

The New Deal of the 1930s Revisited in Symposium and Exhibit

The National Hispanic Cultural Center (NHCC) in partnership with the National New Deal Preservation Association (NNDPA) and the Historical Society of New Mexico (HSNM) will sponsor a one-day symposium titled, **The New Deal -- was it a Great Deal?** on October 5, 2013. The event will be held in the Salon Ortega of the History and Literary Arts Building on the NHCCC campus and will begin at 1PM. On that day, an exhibit will open composed of photographs of the New Deal public art located in New Mexican sites, as well as a tribute to New Deal photographer Dorothea Lange. Lange, whose iconic image of a woman holding her face while surrounded by three small children in a make-shift tent made her the best known among the many photographers who captured images of America during the depression and the efforts by New Deal artists to mitigate the suffering of Americans who were out of work and often out of hope.

Speakers invited to address the symposium have written and published important work on the New Deal as it was experienced in New Mexico. Kathryn Flynn, president of the NNDPA has published several books on the New Deal and its impact on New Mexico, including her latest, *Public Art and Architecture in New Mexico, 1933-1943*. Dr. Richard Melzer, an instructor at the UNM Valenica Campus whose book, *Coming of Age in the Great Depression: The Civilian Conservation Corps Experience in New Mexico, 1933-1942* tells the story of the young men who went off to work on conservation projects to help support their families. Also invited to speak is author Lucinda Lucero Sachs whose book, *Clyde Tingely's New Deal for New Mexico, 1935-1935* covers the efforts of the loquacious governor at that time to secure New Deal funds for the state. Dr. Rose Diaz, whose work on the archives of the late Senator Dennis Chavez has buttressed many documentary projects on the senator will address his efforts in making New Mexico the recipient of generous doses of New Deal projects. Dr. Tey Nunn, Author of *Sin Nombre: Hispana and Hispano Artists of the New Deal Era* will discuss the role of Hispanic artists who were often ignored or categorized as simply "folk artists," regardless of their talents.

Each of the speakers will address the New Deal from their particular vantage point and answer the question: Was the New Deal a great deal and could something like that work today? Invited to comment on the presentations and to give her assessment of the prospects for a modern New Deal, is State Senator Linda Lopez who plans to challenge the current governor for her office in 2014. As a Democrat, she feels the New Deal is a legacy worth fighting in what she considers to be an antagonistic environment for government support of work projects to help solve our persistent unemployment challenges.

Carlos Vasquez, Director of History and Literary Arts and one of the organizers of the symposium and exhibit, says, “We felt revisiting the impressive number of infrastructure projects that were completed in just a short ten years was a worthwhile topic of discourse, especially since many who benefited from those programs are passing from the scene.” Kathy Flynn, president of the NNPA, who has dedicated many years insuring that the accomplishments of the New Deal, in all its venues of concerns, is documented archived and understood by succeeding generations, says. “... today much of the art that was done in public places is under threat of elimination as post offices and other WPA buildings are abandoned or gentrified and a legacy of art needs to be preserved for future generations; we can help to do that with programs like this.”

The symposium is open to the public at no costs. For more information you can contact Carlos Vasquez at (505) 724-4735 or carlos.vasquez@state.nm.us or Kathryn Flynn at (505) 473-3985 or newdeal@cybermesa.com