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Historic Preservation Division Director Announced

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Office of the Secretary

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Jeff Pappas, Ph.D. Named as New Mexico State Historic Preservation Officer And Director of Cultural Affairs Historic Preservation Division

SANTA FE -- Governor Susana Martinez has approved the appointment of Dr. Jeff Pappas to lead the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division of the Department of Cultural Affairs, Cabinet Secretary Veronica Gonzales announced today. Pappas will commence work as the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and Historic Preservation Division Director on August 20, 2012.

“Dr. Pappas is exceptionally qualified,” Secretary Gonzales said. “He is extremely well versed in the history of the West. His background with the National Park Service, the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office, and as a history instructor at Colorado State University gives him the expertise to be able to identify and protect the cultural resources that are so vital to our state, which is the mission of this important division of Cultural Affairs.”

Pappas grew up in Worcester, Mass., and graduated from Brigham Young University. He holds a master’s degree in American Studies from Baylor University, in Waco, Texas, and a doctorate in U.S. History and Public History from Arizona State University in Tempe. He has taught U.S. history, the history of the National Park Service, and public history since 2005 at Colorado State University during spring semesters. He also has worked as lead ranger at Yosemite National Park in California since 2007 where he managed a staff of seasonal rangers.

“New Mexico is a dream come true,” he said. “As a scholar of western, public, and Native American history, New Mexico is the place where I can combine all of my skills as an academic and historian on the job.”

Currently, Pappas works at Yosemite, where his partner, Brenna Lissoway, a New Mexico native, is an archivist. She will join him in Santa Fe in spring 2013.

In making the announcement, Secretary Gonzales acknowledged the Historic Preservation Division (HPD) staff for helping meet the many demands of the division throughout the long

search process for a permanent director, and also acknowledged the generous contributions of Jan Biella and Sam Cata, who served respectively as interim State Historic Preservation Officer and Division Director during the past three years. Biella is the deputy SHPO and also the State Archaeologist, and has served as the division's interim director since Sam Cata's retirement six months ago.

Pappas was the unanimous choice of a search committee appointed by Secretary Gonzales. The committee was comprised of Jerry Rogers, the former director of the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places; Theresa Pasqual, Acoma Pueblo Historic Preservation Officer; Reginald Richey, an architect in Lincoln, NM, who serves on the Governor-Appointed Cultural Properties Review Committee in the Historic Architect position; John Montgomery, Ph.D., professor and chairman of the Department of Anthropology at Eastern New Mexico University; and Pilar Cannizzaro, Architectural Reviewer for the Historic Preservation Division.

The State Historic Preservation Officer is the senior policy advisor to DCA on matters of culture, history, prehistory and preservation. The 1966 National Historic Preservation Act decreed that every state and U.S. territory would have a state historic preservation office to carry out federal preservation law at the state level. HPD performs these duties, working closely with the National Park Service and numerous federal and state agencies, local and tribal governments, nonprofits and the public. They include listing properties in the National Register, providing technical expertise, participating in consultation and mitigation on projects affecting cultural resources and involving the public in preservation through outreach. HPD also operates under the State Cultural Properties Act established in 1969, and maintains a State Register of Cultural Properties, a preservation tax credit program, granting and loan authority, and a permitting process for consultants working on cultural sites.

The Department of Cultural Affairs includes, in addition to the Historic Preservation Division, the New Mexico State Monuments, the New Mexico Museum of Art, the Museum of International Folk Art, the Museum of Indian Arts & Culture and the New Mexico History Museum/Palace of the Governors, in Santa Fe; the Museum of Natural History & Science and the National Hispanic Cultural Center, both in Albuquerque; the New Mexico Museum of Space History in Alamogordo; and the New Mexico Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum in Las Cruces. The department also administers the Office of Archaeological Studies, New Mexico State Library, New Mexico Arts, and the Center for Museum Resources.

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