

## **Acequias to discuss hemp production at annual meeting of the New Mexico Acequia Association**

Submitted report

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Irrigators and farmers will learn about hemp production in New Mexico at the upcoming Congreso de las Acequias, Saturday (Nov. 17) the annual membership meeting of the New Mexico Acequia Association. The gathering will take place beginning at 9 a.m. at the Albuquerque Marriott Pyramid. The Congreso is the largest gathering of acequias in New Mexico where presentations and activities celebrate the importance of the traditional irrigation system to New Mexico.

“Acequias need to be informed of this opportunity. Growing hemp could contribute to the economic vitality of rural communities in New Mexico,” said Paula Garcia, NMAA Executive Director. “The agricultural industry in New Mexico took a step forward with a new law that allows the cultivation of hemp.” New Mexico is catching up to other states that have legalized growing hemp, including Colorado and Kentucky.

The presentation at the Congreso de las Acequias will review the financial benefits of hemp production, the proposed rules and regulations for growing hemp, how to purchase hemp seedlings, and where to sell farm products. Vicente Cordova, a farmer from Guadalupe County, said, “This product can revive small farms!” He will present along with Leonard Salado, co-founder of New Mexico Hemp Company.

NMAA also will honor some of the state’s top acequia parciantes. NMAA will also honor award recipients, Leon Tafoya, Mayordomo of the Year, and Max Martinez, who lives in Taos, as Rancher of the Year.

This year’s program will feature testimonies from commissioners, mayordomos, farmers, and ranchers about the challenges of sustained drought and their strategies of adaptation. Younger voices will also be featured to speak about their dedication to sustaining communities through local agriculture.

“Acequias have continued traditions of sharing water and growing food for centuries in New Mexico,” Garcia said. “We celebrate their endurance and also convene to discuss our future in the face of tremendous challenges related to mounting demands for water, a changing climate, and the need to cultivate the next generation.”

The agenda for the gathering includes film, music and entertainment. NMAA will premier “Acequia,” film trailer by Arcy Chapa, “Bendición del Agua,” a poem film by Olivia Romo, and “Los Milagros de San Isidro Labrador,” a live performance by Grupo

Teatro Acequero. Acclaimed acoustic musical ensemble from northern New Mexico, David Garcia and Jeremiah Martinez, will provide music rooted in the movement for land and water rights in New Mexico. A multimedia piece, “Nuestras Acequias,” will feature an oral history project from the Embudo Valley.

For more information about the New Mexico Acequia Association or to register for the Congreso de las Acequias, visit [www.lasacequias.org](http://www.lasacequias.org) or call (505) 995-9644.