

## ROBERT REDFORD

February 26, 2010

To The People of New Mexico

Yours is a beautiful State. In my youth, I began traveling this countryside. I was searching for proper words to describe this haunting landscape when I brought *Milagro Beanfield War* to the screen, and, again, when developing the Tony Hillerman series for PBS. Like an archeologist dusting the surface of ruins at Bandelier or Chaco Canyon, I felt sure the answers lay in the past. But this Land of Enchantment carries its past into the present and future through story. And this is the land of storytellers.

Some six years ago, when I started conversations with the Governor about a collaboration, I was searching for a new vehicle for arts as an economic driver and its potential for effecting the human condition.

Like many of you, I was born in an era when Native Americans and Hispanics suffered grievous injustices. Workers in factories were being horribly underpaid and subjected to degrading conditions. I have witnessed the power of film and media to lift the veil on these injustices, paving the road toward correcting wrongs. Whether in the news reels of the past, or the documentaries and stories of today, we, as a nation, have used the power of film as our voice, our testimony, our expression of pride, and at times, our displeasure with the course of our nation. Let us not dismiss our accomplishments, but build from our foundations.

I have also chosen New Mexico as a home for a new film institute, Milagro at Los Luceros, dedicated to jobs training in the film arts. These programs focus on arts as an economic driver in a state where job creation is of prime importance.

New Mexico believes in jobs training, in skills enhancement for a new generation. I believe that artists - actors, writers, producers, directors and artisans – carpenters, costume and set designers, transportation and camera operators, deserve the opportunity to make a decent living for themselves and their families. Today we combine forces to create new pathways for the film arts. What better word than *Milagro* to name the spirit of this land, and the power of its people as storytellers. Let us seize this day together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Redford", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.