

A MEMORIAL

HONORING THE HEROIC EFFORTS OF FIREFIGHTERS IN THE DAYS  
DURING, AND THE RECOVERY FOLLOWING, THE LAS CONCHAS WILDFIRE.

WHEREAS, on June 26, 2011, the Las Conchas wildfire unexpectedly ignited in the Jemez mountains surrounding Los Alamos, the Valles Caldera national preserve and Bandelier national monument; and

WHEREAS, in the first hours after the fire erupted, the rapid response of the La Cueva volunteer fire department, the United States park service and the United States forest service preempted the fire from growing in ferocity and shifting direction, and those efforts should be commended, as the fire would have been much worse had the response not come so quickly; and

WHEREAS, despite valiant efforts, the flames were extraordinarily wind-driven on June 26 and 27 and quickly raced toward Los Alamos national laboratory, exploding overnight from four thousand acres to over forty thousand acres and, in the days that followed, scorching one hundred fifty-six thousand five hundred ninety-three acres of beautiful northern New Mexico land before finally being fully contained on August 3, 2011; and

WHEREAS, across the state, people were deeply saddened and concerned as they watched the out-of-control wildfire burn

across the beautiful and sacred lands of the Santa Fe national forest in Sandoval, Los Alamos and Rio Arriba counties; the Pueblo of Santa Clara; the Pueblo of Jemez; the Pueblo of Cochiti; the Pueblo of Santo Domingo; Bandelier national monument; and the Valles Caldera national preserve; and

WHEREAS, the Las Conchas wildfire destroyed sixty-three homes and forty-nine other buildings, forever changing the lives of the people that owned those residences and buildings; and

WHEREAS, thousands of residents in the Jemez mountains, including residents of Los Alamos, were forced to evacuate for their safety, and Los Alamos national laboratory closed during this enormous, uncontained wildfire, the largest in New Mexico's history; and

WHEREAS, one hundred twenty-eight of Los Alamos' finest firefighters were called upon to battle the blazes; and

WHEREAS, the heroic fight of the Los Alamos firefighters would not have been possible without the help of other resources; and

WHEREAS, Los Alamos county was assisted by numerous local, state and federal agencies, including firefighters, police, emergency services and support personnel from Rio Arriba, Santa Fe and Sandoval counties; Cimarron, Tucumcari, Abiquiu, Chamita and Santa Fe; the Pueblo of Santa Clara; the Agua Sana volunteer fire department; the state fire marshal;

the United States forest service and the United States park service; and Los Alamos national laboratory; and

WHEREAS, the sight of the flames on the mountainside reminded New Mexicans of the Cerro Grande wildfire just eleven years prior; and

WHEREAS, lessons learned from the Cerro Grande wildfire and protective and proactive projects undertaken by Los Alamos county and Los Alamos national laboratory benefited firefighters' efforts in 2011; and

WHEREAS, although the Las Conchas wildfire devastated many homes and a significant amount of land and property, no lives were lost; and

WHEREAS, the fire is a testimonial to the resilience of New Mexico residents, and their ability to survive these experiences has only made them stronger in their resolve to stand together during their greatest times of need, which is proof that New Mexico residents shall always persevere;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the firefighters, and all of those who assisted in fighting the blaze, be honored for their service and resolve to contain the flames and protect the people and the lands of New Mexico; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the council of the incorporated county of Los Alamos and the governor.