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**TAOS COUNTY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

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PRESS RELEASE:

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**Taos County Economic Recovery Corps Fellow Contessa Trujillo Named National Folklife Network
Community Voice for the Southern Plains**

Taos, NM – Contessa Trujillo, currently working with Taos County as the Economic Recovery Corps Fellow, who is a champion for cultural heritage, community-driven initiatives, and sustainable tourism, has been named a National Folklife Network (NFN) Community Voice for the Southern Plains. This appointment recognizes her ongoing dedication to uplifting tradition-bearers and cultural workers across her region while fostering connections that honor and sustain cultural treasures.

The National Folklife Network, supported by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in partnership with the Southwest Folklife Alliance and other collaborators, is dedicated to strengthening the folk and traditional arts infrastructure in historically underfunded and geographically isolated regions. The Network emphasizes equity and accessibility, particularly for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) and economically vulnerable communities.

For Trujillo, this role represents both a responsibility and an opportunity. “I am deeply grateful and honored to be a voice on the national level, uplifting tradition and culture workers throughout my region and community. To be part of this collective voice and tapestry, learning and growing alongside others, is a true gift,” she shared.

Trujillo’s ongoing work with Taos County as the Economic Recovery Corps Fellow aligns seamlessly with the NFN’s mission. As Project Manager for the **Cultural Treasures Project**, a cultural and outdoor asset mapping study in Taos County, she is leading efforts throughout the County to collectively identify cultural and natural assets for the purposes of safeguarding and establishing informed economic development plans for the treasures and places that make Taos County unique. Since February 2024, the project has convened an Advisory Group with representatives from across Taos County communities. Collaborations with the Alliance for California Traditional Arts (ACTA) have further solidified the project’s foundations, alongside brand development with local design firm, Gizmo. Significant milestones and community engagement events are planned for 2025.

In addition to her work on this project, Trujillo has been actively involved in projects that promote cultural preservation and sustainability. As part of the **Taos Destination Stewardship Plan**, a Taos County and Town of Taos partnership, she has worked to bring community voices together to identify needs and challenges in the tourism industry. Through resident sentiment surveys, the plan has highlighted key insights, including the importance of uplifting Hispanic lifeways, practices, arts, and culture within the visitation realm. These efforts emphasize sustainable tourism that benefits local communities while addressing challenges faced by historically underrepresented groups.

“Taos County is deeply proud of Contessa to have received this well-deserved national recognition, and is grateful to work with her as a Fellow with the Economic Recovery Corps. It is these types of professional development opportunities we hope will continue to lift up our local talent, and propel our community forward,” said Jessica Stern, Economic Development Director for Taos County and Project Director for the Cultural Treasures Project.

The National Folklife Network’s mission, focused on uplifting heritage practices, fostering connections, and nurturing sustainability, resonates deeply with Trujillo’s vision for cultural preservation and community engagement.

For more information about the National Folklife Network and Contessa Trujillo’s work, visit:

- NFN Website: nationalfolklifenetwork.org
- Contessa Trujillo’s Profile: nationalfolklifenetwork.org/contessa-trujillo/
- Economic Recovery Corps Fellowship at Taos County: <https://www.taoscounty.org/476/Current-Projects>

Follow the National Folklife Network on social media for updates and stories from across the regions:

- Facebook: [@NationalFolklifeNetwork](https://www.facebook.com/NationalFolklifeNetwork)
- Instagram: [@NationalFolklifeNetwork](https://www.instagram.com/NationalFolklifeNetwork)

About the National Folklife Network

The National Folklife Network seeks to address gaps in support for folk and traditional arts in underrepresented regions, with a focus on BIPOC communities and economically vulnerable areas. Through capacity-building, collaboration, and resource-sharing, the Network fosters a thriving ecosystem for cultural heritage and traditional arts in America.

For additional information, please contact Jessica Stern, Taos County Economic Development Director at 575-737-6346 or jessica.stern@taoscountynm.gov

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