



## Temporary Art Installation at City Hall Raises Awareness about Homelessness

Part of a National Campaign, Highlights Ongoing Efforts to Eliminate Homelessness in Santa Fe

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Santa Fe, NM – In 2015, Mayor Javier M. Gonzales announced that through an intensive cooperative effort among governments at all levels and local service providers, the City of Santa Fe had effectively ended homelessness among veterans. But homelessness among the general population, and especially among young people, remains a major issue in our community and a primary focus of this administration.

To raise awareness to that effect, the City is participating in a national project to raise awareness about homelessness in our community.

The Homeless Design Installation is an initiative started in Charleston, SC through a partnership with the City of Charleston and Meadors, Inc., a private design firm. Through the installation of 430 plywood figures – one for each person in Charleston who is homeless - the City of Charleston hopes to raise public awareness about the plight of those experiencing homelessness.

The center of each figure is cut out to represent the invisibility of the homeless. Visitors to the installation will notice the image of a bench casting the shadow of a house, representing the dual-purpose many public benches, including the one to which the installation is attached at City Hall, serve for the homeless population in many cities.

“This exhibit illustrates how homeless people are not seen by our community even though homelessness leads to much suffering and even premature death for many of our neighbors,” comments Hank Hughes, Executive Director of the New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness (NMCEH). NMCEH was founded in 2000 to lead a comprehensive, coordinated and strategic response to homelessness. Its 70 member organizations provide housing and services to individuals and families experiencing homelessness. “Studies show that providing housing for people costs less than leaving them homeless,” he adds.

The project is now going national with all 50 state capitol cities being asked to erect a single cut out figure in front of their city halls to represent solidarity around this issue. A photograph of each figure from every capitol city will be posted on the End Homelessness website: [www.endhomelessness-installation.com](http://www.endhomelessness-installation.com).

Santa Fe’s cutout figure was installed on the east side of City Hall earlier this week and will remain in place for four weeks.