



For Immediate Release

**SOUTHERN NEW MEXICO PRIDE REMINDS EVERYONE THAT
“DIVERSITY CREATES COMMUNITY” AT THE
2011 GLBTQ PRIDE FESTIVAL
June 17 & 18, 2011**

May 12, 2011 – Southern New Mexico Pride invites everybody to come out for this year’s GLBTQ Pride Weekend, taking place from the 17th and 18th of June, 2011. The theme for this year’s event is “Diversity Creates Community” and in keeping with that philosophy, all those who embrace diversity in its various forms are invited to attend. Events scheduled to take place during the Festival include a Parade, a juried Art Show, Pet Blessings, A Queer Bake-Off and performances by local entertainers **Nicole Martinez, Randy Granger** and **Mari & Belle**. The Pride Festival itself will take place from 10am to 3pm on Saturday, June 18th at Pioneer Women’s Park, 500 W. Las Cruces Avenue.

Other events coinciding with that weekend will include Drag Bingo, sponsored by Southern New Mexico Pride and the Sexual and Gender Diversity Resource Center at NMSU, on the evening of June 17th and a Pride Dance Party, featuring DJ Sandra Ware, sponsored by Triple Threat Productions on the evening of June 18th. Both evening events will take place at the Ramada Palms Inn. For more information on these and other Pride-related events, interested parties are encouraged to visit the website at www.SouthernNMPride.org.

The Festival on June 18th will begin with a walking Parade through the Downtown Mall at 10am, led by Grand Marshall Tom Smith, Managing Director of American Southwest Theatre Company and former co-chair of Southern New Mexico Pride. The parade will be followed immediately by the Pride Awards, given to those who have made a significant contribution to the betterment of the GLBTQ community in Southern New Mexico, through their volunteerism, activism and/or community involvement. Nominations for 2011 recipients were accepted from February 1 through April 1, 2011. Recipients of this year’s Pride Awards are Mary Jane Garcia, James Hansen and Santorini’s Restaurant.

A graduate of New Mexico State University, Mary Jane Garcia has been a New Mexico State Senator since 1988 and has supported numerous legislative measures that ensure safety for children including SB 166, entitled "Life Sentences for Deadly Child Abuse," that was passed by the New Mexico Legislature and signed into law in 2005. She has been Majority Whip in the New Mexico State Senate from 1996 to present and a candidate for the United States House of Representatives in 1998. In the 2011 Legislative Session, Mary Jane Garcia introduced legislation that would protect children in schools from bullying, including LGBT children.

James Hansen is a recent transplant to Las Cruces, having moved here in October of 2010 from Phoenix. Since his arrival he has hit the ground running, bringing his passion for community involvement to such diverse organizations as the Child Crisis Center of Southern New Mexico, where he is a staff member, and as a volunteer for La Pinion Sexual Assault Recovery Services (where he is currently helping to develop a Suicide Prevention Program for Youth), the New Mexico GLBTQ Community Center and the Dona Ana Arts Council. In his spare time, he is also a founder of Las Cruces Out 'n About, a social/sports club that meets weekly to explore opportunities for social interaction throughout Southern New Mexico.

Located at 1001 E. University Avenue and in business for only a few years, Santorini's has demonstrated great support of events happening in the LBGT Community. Sean and Charlie, co-owners of Santorini's, have supported the efforts of several LBGT groups in the area, including PFLAG, Southern New Mexico Pride and the New Mexico GLBTQ Centers.

Southern New Mexico Pride Festival 2011 is sponsored in part by Save Mart, New Mexico Centers, Convergys, KRWG Radio, PFLAG Las Cruces, The Doña Ana Arts Council, Las Cruces Convention & Visitor's Bureau, SunSpot Solar, Ramada Palms de Las Cruces, The Mesilla Valley Film Society, Dental Associates, Pride Guide New Mexico, Dr. Larry Roegge and an Anonymous Soldier. For more information, visit www.SouthernNMPride.org.