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**TAOS COUNTY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

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PRESS RELEASE:

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Constellations and Cultural Treasures Event to Celebrate Dark Skies Policies and Preview
Community-Driven Cultural Map**

Taos County community members are invited to gather for *Constellations and Cultural Treasures*, an evening celebrating the County’s new Dark Skies policies and offering a first public preview of the Cultural Treasures Project’s interactive map.

The event will take place on **Thursday, May 14 from 5:15 to 7:30 PM at Daleee at KTAOS**. Attendees can enjoy free food and receive free T-shirts while supplies last.

The Cultural Treasures Project (CTP) is a community-led initiative focused on identifying, documenting, and honoring the places, practices, and people that define Taos County. The project responds to growing development pressures and the risk of losing cultural identity by empowering residents to name what matters most.

At the heart of the event is a preview of the project’s interactive map, a dynamic tool shaped by nearly two years of community input that is still actively growing. The map highlights cultural assets across the region, from landscapes and gathering places to traditions and local knowledge. It is designed to support planning, education, and long-term cultural preservation, and will continue to evolve as more community members contribute.

Community participation remains central to the project. Residents are encouraged to continue sharing their cultural treasures at **CulturalTreasuresProject.org**, helping ensure the map reflects the full richness and diversity of Taos County.

“This preview reflects the depth of community engagement and the momentum behind this work,” said Jessica Stern, Taos County Economic Development Director. “The Cultural Treasures Project presents a unique opportunity to align community-identified values with the County Planning Department’s efforts. By integrating these findings into the County’s new Unified Development Code (formerly the Land Use

Regulations), we can help ensure that future growth reflects and protects what makes Taos County unique.”

The Cultural Treasures Project is spearheaded by Taos County Economic Development in collaboration with a diverse advisory group of local residents. Community members of all backgrounds have contributed through surveys, interviews, and focus groups, helping to document both tangible and intangible cultural assets. The Taos County Planning Department is currently undergoing a comprehensive revision of the longstanding Land Use Regulations, Subdivision Regulations, Dark Sky Ordinance, Short Term Rental Ordinance, and other development policies into a cohesive document called the Unified Development Code (UDC). Taos County Economic Development and Taos County Planning have joined together in a collaborative effort to ensure that the community voice and input gathered through the Cultural Treasures Project is directly integrated into the UDC process.

“This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to align the kind of deep and thoughtful community engagement that the Cultural Treasures Project has been focused on over the past 2 years and directly integrate that information into policy and code development in real time. This is such a significant, yet quiet win for Taos County residents that will resonate for the long term,” Stern said.

“We cannot protect, restore or revitalize what we — the communities and people of this region — have not identified,” said Contessa Trujillo, Cultural Treasures Project Manager. “Before us is a rare opportunity to share with our public leaders what matters most, bridging our rich past with a thoughtful and intentional future for ourselves and for generations to come. The time is now.”

Cultural treasures include people, traditions, places, and events that carry aesthetic, historic, or emotional significance. They may be physical or intangible, but all play a vital role in shaping community identity.

The *Constellations and Cultural Treasures* event invites the public to celebrate, reflect, and engage with this work as it continues to grow.

For more information, please contact Contessa Trujillo: ctrujillo@economicrecoverycorps.org or at culturaltreasuresproject@gmail.com. Visit www.CulturalTreasuresProject.org for more information or to submit a cultural treasure.

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