Benildus Hall on the Midtown campus, and I teach the UNM CRE accelerator in the same building. I'm not a visiting instructor who parachutes in for class and leaves. I run into the people I teach, the people who teach alongside me, and founders across Midtown, again and again, in moments that have nothing to do with any formal structure. A once-a-week class becomes a running relationship.

Proximity changes speed, too. When a founder hits a wall, we don't need to book an advisory session three weeks out. Sometimes the most useful thing I can do is pull together a quick workshop that afternoon: two or three of us at a whiteboard, working the real problem, leaving with real options and a next step.

It also changes who you know. When I bring a client, a guest or a student into the Hub, I'm plugging them into a platform: the founders, mentors, investors and specialists in the building that week. New Mexico Angels and the New Mexico Climate Investment Center are down the hall. A student meets a working founder she'd otherwise never cross paths with. A guest speaker's side conversation turns into a real introduction. Every person who walks in widens what the next person can draw on.

When I bring a client, a guest or a student into the Hub, I'm plugging them into a platform: the founders, mentors, investors and specialists in the building that week.

BEYOND ONE BUILDING

The Hub doesn't do this alone. The City of Santa Fe's Economic Development Department (formerly the Office of Economic Development) funds the Santa Fe Small Business Navigator, which runs with NMSU's Arrowhead Center and is led by Caroline Lee. The Navigator is a hub too, with partners like the Santa Fe Business Incubator, SCORE, WESST, New Mexico Angels and the Regional Development Corporation as spokes. The city even lists the CRE partnership with UNM among its own business development programs.

We're not competing for a founder's attention. We hand people back and forth. A founder who needs an intensive accelerator comes our way. A founder who needs help with licenses, permits or a microgrant goes Caroline's way. That's what a shared vision for New Mexico's economic and workforce prosperity looks like in practice: many organizations acting as connective tissue instead of silos.

The payoff is real. Shared resources, like the co-marketing I've done, let a small company borrow reach it couldn't build alone. Shared event space, classrooms and labs mean no single startup carries all that overhead. Students meet their future employers. Founders learn from each other's mistakes instead of repeating them. And people learn to give before they ask, until that reciprocity becomes the way the place works.

THE GRADUATION CLIFF

Here's the part we don't talk about enough. Every accelerator and incubator has an end date, including the one I teach. Founders graduate. They pitch on demo day, everyone applauds, and then the structure that held them up for months goes away.

The cohort disperses. The mentors move on to the next class. The meeting room, the deadlines, the people asking "What did you get done this week?" are gone. And that usually happens right when the work gets harder: the first hires, the first real customers, the first serious money.

Some founders find their way through the hallway luck I described above. Many don't. They stall, or they take their company somewhere that offers more support. Either way, Santa Fe loses the return on everything it already invested in getting them that far.

Luck is not a strategy. If building alongside one another works this well by accident, imagine what it could do on purpose.

FROM "OR" TO "AND"

Today Santa Fe runs on an "OR" model. You join this incubator or that accelerator or another program, and each one carries you for a while, on its own. That diversity at the start is a strength. Different founders need different on-ramps, and I wouldn't change that.

What we're missing is an "AND" at the other end: one shared place where graduates of every program can keep going, together.

We could use more shared services for companies that have finished an early program and are ready to launch. Founders would arrive from the Santa Fe Business Incubator, Arrowhead, UNM CRE, Santa Fe Community College, WESST and others. Instead of starting over, they would plug into services no single program can afford to offer on its own:

- **Professional development**, including short, practical micro-certifications
- **Space** for co-working, meetings and events
- **Mentoring and coaching** from SCORE volunteers, subject experts and faculty

- **Development resources** like web and software help and fabrication lab access
- **Workforce support**, from interns to advisory boards
- **Funding connections** to credit unions, angel investors and funds
- **Residencies** for experienced executives and founders who can guide others
- **A community network** and industry groups that last beyond any single cohort

The City of Santa Fe's Economic Development Department funds the Santa Fe Small Business Navigator, which runs with NMSU's Arrowhead Center. The Navigator is a hub too.

None of this replaces what our programs already do. It connects them. It makes the pie bigger instead of splitting it. It makes better use of the mentors, money and space we already have. And it gives founders something they rarely see today: a visible path to long term support, right here.

IF YOU'RE STARTING SOMETHING, HERE'S HOW TO PLUG IN:

1. **Start with the Navigator and the city.** The Navigator is free and confidential, and its job is to route you to the right partner. Request a consult at santafebiznavigator.com. The city's Economic Development office hours and quarterly Santa Fe Business 101 workshop cover licenses, permits and the startup process.
2. **Pick the right level of structure.** The Santa Fe Business Incubator offers incubation, a six week Runway program and shared lab and fabrication space. The UNM CRE accelerator is a four-month program where you build alongside a cohort.
3. **Plan for after graduation.** Before your program ends, ask who your mentors, peers and next resources will be once it does.
4. **Bring a decision, not a topic.** "Should I raise my price or add a premium tier?" gets you further than "Can we talk about pricing?" Specific questions get specific help, and sometimes a workshop.
5. **Give something back.** Make an introduction. Share what you learned. The whole network gets stronger every time someone does.

MORE OF THIS, ON PURPOSE

What building alongside one another adds up to is density. Not of square footage, but of useful collisions: the chance encounter that becomes a customer, the hallway question that becomes a solved problem, the founder routed to the right program instead of whichever one answered the phone first.

More help, offered faster, by more people, to more people than any one of us could manage alone. That's what becomes possible. We just have to build it on purpose. ■

Ron Dimon is the founder of Spark Labs Studio (sparklabs.studio), a decision design studio at the New Mexico Innovation Hub in Santa Fe, and faculty at UNM's Center for Responsible Entrepreneurship, where he leads its four month accelerator. He is the author of Enterprise Performance Management Done Right *and* Connected Planning *(Wiley).*



Coffee break at the UNM CRE accelerator

BETTING ON NM – THE NM CLIMATE INVESTMENT CENTER

BY **BETH BELOFF**

In Los Alamos, a short drive from a national laboratory, two aging apartment buildings needed a new way to heat and cool 87 affordable homes. The science was not the problem. Neither was the will. The problem was financing. The borrower needed a loan that was affordable and long-term to make the economics work, and the old boiler was not going to replace itself.

Our organization, the New Mexico Climate Investment Center (NMCIC), worked with the developer to make that loan, $1.1 million, our first. The boiler is being replaced with efficient mini-split HVAC systems, with energy use expected to drop 20 to 30 percent; the homes carry a 20-year affordability restriction that expands the county's multifamily affordable housing inventory by more than 30 percent.

What becomes possible when we build alongside one another? Things that were stuck start to move.

THE GAP BETWEEN AN IDEA AND A PROJECT

New Mexico does not have an innovation problem. Our national laboratories and universities produce research in energy, computing, quantum and aerospace. What we have is a commercialization problem. An idea or technology becomes economically valuable when someone finds a commercial use for it. That step takes capital, and in New Mexico, capital can be hard to come by if a project is a little bit different or new, and the market isn't totally sure how to underwrite it.

The same gap runs through our whole economy. As the state moves toward energy independence, clean energy and efficient buildings are not a niche. They touch every school roof, warehouse, farm well and apartment boiler. If financing is the bottleneck, it is everyone's bottleneck.

The NMCIC was built to close that gap. We are an independent nonprofit lender, working statewide. We finance clean energy-, efficiency- and climate projects that conventional lenders won't, not because they are bad projects, but because they are too small, too new, not yet shovel ready, or too unconventional. We take the first risk so other money can follow.

SEEDING THE MARKET IN MIDTOWN

Here is what that means for Midtown, where the NMCIC has its office: Every time we finance a microgrid, a building retrofit, or a solar array, we create a customer. That customer needs engineers, installers, controls, software and storage. Some of those products are being invented a few doors down. When we lend, we are not only building one project. We are seeding the market the Hub's innovators will grow into.

We do it alongside others, not instead of them. In Albuquerque, a local bank had reached its limit on solar lending and brought us a 1.2-megawatt carport project at Bachechi Open Space Park, developed with Somos Energy. We financed $2.25 million. In Aztec, Bidii Baby Foods, a Navajo-owned company, needed to buy land. MAD Capital took the first position, and we took a subordinate position at a lower rate so the numbers worked. In Las Cruces, Backyard Farms had USDA and state grants that would pay out only after the work was done. Our bridge loan let the owner build in one phase and triple capacity.

NMCIC
New Mexico Climate Investment Center

Our product is a new kind of financing.

None of these were grants. They are loans, and as they are repaid, that capital goes back out to the next New Mexico project. That is what sharing resources looks like in finance: money that revolves, and stays here.

SOMETHING TO POINT TO

Investors put their money where they see others already betting. New Mexico struggled to give outside capital a reason to look closer. That's starting to change. The State of New Mexico, the Coalition for Green Capital and other philanthropies have committed about $31 million in seed capital to our work. The labs anchor the research. The New Mexico Innovation Hub gives that research a place to become companies. A working climate lender means those companies have customers who can finance what they sell.

The NMCIC takes the first risk so other money can follow, creating local markets for products and services New Mexico's innovators are building.

Each is a bet on New Mexico that together sends a signal: This is a place where things get built.

We are exploring financing for energy efficiency and solar work on the New Mexico Innovation Hub itself. It would be a fitting test of the idea: the place where New Mexico innovators gather, powered by financing made in New Mexico.

A STARTUP IN FINANCE

We fit in at Midtown because we are a startup. We began building our operations in January 2025 and lending toward the end of that year, and our product is a new kind of financing. Like every founder at the Hub, we build credibility one deal at a time. Our underwriting is designed for deals with no comparables: first-of-a-kind projects, unusual collateral, nonprofit sponsors, small tickets. That is where most innovation lives. We don't compete with banks; we lend alongside them and take the positions they can't.

PROSPERITY HAS TO BE SHARED

One more thing becomes possible when we build together. Innovation needs talent, customers and stable communities that believe the future includes them. Inequality erodes all three.

That is why our board wrote our mission as it did: "To address climate change by investing in New Mexico projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, other climate impacts, and energy cost burdens, prioritizing underserved communities." We have set a floor that at least half of our portfolio serves low-income, tribal, rural and other underserved communities.

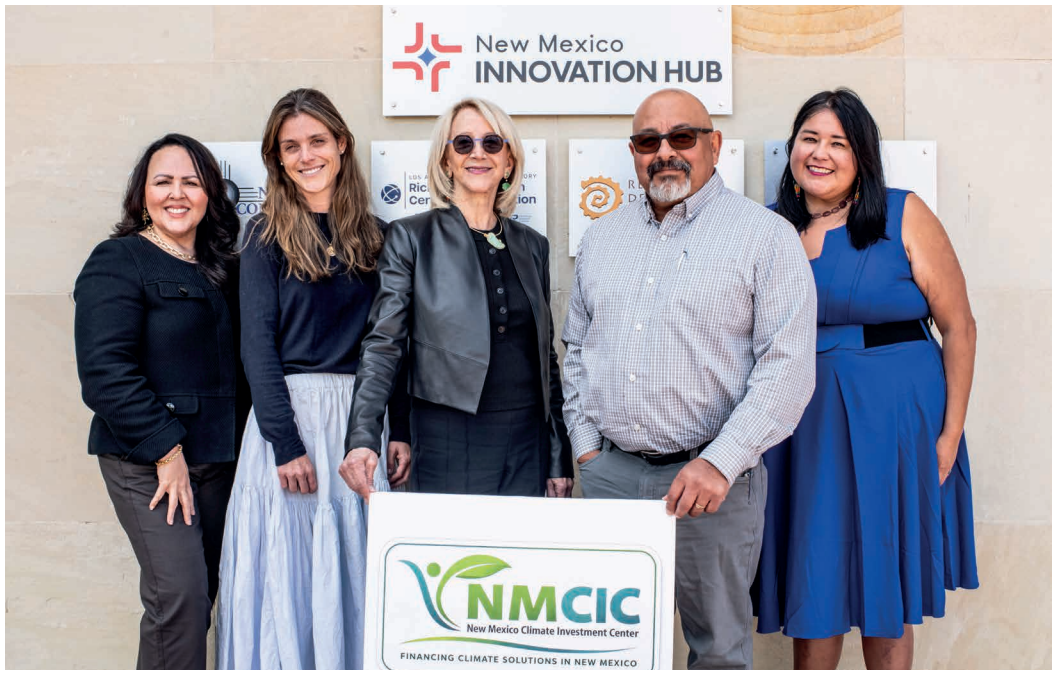
The Hub's bet and ours rest on the same premise: New Mexico's wealth can stay in New Mexico, and New Mexicans can build the future here instead of exporting their best ideas for someone else to finance. That only works if the prosperity is shared.

So what becomes possible? A lab breakthrough becomes a product. The product finds a customer. The customer finds financing. The loan is repaid and finances the next project. And a family in Los Alamos, a farm in Las Cruces and a startup in Midtown end up building the same economy.

If you have a project that is good for New Mexico and you can't get it financed, come find us. We will work on the problem with you.

HTTPS://NMCLIMATEINVESTMENTCENTER.ORG/, 505-257-5521, Emily Leveille: EMILY@NM-CIC.ORG ■

Beth Beloff is CEO of the New Mexico Climate Investment Center.



L-R: Janet Pacheco-Morton, NMCIC outsource CFO and accountant; Emily Leveille, Chief Investment Officer; Beth Beloff, CEO; Michael Athens, COO; Beatriz Reyna, Executive Assistant

Celebrating 100 Years!

PRESERVING SANTA FE SINCE 1926

This year the Old Santa Fe Association turned 100 years old. Through history education, community service and historic preservation advocacy, we continue to promote the preservation of Santa Fe's unique distinction that combines culture, tradition, and environment — the priceless assets of our region.

Please join us as we celebrate Santa Fe's cultural and architectural heritage. We are excited to welcome new members and reconnect with old friends.

Visit www.oldsantafe.org to get involved!

OLD SANTA FE ASSOCIATION

Since 1926

The Role of Higher Education Institutions at Midtown

BY **AUDREY B. ARNOLD AND ANDREA POLLI**

For generations, the Midtown campus gave Santa Feans a place to study, work and imagine their futures. From St. Michael's College to the College of Santa Fe and the Santa Fe University of Art and Design, higher education shaped both the site and the city's creative life. The university's closure in 2018 interrupted that continuity, leaving an opportunity to reconsider the role education plays in shaping the city's creative economy.

As Midtown becomes a district of housing, arts, culture and economic activity, higher education institutions can help carry this legacy forward through satellite programs. Shared classrooms, workshops and public events could bring university resources into a setting already connected to community organizations and everyday life. For institutions seeking to broaden their reach, Midtown offers a place to meet learners closer to home.



Student using plasma cutter. Credit: UNM STEAM

This approach could serve people at many stages of life: a young person considering college, an artist learning new digital tools, a worker preparing for a career change or an older adult pursuing an intellectual interest. A local class can be a manageable first step for someone balancing employment, caregiving and other responsibilities. Regular offerings would also give the campus a renewed rhythm of learning and exchange.

UNM CONTINUING EDUCATION AND STEAM

Two University of New Mexico programs illustrate what this model could offer.

UNM Continuing Education connects university resources with professional development and personal enrichment. Its offerings include business, technology, healthcare, languages and creative subjects such as photography, writing and art. Courses provide opportunities to build skills and prepare for professional certifications, while the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute offers intellectual and cultural learning for adults 50 and older.

Continuing Education also develops customized training for organizations and works with UNM departments to deliver noncredit programs. This flexibility is relevant to Midtown, where employers, nonprofits and creative practitioners could help identify learning needs. Courses in project management, digital design or communication, for example, could support both individual career goals and the organizations operating nearby. These are possibilities to develop collaboratively as Midtown programming takes shape.

For institutions seeking to broaden their reach, Midtown offers a place to meet learners closer to home.

STEAM NM, based in UNM's College of Fine Arts and directed by Dr. Andrea Polli, approaches education through the connections among science, technology, engineering, the arts and mathematics. It uses inquiry and problem-based learning to bring artistic practices into dialogue with scientific and technical subjects. Its mission is to strengthen STEAM education across New Mexico, with a focus on higher education and opportunities for students and community members.

The program connects a statewide network extending along the Northern Cultural Corridor, including Santa Fe and Taos. Its work encompasses workshops, visiting presentations, courses connecting science and art, public projects and research. Partnerships span university departments and community institutions, including SciArt Santa Fe, Santa Fe Community College and the Santa Fe Art Institute. It has also supported training in outreach, digital media and fabrication through AmeriCorps VISTA service.

At Midtown Sol, this interdisciplinary approach could connect naturally with makers, designers, filmmakers and arts educators. A workshop might bring environmental research into an art project or pair digital fabrication with community storytelling. Institutions would contribute expertise while learning from the knowledge and practices of local partners.



Students using microscopes. Credit: UNM STEAM

Making satellite education useful will require more than reserving rooms. Institutions and community partners should shape schedules, costs, teaching formats and subjects together. Clear information about whether a course offers academic credit, a certificate or personal enrichment would help learners make informed choices. Coordination with existing local colleges and training providers could create complementary offerings and clearer pathways between programs.

Midtown can become a place where education remains part of daily community life. By sharing resources and building sustained local relationships, higher education institutions can extend their reach while renewing the campus's longstanding purpose: helping people learn, connect and imagine what comes next. ■

Audrey B. Arnold is executive director of UNM Anderson School of Management and UNM Continuing Education.

Andrea Polli is professor and director of STEAM NM with appointments in the College of Fine Arts and School of Engineering at UNM.

Santa Fe FutureWorks

Midtown is evolving into an extended learning campus.

The MASTERS Program, New Mexico Innovation Hub and Aspect Media Village are launching the Santa Fe FutureWorks initiative on the Midtown campus in the 2026-27 school year. All 280 MASTERS students are participating in the pilot program. The initiative connects students with internships, mentorships and work-based learning opportunities.

The MASTERS Program is an early charter high school that aims to build the local workforce by connecting students with employers, while providing college-credit practical learning. The initiative focuses on helping young people gain knowledge and experience with local businesses, research organizations, creative industries and other groups. Lowerclassmen focus on service-learning projects, career exploration and field experiences. Upperclassmen shift into more work-study, internship and apprenticeship opportunities.

Participating businesses include those within the New Mexico Innovation Hub and Aspect Media Village. Other businesses and organizations can also participate. The initiative is being funded through the MASTERS Program's Next Generation CTE state grant, which supports new career-oriented programs.

In a statement, MASTERS Program Head of School Amanda Chávez said, "Our students deserve more than an education that prepares them for graduation—they deserve experiences that prepare them for life. Together with the New Mexico Innovation Hub and Aspect Media Village, we're creating opportunities that inspire students to discover their passions, develop professional skills, and envision successful futures right here in New Mexico."

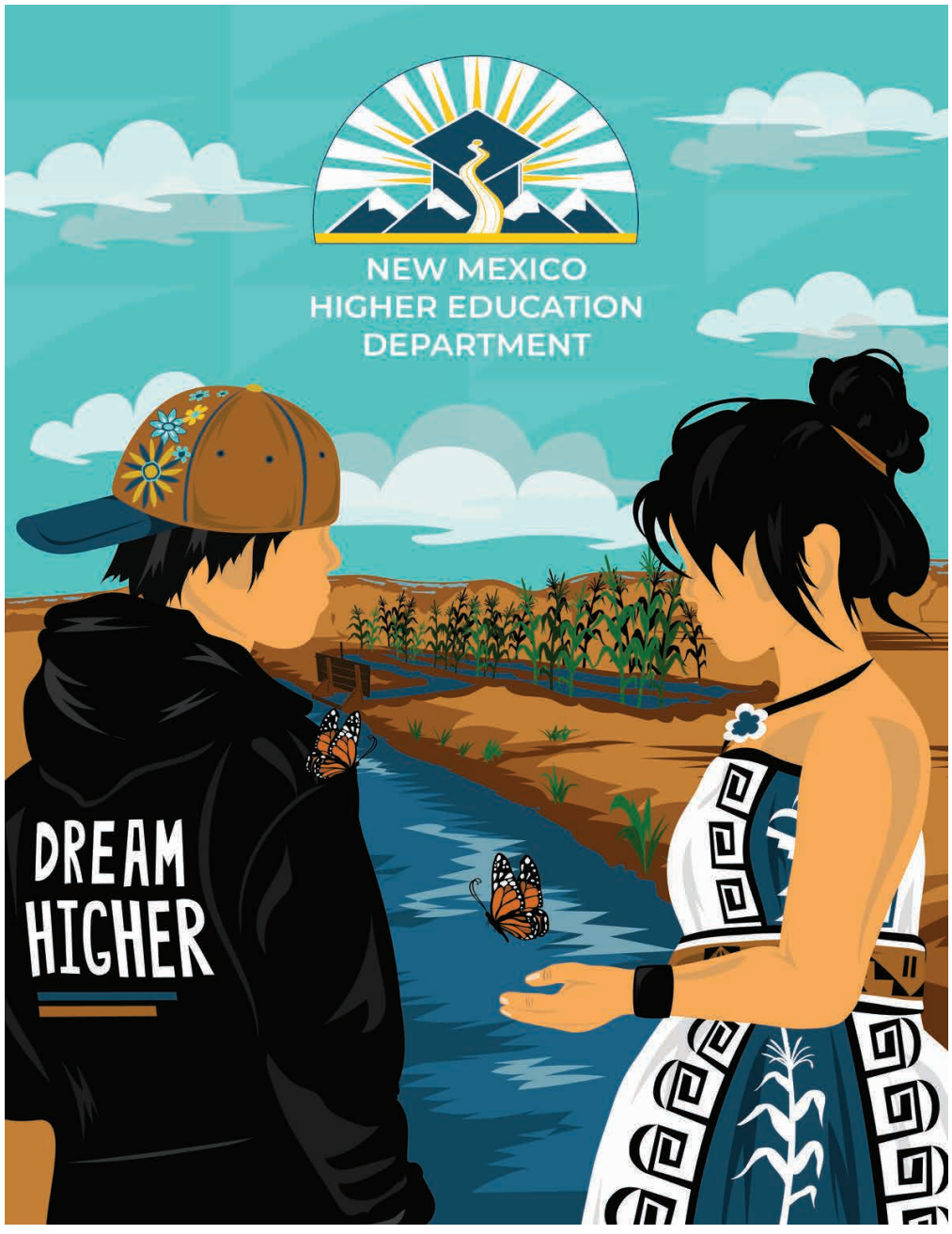
SANTA FE COMMUNITY COLLEGE'S MOSAICA TRAINING CENTER

MOSAICA
powered by SANTA FE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Santa Fe Community College (SFCC) operates programs in the Midtown area primarily through the nonprofit Mosaica Training Center (formerly the Higher Education Center), a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design)-certified, energy-efficient facility located at 1950 Siringo Road, located across from Santa Fe High School. And not far from the training center, SFCC's Innovation Center has opened a machining lab that is part of Midtown's Aspect Media Village.

The Mosaica Training Center accelerates student success and engagement, entrepreneurship and community economic development by providing innovative workforce training programs with strategic partners across industry, government and nonprofit organizations. The collaborative hub's partner institutions (including New Mexico Highlands University and New Mexico State University) allow students to complete undergraduate and graduate degrees without leaving Santa Fe. Impactful learning opportunities are offered in a traditional classroom setting, via instructional TV and online. SFCC students can transition or coordinate credit and transfer pathways directly through these partner programs. Mosaica also houses the Santa Fe Small Business Development Center.

For information, call 505-428-1000
or visit HTTPS://WWW.SFCC.EDU/MOSAICA/



CONGRESO DE LAS ACEQUIAS “AGUA, TIERRA Y CORAZÓN”

Statewide Gathering of Acequias
Nov. 13–14, Ohkay Owingeh Conference Center
Registration: LASACEQUIAS.ORG

The 2026 Congreso de las Acequias will bring together acequia leaders from across New Mexico to share experiences, learn from communities responding to drought and disasters, and strengthen collective efforts to protect water and land. The full-day congreso, an official meeting of the New Mexico Acequia Association, creates space for parciantes (water rights holders), community members, youth and supporters to connect, exchange knowledge, celebrate traditions and strategize.

The theme this year, *Agua, Tierra y Corazón*, speaks to the deep interconnections of water, land, culture and the people who care for them. Across New Mexico, acequia communities are facing increasingly difficult conditions, from prolonged drought to destructive flooding, wildfires and damage to acequia infrastructure. “These challenges remind us how deeply our lives, livelihoods and traditions are connected to the health of our watersheds and the land,” said Paula García, executive director of the NMAA.

WHAT “AGUA, TIERRA Y CORAZÓN” MEANS

Acequias have always been about more than moving water. They represent a way of life rooted in cooperation, shared responsibility, cultural knowledge and a commitment to caring for one another. For generations, acequia communities have worked together to protect the water and land that sustain their families.



Maizyolotl by Mario Chacon
“Maizyolotl reminds us that our relationship with the land is one of care, reciprocity and belonging. It reflects the living traditions we carry forward.”

To acequia farmers, agua, tierra y corazón (water, land and heart) means protecting water rights from mounting pressure by development and industry to move water away from agriculture. Acequieros recognize the interconnected waters of watersheds, rivers and aquifers, and the importance of protecting them as a whole. That means defending clean water by advocating for strong policies that prevent pollution, policies that protect the waterways that sustain agriculture, healthy ecosystems and aquifer recharge. Acequieros are also working to strengthen acequia infrastructure and disaster recovery so their communities can respond to climate-change challenges while continuing to exercise their historic water rights. This includes advocating for reliable funding to repair, restore and maintain their acequias.

SANTA FE–EPA PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS THE POWER OF WATER CONSERVATION

The City of Santa Fe partnered with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s WaterSense program and Eastern Research Group on a new study that looks at how saving water can also save energy and money while reducing carbon emissions. The study examined energy use throughout Santa Fe’s municipal water system and in residential water heating, putting numbers behind the broader benefits of decades of water conservation. The partnership grew out of conversations at Santa Fe’s annual Next Generation Water Summit.

Since 2000, Santa Fe’s per-capita water use has fallen nearly 30 percent, even as the city’s population grew by approximately 40 percent. Total water production decreased by about 20 percent during the same period.

Compared with what demand could have been if per-capita water use had remained at 2000 levels, the study estimates Santa Fe’s conservation efforts resulted in annual savings of approximately:
- 3,815 acre-feet of water
- 9.8 million kWh of electricity from water system operations
- $1.04 million in electricity costs
- 8.8 million pounds of carbon emissions from water system operations

“The study quantifies how decades of water conservation have significantly reduced electricity consumption, operational costs, and greenhouse gas emissions—demonstrating that water efficiency is one of Santa Fe’s most impactful sustainability investments,” said senior environmental scientist Holly Cannon.

The study also gives Santa Fe new tools to measure the energy and carbon impacts of water conservation and guide future sustainability investments. The city hopes the work can serve as a blueprint for other communities interested in understanding the connection between water conservation, energy use and carbon emissions.

NM LAUNCHES DASHBOARD TRACKING PROGRESS ON WATER SECURITY



State on pace to treat 140,000 acres annually to reduce wildfire risk and protect watersheds

New Mexico has launched a public dashboard tracking the state’s real-time progress toward securing its water future, showing advances in restoring forests and watersheds that supply the bulk of the state’s surface water. The 50-Year Action Plan Implementation Dashboard (HTTPS://WATER-DASHBOARD.NM.GOV) provides a real-time window to monitor progress addressing projected water shortages driven by drought and climate change. The plan is based on three pillars: conserving existing freshwater supplies, developing new water sources and protecting water quality.

Scientists predict that within 50 years, New Mexico will have 25 percent less water—a shortage of up to 750,000 acre-feet, or roughly the amount of water 1.5 million households use in a year. The New Mexico Forestry Division has worked to restore forested watersheds, which supply the bulk of the state’s surface water.

Post-fire stabilization projects are progressing in areas burned by the Hermit’s Peak-Calf Canyon fire and South Fork and Salt fires under the Division’s new post-fire restoration authority. With the groundbreaking on the New Mexico Reforestation Center, the state took a significant step toward protecting water resources by mitigating the risk of permanent forest loss.
The state’s 50-Year Water Action Plan, promoted by Gov. Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham, calls for accelerated thinning, prescribed burning and reforestation across 140,000 acres of state and private land each year to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire, flooding and large-scale erosion.

An acequia flows through forest regrowth in the Hermit’s Peak-Calf Canyon burned area.
Photo by Laura McCarthy

Profile: Santa Fe Art Institute







Left: "Rise Above," a mural by renowned street artist Shepard Fairey that celebrates peace and harmony was installed on a wall of SFAI by the artist in July. Photo: Seth Roffman; Above: Courtyard at SFAI designed by renowned Mexican architect Ricardo Legorreta; "Light in Mind" light display projected on a wall of SFAI. Photo: High Vibe Brands

Since its founding in 1985, the Santa Fe Art Institute (SFAI) has supported artists as essential contributors to social and cultural life. Through residencies, fellowships and public programs, the independent arts organization brings artists and creative practitioners together across disciplines and geographies, creating space for experimentation, critical inquiry and cultural exchange. Its programs emphasize socially engaged practice and expand access for artists historically excluded from institutional support.



SFAI's thematic residencies have invited creatives to explore issues including water rights, immigration, equal justice, sovereignty and the changing climate. These shared inquiries spark conversations and connections among people whose experiences might never intersect otherwise. Public conversations and community programs carry that energy beyond the studio, inviting neighbors into dialogue and connecting artistic exploration with the challenges and possibilities of everyday life.

When the Santa Fe University of Art and Design closed in 2018, SFAI kept its artist residencies and contemporary arts programming alive on a nearly vacant campus. The empty buildings and quiet public spaces made one thing clear: The organization's future was linked to the vitality of its surroundings. In response, SFAI founded the Midtown Arts and Design Alliance LLC (now called *Midtown Sol)* to bring together cultural and community-serving organizations to imagine—and help build—a renewed campus rooted in creativity, opportunity and belonging.

As plans for the redevelopment of Midtown move forward, SFAI's programs are helping animate its next chapter. Artist gatherings, workshops, public programs and opportunities for creative exchange build relationships that turn a collection of buildings into a community. This reflects a conviction that sustaining artistic practice takes space, connection, care and shared possibility. With growing attention to local artists, community-building and artist-led wellness, SFAI continues to evolve, supporting the people and relationships that will shape Midtown's cultural life for years to come. ■

More information: 505-424-5050, INFO@SFAI.ORG, SFAI.ORG

OP-ED: ELIZABETH BURDEN

A CREATIVE COMMONS, BUILT TOGETHER

When I was an artist in residence at the Santa Fe Art Institute, I experienced what a residency can make possible: time to think, room to experiment, and the chance to encounter other artists and ideas. It offered more than a place to work—it created a community that persists for me to this day, in which I can take risks, follow questions and consider how my work meets the world around me. The residency helped me see how an institution can support creative production and also the relationships and conditions that allow artists to keep making.

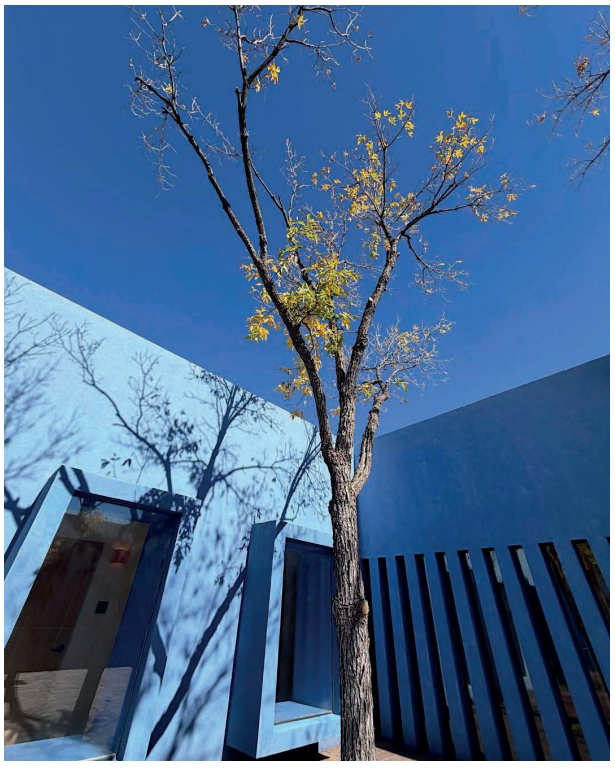
That experience is one reason I serve on SFAI's board of trustees. I want to help sustain an organization that takes artists seriously and understands that creative life depends on access, care, exchange and opportunity. The work of supporting artists extends far beyond one encounter, one residency. It includes opportunities to connect with peers, develop professionally, care for themselves and bring their ideas into public life.

Our local and regional partners are working toward a shared creative and cultural center.

SFAI's programming makes that broader commitment tangible. The Artist Community Critique Circle offers a structured setting to share work and receive feedback, building a practice of attention and exchange over time. Artist-led meditation and wellness workshops make room for reflection and restoration. Deep Listening sessions bring sound, movement, vocalization and qi gong together, inviting participants to listen more fully to themselves and one another. These programs treat artists as whole people, while making artistic practices available to a wider community. They create openings for people to encounter art through conversation, movement and shared attention. All of this is happening, now, on the Midtown campus.



4Kinship display/sale at SFAI; Right: Changing shadows of trees create a peaceful yet powerful space in SFAI's iconic blue courtyard. Photo: High Vibe Brands



SFAI is testing new ways to support artists:
• *Spinal Cord Artist Residency*, or SCAR, is an access-centered residency model created by and for artists with spinal cord injuries.
• *Community of Practice: Art in Action Fellowship* supports artists developing projects within their own communities.
• *Transatlantic Rising Stars* partnership with the European Union Delegation to the United States and the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA) creates another kind of exchange, bringing European and U.S. artists into relationship through a Santa Fe residency.

Together, these and other efforts ask how artist support can respond to local needs and make regional, national and international connections at the same time.

SFAI's public work also makes the arts visible in everyday life. An installation of a mural by Shepard Fairey at the institute's entrance brought contemporary art into shared civic space on campus. Programs with artist-led groups extend that invitation through different approaches and communities. Such encounters can prompt curiosity and conversation, whether someone comes to SFAI as an artist, a neighbor, a student or a visitor.

Creative life depends on access, care, exchange and opportunity.

Our Midtown Sol program extends this spirit of collaboration into a larger network. Our local and regional partners are working toward a shared creative and cultural center. Midtown Sol's strength lies in the different kinds of work its partners bring, strengthening connections among artists, educators, cultural organizations and creative businesses, while supporting jobs and learning pathways. Across the region, it can serve as a place where different communities exchange knowledge and build relationships without losing the specificity of their histories and practices.

At this point in time, many communities are asking what comes next. In Santa Fe, the answer is taking shape through ongoing arts- and creativity-based work at Midtown: imagining the future and creating opportunities for people to participate deeply and actively in it. With collaborators of all kinds, we are contributing to a Midtown where all people can be a part of its cultural life now, while creating new ways for the community to gather, make and shape what comes next. ■

Elizabeth Burden is a multidisciplinary artist and board trustee of the Santa Fe Art Institute. Her practice brings studio work and social practice into conversation with memory, Black presence and collective imagination.

Midtown Sol: From Campus Closure to Creative Community

BY **DANIEL HERNÁNDEZ**

... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

FROM PLANNING TO A PROPOSAL

The City of Santa Fe had been pursuing redevelopment options for Midtown since shortly after the SFUAD closed. A 2019 Request for Expressions of Interest eventually led to a proposal from major companies for redevelopment of the larger 64-acre campus, but that effort ended during the pandemic.

In 2022, following a comprehensive master planning effort, the city took a more targeted approach, issuing a Request for Proposals for redevelopment of the portion of the campus surrounding the Santa Fe Art Institute (SFAI): the Visual Arts Center and a collection of World War II barracks originally constructed as part of the Bruns Army Hospital complex. SFAI began assembling a coalition around a proposal to return those buildings to active use. In March 2023, that proposal became MADA, the Midtown Arts and Design Alliance (which recently changed its name to *Midtown Sol*). It was the only response submitted to the city.

The idea was straightforward but ambitious: Rather than create another single-use institution, the project would adaptively reuse the existing buildings as affordable, long-term civic infrastructure for a collection of arts, cultural, educational, workforce-development and community-serving organizations.



L-R: Midtown Sol Engagement and Programs Coordinator, Sachiko Cooper da Silva; CEO Daniel Hernández; Managing Director Mayrah Udvardi
Photo: Jasper Knight Keen

The city council's vote marked the transition from years of planning, negotiation and advocacy into implementation.

Under the leadership of former Executive Director Jamie Blosser,* SFAI established MADA as the project's development entity in August 2023. The following month, the city and SFAI entered into an Exclusive Negotiation Agreement, beginning an intensive period of due diligence and planning. From 2023 through 2024, SFAI worked with Model of Architecture Serving Society (MASS) and a core group of prospective tenant organizations to create an alliance: Little Globe; Santa Fe Indigenous Center; Make Santa Fe; YouthWorks; CENTER Santa Fe; MASS; Vital Spaces; Creative Startups; Girls, Inc.; and UNM Continuing Education—organizations that represent a cross-section of Santa Fe's creative and community ecosystem.

The work was deliberately grounded in the existing buildings. The alliance understood that the buildings held memories for many people who taught, studied and visited them. It was also clear that the quality of the architecture, designed by world-renowned architect Ricardo Legorreta, presented an opportunity to reuse the buildings for civic purposes that would be accessible to the community. The planning process evaluated building conditions, code requirements, space needs, construction costs, fundraising capacity and long-term operating models. It also asked a more fundamental question: What would organizations need to thrive together?

The resulting vision connected creative practice with education, workforce development, youth programming and community services. Organizations could maintain their own identities and missions while gaining access to affordable space and shared resources that would be difficult for many of them to secure independently. The alliance also shared a vision that together they were stronger with the potential to enhance community arts and culture as a civic resource and economic development driver for Santa Fe and its communities.

By November 2024, the team had completed the major deliverables required under the exclusive negotiation agreement. Nearly $4 million had already been raised during predevelopment toward an estimated $7 million for Phase 1 with a total development cost of $30 million to complete the three phases of renovations and improvements of the city-owned buildings. But completing the feasibility work was only one step.

GETTING TO A GROUND LEASE

Moving a complex public-private redevelopment through city departments required another lengthy process. The project had to advance from the Exclusive Negotiation Agreement into a development and disposition agreement and ultimately, a long-term ground lease establishing the terms under which MADA could invest in and operate city-owned property. That process took a year longer than originally anticipated.

During that time, the future of the project depended on sustained advocacy from city councilors, community members, partner organizations, funders and others who had followed the evolution of Midtown since the university's closure. For supporters, the question was increasingly practical: After years of planning and community engagement, could the city establish the agreements necessary to allow outside investment to begin flowing into its vacant and deteriorating public buildings?

On June 10, 2026, the Santa Fe City Council approved the ground lease and development agreement. The agreement established a long-term framework for the redevelopment of the site and a nominal ground rent of $1, allowing philanthropic and other sources to invest in rehabilitating the public buildings rather than acquiring the underlying land. The vote marked the transition from years of planning, negotiation and advocacy into implementation. This benchmark also gave donors the confidence they needed to trust that the city would honor and support the People's Plan.

MOVING FROM VISION TO CONSTRUCTION

Today, that implementation is moving quickly. Midtown Sol is advancing the adaptive reuse of approximately 3.2 acres at 1600 St. Michael's Drive, encompassing the Visual Arts Center's Marion Center, Tipton and Tishman halls, Thaw Center and three WWII barracks. Altogether, the long-term plan encompasses roughly 50,000 square feet of buildings, courtyards and surrounding landscapes.

The work is planned in three phases. Phase One focuses on Marion and Tipton halls, approximately 21,000 square feet within the Visual Arts Center. These buildings will be renovated to provide affordable space for nonprofit organizations alongside shared gallery, classroom, gathering and program spaces.

The project is now in active design and preconstruction. MASS is advancing the architectural work, while Bradbury Stamm has joined the team as construction manager at

The planning process asked a fundamental question: What would organizations need to thrive together?

risk. Design, cost estimating, building investigation, permitting, fundraising, tenant coordination and operational planning are all proceeding in parallel, with construction anticipated to begin following completion of design and approvals. Later phases will extend the work into Tishman Hall and the historic barracks, while improving the spaces between the buildings and their connections to the larger Midtown District.

The physical redevelopment is only part of the work now underway. Midtown Sol and the tenant alliance are also developing the systems that will determine how the campus functions collectively: how shared spaces are managed, how organizations coordinate programming, what resources can be shared, and how a group of independent organizations can operate as a collaborative community while maintaining and strengthening their individual core mission.

At the same time, the broader Midtown District is beginning to move into a new phase. Public infrastructure investments, private development and nonprofit programming are gradually bringing activity back to a campus that, for years after 2018, was defined largely by vacancy. The Midtown redevelopment plans called for community-based arts, culture, education, technology and entertainment within a mixed-use district as the generative forces that would create a Midtown for and with Santa Fe communities.

Midtown Sol is an anchor at Midtown and represents the transformational development within the Midtown Redevelopment Plans that is in direct response to community voices. Its particular contribution is rooted in the history of the land, its uses over time and the memories it holds. The unprecedented success of the community engagement process that followed the university's closure reinforced the importance of keeping the site as a key element of the city's civic infrastructure.

Midtown Sol is part of other exciting redevelopment occurring at Midtown, including the mixed-use *Aspect Media Village* and an up-and-coming technology hub *(New Mexico Innovation Hub)*. Visitors and residents encounter wonderful cafes and restaurants, a beautifully renovated movie theater, health and recreation amenities and multimedia facilities. The Midtown Master Plan identifies these two anchors, at the northern and southern ends of the 64-acre redevelopment site, as the initial developments driving market forces for future investment and development. They are underway and people are back at Midtown.

Instead of redevelopment organized around a single use, the emerging developments bring together various entrepreneurial organizations with different missions, audiences and areas of expertise. Eight years after the university closed, the work is finally shifting from imagining what these buildings might become to preparing them for the people who will use them next. If all goes according to plan, the next chapter of the Visual Arts Center will be shaped by the organizations, artists, educators, young people and communities that once again make it a place of learning, creativity and possibility.

The former Visual Arts Center is one of several legacy buildings that contribute to Midtown's cultural and civic identity. The Midtown Redevelopment Plan also calls for renovation of the Greer Garson Theater, envisioned with programming as a public performing arts theater, and the Fogelson Public Library, envisioned as a library, community resource center and gathering place. Given the limited capital resources available within city budgets to reinvest in these public assets, Midtown Sol is an example of a private, mission-driven community development entity with the real estate expertise and capacity to help revitalize civic institutions and create spaces for arts, culture, education, community services and creative industries to thrive. Could a public-private partnership of this nature provide a viable pathway for restoring and reactivating these important public resources in Midtown? ■

Daniel Hernández is CEO of Midtown Sol, where he leads the development of this new collaborative creative venture. His work focuses on public-private development, always with a commitment to triple-bottom-line objectives: economy, equity, environment. He brings experience in for-profit, nonprofit and government sectors to advance community-centered real estate development.

** Jamie Blosser, the former director of SFAI, remains associated with Midtown Sol as its founding director. She is currently the curator of the Loeb Fellowship at the Harvard Graduate School of Design.*







Top: SFAI/Midtown Sol rendering by MASS Design Group; rendering of remodel; Ricardo Legorreta-designed buildings

OP-ED: MAYRAH UDVARDI

THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF COLLABORATION

Over the past 15 years, my work in nonprofits and architecture has intersected closely with arts, community and cultural institutions. I've developed bold spatial visions for more than 30 creative organizations around the country, from the ICA Boston and Minneapolis College of Art and Design to Ballroom Marfa and the Peninsula School for the Arts.

Each organization has had a different reason for investing in its space. Some wanted to welcome people back safely during the pandemic. Some needed to repair aging buildings. Some were responding to criticisms of the ivory tower and wanted to become more public-facing. Others simply needed permanent, secure space to fulfill their organizational mission.

Across all of these projects, one thing has stood out to me: We've built a system that rewards independence.

We celebrate collaboration in the arts, but structurally, we ask every organization to operate like its own tiny island. Every organization needs its own building or lease. Its own administrative infrastructure. Its own fundraising operation. Its own communications team. Its own equipment, program spaces and relationships with audiences and donors.

And then we ask all of these organizations, often competing for the same limited pool of money, to somehow find the resources to sustain all of it.

We ask organizations whose missions are fundamentally about community to survive in a system designed around institutional independence.

Santa Fe is an extraordinary example of this. For a city of just 90,000 people, we have 1,342 nonprofit organizations, a quarter of which are dedicated specifically to arts, culture and the humanities. And while we have some very visible, well-resourced institutions, much of our cultural ecosystem is made up of remarkably small organizations, often operating with tiny staffs, limited reserves-and annual budgets in the hundreds of thousands, not millions. Some are essentially volunteer-run.

That proliferation isn't accidental. Nonprofits often emerge precisely where something else is missing: where public investment is insufficient, where a community isn't being served by an existing institution, or where people see something culturally important at risk of being lost. So we create an organization to protect it. And then another organization to address the next unmet need. And another.

The result is an incredibly rich cultural ecosystem, but also an incredibly fragmented one. And fragmentation is expensive. Here in Santa Fe, creative organizations are competing for increasingly unaffordable space and a limited pool of public and philanthropic dollars, while public buildings sit vacant and deteriorating.

Scarcity should push us toward sharing. Instead, our model makes us duplicate: separate leases, offices, classrooms, equipment, administrative systems, all paid for over and over again.

Every dollar and hour spent maintaining that independence is a resource that isn't going toward mission.

There is another way to think about the problem-
Santa Fe has vacant, deteriorating buildings in the geographic heart of the city. At the same time, creative organizations desperately need affordable, long-term homes. Rather than solving those as separate problems, Midtown Sol is transforming more than 50,000 square feet of public assets into shared infrastructure for Santa Fe's creative community.



Members of Midtown Sol's founding organizations during the 2025 Midtown Momentum summer event. Photo courtesy of Little Globe

But the important thing isn't simply putting organizations next to one another. They'll share spaces, equipment, audiences, knowledge, programming and relationships. This isn't consolidation. It isn't one large institution absorbing smaller ones. And it isn't coworking. It's collaboration: organizations retaining their identities and autonomy while sharing the things that become more powerful collectively.

And critically, it creates a new center of gravity for Santa Fe's creative economy, bringing resources and investment toward Midtown and the Southside, where many of the communities producing Santa Fe's culture increasingly live.

What if we applied this idea beyond Midtown?

Across the country, governments own an extraordinary amount of land and buildings they don't have the resources, or sometimes the mandate, to activate. At the same time, nonprofits and community organizations struggle to afford the spaces and infrastructure they need. That creates an enormous opportunity for public-private partnerships and adaptive reuse: public assets providing the foundation, with communities bringing the investment, stewardship, programming and relationships that bring them to life.

And this doesn't have to stop with the arts. What if we built this way for childcare? Food systems? Education? Small businesses? Healthcare? Housing?

We usually think of infrastructure as roads, pipes, power lines and buildings. But shared resources, relationships and collaboration can be infrastructure, too.

Independence says everyone needs their own table. ***Collaboration asks: What becomes possible when we build a bigger table together?*** ■



Photo by Jasper Knight Keen

Mayrah Udvardi, AIA, NCARB, LEED AP, is an architect, artist and educator based in Santa Fe, New Mexico. She is the Managing Director of Midtown Sol and maintains a design practice focused on community-centered, culturally responsive and environmentally responsible places.

Midtown Sol Profiles

CENTER SANTA FE



CENTER
ADVANCING THE PHOTOGRAPHIC ARTS

Founded in Santa Fe in 1994, CENTER is a nonprofit organization supporting photography and other lens-based work that engages social and environmental issues. Through education, funding, exhibitions and partnerships, it helps artists develop their projects and connects their work with audiences. Its mission also includes deepening public understanding of photography's history and continuing cultural significance.

CENTER's programs address several stages of an artist's practice, from developing a project to finding opportunities for publication and exhibition. Grants and awards provide financial support and recognition, while workshops offer practical training and professional exchange. The Blue Earth Fiscal Sponsorship program helps photographers and filmmakers pursue grants and tax-deductible donations for documentary projects exploring environmental and social concerns.

The annual *Review Santa Fe* photo symposium, CENTER's flagship event, brings local, national and international photographers into conversation with curators, editors, publishers and other arts and media professionals. Portfolio reviews offer feedback and opportunities to build professional relationships. Public programs, including artist presentations and the free Portfolio Walk, invite residents to meet photographers and explore projects addressing contemporary life, politics and the environment. Review Santa Fe celebrated its 25th anniversary this year with a weekend defined by creative synergy and 947 portfolio review meetings.

Alongside its international network, CENTER offers exhibitions and educational programs in New Mexico, including printing workshops and lectures exploring photography and civic engagement. These activities bring the production and interpretation of images into shared public settings, where artists and audiences can discuss both the work and the questions it raises.

Partnership is central to this work. By connecting artists with scholars, students, cultural institutions and media outlets, CENTER supports the relationships that allow visual stories to develop and circulate. This approach contributes to Santa Fe's creative community by pairing support for individual artists with opportunities for public learning and exchange.

More information: CENTERSANTAFE.ORG. 505-933-9146, PROGRAMS@CENTERSANTAFE.ORG

Photo by Laura Wzorek Pressley

CREATIVE STARTUPS

creative startups®

Creative Startups is a New Mexico-based nonprofit supporting creative entrepreneurs and the systems that help them build sustainable livelihoods. Co-founded by Alice Loy and Tom Aageson, and directed by Brianna Figueroa, the organization works locally and internationally, connecting business development with cultural vitality, economic opportunity and environmental resilience. Its approach recognizes that creative workers generate value for their communities and should share in the prosperity they help produce.

Creative Startups' programs support entrepreneurs at different stages, from exploring an idea to growing an established business. Workshops, cohort-based courses and accelerators combine practical learning with mentorship and connections to regional organizations and investor networks. Programs are developed with local partners to respond to the needs of particular creative communities and industries. Alumni include Meow Wolf and Native Realities, alongside businesses working across a range of creative fields.

Creative Startups also works to make entrepreneurial support available through familiar community institutions. Its Libraries as Launchpads initiative trains librarians to help people navigate business resources, positioning public libraries as accessible entry points for starting and developing a business. The initiative combines staff training with local strategy development to address gaps in support for entrepreneurs.

Beyond individual businesses, the organization works with economic developers and community partners on strategies for stronger creative economies. Its work connects the needs of artists and entrepreneurs with the institutions, relationships and resources that sustain their careers.

Within Midtown's emerging community of arts, education and workforce organizations, Creative Startups brings experience linking creative practice with business skills and economic opportunity. That perspective supports a shared ambition for the district: a place where people can develop ideas, find collaborators, and build viable livelihoods rooted in their creativity.

More information: CREATIVESTARTUPS.ORG, CREATIVESTARTUPS.ORG/CONTACT-US
To read the creative economies report that Creative Startups wrote for the state of New Mexico, visit: HTTPS://WWW.CREATIVESTARTUPS.ORG/STRATEGY/

GIRLS INC

girls inc. of Santa Fe

Girls Inc. of Santa Fe is a nonprofit organization dedicated to inspiring girls to be strong, smart and bold. Through mentorship, hands-on learning and supportive relationships, it helps participants build confidence, develop leadership skills, and explore possibilities for their futures. Its approach recognizes that girls need environments where they can be themselves, ask questions, take healthy risks, and experience a sense of belonging.



Programs span after-school activities, summer and spring break camps, teen opportunities and partnerships with local schools. The girls explore science, technology, engineering and mathematics alongside financial literacy, health, creative expression and leadership. Activities encourage curiosity and teamwork while challenging gender stereotypes that can limit young people's expectations of themselves.

The organization also works with parents and guardians, offering education and resources to support girls' development at home. Its advocacy programs connect participants' experiences with broader efforts to improve opportunities for girls to lead healthy, educated and independent lives. A sliding tuition scale based on household income helps make programs accessible to families with different financial circumstances.

Collaboration extends this work beyond a single program site. School and community partnerships bring learning opportunities to young people in different settings, while relationships with families help sustain support over time. This approach connects individual growth with a wider community responsibility to ensure girls have access to resources and opportunities.

In the coming years, Girls Inc. of Santa Fe plans to expand from its current Eastside location to a new purpose-built campus off of Siler Road. The organization will also maintain a presence at Midtown Sol through its Teen Arts Program, connecting teens with creative opportunities within Midtown's growing community of artists and organizations.

More information: girlsincofsantafe.org, 505-982-2042

LITTLE GLOBE

Little Globe is a Santa Fe-based community arts nonprofit organization that works with people to help them tell their own stories through film, performance and other creative practices. Little Globe began in 2005 with collaborative arts projects led by Molly Sturges and Chris Jonas. The organization brought artists and community members together across cultural, economic and generational differences. In 2024, Little Globe entered a new chapter as an Indigenous-led organization under the co-executive directorship of Dylan Tenorio (Kewa) and Aurora Escobedo (Tesuque Pueblo).

Through workshops, mentorship and partnerships, Little Globe provides tools to help people tell their own experiences, sharing voices that may be missing from public dialogue and together creating community events where stories can be shared. Participants help shape the process of creating the stories, with attention to the ethics of consent, shared authorship, and guiding how their work will be used.

The organization's longstanding *Community Storytellers* program trains residents in storytelling and video production, contributing to a living history of northern New Mexico. Recent projects include oral histories with the Agua Fría Village Association and three documentaries preserving the stories of *La Sociedad Folklórica,* a Hispanic women's society founded in the 1930s. At Capital High School, *La Milpa,* with Earthcare and Future Focused Education, allows students to earn credit through farming, while the *Newcomers* program, with Communities in Schools, helps recently immigrated students film their journeys.

With the Santa Fe Indigenous Center, Little Globe created *Circles,* an original theater piece written and performed by Indigenous community members. The performance drew over 600 people to the Lensic in 2025. *"Powwow Etiquette,"* a video featuring local dancers and actors, teaches Native and non-Native audiences how to respectfully attend a powwow. These projects connect participants and bring their perspectives to wider audiences.

Little Globe also uses storytelling to support civic participation. At the Midtown Block Party in 2021, a film workshop invited residents to share ideas for the former university campus. Partnering with Earthcare, they helped develop *Convivio Southside,* bringing neighborhood residents together for a gathering shaped by a community council and local partners.





Little Globe filmmaking training. Photo courtesy of Little Globe; community theater production. Photo: Seth Roffman

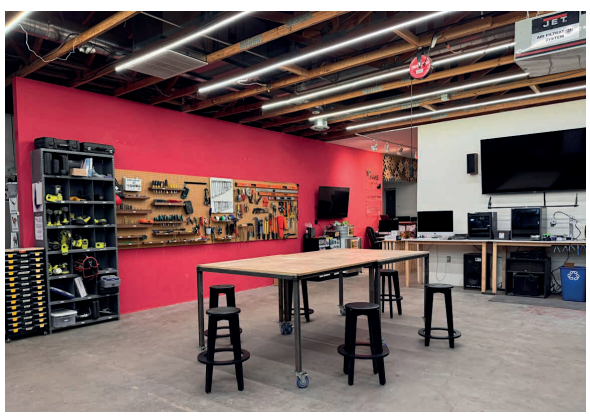
Across these efforts, collaboration involves sharing decisions about whose stories are told, how they are created and what they can contribute to community life. Little Globe's work connects artistic practice with relationships through which people can understand their neighbors and participate in shaping their city.

More information: LITTLEGLOBE.ORG, 505-980-6218, INFO@LITTLEGLOBE.ORG

MAKE SANTA FE







Photos courtesy of Make Santa Fe

MAKE Santa Fe is a nonprofit community makerspace providing access to tools, training and shared workspaces for art, fabrication, repair and invention. It brings together traditional craft and digital technologies, supporting people who want to learn a skill, experiment with materials, develop a product, or build a livelihood around making.

Its facilities include equipment for woodworking, welding, ceramics, blacksmithing, metal casting, laser cutting and 3D printing, alongside computer-controlled tools for precision fabrication. Sharing this equipment gives members access to capabilities that can be costly or difficult to maintain in an individual studio. Artists, students, hobbyists and entrepreneurs work within the same space, with opportunities to exchange knowledge across disciplines.

Education is central to MAKE's approach. Introductory "badge" classes teach members to use particular tools and studios safely, while workshops

and more intensive courses help participants deepen their skills. Its programs connect hands-on learning with opportunities in skilled trades and creative entrepreneurship. Student and educator memberships, along with volunteer membership pathways, help broaden access to the space.

MAKE also encourages experimentation, play and learning through mistakes. Members contribute to a shared knowledge base containing equipment guides, class materials and lessons from the workshop. Volunteers help maintain tools and facilities, making the care of the space part of its collaborative practice.

This model gives practical form to the idea of shared creative infrastructure: pooling equipment, space and expertise so more people can participate in making. It supports both individual projects and the relationships through which skills circulate within Santa Fe's creative community.

More information: MAKESANTAFE.ORG, build@makesantafe.org

MASS DESIGN GROUP

Model of Architecture Serving Society (MASS) is a nonprofit practice working toward a just and beautiful future through architecture and landscape design. Its work combines research with local knowledge and expertise to address the ways the built environment shapes health, economic opportunity and ecological wellbeing. MASS approaches design as a means of meeting people's needs with dignity while respecting the limits of the planet.

The practice grew from a collaboration among Harvard architecture students, Partners In Health and communities in Rwanda. Work on its first project, Butaro District Hospital, began in 2008 and helped establish a commitment to working alongside communities throughout the design and building process. Today, MASS practices across Africa and North America, with studios in Kigali, Boston, Poughkeepsie and Santa Fe.

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575-758-3840







Mayrah Udvardi and Joseph Kunkel (r) review plans; MASS Design Group gathering

MASS combines commissioned design services with philanthropic investment in projects and places where design is needed but underfunded. Its Design Labs connect lessons from individual projects to broader efforts addressing affordable housing, community health, education, climate resilience and social cohesion. This structure supports both the creation of buildings and sustained work on the systems that shape them.

The Santa Fe studio is home to the Sustainable Native Communities Design Lab, led by Joseph Kunkel, a citizen of the Northern Cheyenne Nation. The lab partners with tribes and Native-led organizations to co-design buildings and landscapes that honor cultural heritage, sovereignty and self-determination. Working in urban and rural Native communities, it places Indigenous leadership and knowledge at the center of projects ranging from housing and health facilities to schools and memorials.

Through these partnerships, the lab explores how investment in the built environment can strengthen community resilience, sustain cultural practices and repair relationships between people and place. Its work connects MASS's international practice with a locally grounded commitment to Indigenous communities and their visions for the future.

More information: MODELOFARCHITECTURE.ORG, Santa Fe studio: 505-634-9200

MASS.

SANTA FE INDIGENOUS CENTER

Founded in 2008 as the Santa Fe Indian Center, the Santa Fe Indigenous Center (SFIC) is a community organization designed by and for Indigenous Peoples. It adopted its current name on Indigenous Peoples' Day in 2020 to better represent the community it serves and received its 501(c)(3) nonprofit designation in 2026. Its work brings together direct assistance, cultural programming and opportunities for Native people to gather and build relationships.



Santa Fe's Indigenous community includes people from Tribal Nations across the country, alongside members of New Mexico's 19 pueblos, Apache Nation and Navajo Nation. This diverse community is not fully visible in commonly reported Census statistics: 2.1 percent of Santa Fe residents identify as American Indian or Alaska Native alone, while 27.6 percent identify as two or more races, a category that includes people with Indigenous identities.





Top: Logo by George Toya (Jemez Pueblo); Indigenous People's Day 2026, Santa Fe Plaza. Photos by Erny Zah

SFIC provides a place for this broader community to access assistance, sustain cultural connections and build relationships across tribal affiliations. Its assistance and community-building can be particularly supportive for Native people whose tribal affiliations are outside New Mexico and who may be far from their home communities' resources and support networks.

SFIC's programs connect material needs with cultural life. They include food distributions, emergency financial assistance, school supply giveaways, cultural art classes, and gatherings such as Native Earth Day and the annual Honoring Native Nations Powwow. In 2025, the center provided food to more than 3,520 Native family members in Santa Fe County and distributed $49,737 in emergency financial assistance.

The center also connects people with organizations offering housing assistance, medical care and services for children and families. These relationships make collaboration part of its everyday work, helping people navigate resources while sustaining an institution shaped by Indigenous needs and priorities.

More information: santafeindigenouscenter.org, 505-660-4210, SFINDIANCENTER@GMAIL.COM

ZEITGEIST DANCE THEATER

Santa Fe audiences may associate Zeitgeist Dance Theatre (ZDT) with a three-week summer residency and public performances. As one of Midtown Sol's new tenants, Zeitgeist is establishing a year-round contemporary dance center. Artistic Director Francisco Gella and Executive Director Jeffrey Hoffman will move their operations to the Midtown campus once the buildings are ready for occupancy.





Jeffrey Hoffman: "We've been inspired by the current work and plans of other partner organizations. We see many possibilities to collaborate on programming. A permanent space will provide the footprint for our company rehearsals and educational programming, but also for movement and dance classes that reach all corners of the Santa Fe community. It will also provide opportunities for artistic residencies for New Mexican, national and global dance makers. It will be a welcoming place that encourages us all to 'keep moving.'"

Francisco Gella: "My goal is to create training opportunities for aspiring young dancers. This could include a 'supplemental Sunday' program, local mini-intensives and master classes. I intend to create an engaging and fun class environment. Ultimately, my goal is to keep Santa Fe and the surrounding communities moving through dance training, exploration and improvisation, while creating accessible opportunities for people of all ages to experience the physical, creative and expressive benefits of movement."

Zeitgeist will present "*Santa Fe Moves: A Winter Celebration of Dance + Movement*" from Jan. 8–10, 2027. This is open to both dancers and nondancers. The invitation is extended to professional artists, young dancers, families and curious beginners. *Santa Fe Moves* will feature an eclectic mix of community classes and workshops, professional and guest performances, artist conversations and preview performances from ZDT's upcoming summer season. Visit https://zeitgeistdancetheatre.org or follow on Instagram @zeitgeistdancetheatre.

FRANCISCO GELLA DANCE WORKS



FRANCISCO GELLA DANCE WORKS

Francisco Gella Dance Works' helps young dancers develop as artists and prepare for college and professional careers. Gella's approach pairs technique, strength and artistry, with attention to mindset, confidence and personal direction. His mentorship extends to parents and guardians, recognizing the role they play in supporting young artists.

Gella has offered programs since 2015. Students can train in ballet, modern, contemporary and other movement forms. The New Century Dance Project, presented with Zeitgeist Dance Theatre, includes a choreographic fellowship and opportunities for emerging dancers to work with experienced artists. This includes a summer program that gives advanced preprofessional dancers an immersive company experience. More information: franciscogelladance.com, INFO@FRANCISCOGELLADANCE.COM



Vital Spaces storefront on Cerrillos Road, Santa Fe

VITAL SPACES SANTA FE

Founded in 2019, Vital Spaces is a Santa Fe arts nonprofit that began by providing low-cost studios, with a particular commitment to artists of color and underserved creatives. Its work has since expanded to address the resources and relationships people need to sustain a creative practice: places to work, opportunities to share their work, access to materials and connections with audiences and fellow artists.

Vital Spaces activates buildings for studios, exhibitions, workshops and community gatherings. On the Midtown campus, its Annex Gallery brought a former university building back into use as an arts space. Its location at 3140 Cerrillos Road—formerly JoAnn Fabrics—combines affordable studios with exhibition space, podcast room, shared work areas, a retail shop and numerous classes, exhibitions, workshops and performances. These spaces bring working artists and public programming together, allowing people to encounter creative work as part of everyday community life.



Cross-cultural dialogue at Vital Spaces, 2025. Photo ©Seth Roffman

The Community Art Closet, operating since 2020, distributes free new and donated supplies to artists, young people and educators. By circulating materials for reuse, the program reduces both financial barriers to making art and the amount of usable supplies discarded.

Other programs include exhibitions, poetry, music, workshops and art markets offered at no cost to vendors. Unhoused Art, launched in 2025, provides workshops through partner organizations serving people experiencing homelessness, along with opportunities to exhibit their work. Public celebrations, including Juneteenth on the Plaza and the "Wonderful Fantastic" Hip Hop Festival in the Railyard, create further opportunities for cultural expression and gathering.

Across these activities, Vital Spaces approaches access to the arts as a community need. Its work connects affordable physical space with the materials, encouragement and public opportunities that help more people participate in Santa Fe's creative life.

More information: VITALSPACES.ORG, 505-216-6350, CONTACT@VITALSPACES.ORG

Midtown: A New Model for Collaboration and Sustainable Growth

BY **RAASHAN AMAAD**

When I think about the future of Midtown, what excites me most isn't any one building, organization, business or project. It's the possibility of what can happen between them.

Santa Fe is a place full of so many creative people, deep culture and traditions, beautiful organizations and incredible ideas. But too often, all of those things exist in separate lanes. So many of us are trying to solve problems, so many artists are looking for space, small businesses are looking for opportunities to grow, and folks are trying to figure out where they fit into a city that is constantly changing.

Midtown gives us a huge opportunity to approach things differently. What if we thought about building an ecosystem? A new model for collaboration and sustainable growth?

At Vital Spaces, we have seen firsthand what can happen when space, relationships and community come together. Much of our work has grown out of taking places that were underused or sitting empty and asking, "What could happen here?" Once artists and community members are invited into that question, the answers multiply.

A room becomes a studio. A vacant building becomes a place for exhibitions, performances and workshops. A parking lot becomes a pop-up market or new venue. Someone who came in to see an art show meets the person they eventually collaborate with. A young person walks into a creative space and suddenly sees a future for themselves that they hadn't imagined before.

Midtown gives us a huge opportunity to approach things differently.

That is what makes the opportunity at Midtown so interesting to me. We have the chance to imagine not only about what goes into each individual space, but about what the people and organizations occupying those spaces can make possible for one another and for our community as a whole.

Maybe someone has equipment someone else can use. Maybe a business has expertise that can support a community member, collective or crew. Maybe artists bring ideas, energy and culture into spaces that transform and serve like no one even imagines. Maybe shared programming brings people to Midtown who would otherwise believe that they have no reason to be there. Maybe young people meet artists, entrepreneurs, educators and organizations all within the same place.

The possibilities grow when we stop thinking of resources as only money. Or collaborations as more than transactional experiences that don't fully benefit all involved.

People. We need people to be fully human and showing up fully. That's what I'm most excited about: people interacting and what might be born from those interactions. ■

Raashan Ahmed, artistic/executive director of Vital Spaces, is a father, musician, poet, community worker and DJ. HTTPS://WWW.VITALSPACES.ORG



YOUTHWORKS

Founded in 2001, YouthWorks is a Santa Fe nonprofit connecting young people with education, employment and a community of support. Celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2026, the organization serves approximately 1,000 young people from diverse cultural backgrounds across northern New Mexico each year. Its programs combine alternative education and work-based learning with counseling, case management and mentorship to help youth overcome barriers and pursue their goals.

YouthWorks offers pathways into construction, culinary arts, retail and environmental stewardship. Through Santa Fe YouthBuild, participants prepare for the GED while gaining vocational skills and receiving a stipend. Graduates receive continued support with job placement, education and personal needs for a year after completing the program. Construction participants work with Santa Fe Habitat for Humanity to build affordable, energy-efficient homes, connecting their training to a tangible community need.



Environmental programs offer paid opportunities for young people ages 16–24 to learn through land restoration, trail and park maintenance and sustainable agriculture. Partnerships with organizations such as Reunity Resources bring participants into working farms, where they develop skills in greenhouse management, soil health, planting and harvesting. These experiences connect career exploration with care for the region's land and food systems.

Across its programs, YouthWorks treats education, employment and personal support as connected needs. Young people can build practical skills while receiving help to navigate the circumstances that affect their ability to stay engaged.

As a Midtown Sol partner, YouthWorks plans to connect participants with neighboring organizations' creative programs and resources. A shared setting would also offer an entry point for young people attending district activities who want to return to education or explore job training. These relationships extend its longstanding approach of bringing community partners together around young people's futures.

More information: SANTAFEYOUTHWORKS.ORG, 505-989-1855, INFO@SANTAFEYOUTHWORKS.ORG

Building Futures Together

BY **JAY HENNICKE**

YouthWorks is proud to announce that we have received our seventh federal Department of Labor (DOL) Employment and Training Administration Grant award for a very competitive workforce training program titled YouthBuild. YouthWorks launched services in mid-October for 70 youth recipients over two years, and will grant a total of $1.6 million over three years. Since our first award in 2011, we have brought $10 million in DOL funds to Santa Fe to educate and train marginalized youth who want to complete their GED and receive workforce credentials in various trades. We have served approximately 400 youth since first receiving the YouthBuild grant, and our program continues to grow. We are very excited to offer a new cohort of youth this extraordinary program.

Our enthusiasm for the new grant is bolstered by the partnerships we share on the developing Midtown site. The requirements and mandates of the YouthBuild program and how we present it to our youth can be quite specific to the GED and the job-training tracks we offer, but sharing space with the other Midtown partners will make it much easier for us to augment our programs and make young people aware of the many opportunities and creative outlets within the city. Similarly, we hope to provide a landing spot for youth and young adults attending activities and events on the Midtown site who are looking to reengage with academics or pursue job training they might have trouble finding without prior experience.

This year, YouthWorks is celebrating its 25th year of pursuing the mission to drive and elevate youth in our community, and, while YouthBuild is one of our biggest programs, it is not our only program. Through other grants and private donations, we are further enabled to offer local environmental workforce training, a variety of academic programs, case management, apprenticeships, counseling and mentoring. The broad range of programs and opportunities we offer is only available because of the moral and financial support of numerous wonderful agencies and individuals. Please consider contributing to our mission. You can do so by assisting our academic instructors as a volunteer tutor. You can also contribute by donating items to our thrift store



YouthWorks builders at the Ice Box Challenge, Santa Fe. A block of ice in B.Public Prefab's well-sealed and insulated building didn't melt for days during the summer. Photo © Seth Roffman

YouthWorks is celebrating its 25th year of pursuing the mission to drive and elevate youth in our community.

(ThriftWorks) or by donating money directly to our programs or through our annual year-end fundraising campaign. We would love to add your support to our continued efforts to raise youth toward success as Santa Fe and northern New Mexico citizens.

The entire YouthWorks network of staff, youth and volunteers is excited and energized by everything happening within our organization and among the growing Midtown community. There are many organizations doing excellent work throughout the city, and being able to share a common space will only make us all more efficient and effective in our missions.

If you are or have a youth between 16 and 24 years old who would like to pass the GED, train for a job, and get paid for both, please contact YouthWorks and ask to speak with someone about YouthBuild.

www.santafeyouthworks.org, 505-989-1855, JAY@SANTAFEYOUTHWORKS.ORG . ■

Jay Hennicke is an academic specialist and program coordinator at Santa Fe YouthWorks. He has 25 years of experience in education, including teaching college composition and philosophy and helping students prepare for the GED. His work reflects a belief that healthy communities put young people first.



Renderings of Blue Mesa Center for the Arts
Courtesy of BMCA

Blue Mesa Center for the Arts

Reimaging Community in Santa Fe

BY **SETH ROFFMAN**

Blue Mesa Center for the Arts is a proposed mixed-income creative community in Midtown, to be located at the entrance to Aspect Media Village. A 73,000-square-foot campus is being designed to support local, national and international artists with flexible townhouse-style, live/work residences, studios, galleries, classrooms and public gathering spaces for engagement between artists and the community. Blue Mesa's projected opening is in 2029.



A broader understanding of the intersections between technology and culture

Architect/developer Dr. Glenn Robert Erikson previously designed and developed Electric ArtBlock in Venice, California, and served for a decade on the board of Westbeth Artists Housing in New York City, the nation's largest artist live/work community.

A statement from Blue Mesa says: "The qualities that make a place desirable can gradually make it more difficult for the people who sustain its cultural life to remain there, develop their practices and build viable careers. The challenge, then, is not simply to protect a creative legacy, but to create the circumstances in which that legacy can evolve… Blue Mesa recognizes that this is an ongoing negotiation between what is inherited and what remains possible.

"Culture and technology working in concert is vital to the project's intended impact… The project offers a model for bringing creative professionals into closer proximity through shared spaces for living, working, learning and making… Rather than treating the studio as the final destination, Blue Mesa imagines a setting where creative work can move through the entirety of its lifecycle, between experimentation, production, education and public presentation."

Work-only studios would allow people who already live in Santa Fe to engage with the community without relocating. Educational programs, workshops, galleries and public spaces would create opportunities for people beyond the residential population. Ericson says Blue Mesa "exists to ensure artists and other creatives can not only come to Santa Fe, but stay, grow and contribute." Blue Mesa's website (https://www.bluemesacenter.com) says that the campus will be an interconnected ecosystem that will work in partnership with neighboring arts organizations, businesses, educational institutions, retreat centers and civic leaders.

The challenge is to create the circumstances in which a legacy can evolve.

A strong emphasis has been placed on accessibility and long-term sustainability. The campus will integrate renewable energy, water reuse, drought-tolerant landscapes and low-carbon materials.

Blue Mesa's leadership team includes partnerships with Creative Santa Fe and Daniel Werwath, both of whom played important roles in developing Santa Fe's Siler Road Artist Live/Work initiative. Their involvement reinforces the project's focus on cultural infrastructure and community-driven development. ■

FOGELSON LIBRARY





The Fogelson Library at the heart of Santa Fe's Midtown campus has been closed since 2018. It was formerly the library of the College of Santa Fe and then the Santa Fe University of Art and Design. In the future it will join the Santa Fe Public Library system as part of the ongoing redevelopment of the campus. City officials envision it replacing the La Farge Library and serving as the new central branch of the system. In 2025, the city approved an initial contract with RMKM Architecture for design and programming work (including a community outreach process) to transform the space into a "21st century" library and community hub. The project is part of the city capital improvement and infrastructure plans, including state capital outlay funding that will kickstart initial fire safety and energy retrofits. Upgrades to the library to get it up to code will likely cost several million dollars.

GREER GARSON THEATER

The Greer Garson Theater has a 500-seat auditorium, a main stage with an orchestra pit, a black box performance space, classrooms, rehearsal halls and storage spaces. It was built in 1965 through the generosity of Oscar-winning actress Greer Garson. For decades, the theater served as the performance home for the College of Santa Fe and later the Santa Fe University of Art and Design. The city purchased it in 2009.

In 2022, the city released a request for proposals to buy or lease the complex. In 2024, the city announced that it would redevelop the theater itself and committed to an initial $500,000. In 2025, the city entered into a contract with Minnesota-based ArtSpace and local architecture firm Autotroph to conduct a feasibility study. The study was presented to the Metropolitan Redevelopment Commission (MRC) in April. The city is interested in pursuing a model that includes turning the space into a multidisciplinary performing arts center managed by a nonprofit.

The city is at least several years away from being ready to put out a bid for operators. It reportedly has some of the money needed for the first phase of a two-phase renovation that could exceed $12 million. MDC has taken initial steps toward seeking National Register of Historic Places status for the theater, which would open up additional funding pathways.



© Seth Roffman





















MIDTOWN
THE CENTER OF SANTA FE

LANL SPINOFF COMPANIES AT NAMBE PUEBLO



DISCOVERY 2 SCALE

Discovery 2 Scale (D2S), an advanced materials company founded by Dr. Saryu Fensin, a longtime Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) scientist, is establishing its headquarters on Nambe Pueblo tribal land. The facility is expected to create more than 80 high-paying jobs for scientists, technicians and other highly skilled workers. "We are putting AI, robotics, manufacturing and testing together under one roof," Fensin said in an Economic Development New Mexico (EDNM) press release. Applications range from developing lighter military armor to creating radiation-resistant materials for fusion energy.

With $500,000 in Local Economic Development Act (LEDA) funding from EDNM, D2S will lease and improve a 6,500- square-foot laboratory and office space at the pueblo. "Discovery 2 Scale is commercializing technology and creating private-sector opportunities for New Mexicans," said EDD Secretary Rob Black. "By creating pathways for collaboration, investment and technical workforce development, we can help ensure that tribal communities participate in and benefit from New Mexico's innovation economy," said Randy Vigil, president of Nambe Pueblo Development Corporation.



Discovery 2 Scale is establishing its headquarters at Nambe Pueblo.

CARBON CAPTURE PILOT PROJECT

Spiritus is an energy technology company developing a new source of CO^2 to increase production from existing U.S. oil fields. Its modular technology captures atmospheric CO^2 at the point of use, giving oil and



gas operators a new source of supply for enhanced oil recovery without relying solely on natural CO^2 deposits, industrial emitters or long-distance transportation infrastructure. Headquartered in New Mexico, Spiritus is developing projects across major U.S. producing regions.

Spiritus (SPIRITUS.COM) is another LANL spinoff. The "climate tech" company recently cut the ribbon on a prototype facility located on an acre of Nambe Pueblo land, where the company expects to eventually employ 30 workers. The facility will test direct air capture (DAC) technologies and demonstrate operation of the company's full-scale Carbon Orchards. Upon achieving operational capacity, the Carbon Orchards will be capable of delivering 1,000 tons of gross carbon removal per year. Spiritus' capture system uses a type of sorbent energy, shaped like small balls, that sit in the open air, absorbing carbon and then releasing it through an offsite desorption process. The CO^2 is stored underground. The balls are reusable.

In a press release, James Burbridge, director of business development for Spiritus, said, "Climate change is the greatest problem the world is faced with, and the only path forward is through innovation." An article from Business Wire proclaims, "Backed by Aramco Ventures, Khosla Ventures, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries America and TDK Ventures, Spiritus is set to transform carbon removal, turbocharging America's AI-driven future with energy and infrastructure abundance without climate compromise." *USA Today* recently named Spiritus among five American technology breakthroughs "poised to transform life."

Spiritus' solution starts with enhanced oil recovery that increases production from existing oil fields. There are an estimated 70 billion barrels of U.S. oil recoverable with CO^2 injection, 40 billion in the Permian Basin alone. Less than 1one percent has been unlocked to date. "The constraint was access to affordable CO^2. Spiritus closes that gap, delivering captured CO^2 at a cost structure that, combined with a tax credit, makes the economics work for operators.

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KIT CARSON ELECTRIC CO-OP TO UPGRADE RURAL ELECTRIC GRID

In September, the U.S. Department of Energy announced that it had selected Kit Carson Electric Co-op (KCEC) as one of four small utilities to receive millions in federal funding to upgrade its rural electrical grid as part of DOE's SPARK initiative. KCEC will receive up to $38.1 million to update its 25.5-mile main transmission line between Taos and Questa.

KCEC plans to contribute $12.7 million in cost-share funding to help finance the project, which has an estimated total cost of $50.8 million. A total of $86.8 million has been earmarked for three public utilities in the state. The other recipients are Public Service Company of New Mexico (PNM) and Farmers' Electric Cooperative of New Mexico, which will rebuild a 60-mile transmission line from Clovis north to San Jon.

Kit Carson Electric serves just under 30,000 member-owners and businesses across Taos, Colfax and Río Arríba counties. The rural N.M. 522 corridor north of the town of Taos to be served by the upgrade is home to several thousand residents in El Prado, Arroyo Hondo, Arroyo Seco and San Cristobal.

Kit Carson transferred its wholesale power supplier from Tri-State to Guzman Energy in 2016. That made it possible for the co-op to advance its solar energy initiatives and save up to $170 million, which translated into rate reductions for its customers. It also made it possible for KCEC to achieve its goal of becoming 100 percent daytime solar-powered by 2022.

GREEN HYDROGEN LAWSUIT

More recently, KCEC has been embroiled in a controversy over its plans to construct a green hydrogen plant in Questa. The co-op received $231 million in federal funding to develop the project in 2025. The plant would be the first of its kind in the state. It would provide a virtually zero-emission energy source. Construction is underway on a 50-megawatt, 200-plus solar panel array to power the facility.

The co-op plans to draw groundwater for hydrogen production from an existing Chevron well at the site. A preliminary proposal from Chevron would have explored using reclaimed mine wastewater to make hydrogen. The company backed out of that proposal and instead offered groundwater rights. Questa's Chevron Mine, molybdenum milling facility and tailings sites cover five noncontiguous square miles. After nearly a century, the mine was closed in 2014. It was declared a Superfund site in 2011, and there has been a decades-long path toward cleaning it up.

Two acequias in the area—the Cabresto Lake Irrigation Community Ditch Association and the Acequia Madre del Cerro de Guadalupe—filed a lawsuit challenging a federal review that found the plant would not substantially impact local water sources. The lawsuit cites a 2009 conservation easement that prohibits development. The acequias are seeking an injunction to halt construction until further environmental review is conducted. The U.S. Department of Agriculture is the defendant.

New Mexico's governor-elect, Deb Haaland, has said that hydrogen is not part of her vision for New Mexico's energy transition.

MICROGRID SYSTEMS LAB'S GRID MODERNIZATION PROJECTS

Microgrid Systems Laboratory, an "innovation center for decentralized energy systems," is part of three teams that have received awards from the Grid Modernization Grant Program of the New Mexico Energy Office. MSL's projects reflect the three areas supported by the program. The projects are Advanced Storage Architectures (research); the Picuris Pueblo Tribal Microgrid (planning); and the Resilient El Rito utility microgrid (construction). The Advanced Storage Architectures project is a collaboration with the University of New Mexico and Sandia National Laboratories. The ASA conceptual framework, developed by MSL, takes a holistic systems innovation approach to optimizing the economic and operational deployment of energy storage throughout the grid.

Under the state grant, a team will focus on developing modeling tools that employ the framework to design resilient architectures in New Mexico under a "blue sky scenario," in which heterogenous distributed storage fleets can be quickly configured to meet sudden load spikes and surges; and a "black sky scenario," in which dynamic microgrids can be formed on the fly to support critical loads in flexible geographic envelopes during utility outages.

NEW MEXICO'S FIRST TRIBAL COMMUNITY MICROGRID PROJECT

The planning grant for the Picuris Pueblo microgrid will enable the pueblo to integrate its previously deployed utility-scale PV array and battery energy storage system into a functional community resilience microgrid. The pueblo is located in a remote region and is vulnerable to outages due to wildfire and extreme weather events. Kit Carson Electric Cooperative (KCEC), the utility partner, will utilize the microgrid under normal conditions to deliver grid services to its distribution network.

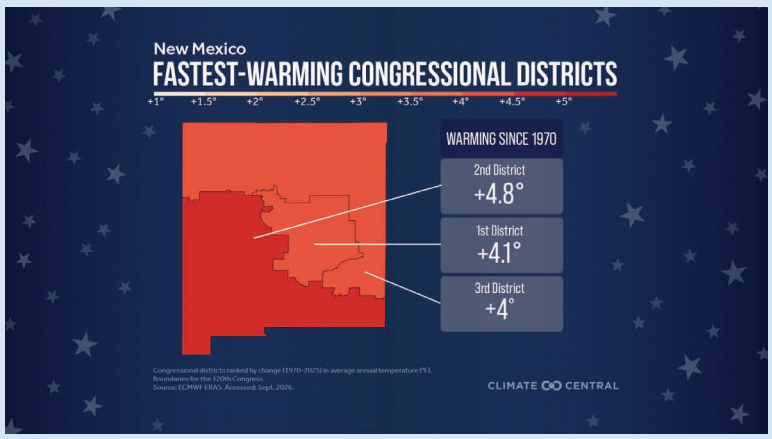
RESILIENT EL RITO

The construction grant will fund the addition of a battery energy storage system and microgrid controls to complete the El Rito community resilience microgrid, a project initially developed by MSL in collaboration with Northern New Mexico College (NNMC) and KCEC. The system will supplement the 1.5 MW PV array previously installed in El Rito by Kit Carson and Guzman Energy. The fully integrated microgrid will be constructed by PowerSecure, the leading microgrid developer in the U.S. It will be New Mexico's first utility microgrid project and will integrate workforce training with NNMC's Electrical Technology training program.

Microgrid Systems Lab has also joined the Global Food-Energy-Water Alliance, an international coalition focused on place-based knowledge and contextual engineering to foster climate change adaptation solutions. MICROGRIDSYSTEMSLAB.COM

FASTEST WARMING DISTRICTS IN NEW MEXICO

New Mexico saw its hottest-ever summer in 2026. The state's cities repeatedly shattered high-temperature records. Since 1970, average annual temperatures in New Mexico have become 3.7 degrees warmer, reflecting an overall trend. Warming puts people and ecosystems at risk from more frequent and intense extreme weather.



Graphic courtesy Climate Central

A newly released analysis of which U.S. Congressional districts in the United States are warming fastest shows New Mexico's 2nd Congressional District tied for second place among 431 other districts. The 2nd district covers the southern half of the state, from Albuquerque to Sunland Park. It warmed 4.8 degrees between 1970 and 2025, according to an analysis by the national program Climate Matters, a resource created by the nonpartisan nonprofit Climate Central. New Mexico's 3rd Congressional District, which covers the northern half of the state plus an eastern swath down to Lovington, warmed 4 degrees during that time period. The state's 1st Congressional District, from Río Rancho to Ruidoso, warmed 4.1 degrees.

Using data from the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication, Climate Matters also reported that between 40 and 60 percent of New Mexicans say they have experienced the effects of global warming.

Since 1970, all U.S. congressional districts have warmed by an average of 2.8 degrees. The fastest-warming districts are mostly scattered across the Southwest. The top spot is southeast Arizona's 6th District.

WORLD AND BUSINESS LEADERS GRAPPLE WITH CLIMATE CHANGE

At the Global Renewables Summit during Climate Week in New York in September, world and business leaders grappled with the increasingly urgent costs of climate change, soaring energy prices and the human toll from the summer's oppressive heat waves and wildfires. "We're seeing the handprint of climate change on the whole world," said Bill Hare, CEO of Climate Analytics.

Meanwhile, despite competing with heavily subsidized fossil fuel-based energy and electricity systems, renewable energy is booming, technology is improving, and the economics of clean energy is increasingly attractive, according to a new report from the International Renewable Energy Agency and the Global Renewables Alliance. But to meet its 2023 goal of tripling renewable power capacity, the world must build more renewable capacity from 2026 to 2030 than in all the previous years combined.

However, the reduction of oil, coal and gas use is necessary to cut carbon pollution and meet climate targets. There is fear that the data center boom will mean a surge in fossil fuels, even though data centers can be powered by renewable energy.

U.N. climate chief Simon Stiell said, "Energy-guzzling artificial intelligence is driving up planet-heating pollution from coal, oil and gas, while ratcheting up energy costs for households and businesses." But Siemens Head of Sustainability Eva Riesenhuber and MIT Vice President for Energy and Climate Evelyn Wang told the Associated Press that AI will help tackle climate change and predicted that eventually data centers will not add to the world's carbon dioxide emissions or use extra water. Wang said that data centers are five years away from being water neutral and about a decade away from no longer adding to the warming problem. "We do need the intelligence to design the future that the world needs," Riesenhuber said.

JICARILLA APACHE GEOTHERMAL STUDY

The Jicarilla Apache Nation is using a $2.5 million state grant for a 9-month study of geothermal resources on tribal lands in northern Rio Arriba County for potential electricity generation and direct heating. The tribe is working on the first phase with SMK Geoscience, a consulting firm based in Durango, Colo. that has also worked with the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe.

A Jicarilla Apache tribal member has been hired as a community engagement manager for the study. She will share project updates and gather tribal members' questions and feedback. A final feasibility report and the community's input will be presented to the tribal nation's Legislative Council and state officials. The director of the tribe's Oil and Gas Administration, Donna Montoya, said in a press release, "For over 75 years the Jicarilla Apache Nation has relied on revenues from oil and gas production on the reservation. We look forward to exploring potential opportunities to include renewable energy, hydrogen and carbon management, among other initiatives."

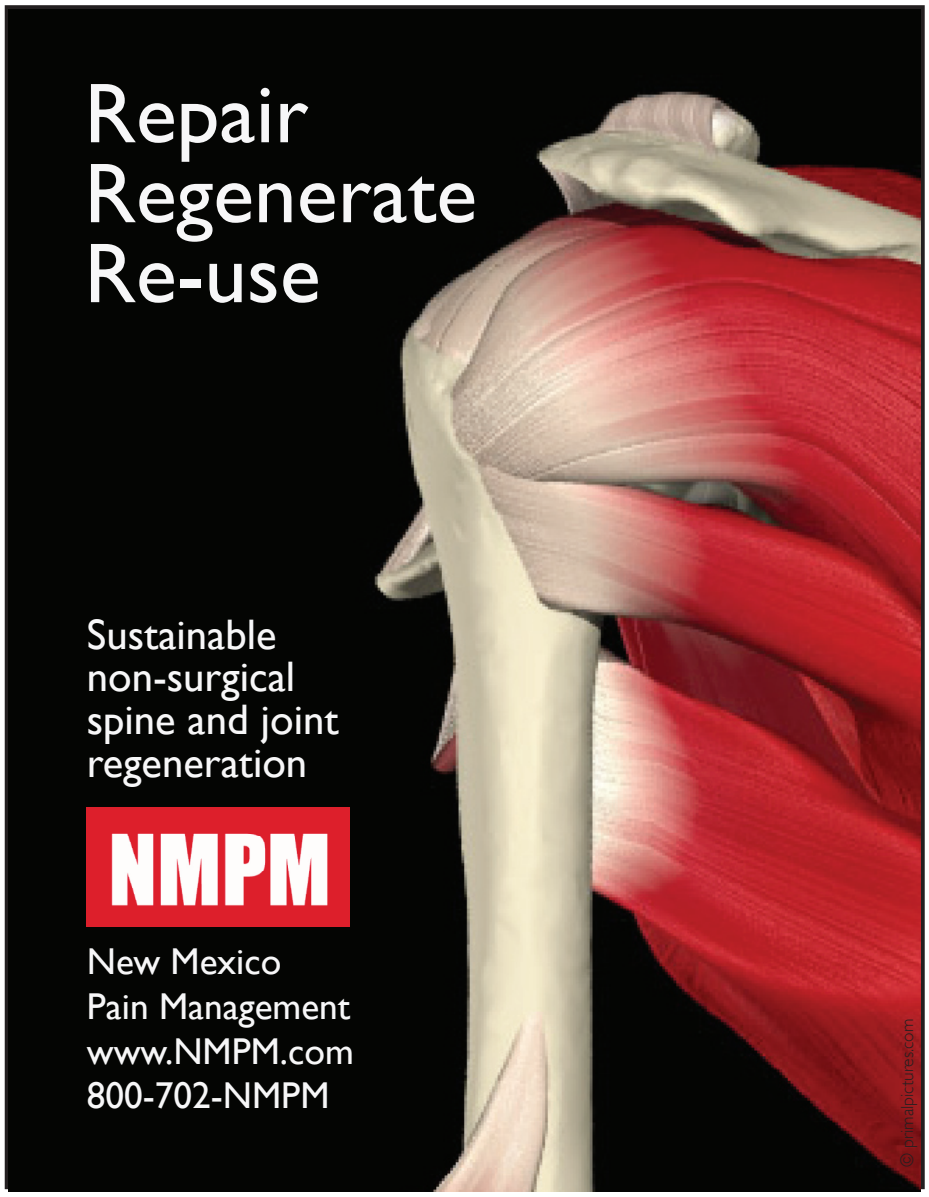
Several other tribes, including Jemez Pueblo, Ohkay Owingeh and Zia Pueblo, have expressed interest in the geothermal potential on their lands. A report from the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology and Project Innerspace in 2025 described New Mexico as "on the cusp" of a geothermal boom, with a potential energy production of about 163 gigawatts.

MIDTOWN CAMPUS ELECTRIC MANDATE AMENDMENT REQUESTED

The Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency, which is overseeing redevelopment of the City of Santa Fe's Midtown campus, recently requested an amendment to the campus master plan that would remove a requirement that buildings must be 100 percent electric. PMM notified the city that the mandate isn't feasible and the utility would not be able to provide the electric load necessary to meet the requirement. Also, the MRA realized that the cost of removing natural gas infrastructure in old college buildings including the Fogelson Library and the Greer Garson Theater would be prohibitively expensive. If the amendment is approved, natural gas would be permissible in new commercial and industrial buildings, as well as the campus' legacy buildings.

The amendment would also designate "light industrial" for uses up to 20,000 square feet as a permitted use. That would allow for a wider array of businesses to set up shop, city officials say. "We want to give them that capacity while also tapping into photovoltaics on site and going fully electric where possible," said Carly "Cav" Vendetti, MRA's deputy director. Solar requirements for the campus would remain unchanged. Light Industrial for manufacturing and assembly would stipulate that the business cannot negatively impact adjacent sites. Light industrial is currently permitted at the former Shellaburger Tennis Center, which is now home to Woodruff Engineering, Santa Fe Community College's machinist program and a manufacturer of herbal medicines, Herbs, Etc.

After being presented to an early neighborhood notification meeting, the proposed amendment will go to the city Planning Commission and then to the city council for final approval.





WHAT'S GOING ON

ALBUQUERQUE / Online

NOV. 1–21
DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS
So. Broadway Cultural Center, 1025 Broadway SE
Vibrant cultural exhibit honors loved ones who have passed on. WWW.CABQ.GOV/ARTSCULTURE/

NOV. 13, 9 AM–4 PM
NM FOOD ALLIANCE SUMMIT
Route 66 Welcome Center, 12300 Central Ave.
What's next for food, farming and ranching and food security work in the state? Hear from policy experts and community leaders. Open to the public. RSVP required. BIT.LY/FOODALLIANCESUMMIT

NOV. 17
SOUTHWEST TRIBAL HOUSING AND HOMEOWNERSHIP SUMMIT
Berna Facio, 3315 Louisiana Blvd. NE
Tribal leaders, housing professionals, lenders, developers, policy makers and community partners. Tribal Home Ownership Coalition of the SW. Free. Registration: https://linkd.in/emu6cRtm

NOV. 19, 8 AM–4 PM
UNM BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC SUMMIT
Lobo Rainforest Building
Examining NM's tech commercialization pipeline. Panels will spotlight success stories, opportunities and barriers across the innovation ecosystem spanning quantum, advanced energy, creative industries, Indigenous entrepreneurship and more. Free. Registration: https://2026UNMECONOMICSUMMIT.EVENTBRITE.COM

DEC. 1–3
ROOTS & RESILIENCE CONFERENCE
Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, 2401 12th St. NW
"Strengthening NM Farms, Food & Communities." Practical tools & strategies to increase production capacity, build networks and partnerships. Hosted by Farm to Table NM's Farmer Innovation Program. 505-660-8403, WWW.FARMTOTABLENM.ORG

THROUGH APRIL 11, 2027
OVERCOMING HATEFUL THINGS
Albuquerque Museum, 2000 Mountain Rd. NW
Stories from the Jim Crow Museum of Racist Imagery explore the African-American experience and its legacies in modern society. 151 objects and images in historical context as teaching tools. 505-243-7255, ABQMUSEUM@CABQ.GOV

THROUGH MAY 30
"I THOUGHT I SAW YOU YESTERDAY"
National Hispanic Cultural Center, 1701 Fourth St. SW
Exhibition of nine artists interweaves personal memories and ancestral knowledge. Admission: $5 NM residents/16 & under free. NHCCNM.ORG

THROUGH MAY 31, 2028
COILING KIN: THE LIFE OF PUEBLO POTTERY
Maxwell Museum of Anthropology, 500 University Blvd. NE
23 potters from 14 pueblos selected 70 works from the permanent collection. A deep reflection of clay in Pueblo life. Presented in the round with audio-visual materials. MAXWELL.MUSEUM.UNM.EDU

TUES.–SUN. 9 AM–5 PM
"ONLY IN ALBUQUERQUE"
Albuquerque Museum, 2000 Mountain Rd. NW
Permanent exhibit told through four galleries: Spirited, Courageous, Resourceful and Innovative. Hundreds of the city's beloved artifacts are featured. $6., Free Sun., 9 am–1 pm. CABQ.GOV/ARTSCULTURE/ALBUQUERQUE-MUSEUM

TUES.–SUN. 9 AM–4 PM
INDIAN PUEBLO CULTURAL CENTER
"Gateway to the 19 Pueblos of N.M." Through Feb. 21, 2027: "Grounded in Clay: The Spirit of Pueblo Pottery." Special 50th anniversary programming. Cultural dances, restaurant. $10/children under 5 free. 505-843-7270, INDIANPUEBLO.ORG

TUES.–SAT. 10 AM–4 ON
MAXWELL MUSEUM OF ANTHROPOLOGY
500 University Blvd. NE
"People of the Southwest" permanent exhibition celebrates the cultural history of the SW, especially the close relationship people have had with the land. Free admission. 505-277-4405, HTTPS://MAXWELLMUSEUM.UNM.EDU

NM MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY AND SCIENCE
1801 Mountain Rd. NW
Reopened after seven months of renovations. 505-841-2800, NMNATURALHISTORY.ORG

RESILIENT FUTURES INITIATIVE
Dangerous heat, pollution and natural disasters affect all New Mexicans, especially frontline communities. This initiative, facilitated by the City of ABQ's (CABQ) Sustainability Office, is an effort to future-proof communities in Central NM. RESILIENTFUTURESNM.ORG

SANTA FE / Online

OCT. 3–DEC. 19, FRIDAYS. 8:30 AM–12:30 PM
EV OPERATIONS BOOTCAMP
SF Community College
Understanding hybrid and electric vehicle diagnostics, repair and safety. Free to qualified NM residents. https://sfcc.augusoft.net, 505-428-1324, CANDICE.MIRABAL@SFCC.EDU

NOV. 5–8
TRAVEL CLASSICS WEST
Eldorado Hotel
Networking conference for 18 assigning editors, 45 award-winning writers and tourism executives from around the world. Hosted by Tourism Santa Fe and New Mexico True.

NOV. 6–8
RECYCLE SANTA FE ART FESTIVAL
SF Community Convention Center
The country's largest and oldest recycled arts market. Juried art exhibits. Friday trash fashion & costume contest. HTTPS://WWW.RECYCLESANTAFE.ORG/EVENT-INFO/

NOV. 7, 10 AM–1 PM
SANTA FE FORWARD OPEN HOUSE
SF Community College, 1959 Siringo Rd.
Join the project team to review the latest planning recommendations and provide feedback. SFF's map connects community vision with form, function and investment priorities. 505-878-6520, SANTAFEFORWARD.ORG

NOV. 12, 8 AM–10:30 AM
SANTA FE SMALL BUSINESS FINANCE FAIR
Scottish Rite Center, 463 Paseo de Peralta
Santa Fe Small Business Navigator Program, City of SF Economic Development. HTTPS://LUMA.COM/G6870AT6

NOV. 12, 6–7 PM
RIVER TALKS: URBAN TREES, RAIN GARDENS & WATER CONSERVATION
Iconik Red, 1366 Cerrillos Rd.
Speaker: Aaron Kauffman, SW Urban Hydrology. HTTPS://SANTAFENM.GOV/PUBLIC-WORKS/PARKS-AND-OPEN-SPACE

NOV. 14, 9 AM–12 PM
FOUNDATIONS OF WATER EDUCATION WORKSHOP
Río Grande School, 715 Cam. Cabra
Engaging, hands-on activities that connect students to the science of water and the watershed. Designed for educators. Free. Register: WWW.SANTAFEWATERSHED.ORG/TWS

NOV. 15, 10 AM–4 PM
A DAY WITH SANTA FE AUTHORS: POETRY AND PROSE
CCA Munoz Waxman Gallery, 1050 Old Santa Fe Tr.
Fundraiser for Reading Quest. $99. Lunch included. Half-day options available. Raffle for items donated by local businesses and organizations. HTTPS://ADAYWITHSANTAFEAUTHORS.COM

NOV. 17, 5–7 PM
ON THE FRONTLINES OF PROTECTING SACRED LANDSCAPES
Museum of Indian Art & Culture, 710 Cam. Lejo
Legal and community perspectives from the fight for Chaco Canyon. Acoma Pueblo Gov. Charles Riley and attorney Aaron Sims. Musical performance by Adrian Wall (Jemez Pueblo). Tickets: $25

NOV. 18, 6–8 PM
PECHAKUCHA NIGHT: COMMUNITY GATHERING
The Lensic Performing Arts Center
Presenters: Educator Tobe Bott Lyons, Community Host Eriberto Caranto, Treasure Hunter Domenic Etre, Multimedia artist Lisa Jensen-Nye, Community Developer Daniel Hernandez, Artist Nikki McCauley, improv performer Eric Weiss. Tickets: LENSIC.ORG, HTTPS://CREATIVESANTAFE.ORG

NOV. 20, 6 PM
THE ONGOING POLITICS OF A RADIOACTIVE WASTE SITE
Collected Works Books/Online
Chuck McCutcheon in conversation with former Sen. Jeff Bingaman. Nuclear Reactions – A new edition of the history of the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant. 505-988-4226, WWW.COLLECTEDWORKSBOOKSTORE.COM

NOV. 21, 9 AM–7 PM
DESERT BLOOM
SF Community Convention Center
An Intergenerational Feminist Fiesta celebrating women in NM who have done and are continuing to do the work. Bold conversations, poetry, art and ideas. Tickets: DESERTBLOOMSF.COM

NOV. 28, 10 AM–5 PM
NOV. 29, 10 AM–4 PM
WINTER INDIAN MARKET
SF Convention Center
160 juried artists from the SF Indian Market. Jewelry, pottery, paintings and more. SWAIA.ORG

THROUGH NOV. 30
I AM CLAY: ACOMA LIFE IN FIGURES
Museum of International Folk Art, 706 Cam. Lejo
Community-curated show of figurative pottery works by Acoma Pueblo artists from ancient times and today. 505-476-1204, MOIFA.ORG

DEC. 6, 6–9 PM
GLOBAL SF BENEFIT GALA
Eldorado Hotel & Spa
National correspondent Robert Costa joins Fred Nathan of Think NM in a conversation to report about what happened in the midterm elections and the state of American democracy. Tickets: 505-982-4931, WWW.GLOBALSANTAFE.ORG

DEC. 12, 9 AM–4 PM
IAIA HOLIDAY MARKET
IAIA Campus
Original artwork by IAIA students, alumni, staff and artists from across communities.

DEC. 12, 9 AM–4 PM
HOLIDAY ARTS & CRAFTS FAIR
SF Community College, 6401 Richards Ave.
Holiday shopping and opportunity for artists and makers across Santa Fe.

THROUGH JAN. 3, 2027
BUILDING WORLDS: KEN FURY AND GARY MEDINA COOK
IAIA Museum of Contemporary Native Arts
Contemporary Genízaro artists shed light on a long obscured history of cultural narratives of the Southwest. HTTPS://IAIA.EDU/EVENT/BUILDING-WORLDS-KEN-FURY-GARY-MEDINA-COOK/

JAN. 25
CLIMATE AND HEAT DAY AT THE ROUNDHOUSE
State Capitol
Exhibits, presentations during the legislative session

FEB. 4, 2027
NEW MEXICO FOOD & FARMS DAY
State Capitol
Awards ceremony and recognition by the Legislature. WWW.FARMTOTABLENM.ORG

FEB. 2–3
QUANTUM SUMMIT
Santa Fe Convention Center
"Shaping the Future of New Mexico's Quantum Ecosystem." Participants from national laboratories, universities, community colleges, government, industry, investment and workforce development. HTTPS://CVENT.ME/L5MAW5

THROUGH MARCH 7
"STARS, STRIPES AND FIRST AMERICANS"
Museum of Indian Arts and Culture, 710 Cam. Lejo
The many meanings of the American flag, as seen on objects from the late 19th century through the 21st. Also, "Route 66 Is Indian Country." $12. Closed Mondays. 505-476-1269, INDIANARTSANDCULTURE.ORG

MAY 14–16
SF INTERNATIONAL LITERARY FESTIVAL
SF Community Convention Center
Among the more than 30 authors joining the festival are winners of the Pulitzer Prize, the Booker Prize and the National Book Award. Tickets: SFINTERNATIONALLITFEST.ORG, HTTPS://WWW.SFINTERNATIONALLITFEST.ORG

SATURDAYS THROUGH DEC., 9 AM–2 PM
SANTA FE ARTISTS MARKET
The Railyard north of the Water Tower
Local juried artists sell fine art and crafts. INFO@SANTAFEARTISTSMARKET.COM

SUNDAYS
RAILYARD ARTISAN MARKET
SF Farmers' Market Pavilion
Gifts, souvenirs and mementos from local artisans and creative small businesses. SANTAFEFARMERSMARKET.COM

MON.–FRI.
POEH CULTURAL CENTER AND MUSEUM
78 Cities of Gold Rd., Pueblo of Pojoaque
Di Wae Powa: They Came Back: Historical Pueblo pottery. The Why, group show of Native artists. Nah Poeh Meng: core installation highlighting Pueblo artists and history. 505-455-5041, POEHCENTER.ORG

MON.–SAT., 8 AM–4 PM
RANDALL DAVEY AUDUBON CENTER & SANCTUARY
1800 Upper Canyon Rd.
Free guided walks to see birds, Sat., 8:30–10 am. RSVP for Randall Davey House tours. 505-983-4609, RANDALLDAVEY.AUDUBON.ORG

TUES., SAT., 8 AM–1 PM
SANTA FE FARMERS' MARKET
Market Pavilion, 1607 Paseo de Peralta
Farmers and producers from northern NM. 505-983-4098, SANTAFEFARMERSMARKET.COM

WEDS–FRI. THROUGH DECEMBER
NUEVO MEXICANO HERITAGE ARTS MUSEUM
750 Camino Lejo, Museum Hill
100 Years of Collecting/100 Years of Connecting, historical and contemporary artworks and articles representing daily life in New Mexico. Free admission. 505-982-2226, HTTPS://NMHERITAGEARTS.ORG

WEDS–SAT., 10 AM–6 PM; FRI.–SAT., 10 AM–6:30 PM
SANTA FE CHILDREN'S MUSEUM
Interactive exhibits, play areas, weekly programs. 505-989-8359, SANTAFECHILDRENSMUSEUM.ORG

WEDS–SUN.
EL RANCHO DE LAS GOLONDRINAS
334 Los Pinos Rd., La Ciénega
Living History Museum dedicated to the heritage and culture of 18th- and 19th-century New Mexico. 505-471-2261, GOLONDRINAS.ORG

SAT., 9 AM–2 PM THROUGH DECEMBER
SANTA FE ARTISTS MARKET
SF Railyard north of the water tower
More than 40 artists from around NM. Ceramicists, photographers, woodworkers, jewelry makers, fiber artists, sculptors. Free. SANTAFEARTISTSMARKET.COM

SAT., 9–4, SUN., 10–4
EL MERCADO DE EL MUSEO
El Museo Cultural de Santa Fe
Many vendors. Art, jewelry, herbal remedies, textiles, beads, tapestries, books, furniture and more.

COMMUNITY WATER SERIES
9/10, 6–7 pm: River talk at Iconic Red; 9/17, 10 am–12 pm: Historic San Ysidro Tour; 9/19, 9

am–2 pm: Nichols Reservoir Tour; 9/22, 12:30–2 pm: Buckman Direct Diversion Tour; 9/23, 9–11:30 am: Paseo Real Wastewater Treatment Plant Tour; 10/17, 10 am–12 pm: Urban Forest Management Workshop. WWW.SANTAFEWATERSHED.ORG/CSF-26

EL RANCHO DE LAS GOLONDRINAS
La Ciénega, N.M.
Living history museum. GOLONDRINAS.ORG

IAIA MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY NATIVE ARTS
108 Cathedral Place
Closed Tuesdays. $10; under 16, Native and Indigenous peoples free. 888-922-4242, IAIA.EDU/MOCNA

MUSEUM OF INDIAN ARTS & CULTURE
710 Camino Lejo (Museum Hill)
Maatakuyma: Essential Elements: Art, Environment and Indigenous Futures, Makowa: The Worlds Above Us; Here, Now and Always. $12. 10 am–5 pm. Closed Mondays. 505-476-1269, WWW.INDIANARTSANDCULTURE.ORG

MUSEUM OF INTERNATIONAL FOLK ART
706 Cam. Lejo, Museum Hill
"Protection: Adaptation and Resistance." More than 45 artists explore themes of climate crisis, struggles for social justice, strengthening communities through ancestral knowledge and imagining a thriving future. $12. NM residents free first Sunday of the month.

NATIVE BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE
SF Business Incubator, 3900 Paseo del Sol
Monthly gatherings for Native American entrepreneurs, artists and business owners to connect, share resources and build pathways to success. Presented by UNM Rainforest Innovations and the City of SF Economic Development Dept.

NEW MEXICO HISTORY MUSEUM
113 Lincoln Ave.
"1912," a snapshot of the state at a time of remarkable change and growth. The museum explores what tied 327,000 Nuevo Mexicanos to the union. 36 historic objects. Closed Mondays. 505-476-5200, NMHISTORYMUSEUM.ORG

SANTA FE HABITAT FOR HUMANITY
Seeking land, donated or for sale, to build affordable housing. Low-income homeowners help build homes and make mortgage payments to the nonprofit HFH. Property owners can qualify for 50% Affordable Housing tax credit through the NM Mortgage Finance Authority. 505-986-5880, ext. 109

SANTA FE WATERSHED ASSN. EVENTS CALENDAR
HTTPS://WWW.SANTAFEWATERSHED.ORG/EVENTS/

STATE MUSEUMS
Museum of International Folk Art (10 am–5 pm), Museum of Indian Arts and Culture (10 am–4 pm), N.M. History Museum (10 am–4:30 pm), N.M. Museum of Art (Tues.–Sun., 10 am–4 pm).
NEWMEXICOCULTURE.ORG/VISIT

WHEELWRIGHT MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN
704 Cam. Lejo
10 am–4 pm Tues.–Sat. $10., children under 12 free. 505-982-4636, HTTPS://WHEELWRIGHT.ORG

YOUTHBUILD / YOUTHWORKS!
Paid training for Youth 16–24. Construction, Culinary, GED. 505-989-1855,
WWW.SANTAFEYOUTHWORKS.ORG/SANTA-FE-YOUTHBUILD/

ESPAÑOLA

DEC. 5, 1–4 PM
TRAIN TOWN
Bond House Museum, Española, N.M.
Slide talk by train expert Fred Friedman (3 pm). Large-scale paintings by David Knowlton will spotlight the Chili Line. Memorabilia from descendants of the first Española Station Agent. Presented by the San Gabriel Historical Society.

TAOS / Online

THROUGH FEBRUARY 2027
Desenterrando Futuros / Unearthing Futures
Exhibit explores adobe as a living practice connecting art, architecture and ancestral knowledge across the Americas.
Harwood Museum, 238 Ledoux St.
HARWOODMUSEUM.ORG

THROUGH MARCH 1
"HONORING THE LIFE AND WORK OF DEANNA AUTUMN LEAF SUAZO"
Millicent Rogers Museum
1504 Millicent Rogers Rd.
Open daily. HTTPS://WWW.MILLICENTROGERS.ORG

LA HACIENDA DE LOS MARTÍNEZ
708 Hacienda Way
Northern NM-style Spanish colonial "great house" built in 1804 by Severino Martínez. Open daily. TAOSHISTORICMUSEUM.ORG

HERE & THERE / Online

THROUGH NOV. 13
LAND & LEGACY PHOTOGRAPHS
NM Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum, Las Cruces, NM
Photos of farming and ranching in El Paseo del Norte region by the Doña Ana Photography Club and the Photography Enthusiasts of El Paso.

NOV. 13, 9 AM–12 PM
THE 2ND GREAT GARLIC REVIVAL
Sostenga Farm, NNMC, 1028 N. Railroad Ave., Española, NM
Culturally-centered workshop. Community garlic planting, acequia site tour, bosque walk, corn maze. Presented by NNMC's Sostenga in partnership with Greenroots Institute and the NM Acequia Assn.

NOV. 13–14
2026 CONGRESO DE LAS ACEQUIAS
Ohkay Owingeh Conference Center
NM Acequia Assn's statewide gathering. The theme: *Agua, Tierra y Corazon* speaks to the deep connections between water, land, culture and the people who care for them. General admission: $30/$15 students. Registration required: HTTPS://LASACEQUIAS.ORG

NOV. 17 APPLICATION DEADLINE
NM TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION GRANT
Small Business Innovation Research Technology Transfer Matching Grants support commercialization of technologies developed through federal SBIR/STTR grant awards. NM-based for-profit companies are eligible. MARK.GILBOARD@EDD.NM.GOV

NOV. 18 APPLICATION DEADLINE
HEALTHY FOOD FINANCING GRANTS
Grants for shovel-ready projects that expand healthy food access, create and retain jobs, strengthen markets for NM producers, improve storage and distribution networks, advance regenerative ag practices. EDD.NEWMEXICO.GOV/HFFF

APPLICATIONS OPEN LATE NOV.
GRANTS TO DEVELOP AGRITOURISM
Airbnb and American Farmland Trust's Farm to Stay Program for farmers and ranchers offers $10,000 grants. FARMLAND.ORG/FARM-TO-STAY

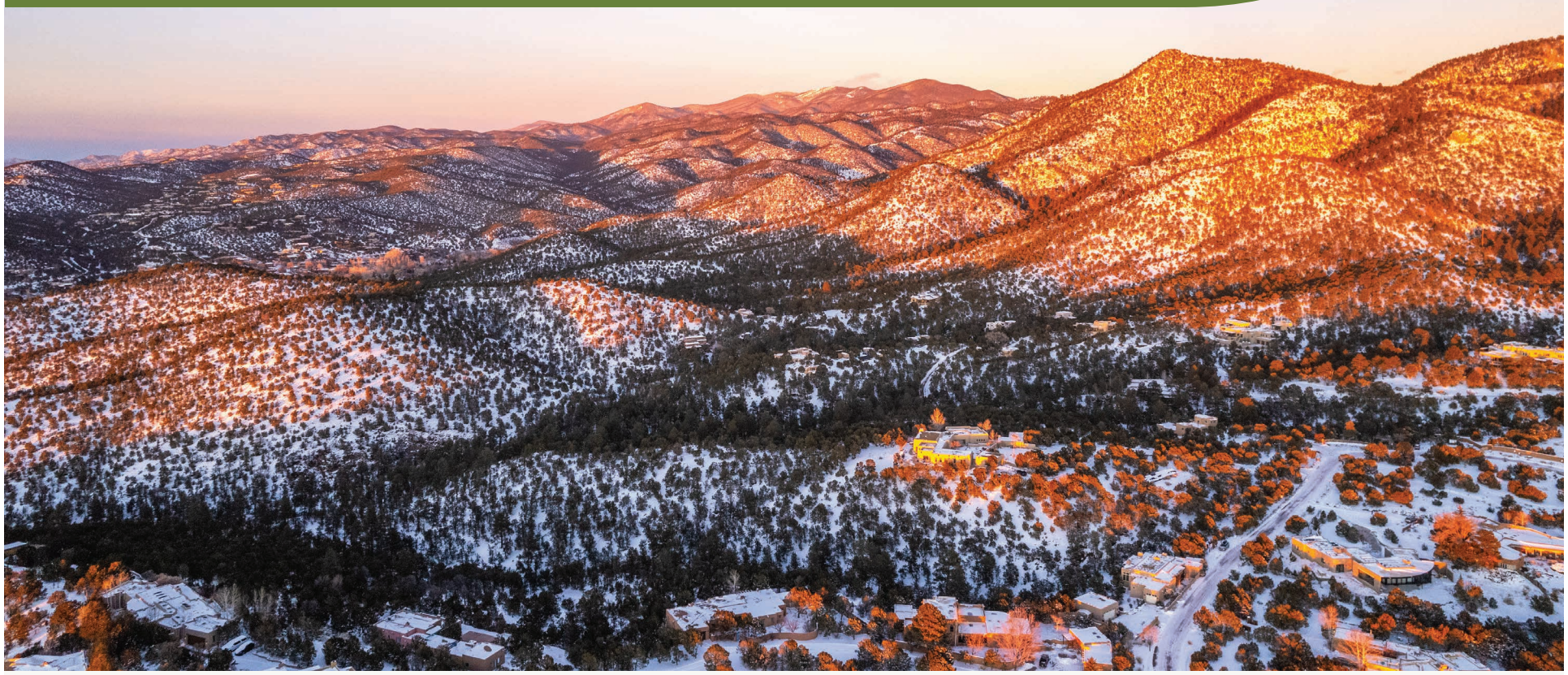
THURS–SUN, 10 AM–4 PM
BOSQUE REDONDO MEMORIAL
Fort Sumner Historic Site, Fort Sumner, N.M.
Exhibit, 30 years in the making, tells the story of 'The Long Walk' and the Bosque Redondo. $7, children 16 and younger, free. NM residents with ID free first Sun. each month. NMHISTORICSITES.ORG/BOSQUE-REDONDO

EARTH KNACK SURVIVAL AND OUTDOOR LIVING SKILLS
Crestone, Colo. and elsewhere
Fiber arts, blacksmithing, hide tanning, Rocky Mtn. Survival, edible and medicinal plants, internships and more. HTTPS://WWW.EARTHKNACK.COM

GALLUP NEW DEAL ART VIRTUAL MUSEUM
GALLUPNEWDEALART.ORG
The culmination of a 9-year project provides images of the works as well as scholarly information. Hand-carved wood furniture, Spanish-Colonial-style tinwork, prints, murals, western American paintings, Native art. HTTPS://CONFERENCE.BIONEERS.ORG

For northern New Mexico. For our shared home. Forever.

For Santa Fe.
For Española.
For Las Vegas.
For Mora.
For Native Tribes, Pueblos & Nations.
For the Environment.
For Affordable Housing.
For School Programs.
For the Arts.
For Animal Welfare.
For Health.
For Equity.



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