

Building a Vigorous Las Cruces Art Scene: 4 Page Summary

Proposal to Mayor Ken Miyagishima and Councilors Miguel Silva, Dolores Connor, Nathan P. Small, Gil Jones, Sharon Thomas. & Mayor Pro-Tem Dolores C. Archuleta

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Prepared by Professor David M. Boje Ph.D. of Business College and the Board of *Talking Stick Institute* - 575-532-1693.¹ This report received no funding from any organization or agency, and is a public service project. The report is on line at <http://talkingstick.info> Dated: April 7 2008, revised **May 7 2008**.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*We are proposing to work with the Mayor's Office and Councilors to leverage the resources in place to increase the visibility of the Las Cruces Arts Scene identity by forming a **Las Cruces Arts & Cultural Affairs Commission**. The aim is to be an 'idea incubator', to create an infrastructure to develop the economic potential of art (its unique history & culture), the artists in the area, and to market Las Cruces as an arts destination. The *Commission* is not one more arts organization. It supports the existing ones. Although Las Cruces is under the shadow of Santa Fe and Taos, it has half-billion dollar potential that is not being realized economically. The intent is to support all arts service organizations, galleries, and museums. This means supporting all painters, sculptors, weavers, poets, writers, musicians, singers, dancers, drama, chefs, etc. as well as galleries, studios, museums, performance theatres that display and/or sell the art.*

MISSION: *Las Cruces Arts & Cultural Affairs Commission* is forming to bring Arts Organizations together with stakeholders (City + Education + Chambers of Commerce) to market City & Region as an Arts & Culture Destination.

VISION: *Las Cruces Arts & Cultural Affairs Commission* intends to build a ½ billion-dollar arts industry within five years.

CALL TO ACTION

Now is the right time to act. The impact of Arts & Culture is a \$4,875,233,000 cultural tourism & resources industry. Its employment (32,347) is more than any other industry of state including mineral extract, general merchandise stores, food & beverage, even more

¹ Contact Professor David Boje for more information on the *Las Cruces Arts Scene* project 575-532-1693 dboje@peaceaware.com **Assertions in this report are solely those of Professor Boje and Talking Stick Institute's Board, and are focused on economic and organizational strategies done in other cities.** Thank you to the Mayor, City Councillors & Dean Caruthers of the Business College of New Mexico State University for their helpful comments.

than computer & electronic manufacturing. *Las Cruces owes a huge debt to over 101 leaders* (74 arts service organizations & 44 galleries/museums), plus scores of others in the Education, and Government sectors that have brought Las Cruces to this point. Over the years, there have been many prior summit and economic strategy meetings. Hard work has been done. Now is opportunity to move forward to make Las Cruces a ½ billion dollar Arts & Culture Scene. Now more than ever, we need to energize this scene by supporting all the award-winning cultural talent we have in Southern New Mexico.

Three Short-Term Goals for Revitalizing Las Cruces Arts & Culture Scene

1. **Convene a *Las Cruces Arts & Cultural Affairs Commission*** by inviting 100 arts service organizations, museums, performance theatres, gallery owners and leaders of Mayor's office, City units such as Visitor's Bureau and Convention Center, plus both Chambers of Commerce, the Arts Education sector, Downtown Main Street, and other community and regional leadership to advise the City on investing in arts & culture, keeping a comprehensive artist's directory, and arts & culture calendar on the City's website. See prototype at <http://talkingstick.info>
 - A. **City to designate 2 people, on its budget, to be in a supporting role to the Commission for grants, and to insure the City's arts & cultural events have web-presence and arts & culture scene is strategic priority in City's brochures.**
 - B. **Raise money from City, State, & Federal 1% Monies, and from Grants & Foundation sources to fund purchase arts from Southern New Mexico artists, and to market the City of Las Cruces as an Arts & Culture Scene.** (David Boje taught grant writing and may be helpful & is happy to assist.)²
2. **Establish "*Las Cruces Arts Scene*" as highly visible elements of the City and region's *strategic marketing identity*** (especially in city's websites & city publications). Make this a link on City, Education sector, and both Chambers' websites. Filmographer Ed Breeding is developing a film of the Las Cruces Arts & Culture Scene. He needs input on what that project can do to market the Arts Industry.
 - A. **The supportive recommendation is for those involved in the Downtown renovation to write a better story for people around the world to read about us.** Update the Wikipedia website. According to the revitalization plan promotional brochure, as Main Street Downtown builds momentum, there will be "an increasing variety of shopping and dining experiences" that will emerge and offer "more opportunities for exciting festivals, fairs and open-air entertainment on the new Main Street Plaza."
 - B. The *Commission* will have the central clearing house for arts activities and venues on a website. All other sites (City, both Chambers, University, Media orgs, etc.) would point to the 'Las Cruces Arts & Cultural Scene' website.
3. **Arts Incubator & Co-op - *live/work/retail space***, studios, and arts facilities in available, vacant City properties and in Downtown Main Street. An Arts Co-op/ Arts

² David Boje grants background <http://peaceaware.com/vita/grants/index.html>

Incubator could be initiated.

- A. Develop a working structure for the Arts Incubator and Co-op.
- B. Recruit a Las Cruces entrepreneur to do bus tours & maps of the *Las Cruces Arts & Cultural Scene*: including bed and breakfast, arts co-op visit, gallery tour, visit with artists in their studios, go to restaurants featuring art, see artistic performances, & fine art owned by the city.³

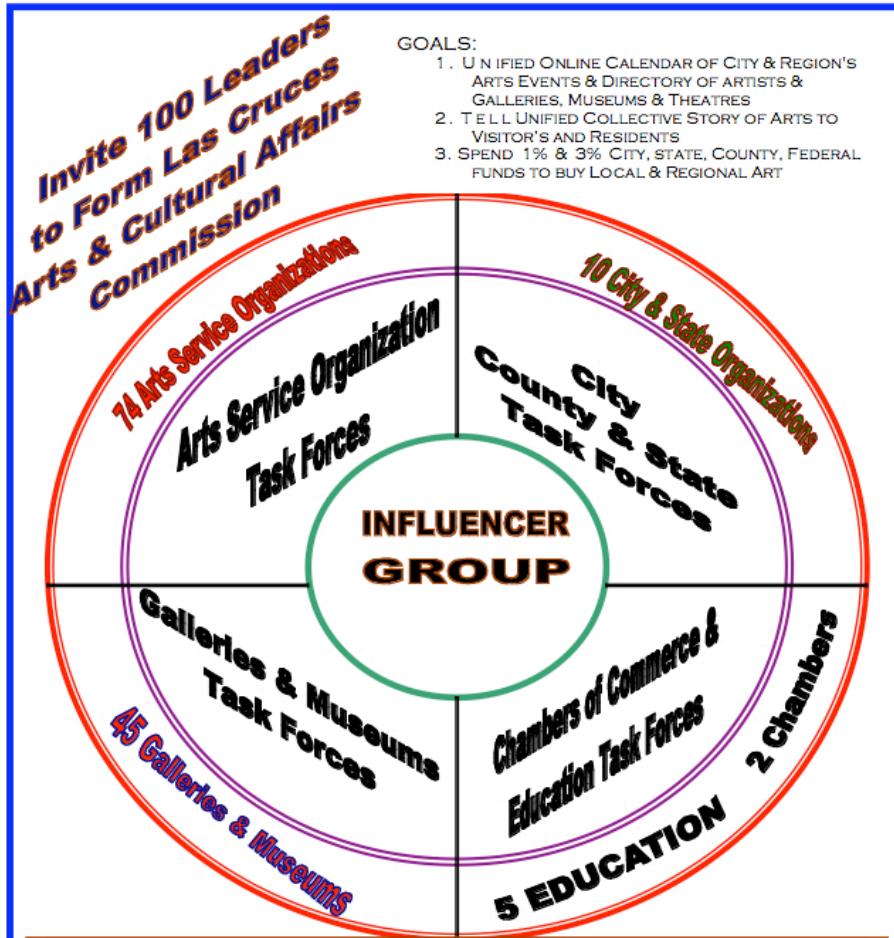
Time Table for Start-Up of Commission Process

PLANNED MEETINGS FOR FALL AT NMSU:

1. 8 Sep – NMSU Small Business Classes hosts – **1st Commission Convention**: Form 10 Task Forces; Get to know one another; Learn to Hear & Tell one another’s Stories (where: Corbett Center at New Mexico State University); *Talking Stick Institute* will provide the meeting facilitation.
2. 15 Sep - NMSU Small Business Classes (Mgt 448 & 548) & System Complexity Class (Mgt 655) hosts **2nd inaugural ‘open meeting’ of the Las Cruces Arts & Cultural Affairs (10 task forces)** to meet to make action plans to make ‘Las Cruces Arts Scene’ a Strategic Identity for the City & Region. *Talking Stick Institute* will provide the meeting facilitation.
3. 22 Sep - NMSU Small Business Classes (Mgt 448 & 548) & System Complexity Class (Mgt 655) hosts **3rd open meeting of 10 Task Forces and of Las Cruces Arts & Cultural Affairs** (Corbett Center at New Mexico State University). *Talking Stick Institute* will provide the meeting facilitation.
4. Jan 2009 Transition to Fully Functional Arts & Cultural Affairs Commission. At this time leaders from the task forces, would elect their governing body and develop their 501 c 3 incorporation. May or may not need additional Small Business Classes’ service learning involvement or additional *Talking Stick Institute* meeting facilitation. Both services provided free of charge to the public.

³ See New Mexico Arts Bus Tour guide <http://www.nmarts.org/pdf/bustours.pdf>

Figure 3: Map of the Las Cruces Arts & Cultural Affairs Commission



The Commission will bring together experience and expertise in economic development and marketing to market the City of Las Cruces as a place to buy art and enjoy performances. The Commission will be inclusive of all the arts, including the painting/visual arts as well as literary, musical and performance arts. The aim is to be an 'idea incubator' that will help every arts organization.

In sum, the plan is to develop the economy of the arts industry by inducing arts buyers to buy in Las Cruces.

The full report is available for download at <http://Talkingstick.info>