

El Grito de Las Mercedes

Newsletter of the
New Mexico Land Grant-Merced
Movement

La Merced del Manzano celebrates property purchase with matanza

The Manzano Land Grant held a matanza on March 2 in celebration of the merced's newly acquired property. The event had nearly 100 attendees throughout the day including heirs, legislators and community members. Attendees were able to enjoy live music, beautiful views and each other's company alongside a meal prepared by the board members of the Manzano Land Grant and other volunteers from the area, who prepared the pig and meal since the early morning.

The land grant entered into a real estate contract at the beginning of the year to acquire this parcel of land of over 800 acres, which contains an old orchard and corral. This purchase has prompted the New Mexico Finance Authority to work with this land grant to develop a program that would allow land grants that are political subdivisions of the state to borrow large loans for land purchases, which can be paid back with money from the land grants' HB 8 annual distribution and capital outlay awards at a low interest rate. The Manzano Land Grant, New Mexico Land Grant Council and NM Finance Authority are still working out the details of this first pilot loan, but the same opportunity will be available to other land grants in the near future.



Studies Program hosts curriculum building workshops

The UNM Land Grant Studies Program recently hosted two workshops in an effort to create additional lesson plans to contribute to the Acequia and Land Grant Education (ALGE) Project's larger curriculum, a project that has been made possible through a partnership with New Mexico Highlands University and the Merced Land Education and Conservation Trust.

The first workshop, held on February 24 in Tomé, hosted by the Studies Program with the help and support of board members and heirs of the Town of Tomé Land Grant, who provided their community center as a space for the event. The second workshop was held at Mesa Vista High School and invited heirs from the Ojo Caliente and Petaca Land Grants, student interns, educators and community members to contribute their ideas to the curriculum. The lesson plans created during these workshops are housed at Highland University's and the Center for the Education and Study of Diverse Population's website for public use and can be found at <http://www.cesdp.nmhu.edu/index.php/alge-project/>.

If you are interested in hosting an event like this in your community or would like to contribute a lesson plan to this effort, please contact Anissa Baca or Jacobo Baca.



Important Reminders

- The next Land Grant Council meeting will be held on **April, 2024 at 10:00 am** in **Albuquerque**. Visit lgc.unm.edu for location information and how to participate virtually or in person.
- Land Grant quarterly budget reports are due **April 30th, 2024**. Please contact Greta Archuleta with the Council at garchuleta2@unm.edu **no later than April 15th** if you would like her assistance.
- The Land Grant Council will host two virtual Quickbooks trainings targeting land grant treasurers. The first will be on **Thursday, April 11, 2024 from 9:00am-1:00pm** and the second will be on **Saturday, April 20, 2024 from 9:00am-1:00pm**. Land grant board members can attend both, but it is imperative that they attend at least one. For more information, contact Greta Archuleta with the Council at garchuleta2@unm.edu.

Land grant-merced property tax exemptions

Property taxes have long been a sore subject for land grants. For more than a century, land grants were considered private landowners that were obliged to pay taxes on their properties like any other owner. This left land grants with a hefty tax bill, forcing them to sell off portions of their common land to preserve that very common land. When land grants became recognized as political subdivisions of the state in 2004, they continued paying property taxes, something other political subdivisions like counties and municipalities are not required to do. Last year, the Merced del Pueblo de Chililí won a decision against Bernalillo County, which recognized the grant as a public entity that should not pay taxes on its common lands. In March, members of several land grant boards of trustees met with Taxation and Revenue Department's Property Tax Division, the New Mexico Land Grant Council and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo Division of the New Mexico Department of Justice (formerly the Office of the New Mexico Attorney General) to discuss the impact of this ruling and the process for protesting property tax valuations issued by the county assessors. County assessors will issue notices of value starting April 1st and running through the beginning of May, and while the process varies from county to county, all land grants will have the opportunity to protest their valuation, where they can cite the decision in the Chililí case and pursue tax exempt status on their common lands. Land grant boards should keep their eyes out for the notices of value issued in April or May by each county in which they own property and should contact their local county assessors for details on the protest process. Land grants will have 30 days from the issuance of the notice of value (April 1 or May 1) to file their protest with their county. The Council will send more information needed for filing your protest the week of April 1st.

The following land grants received capital outlay appropriations during the 2024 session:

Abiquiu Land Grant received \$50,000 for community playground improvements

Anton Chico received \$220,000 for community center renovations

Arroyo Hondo Arriba Community Land Grant received \$170,000 for land acquisition

Chililí Land Grant received \$60,000 for an affordable housing project and \$125,000 for heavy equipment

Cristobál de La Serna Land Grant received \$55,000 for fencing and signage

Cubero Land Grant received \$250,000 for community center renovations

Don Fernando de Taos Land Grant received \$50,000 for a multipurpose community center

Juan Bautista Baldes Land Grant received \$75,000 for community center improvements

Santa Barbara Land Grant received \$30,000 for heavy equipment

Los Vigiles Land Grant received \$1,030,000 for heavy equipment

Manzano Land Grant received \$125,000 for a multipurpose center and \$150,000 for land acquisition

San Joaquín del Río de Chama received \$60,000 for Las Mercedes Unidas Center and \$50,000 for their center

San Miguel del Bado received \$50,000 for their community center and \$100,000 for a historic building purchase

Tierra Amarilla Land Grant received \$175,000 for multipurpose center and \$100,000 for heavy equipment

Town of Tomé Land Grant received \$375,000 for community center renovations