

RATON ~ NEW MEXICO NEWS

COLFAX COUNTY CALENDAR

Raton Optimist Basketball Registration

Raton Optimist Basketball Registration for K through eighth grade will go through Friday, Jan. 16. Registration forms can be picked up from your child's school. Deadline for registration forms will be Jan. 16, 2009 at 5 p.m. Please make the deadline because there will be no late registrations. Call Jonni Valdez-Silva at

(575) 445-2761 or (575) 445-5881.

January Jan. 17

11:30 a.m. - Daughters of the American Revolution, Tierra de Mesetas Chapter, home of Lily Budd luncheon with meeting following at 1 p.m. Program at 2 p.m. on "Methods, Manners and Medals" learning about DAR. Reservations: Lily (575) 445-4297.

RATON POLICE BLOTTER

Jan. 9, 2009

ARRESTED:

■ Jess Lujan, 23 - Bench warrant out of Portales Police Department for battery against

a household member.

CITATION:

■ Sheen Martinez, 22 - Assault and criminal damage to property.



Chris Giordano leads Dear Abbeys in a rousing rendition of Prince's "Let's Go Crazy" at Raton High School Thursday afternoon.

(Photo by Tim Keller)

Dear Abbeys bring A Capella fun from Boston to N. M.

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taking their show to far-flung states during semester break three years ago. After performances in Fairbanks, Alaska, San Francisco and Austin, Texas, this year's journey brought them to northeastern New Mexico. How? It turns out that leader Hunter Young's aunt, Gretchen Rockenfield, lives in Ute Park and teaches in Maxwell. The Shortgrass Music Festival helped sponsor the trip, adding to proceeds from CD sales, other donations and Boston concert ticket sales to make the tour possible. All New Mexico shows were presented free of charge.

After each show, the singers mingled with audience members to answer questions, sign autographs and sell copies of their three CDs. Asked how they came up with their name, Giordano explained that when the group formed in 1992, they had to go into the university offices to register as an organization. Several of the new members worked on the forms right there in the office, but they stumbled when they came to the name of their group: they hadn't thought of one. Speaking to the clerk about the necessity of a name, they asked her name. It was Abbey. The guys decided right then to name their group Dear Abbeys.

Last year's Dear Abbeys CD made a play on the Beatles classic Abbey Road album, though apparently they've yet to make a connection to the long-running Dear Abbie newspaper advice column.

The group flew from Boston to Albuquerque, then squeezed into two rental cars for their tour. Asked how they liked northern New Mexico, every one beamed: it was unlike anything they'd seen, and they loved it. In fact, at the last minute, they added a Friday night concert at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Taos and were looking forward to their drive up into the Sangre de Cristos.

Governor Bill Richardson announces ReelzChannel is moving to New Mexico Network's CEO cites state's thriving film and television industry for decision to relocate

Special to the Chronicle

SANTA FE-Governor Bill Richardson announced that the cable and satellite network ReelzChannel is relocating its corporate headquarters to Albuquerque. ReelzChannel is the only network/website dedicated to everything about the movies, and the company says New Mexico's dynamic television and film industry is behind its decision to move.

"ReelzChannel's decision to relocate to New Mexico is a testament to our hard work in building a thriving television and film industry and it seals our reputation as national and world leader in film and television production," Governor Bill Richardson said. "This is a proud day for New Mexico as we welcome our first television network to the state. ReelzChannel will be a great compliment to our expanding television and film efforts."

The relocation is expected to create more than 100 job opportunities in Albuquerque. The network will be hosting a job fair next week to interview prospective employees.

ReelzChannel is owned by satellite television pioneer Hubbard Broadcasting, which has a long history in New Mexico operating KOB-TV in Albuquerque since 1957.

"Joining New Mexico's thriving film and television industry creates exciting opportunities for our fast growing network dedicated to TV About Movies," said Stan E Hubbard, Chairman and CEO of ReelzChannel. "Our sister company, KOB-TV, convinced us of the state's business friendly environment, which has impressed us greatly. We have witnessed remarkable efforts by the Governor and the New Mexico Film Office to quickly rally strong public and private support, and we are confident the move will benefit New Mexico by contributing new jobs that will help to solidify this new entertainment stronghold."

Governor Richardson today thanked those who worked on behalf of the state to secure the ReelzChannel deal, including Director of the New Mexico Film Office Lisa Strout, the New Mexico Economic

Development Department, the New Mexico Partnership and Albuquerque Economic Development.

The ReelzChannel network and website brands were first launched in September 2006 and are currently headquartered in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul—with studio operations in Los Angeles and offices in New York and Chicago. With the move, the programming, production, web development, creative services marketing and communications divisions will all be housed and operated out of one location. Advertising sales will remain in New York City, Chicago and Los Angeles. A Los Angeles bureau will be established for coverage of major entertainment and movie stories and events.

Viewers will continue to see their favorite hosts, movie experts and fan-focused movie programming, including: "Leonard Maltin's Secret's Out," the popular weekly series in which the acclaimed movie critic reveals his favorite movie hidden gems; "The Big Tease," where Jill Simonian and

Jeremy Parson unveil Hollywood's hottest trailers; "Movie Mob," the only user-generated program on TV; the new "ReelzChannel Movie News," with award-winning entertainment reporter Sam Rubin and the entire team of ReelzChannel contributors delivering up-to-the-hour movie news; "First Fans" with Travis Oscarson, which features fans' reactions to new movie releases on the network and website; "ReelzChannel Spotlight," "At the Movies," "The Critic" and "The Directors" round out the schedule.

Since Governor Richardson took office, more than 110 major film and television productions have shot in New Mexico, including recent blockbusters, "Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull," "No Country for Old Men" and "Transformers." Two of the most highly anticipated films of 2009, "Transformers 2" and "Terminator: Salvation," were filmed in New Mexico. The productions have generated more than \$2 billion in economic activity.

BLM decides on full study for Carlsbad potash plan

CARLSBAD, N.M. (AP) — The Bureau of Land Management has decided to prepare an environmental impact statement on a proposal by Intrepid Potash, which could delay the operation for at least 18 months.

Intrepid Potash officials said in November they expected the BLM to approve an environmental assessment that would allow the company to begin its HB solution evaporation potash production project early this year at the former Eddy Potash

mine near Carlsbad.

But the federal agency scrapped the environmental assessment in favor of the fuller study.

Intrepid's chief executive officer, Bob Jornayvaz, said he believes the BLM's decision is based on objections filed by an oil and gas company after the public comment period ended.

"The project has been extensively publicized and supported by the community," he said.

BLM officials said they worked closely with the compa-

ny and the environmental impact statement should not have been a surprise to Intrepid officials.

Jornayvaz said potash solution mining is a widely used and accepted technology. Intrepid's proposal would take advantage of unused water that can't be used for drinking to recover potash from an existing mine and produce it in solar evaporation ponds rather than burning natural gas or coal, he said.

The company plans to spend

between \$78 million and \$88 million on the project.

Intrepid officials said the larger environmental process will not affect the company's 2009 potash production.

The manager of the BLM's Carlsbad field office, Jim Stovall, said that as the assessment progressed, the agency realized it needed a more in-depth study to analyze solution mining's potential impact on fresh water aquifers, surface land use, surface features resulting from subsidence, con-

current development of oil and gas and human health and safety.

BLM state officials in Santa Fe said the proposal includes activities that haven't previously been used in the Carlsbad potash basin. They said a full study is necessary to evaluate the potential impacts of solution mining technology on concurrent development activities.

Stovall denied the fuller study was being done because of objections by an oil and gas

company.

The BLM received a request from an oil and gas company for an extension of the comment period and was granted 10 more days. The company, representing several companies, then submitted its comments, Stovall said.

"The objection by the oil and gas company has nothing to do with us moving forward with the EIS," he said. "We have to do our job and to find a balance."

New Mexico ranks No. 1 in several key areas for disability and compensation payments to veterans

Courtesy of the New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services
Special to the Chronicle

SANTA FE - According to an independent study, New Mexico ranks number one in the nation for the average federal VA disability compensation and pension payment for veterans, and in the average disability and compensation payment collected by veterans diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome.

This study was conducted by The Institute of Defense Analyses, a non-partisan organization commissioned by the U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs to compile a detailed scientific study of state and regional VA care for veterans.

The IDA found that the average disability and compensation payment to a veteran living in New Mexico is \$12,395, about \$600 more than second-place Maine, and \$3,500 more than the nationwide average payment of \$8,895.

"I'm extremely proud of our top-ranking," said New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services Cabinet Secretary John M. Garcia. "We have a strong partnership with the regional VA office in Albuquerque and several statewide veteran service organizations. Together we work to reach out to New Mexico's 180,000 veterans and get them every benefit they're entitled to."

The NMDVS has 17 field offices statewide staffed by certified nationally accredited and highly trained veteran's service officers who help veterans file for state and federal benefits and services.

"The tireless work by our veterans' service officers are what make our department one of the top veterans' service providers in the country," said Secretary Garcia. "Our Veterans' Service Officers are all veterans themselves. They know about the sacrifices veterans have made, so our staff makes it a personal pledge to work as hard as they can for

the men and women who've protected and served our country."

New Mexico is also top-ranked for the average disability and compensation payment to a veteran diagnosed with PTSD is \$24,227, \$560 more than second-place Maine and \$3,778 more than the national average of \$20,449.

PTSD and Traumatic Brain Injury are the "signature" disability suffered by veterans serving in the current Wars on Terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan. 30,000 military personnel have been discharged from service in this war and live in New Mexico. Nationwide, VA studies show at least 25 percent of these veterans who served in the combat zone suffer from PTSD or TBI.

"Our department has teamed with the Raymond G. Murphy Medical Center and Presbyterian Medical Center in Albuquerque to form a Behavioral Health Collaborative," said Secretary Garcia. "We want to make sure that this new generation of veterans understands that we're here to immediately help treat these disabilities that in past wars went undiagnosed and untreated."

New Mexico also ranks number one in the nation in the average disability compensation paid to veterans who've served in the Army (\$13,990), Marines (\$14,983) and the Navy (\$11,813).

The work of the NMDVS is getting noticed across the country. Recently the department has received phone calls from media in Ohio and Nevada doing stories comparing the difference in service of veterans between top-ranked states and bottom-ranked states.

"We're becoming the model that other states are copying when looking how to serve veterans," said Secretary Garcia, a recent past president of the National Association of State Directors of Veterans' Affairs.