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SENATE MEMORIAL 83

50TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2011

INTRODUCED BY

Mary Jane M. Garcia

A MEMORIAL

HONORING THE LAS CRUCES FIRE DEPARTMENT AND THE FIREFIGHTERS
AND CREW INVOLVED IN THE "VECINO" PROGRAM.

WHEREAS, the Las Cruces fire department operates a
program, which serves as a lifeline to many homebound
individuals with no relatives in the area, called the "Vecino"
program; and

WHEREAS, the program involves firefighters and crew making
daily phone calls to check on the health and well-being of the
individuals involved in the program; and

WHEREAS, the program got its start in the spring of 1995,
when a call was received in fire station No. 1 from a woman who
was worried about her elderly neighbor whose light was on at
4:00 a.m.; and

WHEREAS, upon responding to the call, the firefighter

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1 discovered an elderly woman, unconscious and having suffered
2 serious blood loss due to an injury; and

3 WHEREAS, when the woman recovered from her injuries, the
4 firefighter made a telephone call to her to check in on her,
5 and that call was the beginning of the Vecino program; and

6 WHEREAS, the program expanded as firefighters were
7 transferred from one station to another, initiating the phone
8 calls at their new stations; and

9 WHEREAS, the Vecino program now serves more than thirty-
10 five individuals; and

11 WHEREAS, phone calls are made daily, three hundred sixty-
12 five days a year, usually around 8:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m., taking
13 from ten to thirty minutes to complete a round of calls; and

14 WHEREAS, according to Lieutenant Mark Olson, who has
15 headed the Vecino program for the last two years, the
16 firefighters find the phone calls both rewarding and
17 frustrating, aware that they are making an important difference
18 in the lives of lonely people, but recognizing that their needs
19 often far exceed the firefighters' ability to address them; and

20 WHEREAS, many firefighters have established personal
21 relationships with the individuals they call, involving them in
22 family events or visiting them at their homes; and

23 WHEREAS, the program was named "Vecino" after the Spanish
24 word for neighbor, and the firefighters and crew of the Las
25 Cruces fire department are certainly serving as neighbors to

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people who otherwise would have no one to talk to on a daily basis;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the Las Cruces fire department and the firefighters and crew involved in the Vecino program be honored; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be transmitted to Lieutenant Mark Olson, station No. 5, for distribution to all the firefighters and crew who participate in this valuable community service.