



PRESS RELEASE

November 30, 2009

Wilderness Economics: Conference Highlights Economic Benefits of Land Conservation Event Features U.S. Senator Tom Udall & National Speakers

The Hispano Chamber of Commerce de Las Cruces, High Tech Consortium of Southern New Mexico, and the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance welcome Senator Tom Udall, national and local leaders to the Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum in Las Cruces for **Wilderness Economics: Creating Jobs from Protected Lands.**

Wilderness Economics takes place December 5, 2009, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., at the Farm and Ranch Museum. The conference features a diverse panel of presenters--ranging from the Jackson Hole Wyoming Chamber of Commerce and NM Department of Tourism, to the Audubon Society and Headwaters Economics. Each speaker will discuss specific economic development aspects to land conservation. The conference organizers are proud to have U.S. Senator Tom Udall delivering the opening remarks for the event. The free conference includes complimentary breakfast and lunch.

The goal of **Wilderness Economics** is to learn from national and local experts about the range of economic development opportunities that can be developed in Doña Ana County through the protection of important local landmarks such as the Organ Mountains as federal wilderness and National Conservation Areas.

“Wilderness designation has helped communities across America protect their nearby natural treasures and boost local economies. The economic benefits, prestige, and national attention associated with nearby wilderness designations demonstrate just how important it is to protect places like the Organ Mountains and Broad Canyon. Now, our region is poised for the prosperity that protecting natural lands can bring. In these difficult economic times, we must do everything to help our community continue to grow and prosper. The **Wilderness Economics Conference** will help us do just that”, said Gilbert Apodaca, President of the Hispano Chamber of Commerce de Las Cruces. “All interested citizens and community and elected leaders should attend.”

“This is an incredible event and rare opportunity to hear from so many leaders in this field. **Wilderness Economics** can create wonderful new opportunities for our region,” said Gary Gomes, President of the High Tech Consortium of Southern NM. “These opportunities will benefit all of us in one way or another.”

Wilderness Economics: Creating Jobs from Protected Lands

Saturday, December 5th / 9-2 PM

NM Farm and Ranch Museum

*** FREE Event / Complimentary breakfast and lunch served**

*** RSVP to 575-527-9962**

In September, U.S. Senators Jeff Bingaman and Tom Udall introduced the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks Wilderness Act in Congress. This important legislation will protect approx. 259,000 acres as wilderness and another 100,000 acres as two new federal National Conservation Areas. And, perhaps most important, the bill will also protect the Organ Mountains so that they can be enjoyed by our children and grandchildren.

For More Information

John Munoz, Hispano Chamber of Commerce de Las Cruces: 575-571-9767

Jeff Steinborn, New Mexico Wilderness Alliance: 575-635-5615

Gary Gomes, High Tech Consortium of Southern New Mexico; 575-202-6383