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Fueling Creativity: Latest Developments from New Mexico's Creative Industries Division

New Mexico's Creative Industries Division Garners Growing Support for Statewide Study, Significant Research Milestones Achieved

[The New Mexico Economic Development Department](#) (EDD) in collaboration with Santa Fe-based [Creative Startups](#) continues to make significant strides in their groundbreaking study of the state's creative industries, aiming to craft a comprehensive statewide plan for the new [Creative Industries Division](#) (CID). The ongoing study, a pivotal component of the EDD and CID's broader mission to bolster creative entrepreneurship and workforce development, has been met with increasing engagement and support from communities across the state.

“The New Mexico Economic Development Department’s Creative Industries Division is getting closer to having a statewide plan that will guide the important work of advancing NM’s creative economy,” EDD Acting Cabinet Secretary **Mark Roper** said. “Created in the 2023 Legislature and backed by Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham, the Creative Industries Division will support small businesses and entrepreneurs in creative industries, create jobs, provide education and workforce training initiatives, and more.”

In partnership with [Vital Spaces](#) and the [Poeh Cultural Center](#), the Creative Startups research team's efforts have been crucial in laying the groundwork for the CID’s strategic development. Across 28 of New Mexico’s 33 counties, the team has been engaging with more than 150 creative entrepreneurs, working artists, educators, and community organizers — both in person and online. In addition to these meetings, the researchers have interviewed 58 experts in creative, rural, and Tribal economic development and interfaced with the [New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs](#), [New Mexico Department of Tourism](#), the [New Mexico Film Office](#), and others to form future collaborations with the CID. Forging these meaningful connections has been integral to their mission.

“From directors to staff, we've had excellent conversations with creative economy advocates across every level of New Mexico civic leadership,” Creative Startups lead researcher **Mike Young** reports. “There is significant recognition of the potential for the entrepreneurs and working artists of New Mexico's creative industries to diversify and strengthen the state's economy. Even better, there is a hunger to work up new collaborations to support these critical industries at a government level.”

Direct conversations with New Mexico’s creatives have uncovered various strategies that offer potential for boosting local economies, such as integrating historic sites with immersive experiences and combining trade work with cultural heritage initiatives. Additionally, fostering digital media development and eco-resilience technologies in open spaces shows promise, and establishing retreats and artist-in-residence programs focused on community-based economic development could further enhance local value circulation. Supporting these efforts requires standardized artist entrepreneurship training and cooperative networks among historic property owners, drawing from New Mexico's cultural heritage.

“We're blown away by the enthusiasm and camaraderie of creatives across the state,” Young says. “As we find wherever we do this work, creative leaders are community leaders. They play crucial roles in preserving and innovating New Mexico culture, and they are eager to create big tents: they care deeply about their homes and want to translate their success to smart community development that reflects and respects local diversity.”

In addition to direct outreach and interviews, the research team has undertaken rigorous qualitative analyses of data sources, including [BLS](#) and Census data, alongside a comprehensive examination of [New Mexico's Gross Receipts Tax \(GRT\)](#) revenue from 2015 to 2022 to systematically unravel the intricate threads of the state’s creative economy. Early findings from this investigation underscore the immense potential of New Mexico's creative landscape. This aligns with national trends highlighting the economic potential of the creative sector, which added [\\$1.1 trillion to the national GDP in 2022](#).

Interested New Mexico creatives are encouraged to join the study by signing up to voice their perspective and attend community meetups. By joining the list, creatives will continue to play a significant role in shaping the future of the CID, receiving relevant information and opportunities for further contribution — [sign up now to ensure your voice continues to be a driving force in this transformative initiative](#).

For more information on the ongoing development of the statewide plan and other transformative initiatives, please visit <https://bit.ly/SSNMCID>.

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About the New Mexico Economic Development Department (EDD):

The New Mexico Economic Development Department’s (EDD) mission is to improve the lives of New Mexico families by increasing economic opportunities and providing a place for businesses to thrive. EDD’s programs contribute directly to this mission by training our workforce, providing infrastructure that supports business growth, and helping every community create a thriving economy. Learn more at edd.newmexico.gov.

About Creative Startups:

[Creative Startups](#), based in Santa Fe, New Mexico, has a proven track record developing economic strategies and programs leading to measurable economic growth in the creative industries. At the forefront of the creative economy for 15 years, Creative Startups develops strategic plans for regional governments, supplies in-depth economic analyses of assets and market opportunities, supports cultural and tribal institutions, and develops and delivers innovative programs for creative entrepreneurs and artists. Through their work across New Mexico, the USA, and the world, Creative Startups has developed a comprehensive

understanding of the technologies and trends driving the remarkable expansion of creative industries.