

1 A MEMORIAL

2 HONORING THE LAS CRUCES FIRE DEPARTMENT AND THE FIREFIGHTERS  
3 AND CREW INVOLVED IN THE "VECINO" PROGRAM.  
4

5 WHEREAS, the Las Cruces fire department operates a  
6 program, which serves as a lifeline to many homebound  
7 individuals with no relatives in the area, called the  
8 "Vecino" program; and

9 WHEREAS, the program involves firefighters and crew  
10 making daily phone calls to check on the health and  
11 well-being of the individuals involved in the program; and

12 WHEREAS, the program got its start in the spring of  
13 1995, when a call was received in fire station No. 1 from a  
14 woman who was worried about her elderly neighbor whose light  
15 was on at 4:00 a.m.; and

16 WHEREAS, upon responding to the call, the firefighter  
17 discovered an elderly woman, unconscious and having suffered  
18 serious blood loss due to an injury; and

19 WHEREAS, when the woman recovered from her injuries, the  
20 firefighter made a telephone call to her to check in on her,  
21 and that call was the beginning of the Vecino program; and

22 WHEREAS, the program expanded as firefighters were  
23 transferred from one station to another, initiating the phone  
24 calls at their new stations; and

25 WHEREAS, the Vecino program now serves more than

1 thirty-five individuals; and

2 WHEREAS, phone calls are made daily, three hundred  
3 sixty-five days a year, usually around 8:00 a.m. to 8:30  
4 a.m., taking from ten to thirty minutes to complete a round  
5 of calls; and

6 WHEREAS, according to Lieutenant Mark Olson, who has  
7 headed the Vecino program for the last two years, the  
8 firefighters find the phone calls both rewarding and  
9 frustrating, aware that they are making an important  
10 difference in the lives of lonely people, but recognizing  
11 that their needs often far exceed the firefighters' ability  
12 to address them; and

13 WHEREAS, many firefighters have established personal  
14 relationships with the individuals they call, involving them  
15 in family events or visiting them at their homes; and

16 WHEREAS, the program was named "Vecino" after the  
17 Spanish word for neighbor, and the firefighters and crew of  
18 the Las Cruces fire department are certainly serving as  
19 neighbors to people who otherwise would have no one to talk  
20 to on a daily basis;

21 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE  
22 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the Las Cruces fire department and  
23 the firefighters and crew involved in the Vecino program be  
24 honored; and

25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be

1 transmitted to Lieutenant Mark Olson, station No. 5, for  
2 distribution to all the firefighters and crew who participate  
3 in this valuable community service. \_\_\_\_\_

SM 83  
Page 3

4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25