

“PATHWAYS TO HEALTH, WEALTH AND THE DIGNITY OF WORK”

**State of the City Speech 2012 – Mayor David Coss
October 23, 2012**

I especially want to thank Milagro Castillo of Youthworks and Mayté Garcia our dreamer from Somos un Pueblo Unido. These young people are inspiring in their determination to build a bright future in Santa Fe and they represent an opportunity for this community. We can and will move forward together and make sure no one is left behind.

This evening I hope everyone will take away one simple message:

It's time to invest in the people of Santa Fe. It's been ten-years since we passed our Living Wage ordinance and stood with the working people of Santa Fe. We made a long-term commitment to good jobs that can support families, and have continued to see the lowest unemployment rate of any city in New Mexico. Now we face a new imperative in the evolving economy, the need for skilled workers and innovation. We need to train our workers and provide pathways to greater skills, higher wages and successful careers. I am proud of the work Santa Fe has done to strengthen the economy and to make ours an economy that works for all. I am proud that Santa Fe is a Labor Town and has stood with workers in their struggles for good wages and benefits. As I look forward to the implementation of our first project under the Community Workforce Agreement ordinance, I am proud that the governing body has added another partner, organized labor, to our efforts to build a strong and just economy.

Community Workforce Agreements give us a powerful tool to assure quality workmanship, good wages, benefits and working conditions. Our new partnership with the unions of the New Mexico Building Trades Council will help our community develop a skilled workforce able to meet the challenges of the 21st century, while providing apprenticeship training and career opportunities.

Most importantly right now, Community Workforce Agreements further a key goal of our City and of the current City Council, which is ensuring that as much of our local public works dollars as possible go toward employing local Santa Fe workers in good jobs.

Like Michael Archuleta, a union plumber and pipefitter here in Santa Fe who has never been able to work here because the union jobs are elsewhere. With the bids soon to come in for the Market Station project in the Railyard, Mike may be able to work in Santa Fe on a union project. We already benefit from Mike's work leading our Little League, and bringing youth baseball tournaments from all over the State. Now, we have finally made it possible for him to earn his living in his home town.

It's been a hard few years for everyone – workers, businesses, community organizations - have all struggled for survival. A lot of damage was done during the Great Recession and it is a long, slow climb back. I'm pleased that we are now implementing the two general obligation bond questions that were approved by this community early in the year. Those bonds, plus our bi-annual CIP bond means that we have almost 40 million dollars now being mobilized to put people to work, to

support local businesses and to build even better amenities for this community including: parks, trails, solar energy, broadband, affordable housing, street and drainage improvements and more.

It's time to build the 40 million dollars in city projects and to use them as an opportunity to build our workforce. I ask that the City Council not hold up these projects. Let's move forward, let's build, let's continue to create pride in the infrastructure that our community has to offer.

We must remember that hard work pays off, that compromise can pay off, that fighting amongst ourselves does not move this community forward. It's time to understand that if we insist on arguing over the small things, we will only ever have small things, but that if we have the courage, the discipline, and the tenacity to focus on the big things, we can build them together.

The City of Santa Fe has always worked in partnerships to develop and strengthen our community economy. This includes partnerships with a wide variety of constituencies and interests; and with our neighbors in our region. We have partnered with Santa Fe County to manage one of our most precious resources, our water. As a result, we now have one of the most secure water supplies in the southwest, because we have four different sources to draw from.

In 2005, Councilor Rebecca Wurzbarger and I were among the architects of an agreement, a compromise, between the City and County. As a result of this agreement we have completed one of the most important infrastructure projects for our future water sustainability-- the Buckman Direct Diversion Project, which really came out of more than two decades of collaboration with the County. I want to thank Councilor Wurzbarger and Councilor Chris Calvert for their work and willingness in building the Buckman Project. Since it became operational two years ago, we have been able to rest the regional aquifer even though we have been in drought and have had to adjust supplies in order to maintain water quality after large forest fires. Our pumping of the aquifer has gone from over 6,000 acre feet per year to under 1,000 acre feet this year. We have made it possible to begin to put water in the Santa Fe River. We have avoided shocks to our economy such as we saw in the drought of 2002. Because of the 2005 agreement, and the BDD, we, as a community, are more secure.

Of course, our work is not done, and I look forward to working with Councilor Peter Ives on this and thank him for his commitment to water conservation. We must honor our agreements with our partners and work with our neighbors to preserve and protect our resources. That's what makes this a place that can sustain for another 400 years and beyond.

Another key message I want to convey tonight is heartfelt thanks to all of the City's employees for their hard work this year. It's humbling to see the commitment of those that clean offices or fill pot holes or answer constituent phone calls. I particularly want to thank City Manager Robert Romero for giving his heart, soul, energy, intelligence and endless hours to the City of Santa Fe. His commitment to the people of this community is without question and he has made incredible personal sacrifices to keep this City running as smoothly as possible.

The work of all of the people that make the City of Santa Fe thrive, is critical in so many ways to this community. In the past year we've picked up trash and recycling from more than thirty-five thousand locations each week, delivered clean water to more than forty-thousand homes and businesses, and processed two-billion gallons of sewage. Our Public Works Department has maintained 750 miles of streets, more than 200 traffic lights and signals, 95 parks, 65 miles of trails, and four pools and recreation facilities. We also run community programs for youth and

seniors and make it possible for families to get into affordable housing and for businesses to get resources to grow and create jobs. The workers of the City of Santa Fe are not just the arms, legs, eyes and ears of the organization, they are its heart and soul.

Take Morris Herrera for example, our October employee of the month. Officially, he is an Inventory Technician at the Water Treatment Plant, but when sickness or vacancies have come up, Morris has taken on additional jobs without question or complaint. He has continued to build his skills and a year ago achieved his Level II Water Certification. As his supervisor put it, "Morris works through breaks and does not quit working. He has saved the Water Treatment Plant much grief for all he has done and continues to do for us."

I also want to give special thanks to our Land Use staff who have quietly been working to make permitting easier and faster than ever before. With an increased emphasis on customer service, Land Use staff recently redesigned the process for development applications. As a result, the Department has been able to cut processing times for Planning Commission cases by two-weeks and for Board of Adjustment cases by one-month. Another important change is that we recently amended the ordinance so that water offsets can stay with a property after a long vacancy. This can save new businesses tens of thousands of dollars.

It's not just the city employees who make our City programs work, it's also citizens who give their time and energy. Our senior services have benefited from more than one-hundred seventy-thousand volunteer hours from retired senior volunteers and senior companion volunteers, that amounts to more than 82 full-time employees. Our libraries benefited from more than thirteen-thousand volunteer hours last year, which is equivalent to more than six extra full-time employees. One thing these Library volunteers did was raise money to bring in teenagers and provide fun, safe, things to do. It worked. Our libraries brought in sixty percent more teenagers this year. Volunteers magnify the investment in our libraries and the services available to our seniors and youth and that makes this a stronger, healthier, more engaged community.

Another city service that is very close to my heart is our bus system. We have world class public transportation in Santa Fe and next month we will celebrate the milestone of growing to one million riders per year. Also, Santa Fe Trails is using federal stimulus money to build the next generation of bus shelters. The design of these shelters was inspired by tradition, and produced in collaboration with the Arts Commission, a local artist, a local design firm and a fabrication firm. Ultimately, these shelters will become functional, public art that is spread throughout this city.

Our buses have provided key support to incredible events, like the Folk Art Market, that bring in visitors, artists and more from all over the world. In fact, the events that the people of the City of Santa Fe support are a key part of what keeps us together as a community both socially and economically. Of course, there's Spanish Market, Indian Market and Fiestas, but there's also Mexican Independence which was celebrated last month. The Mexican Consulate estimates that this year was the biggest and best celebration yet with almost five-thousand people attending. The City staff who helped with all logistics - including bussing people to Ragle Park from Santa Fe High - started their day with set-up at 6am and cleaned up until almost midnight. They helped make it possible for some of the newer members of this community to feel welcomed, celebrated and a part of Santa Fe.

Together, we can manage our resources, we can integrate all of our citizens, and we can confront the hard issues, the things that tear us apart, like drug addiction and crime.

I've heard from citizens the awful stories, I've talked to the young widow of a murder victim who is trying to pick up and go on with her life. I've seen the fear and anxiety on faces in this community and I've heard many troubling stories. There are so many things that we'd rather do than think about crime. But we must face the hard tasks and be vigilant, because having a safe community - this is the foundation upon which everything else stands.

We saw burglary rates rise substantially in the early part of this year and our Police Department launched Operation Full Court Press to confront the problem. Under the leadership of Chief Raymond Rael and Sergeant Jerome Sanchez, the police have worked smarter and harder for months and have made significant progress. I'm happy to say that burglary rates were down in September to the lowest level since 2006. It has been and will continue to be hard work, and the police need and deserve our respect and appreciation. I want to thank the Chief, Sergeant Sanchez, and all of the members of the Police Department for the burden that they carry for the rest of us.

One of my top priorities in the year ahead is to do the work to reduce crime in cooperation with partners in the region. Because criminals don't pay attention to government boundaries, and if we build collaboration, we can and will get better results.

I'm committed to the potential of an innovative new program known as the LEAD program. It stands for Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion, which may not be the sexiest title, but what it can potentially do is incredibly powerful. We are working with an extensive group of community and regional partners. We are working collaboratively and across disciplines to solve the drug problems that often lead to crime in this and every other community. I want to thank Councilor Bill Dimas for his hard work on this issue and I look forward to continuing our efforts. We are working to divert the people who are struggling with addiction into effective treatment. That way we can finally break the cycle of addiction and incarceration.

The LEAD task force, which includes Milagro Castillo, will bring forward recommendations on a program that would divert people into treatment and try to deal with the root cause of the crime problem. The task force will also look at what we need in terms of treatment options in the region. There's nothing simple or easy about addressing drugs and crime. But we must work together to find long-term solutions.

I want to thank our Fire Department for their continuing regional collaboration in responding to almost fourteen-thousand calls last year. In working to make sure this community is prepared for a fire, they trained twelve local youth this year for the Atalaya Hand Crew and helped fight fires throughout the state. Our Fire Department, Police Department and all first responders deserve thanks for their willingness to put themselves in harm's way in order to protect the community.

We are making Santa Fe more secure, more resilient for the future as we generate more and more power from local, renewable sources. We have insured our future cost of electricity by building solar infrastructure totaling 2.5 megawatts already and we are in the process of adding an additional 1.7 megawatts over the next year. All of these renewable systems will provide electricity and save taxpayer money and I want to thank Councilor Chris Calvert for his tireless work to promote renewable energy. In fact, by this time next year, twenty-percent of the City of Santa Fe's electricity will be provided from renewable energy generated right here in town.

We are also making Santa Fe more affordable for everyone. We are providing down-payment

assistance in partnership with the Housing Trust, Homewise and Habitat for Humanity. In about two-months, we've allocated almost seventy percent of the eight-hundred thousand dollars available from our CIP bond.

Again, it's partnerships that enable us to confront the big issues. Strategic regional partnerships are the key to making our economy and environment secure by working to evolve Los Alamos National Laboratory. The lab has a two-billion dollar impact on our economy. The bottom line is this - the jobs the lab provides which generate the income for more than 11,000 families in the region, are the cornerstone of our economy. As a friend who was recently laid off from a lab contractor job told me: "no lab, no middle class in Santa Fe and Northern New Mexico."

Last month, I was honored to become the chairman of the Regional Coalition of LANL Communities. The Coalition includes elected representatives from the City of Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, Los Alamos, Rio Arriba, Espanola and the Pueblo of Ohkay Owingeh. It is critical to work with these partners and engage the Lab and our federal government on behalf of our communities. The importance to our country and our region of maintaining a world-class national laboratory cannot be overstated.

I will represent the environmental and other concerns of many Santa Fe residents. Our first priority is clean-up of the legacy waste and the environmental threats to our air, water and land resources. With recent grant funds, we plan to work with Northern New Mexico College and Santa Fe Community College to train our local workforce to finish the clean-up at Los Alamos.

As our country pursues non-proliferation, LANL plays a critical role. Without the lab there is no possibility of disarmament. Next month our Coalition will hear from many of the voices who have shaped LANL and our region. We will hear from environmental groups, labor groups and businesses. Together, we will forge understanding and mutual benefit. We will strengthen the fabric that connects our economic reality with the need for LANL's evolving goals and ongoing environmental stewardship.

The economy and environment have always been intimately connected in this region. Our quality of life and clean environment are really the greatest economic advantage we have. A recent example is the International Mountain Biking Association conference which we hosted here in this Community Convention Center. This was an amazing conference for Santa Fe, a great example of creative tourism, and one that also shows how our economy benefits from our investment in infrastructure and amenities. The conference events took place in this convention center and many of the mountain bikers took advantage of our incredible trails during their visit, no doubt appreciating our amazing environment. It was a collaborative, community effort that brought the International Mountain Biking conference and I want to thank Councilor Bushee for her work with local businesses and community groups to bring the mountain bikers here. Also, we just heard officially that Santa Fe was once again ranked fourth by Conde Nast readers in the Top Ten Cities in the United States.

I'll share some more good news on our economy. So far this year we have issued 273 building permits for new, residential units, which is up around 70 percent over last year, and more evidence that we are pulling out of recession.

Also, I am pleased to announce that flights to Denver and Clovis will begin service from our Santa Fe airport on December first and that our airport manager, Jim Montman, was once again named

‘Airport Manager of the Year’ by the New Mexico Airport Managers Association.

Of course, the best economic opportunities are often those we create ourselves. We benefit from a long tradition of entrepreneurship that has always made it possible for people to survive in this high, dry, beautiful place. That’s why we are investing in resources and support for entrepreneurs, people who not only create jobs for themselves, but create jobs for others. We are investing in the small business innovators of tomorrow.

Through a pilot project known as The Velocity Project - which opens for applications this week - at least six new businesses will experience an eight-week bootcamp, where they will receive training and mentorship in the critical thinking, financial management and other skills that will help them build a successful business.

Sattva Ananda and John Cross are long time Santa Feans who recently won the BizMIX Challenge, a business plan competition run by MIX Santa Fe. They won \$5000 for their company called ‘The Way We Grow’ which manufactures a multi-purpose grow- bag, that can scale from small rooftop gardens all the way up to large-scale tree farming. They are rapidly expanding their manufacturing on Early Street and plan to go from one employee to eleven in 2013. By 2015, they anticipate needing as many as thirty-three workers to make their product right here in Santa Fe.

Small businesses like The Way We Grow make our economy stronger, they are helping us diversify our economy and create jobs. They are a large part of the reason we have one of the lowest unemployment rates in the southwest. Two and a half years ago, unemployment in Santa Fe was around seven percent. Now it’s at 4.8 percent according to the Department of Workforce Solutions, and we have a total of around 1800 more people employed in Santa Fe.

Despite the critics, our Living Wage has strengthened our economy and made sure that the lowest paid workers are not left further and further behind. Five-years ago we made an agreement, a community compromise, that included the endorsement of our local Chamber of Commerce; we set-aside an immediate increase in the Living Wage for a cost of living increase that maintains the value of our Living Wage. Santa Feans support this law because we know that it helps working families. President Franklin Roosevelt, during the great depression, reminded the country to look to the welfare of “the forgotten man at the bottom of the pyramid.” The workers who serve at the very bottom of the economic pyramid, are not forgotten here.

Across economic, ethnic and other boundaries, I saw our community fabric strengthen this summer when Santa Fe hosted its first professional baseball team in almost fifty years. We had the best attendance in the league and developed a great fan base for the Santa Fe Fuego. But it was so much more than a game, it was a place to see old friends, to come together with family, it was a place where everyone was welcome. I want to thank Councilor Ron Trujillo for his tireless work for baseball in this community, and I am pleased to say that I will be working with him to make our field even better. We have two-million dollars to reallocate from our CIP bond after a federal grant enabled us to buy buses. Starting with Fort Marcy Park, our professional ballpark, we will be upgrading community facilities citywide and keeping people employed.

This coming year, the City will also be using bond funds approved by the voters to stabilize eight eroding arroyos all around our city. In the face of climate change and continuing drought, we must plan for the future and restore the landscape so that the rain and snow we do receive has the maximum benefit. Creative treatments in these projects provide the opportunity to slow rapid

runoff, letting it sink in to restore aquifers. Then trees and other plant life can provide shade and cooling for us, our pets and native wildlife. I am certain that if we improve our management of our watershed we will be able to put even more water into the Santa Fe River. I'm proud that we have already begun the work of restoring our river and that, earlier this year, we took the historic step of dedicating the first 1,000 acre feet of water to our river.

Now we need to assure that runoff from roads and roofs into our arroyos is treated like a precious resource and not allowed to become polluted and wasted. These arroyo projects will provide jobs and help us create a beautiful urban ecosystem that will be more resilient to drought and heat.

We are building a more inclusive community by raising the bar on the south side of the city.

Councilor Carmichael Dominguez and Councilor Chris Rivera are calling for better urban design and a human scale that is bicycle and pedestrian friendly; they are promoting healthy food choices and healthy lifestyles for the young families of Tierra Contenta and other southside neighborhoods and I want to thank them for their work. We are fighting for good schools and for moderation in alcohol sales and fast foods. With voter approved bonds, we are building a new regional park that will serve everyone.

We are also re-inventing the town center around the St. Michael's Drive corridor. Councilor Rebecca Wurzbarger has worked to move the project forward while embracing the opportunities that a growing university, arts community, business community and health care community can bring. We are looking at how public transportation, communications technology, green building, open space restoration and above all, creativity, can revitalize an area for current and future families, workers and businesses.

The growing vibrancy of Santa Fe University will help fuel this transformation with the creative talent brought to the area by faculty and students.

We are also striving to protect and complete our remarkable, historic downtown, from the Railyard to the Santa Fe River and from Fort Marcy Park to the Plaza. We are determined that one of the most unique, historic, beautiful townscapes anywhere in the world will continue to be an anchor for our economy, a vibrant downtown for locals and our visitors, a downtown filled with history, art, culture that is walkable, bikeable and welcoming. As one small piece of that connectivity, I'm pleased that the State will soon begin improving the crucial intersection of Paseo de Peralta and Washington Avenue.

We are doing this work with partners and across boundaries. We work with business and with labor, with public education and private education. We work with local governments-- state, county and tribal.

While some continue to drive the wedge into to the electorate over immigration and driver's licenses, Santa Fe has stood for tolerance and inclusion. While money and effort has been channeled into this wedge issue, New Mexico has led the nation in job losses this year, according to recent numbers from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Santa Fe though, has continued to create jobs.

We have dreamers in Santa Fe - like Mayté Garcia whom we heard from earlier - young people who were brought to this country as children. They want to get educations and to work for their families, their community and their future. New Mexico is well positioned because of our

policies, to benefit from the inspiration and hard work of these dreamers. We allow all young people, regardless of immigration status, to attend college here if they graduated from a New Mexico high school. With proper identification, we issue driver's licenses so that they may work and attend to the daily business of life as we all do in a safe and legal manner.

Did you know that before New Mexico started to issue driver's licenses to immigrants that Capital High had segregated parking lots? That's right, in America, in Santa Fe, there were two classes of people, one with driver's licenses who could park at the school and one without who had to park across the street.

Santa Fe doesn't want separate and unequal. We want tolerance, unity and respect for all. We want integration and equality. We want all our youth, including our dreamers, to succeed and we will fight for them every day at the legislature. To quote Franklin Roosevelt again: "Remember, remember always that all of us, you and I especially, are descended from immigrants and revolutionists."

We are building an inclusive community. In respecting our history and culture, we welcome all people regardless of where they were born, their gender or sexual identity or their economic class. We support diversity and we look for ways to integrate and to include. We uphold the dignity of work and the right to a fair day's wage for a fair day's work. We are a labor town. We build from the bottom up and the middle out.

We invest in people. Because real community strength comes from individuals, from the foundations of basic rights, human rights to be treated equally, labor rights to be treated fairly in the workplace. Santa Fe is successful because it values social justice and because we are willing to work hard. Santa Fe is a community that sets an example and leaves no one behind. We believe in promoting health, wealth and the dignity of work. I am proud of our work, I am proud of our city. Please join me in pledging to continue to do the hard work that will ensure a brighter future for everyone in Santa Fe.

Thank you very much.