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HOUSE MEMORIAL 29

**49TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2009**

INTRODUCED BY

Richard D. Vigil

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT TO COLLABORATE WITH THE TOURISM DEPARTMENT AND THE CULTURAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT TO STUDY THE FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING AN INTERPRETIVE CENTER OR CENTERS TO SHOWCASE THE HISTORY AND TRADITION INHERENT IN NEW MEXICO AND FACILITATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

WHEREAS, New Mexico has a rich and colorful heritage of connecting the United States to trade routes west and south via the Santa Fe trail; and

WHEREAS, the Santa Fe trail also served to blend diverse cultures, languages and customs as east met west and north met south in the territory of New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, the Santa Fe trail was first used in 1821, when William Becknell traveled west from Missouri through Las Vegas, New Mexico, to Santa Fe, New Mexico; and

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1           WHEREAS, the Santa Fe trail served as a vital commercial  
2 and military highway until the introduction of the railroad in  
3 1880; and

4           WHEREAS, there are many historic landmarks and sites along  
5 the original route of the Santa Fe trail that can be accessed  
6 by car or on foot but that are not well known to residents or  
7 tourists visiting New Mexico; and

8           WHEREAS, an interpretive center or centers in New Mexico  
9 could serve to introduce residents and tourists to the colorful  
10 and dramatic stories of the many men, women and children who  
11 traveled along the Santa Fe trail in wagon trains, which left  
12 behind ruts in the ground that remain today; and

13           WHEREAS, the national historic Oregon trail interpretive  
14 center offers living history demonstrations, interpretive  
15 programs, exhibits, multimedia presentations, special events  
16 and interpretive trails and could serve as a model for the  
17 development of a similar center or centers in New Mexico; and

18           WHEREAS, an interpretive center could be an agent to  
19 promote tourism and enhance local economies along the Santa Fe  
20 trail; and

21           WHEREAS, the Las Vegas citizens' committee for historic  
22 preservation was formed in 1977 to encourage the preservation  
23 and appreciation of Las Vegas and San Miguel county historic  
24 resources and has preserved the exact site where William  
25 Becknell first started the Santa Fe trail; and

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1           WHEREAS, small interpretive centers already exist in the  
2 city of Las Vegas and the town of Springer and could be  
3 expanded, improved and promoted; and

4           WHEREAS, many local farmers, ranchers and long-time  
5 residents who live along the Santa Fe trail have relics,  
6 stories and artifacts that they could contribute to an  
7 interpretive center, establishing a living connection to the  
8 past; and

9           WHEREAS, a sustainable interpretive center for showcasing  
10 and preserving this significant element of the history of New  
11 Mexico and the nation could be an important driver of the  
12 economy without negatively affecting the natural resources of  
13 the state; and

14           WHEREAS, New Mexico will celebrate its centennial of  
15 statehood, beginning on January 6, 2012, and Governor  
16 Richardson in an executive order established a task force to  
17 promote statehood activities as well as larger preservation  
18 projects with statewide significance and of lasting impact; and

19           WHEREAS, a Santa Fe trail interpretive center could be  
20 considered a preservation project with statewide significance  
21 that would have a lasting impact on the state;

22           NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF  
23 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the economic  
24 development department be requested to collaborate with the  
25 tourism department and the cultural affairs department to study

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1 the feasibility of establishing an interpretive center or  
2 centers to showcase the history and tradition inherent in New  
3 Mexico and facilitate economic development; and

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the economic development  
5 department consult with the New Mexico centennial of statehood  
6 task force in conducting the study; and

7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a report of the findings and  
8 recommendations of the study be presented to the appropriate  
9 interim legislative committee by November 1, 2009; and

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
11 transmitted to the economic development department, the tourism  
12 department and the cultural affairs department.