



MONEY

NMSU announces million-dollar gift to support Arrowhead Center

Amanda Bradford For the Sun-News
Published 4:49 p.m. MT Sept. 13, 2017 | Updated 1:13 p.m. MT Sept. 14, 2017

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The Arrowhead Center at New Mexico State University. Courtesy Photo.

LAS CRUCES - As part of the Ignite Aggie Discovery fundraising campaign, the New Mexico State University Foundation has announced a million-dollar gift from Paul and Alejandra de la Vega Foster to support [Arrowhead Center](#), the university's regional entrepreneurship and innovation hub.

The gift was announced Wednesday during opening ceremonies of the Domenici Public Policy Conference at the Las Cruces Convention Center. A key topic of the conference is workforce development in the region.

Arrowhead Center Director Kathryn Hansen said the gift from the Fosters will be used to drive collaboration between Arrowhead and its many partners in the Borderplex region.

"This funding will allow us to continue to build and strengthen our framework for economic development in the region," Hansen said in a news release. "Our goal is to create an environment where those connections can spark greater innovation.

"The interconnectedness of our Borderplex ecosystem is its most powerful asset," she continued. "This gift really emphasizes how important it is that we work together to build the critical elements of abundant capital, collaboration with industry, student entrepreneurship, risk-taking culture, government support and community involvement."

Kevin Boberg, vice president for economic development for NMSU, said the investment from the Fosters has the potential to provide life-changing opportunities for the university's students and the regional ecosystem.

"This will allow Arrowhead Center to further develop its *Activando Emprendedores* program in partnership with universities in Mexico and create new community partnerships throughout the region," Boberg said. "It's a tremendous opportunity and we're excited about the possibilities."

The gift comes in the midst of the NMSU system's \$125 million campaign, which extends through 2019. The fundraising effort, which launched its public phase in April, is the largest cash campaign in the university's history.

"We are pleased to support initiatives that build and promote our Borderplex region," Paul Foster said. "Alejandra and I believe the work that Arrowhead Center is doing is tremendous and we are glad to see the development of regional partnerships, especially in Mexico.

"Those relationships are critically important to the future of this region," he added, "and our gift is intended to help ensure the continuation of those efforts as well as for the overall work of the Center."

Paul Foster is the president of Franklin Mountain Management, LLC. He is the founder and former executive chairman of Western Refining, Inc., and is a director of Andeavor, a U.S. refining, marketing, and logistics company. Foster is chairman of the University of Texas System Board of Regents and serves on numerous boards, including the El Paso Branch of the Dallas Federal Reserve and the Borderplex Regional Economic Alliance. He is also a founding member of MountainStar Sports Group, owners of the El Paso Chihuahuas and the Ciudad Juarez Bravos.

Alejandra de la Vega Foster is the Secretary of Innovation and Economic Development for the state of Chihuahua, Mexico, and co-owner of MountainStar Sports Group. She is also former president of the FC Juárez soccer team, and CEO of Almacenes Distribuidores de la Frontera. She also serves on several boards and commissions in Texas, El Paso, Juárez and Chihuahua. In 2016, she was appointed to Texas Gov. Greg Abbott's Commission for Women as the vice-chair.

NMSU Chancellor Garrey Carruthers said this gift and another [\\$2.5 million gift from the El Paso-based Hunt Family Foundation](#) announced earlier this year demonstrate that Arrowhead Center truly has an impact that is valued throughout the region.

"Arrowhead Center's work in entrepreneurial education, technology commercialization and economic development extends beyond New Mexico into the entire Borderplex region," Carruthers said. "To improve lives and build our economy, we have to work as an open and collaborative ecosystem, and this generous support from Paul and Alejandra will continue the momentum and propel these partnerships to the next level."

NMSU's Ignite Aggie Discovery campaign has already raised more than \$79 million toward its \$125 million cash goal. For information about the campaign, visit ignite.nmsu.edu.

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Las Cruces Sun News.

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