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HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 95
47TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2005

INTRODUCED BY
Irvin Harrison

A JOINT MEMORIAL

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF NATIVE AMERICAN ARTISTS DURING
THE NEW DEAL AND DECLARING MARCH 7, 2005 AS "NATIVE AMERICAN
NEW DEAL ART DAY" AT THE LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt initiated New
Deal emergency programs in 1933 designed to boost the national
economy and help bring the country out of the great depression;
and

WHEREAS, artists created work of significant artistic,
cultural and historical value under federal sponsorship through
the New Deal's various public art projects; and

WHEREAS, New Deal funds were used to promote Indian arts
and crafts, increase employment, improve infrastructure on
reservations and construct schools; and

WHEREAS, a national exhibit of artwork completed under the
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1 public works of art project was held at the Corcoran gallery of
2 art in Washington, D.C., in 1934 that included works of art
3 from New Mexico, two-thirds of which were Indian-made and
4 featured Navajo rugs, mural paintings and pottery; and

5 WHEREAS, the department of the interior building in the
6 nation's capital, constructed between 1935 and 1936, houses
7 important murals by three of New Mexico's most notable Indian
8 artists, Velino Shije Herrera, Allan Houser and Gerald Nailor,
9 along with Oklahoma artist Woodrow Crumbo; and

10 WHEREAS, despite some shortcomings, President Roosevelt's
11 New Deal arts programs increased the awareness and appreciation
12 of Native American art in the nation; and

13 WHEREAS, many Native Americans took part in the arts
14 programs, including Harrison Begay, Maria and Julian Martinez,
15 Tonita Pena and her son, Joe H. Herrera and Pablita Velarde;
16 and

17 WHEREAS, numerous public buildings throughout the state
18 house Native American works of art that were produced as part
19 of the New Deal arts programs; and

20 WHEREAS, many works of art produced during that time have
21 been lost, misplaced or destroyed; and

22 WHEREAS, many of the artists are no longer with us today
23 or cannot be located; and

24 WHEREAS, the arts programs recorded and presented the
25 essence of New Mexico geographically, culturally, artistically,

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1 architecturally, agriculturally and environmentally;

2 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
3 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that March 7, 2005 be designated as "Native
4 American New Deal Art Day" at the legislature; and

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that it recognize Pablita Velarde
6 and Harrison Begay, the two living representatives of the group
7 of New Deal artists; and

8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that it honor the memory of New
9 Mexico's other Native American New Deal artists through their
10 families present at the legislature; and

11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the work of these artists be
12 commemorated and celebrated as among the greatest
13 accomplishments of this state, particularly when considering
14 the economic circumstances under which they were created; and

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the legislature celebrate the
16 lives and contributions of those fine artists and strive to
17 preserve their accomplishments to share them with future
18 generations as a message of beauty and hope; and

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the copies of this memorial be
20 transmitted to Native American New Deal artists and their
21 families.