



Cultural district gets \$70K for planning

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The Taos Arts and Cultural District has been awarded \$70,000 in capital outlay funding to go toward planning in Taos' historic district.

"These are the kinds of dollars that we think can have a real economic impact in communities like yours," said New Mexico Economic Development Cabinet Secretary John Barela at a ceremony Tuesday (April 11).

The funding will pay for a "downtown master plan" that, when finished, will allow the Arts and Cultural District to seek legislative funding for capital improvement projects.

Arts and Cultural District coordinator Cindy Spray told Barela and the audience of dignitaries that she was anxious to get to work.

"Your money will be well spent, I promise you," Spray said.

Spray said after the ceremony that she hoped to have the downtown master plan completed within a year. The town successfully applied to be part of the state's Arts and Cultural District program in 2009. The program is designed to both protect cultural resources while promoting business.

"Preserving that history and that culture is critical and vital to maintaining what New Mexico is all about," Barela said Tuesday. "That's what MainStreet does — it's there to protect the culture, traditions and buildings we have. And it's also good for economic development."

"It's vital, especially to more rural areas, to keep this funding going, Barela said. " We want to be partners with [Taos] through MainStreet."

Taos Mayor Darren Córdova said the town was "fully supportive" of the Taos Arts and Cultural District. He urged the state to continue to invest in Taos, calling it the "gateway to New Mexico."