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Silver City MainStreet Program Wins National Award, Recognized as a Leader in City Revitalization Efforts

SANTA FE — Today the Silver City MainStreet program won the 2011 Great American Main Street Award (GAMSA) from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Recognized as a leader by following the Main Street Four-Point Approach, embracing sound historic preservation ethics and building strategic partnerships, Silver City MainStreet was honored at an awards ceremony Monday during the National Main Streets Conference in Des Moines, Iowa.

“As we continue our efforts to climb out of this economic recession, we salute all of our MainStreet communities that are working hard to join this effort. It also is an honor to know that one of our MainStreet communities, Silver City, has been recognized as a GAMSA Award-winning community, the first such recognition for our state in the 26-year history of New Mexico MainStreet,” New Mexico Gov. Susana Martinez said.

Silver City utilized the Main Street methodology to combine its historic assets with local talents to establish the community as an award-winning destination for arts-based and cultural tourism and artisan manufacturing. This strategy has successfully guided Silver City through the recession and reduced the impact of unemployment.

“The New Mexico Economic Development Department applauds the investment the community of Silver City has made to small business,” said Secretary-designate Jon Barela, who is in Iowa for the National Main Street Conference. “Silver City has re-birthed itself through its MainStreet leaders working with their city leaders to become a model of revitalization.”

Over 26 years, Silver City MainStreet has developed a well-balanced downtown revitalization program that is both comprehensive and incremental. Small successes have led to larger achievements as the organization has built its knowledge and capacity to take on increasingly more complex projects. Consistent attention to the Main Street Four-Point Approach (organization, promotion, design and economic restructuring), and a strategy of inclusion has yielded significant results. Historic Downtown Silver City now has a first floor occupancy rate that ranges from 83-90 percent.

Since the organization began tracking its economic impact statistics, downtown Silver City has witnessed impressive revitalization accomplishments, including:

- Net gain of 49 downtown businesses
- Expansion of 19 downtown businesses
- Net gain of 150 new downtown jobs
- 151 building rehabilitation projects
- \$4,637,342 in private downtown investment
- \$ 2,165,075 in public investment in 17 projects
- 6,365 downtown volunteer hours (2007-2009)

Beyond the numbers, downtown Silver City has become a unified destination with a diverse mix of retail and service businesses that serves both residents and visitors. The pedestrian-friendly streetscape encourages community interaction and mixed transportation in downtown. Downtown’s small-scale owner-operator nature makes it unique among its competitors. Niche marketing has drawn customers to specific individual businesses, and those niche customers benefit other businesses as well. Restaurants and nightspots add to the mix and provide employment for performing musicians and younger people. Historic Downtown Silver City has become the place where a diversity of people gather, celebrate, relax, have a good time, and mix. A variety of residents and visitors regularly looks forward to relaxing and having a good time in historic downtown Silver City.

There are currently 23 MainStreet districts throughout New Mexico supported by the Economic Development Department. For more information, please go to the web site www.goNM.biz.

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