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For Immediate Release: May 21, 2008

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## **Elfego Baca Memorial to be Unveiled in Catron County Saturday** *Cabinet Secretary Fred Mondragón Praises Reserve's Progress*

SANTA FE, N.M.- Economic Development Department Cabinet Secretary Fred Mondragón today announced plans for the dedication of the Elfego Baca Memorial in Reserve, New Mexico, on Saturday, May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008. A life-size statue of Baca will be unveiled in a ceremony beginning at 11AM in the new Downtown Plaza. The Memorial is part of a larger downtown revitalization plan, aided by the Village of Reserve's establishment as a New Mexico MainStreet satellite project.

In October of 1884, 19-year old Deputy Sheriff Elfego Baca stood up to a collection of 80 bullying Texas cowboys who were menacing the small village now known as Reserve. For 36 hours Baca held his attackers at bay, surviving more than 4,000 gun shots fired into the home he had turned into a bunker. His heroic story of justice, bravery, and defense of his community motivated Catron County and the Village of Reserve to create the Memorial.

"The courage displayed by Mr. Baca in the face of difficult odds is an inspirational lesson for all New Mexicans," said Cabinet Secretary Mondragón. "I am pleased to see the cooperation between New Mexico MainStreet and the people of Reserve and Catron County has resulted in not only memorializing a state icon, but also advancing the cultural and economic viability of the area."

Henry Martinez, Board President of the Elfego Baca Project and a Reserve business owner, helped the project get off the ground 7 years ago by establishing a board to create designs and funding plans for the Memorial. In 2003, the land was purchased for the Memorial site. In 2004, Sedona, Arizona artist James Muir was commissioned to sculpt the life-size tribute to Mr. Baca, entitled "One Man, One War."

Mr. Martinez, expressed his appreciation of the New Mexico MainStreet team's assistance with the Memorial. "MainStreet is an instrumental and integral part of Reserve's downtown revitalization and the Elfego Baca Memorial."

Saturday's Memorial dedication will begin at 10AM with music provided by local Mariachi group *The Saddle Mountain Band*. The unveiling ceremony will begin at 11AM and will include speeches from local dignitaries, as well as the reading of proclamations from United States Senators Pete Domenici and Jeff Bingaman. The dedication will be followed by a barbecue and dance hosted by the town of Reserve and the Elfego Baca Board. ##### 30 #####