



**NEW MEXICO**  
**GREEN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**  
**POWER UP YOUR BUSINESS**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 19, 2014

**Contact:**

*Carrie Hamblen*, Executive Director-Las Cruces Green Chamber of Commerce  
[Carrie@nmgreenchamber.com](mailto:Carrie@nmgreenchamber.com) or 575-323-1575

*Celerah Hewes-Rutledge*, COO-New Mexico Green Chamber of Commerce  
[Celerah@nmgreenchamber.com](mailto:Celerah@nmgreenchamber.com) or 505-916-1247

**Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument Designation  
Will Mean Jobs for Las Cruces and Surrounding Communities**

*NM Green Chamber, local business owners celebrate designation*

*LAS CRUCES, N.M.* – Business leaders in Las Cruces and surrounding communities today celebrated news that the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks will be designated as a National Monument by President Obama on Wednesday, May 21, 2014.

Carrie Hamblen, Executive Director of the Las Cruces chapter of the New Mexico Green Chamber of Commerce, says that the new national monument will help the local economy.

“This designation is a long time coming, and we are excited that Doña Ana County is finally going to be able to reap the economic benefits of the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument,” Hamblen said. “I applaud President Obama for doing the right thing by making the public lands and the people of southern New Mexico a priority.”

In December, U.S. Senators Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich co-sponsored legislation calling for the establishment of the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument, marking the third Congress in a row that New Mexico’s U.S. Senators introduced legislation to protect this region’s public lands. Then President Barack Obama used the executive powers granted him by Antiquities Act of 1906 to officially designate the monument.

Hamblen pointed to a recent economic study which showed that a national monument designation for Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks would have a significant impact on the region’s

economy, contributing \$7.4 million in additional local economic activity and creating 88 new jobs in the tourism and outdoor recreation sectors.

Taos County in northern New Mexico is seeing economic benefits similar to those projected for Doña Ana County from the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument. Following that monument's designation in March 2013, the Bureau of Land Management reported a 40 percent increase in visitors—over 50,000 people—in fiscal year 2013 compared to 2012. This helped drive a 21 percent increase in the Town of Taos Lodgers' Tax Revenue in the second half of 2013 compared to the same period of 2012 as well as an 8.3 percent increase in the gross-receipts revenue in Taos County's Accommodations and Food Service sector.

It is this potential economic impact that has local business owners celebrating news of the designation as well.

“Tourism is one of the staples of our economy,” said Monika Denton, General Manager of the Ramada Palms Hotel and Conference Center in Las Cruces. “Now that Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks is a national monument we hope to see an influx of new visitors travelling to the area and spending money at businesses like mine. The economic rewards for our community will add up quickly, including new jobs.”

Director of the Las Cruces Convention and Visitors Bureau Philip San Filippo agreed, adding that national monuments create jobs by allowing businesses to hire more employees to keep up with increased visitation to the area.

“The new visitors that this designation will bring to our communities means that our area's business owners, especially those in the hospitality and outdoor recreation industry, are going to have the opportunity to expand their businesses and bring on new employees to meet the increased demand,” said San Filippo. “Economically speaking, the new monument is a win for everyone living in Doña Ana County.”

#####