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For Immediate Release

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**Arts Alliance Releases Mayoral Candidates' Stances on Arts and Culture
Chavez, Romero and Berry Confirmed for Mayoral Forum August 25, 2009**

Albuquerque, NM. The Arts Alliance is pleased to announce that all three candidates for the city's top political office have confirmed their attendance at a public Mayoral Candidate Forum on arts and culture on Tuesday, August 25, 2009 at 6 p.m. The forum will take place at VSA North Fourth Arts Center. Albuquerque Journal Assistant Arts Editor Dan Mayfield will moderate the forum.

Questionnaires were distributed to candidates for mayor in July. Candidate responses are attached, and are also posted on the Arts Alliance website, www.abqarts.org. Responses have also been distributed to the Alliance's mailing list of more than 4,000 constituents.

"This is an impartial opportunity for the community to learn where these candidates stand on issues that will shape our region for years to come," says Kevin Hagen, president of the Arts Alliance Board of Directors. "We invite the community to attend the forum to make their voice heard, and learn more about each candidate's opinions on the arts and culture."

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About the Arts Alliance

The Arts Alliance is a registered 501c3 nonprofit founded in 1981. With a mission to promote the arts to ensure a vibrant and economically healthy community, it is the only organization in the area that serves all arts disciplines (dance, theatre, music, literary and visual). One of its most visible activities is the annual Bravos Awards, which this year celebrated its 25th anniversary.

For more information, please visit www.abqarts.org, or contact Kevin Hagen, President, Arts Alliance, at 505-268-1920 or kevinhagen@comcast.net

Arts Alliance - Mayoral Candidate Responses – August 2009

Candidate responses were not edited in any way. Responses longer than the 200 words or less limit were cut off at 200 words. Candidates who do not respond had their non-response indicated with “Candidate did not respond” under each question.

1. What initiatives would you support to create long-term sustainable funding for arts and cultural institutions in Albuquerque?

Martin Chavez

Currently the City of Albuquerque has two long-term sustainable funding sources that I continue to support;

1% for Arts

That program currently provides approximately \$750,000 per year for public art projects, which are in all quadrants of the city.

Urban Enhancement Trust Fund (UETF)

That program now provides approximately \$450,000 per year for public art projects

(90% of the fund is used for implementing projects, 10% reinvested into the fund)

In addition to these funds, many other “infrastructure” projects such as the Paseo del Norte roadway, the BioPark, the Big I reconstruction, the I-40/Coors reconstruction projects, to name a few have included funding for public art aspects. These projects include some of the most visible public arts projects in the State.

General fund spending on the arts has increased dramatically during my tenure.

Under my administration, Cultural Services has expanded our venues and performance arts substantially. Summer Nights features both local and national artists each Thursday at the Botanic Gardens. The Zoo features similar performances each Friday evening during the summer. Our Art Museum hosts the New Mexico Jazz Workshop with Salsa Under the Stars on Fridays and Jazz on Saturdays. We have completed phase 2 of the Albuquerque Museum

Candidate exceeded 200 word limit.

Richard Romero

The Economic Importance of the Arts and Cultural Industries report, published in 2007, listed the shortage of financial support as a disadvantage that must be overcome if the arts and cultural industries are to thrive in Albuquerque. Unfortunately two years later, resources of our few philanthropic organizations and those of local and state governments are significantly reduced. Although the federal government is deficit spending to prevent our economy from sinking even further, Albuquerque's unemployment rate has reached its highest level in over 12 years. Families, especially those dependent on the private sector, are hurting. The City's budget cannot sustain the contractual commitments made by the current administration.

Today like most industries, those related to arts and culture, an essential contributor to Albuquerque's quality of life and the foundation upon which Albuquerque's tourism economy is built, must develop short term plans for survival and position themselves for the long term.

I will work to make the arts a major part of Albuquerque's economic revitalization. It is important to our hearts and souls as well as Albuquerque's economic well being.

Short term, the city's resources for arts and culture must be used differently.

- Distribution of special events funds need to be

Candidate exceeded 200 word limit

Richard Berry

Candidate did not respond

2. Do you support a "Quality of Life" initiative such as is being proposed in Las Cruces? Why or Why not? Please explain.

Martin Chavez

Each city in New Mexico has its own unique institutions and needs. Of course Albuquerque is one of the cities that has the most to offer from its rich culture and artistic amenities and traditions. To say I support a Quality of Life initiative like Las Cruces' without a thorough analysis would be imprudent. An

Albuquerque Quality of Life initiative would need to be specifically tailored to what fits for Albuquerque. A ¼ cent gross receipts tax increase went before the public in 2006 as a proposed Quality of Life Tax. It failed in a public vote with only 45% support overall. It failed specifically because it taxed Albuquerque residents the most heavily and then excluded Albuquerque from any say in how the money would be expended. It lacked accountability and transparency. If there is a strong desire in the community to revisit this issue, I am more than willing to have that discussion. However, a promise I have always kept is not to increase taxes unless the public votes in favor of an increase.

I am the only candidate for Mayor that supports construction of a downtown event center. That measure will require a tax increase and must go

Candidate exceeded 200 word limit.

Richard Romero

As a state senator, I have supported the arts and worked to ensure that the Bernalillo County quality-of- life initiative could be taken to the voters. Although I have supported such initiatives in the past, requesting an additional tax, even through referendum, is not appropriate at this time for the reasons discussed in Question 1. I understand that Las Cruces has put their initiative on hold for similar reasons.

Richard Berry

Candidate did not respond

3. What important qualities, background, and experience would you look for in prospective appointees to the leadership of the City's Office of Cultural Affairs?

Martin Chavez

Kathy Wright, Director of our Art Museum exemplifies the talent I have worked to attract to my administration as does Tom Frouge, the founder of Globalquerque. The vast expansion of the arts funded through Cultural Services is a direct testament to the quality of personnel I have brought to the task of supporting the arts in Albuquerque. Sherry Beruggeman, who has stepped in to fill the vacancy left by Cathy Gore, has done a tremendous job with the one percent for the arts program. In addition to being a great gentleman and excellent manager, Ray Darnell, Director of Cultural Services is an accomplished musician and member of a talented local band.

Richard Romero

The director of cultural services should:

- ✓ Have experience in managing a large number of employees who are responsible for positive daily interactions with the public (CSD's budget is approximately \$40 million with approximately 375 full time and 200 temporary employees),
- ✓ Have experience related to managing arts, culture and education programs and their finances,
- ✓ Communicate well and engage residents and visitors in Albuquerque's cultural offerings.
- ✓ Represent the City of Albuquerque and work well with diverse community organizations and citizens.
- ✓ Have respect and derive real enjoyment (Dare I say, passion?) from arts and cultural programs; having shown commitment in some way -- as a participant, artist, patron or volunteer.
- ✓ Understand and respect the diverse cultures that make up Albuquerque.
- ✓ See beyond the department to a broader Albuquerque, where arts and cultural industries are a major contributor to our economy and quality of life, and to work collaboratively with other departments, community groups, businesses and governmental entities to build those industries and the community's involvement in them.

Richard Berry

Candidate did not respond

4. Would you include the arts community in your Office of Cultural Affairs appointment decision making? Why or why not? Please explain.

Martin Chavez

If you're referring to the existing Department of Cultural Services – absolutely. We do include the arts community in our decisions, and the arts are a very vital and important facet of the City. Additionally, public arts are included in all the major projects at the Department of Municipal Development.

In 2008, the City participated as a member of the Art Business Culture Action Plan Leadership Team along with CNM, the UNM College of Fine Arts and 40 representatives of arts and culture, tourism, education, economic development, non-profits and other government agencies. We will continue to

focus on the arts as we grow and develop Albuquerque into the best city in the country.

This year, Albuquerque was rated by Lifestyle Magazine as the 7th best art destination of any major City in America.

Richard Romero

Some of the most important decisions that I will make as mayor are the appointments of the directors of the various city departments. The Cultural Services Department is one of the largest and most important in the City.

Experience as an educator, school administrator and as the Senate Pro Tem of the NM Senate, has taught me that important personnel appointments, especially of those serving and interacting with Albuquerque's diverse community, are improved by seeking the input of people who care most about their success. At a school, it is the parents. For the Cultural Services Department, it is representatives of the arts and cultural industries.

I will create a transition team that is representative of the arts community, including representatives from your organization, to look at all aspects of the City's cultural programs and make recommendations of persons who could fill the position of Cultural Services Director.

Richard Berry

Candidate did not respond

5. In addition to highlighting the many contributions that the arts and cultural industries make to our community, the 2007 UNM Bureau of Business and Economic Research report, "Economic Importance of the Arts & Cultural Industries in Albuquerque and Bernalillo County" identified a number of challenges that these industries face. Among them, the need to better coordinate the efforts of the many institutions and individuals that comprise the arts and cultural industries. In your view, what role can the City and its publicly funded cultural institutions have in supporting improved coordination, collaboration, and connectivity within the arts community?

Martin Chavez

The City is and will continue to be a leader in developing public arts programs. I have implemented the Leadership Team (mentioned above) with members from Municipal Development, Cultural Services, Economic Development, the non-profit sector and the business community. This team's direction is to create and support the future of public arts in the Albuquerque region.

In September 2008, the city sponsored an Arts and Cultural Industries Search Conference attended by

over 60 people from various sectors of the community. The intent of the Search Conference was specifically to reach beyond the artistic disciplinary silos, of which are often rigid and not well connected even within the arts community at large, and connect with the Economic Development community, building alliances between the creative economy and the local business economy. Since then, this effort has moved along very deliberately, creatively and strategically to strengthen that very new alliance, strategically tapping deeper into the professional economic development community leadership for feedback and guidance.

In December after final review of the Search Conference Report, the Leadership Team tasked five individual members to move forward with research and a proposal for the number one goal the came out of the Search Conference:

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Richard Romero

The City of Albuquerque is in an excellent position to support a system for coordination of the efforts of the many institutions and individuals that comprise the arts and cultural industries in Albuquerque and Bernalillo County. It is more important than ever to work together to make the most of what we have.

- ✓ Similar to my proposals for building partnerships among our educational institutions, I will also work with arts and cultural institutions – many of which are the same. The goal is to build consistent and constructive communication that yields strategic results.
- ✓ I will support efforts to develop regional planning and maximize resources. We must pull the Albuquerque Convention and Visitors Bureau, Urban Enhancement Trust Fund Board, Public Arts Board, community arts associations, governments, institutions, philanthropic organizations, and businesses into the mix.
- ✓ As mentioned in my answer to question #1, there are many ways that city resources can be reprioritized. Those include providing tools that build coordination, collaboration and connectivity in this significant Albuquerque industry.

Richard Berry

Candidate did not respond

6. Would you support the creation of a “cultural plan” for the City of Albuquerque? Why or why not. Please explain.

Martin Chavez

Our first cultural plan was developed during my first term. It set out broad goals and strategies, much of

which have been realized today. I will support a good cultural plan that will guide our community to best utilize all of its arts organizations, public/private partnerships, facilities, has vision and is achievable and sustainable.

Richard Romero

Yes, I support developing a cultural plan. Naming the plan differently – something like an Arts and Cultural Industries Plan – might make it easier for the community to see how the plan contributes to a major community priority – building the economy.

Such a plan is essential if we are to take advantage of recent state legislation that provides incentives to communities for the creation of art and culture corridors.

Richard Berry

Candidate did not respond

7. In your view, what role do the performing, visual and literary arts have in education?

Martin Chavez

Study after study has shown that the arts have a direct correlation to education, graduation rates and the overall success of students. Unfortunately, in tough economies, the arts are often one of the first programs to get cut. While the management of the public schools does not fall into the city's jurisdiction, I will continue to do everything in my power to improve, enhance and fund the arts in the schools.

For instance, some of the benefits arts education has been shown on young people include:

- Improved self confidence
- Expanding imagination
- Developing empathy
- Learning cooperation/collaboration and individual contribution
- Increased concentration
- Better communication skills
- Problem solving
- Self-discipline and pride in results
- Trust
- Developing and improving performance skills

The City offers numerous programs for youth including but not limited to:

- Coordinating field trips to our various cultural amenities including the museums, concerts and the zoo
- Partnering with the New Mexico Jazz Workshop to bring jazz camp to youth at the City's Community Centers in the summer. We are also putting together a music academy that will be rolled out in 2010.
- After school programs at the City's community centers,

Candidate exceeded 200 word limit.

Richard Romero

Performing, visual and literary arts are an integral part of a quality education. The schools struggle with how to provide for all the educational needs of students. For some students, it is the arts that keep them there.

The schools cannot bear sole responsibility for providing arts and cultural educational opportunities for Albuquerque's children. Parents are paramount, and the City of Albuquerque is a supporter as well. The libraries, museums, early childhood centers, and even open space programs all contribute. Minimally, much can be done to improve City funded programs. I will work in partnership with public and private entities to do that.

Arts and cultural education will be addressed through the Education Improvement Group that I will form. It will bring city officials together with their APS counterparts on a regular basis. It will focus on coordinating resources to improve the education of young people in Albuquerque and keep them in school. Much can be accomplished by working well with others.

Young artists need good teachers and mentors to grow into the skilled professionals needed for the existing and future arts market. Similarly, the arts and cultural industries will not continue to thrive without an educated population that enjoys

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Richard Berry

Candidate did not respond