



# Get A GRIP

TEN YEARS OF PROMOTING  
HEALTHY COMMUNITIES  
BY PROTECTING  
OUR ENVIRONMENT

► **Responsible Mining** ► **Healthy Rivers** ► **Community Planning** ► **Aquifer Protection** ► **Environmental Health** ► **Sustainability**

## STIMULUS DOLLARS SLOWLY COMING TO NEW MEXICO

by Richard Mahler, Editor

New Mexico may wind up with well over \$3-billion — more than double original expectations — in federal stimulus funding, according to the director of the state's Office of Recovery and Reinvestment. Exactly how, when, and where all funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act will be distributed remains unclear.

"Virtually every week there are new programs that are announced," former governor Toney Anaya, who heads the Office of Recovery and Reinvestment, told a KOB-TV interviewer in mid-May. "We're now up to \$2.8-billion [available to New Mexico] and still counting."



*"We're now up to \$2.8-billion . . . and still counting."*

*— Toney Anaya, former governor and director, NM Office of Recovery and Reinvestment*

Anaya speculated that a large percentage of New Mexico's discretionary stimulus money will be spent on road projects, apparently because they are deemed "shovel ready." According to U.S. Sen. Jeff Bingaman's office, at least \$250-million will likely go toward highway improvements, with another \$630-million

SEE NEW MEXICO STIMULUS ON PAGE 7

## VIVA VERDE "GREEN GUIDE" IS HERE

by John Vanvig, Acting Director of Responsible Mining Program

Who stocks compact fluorescent light bulbs? Where can you get flooring that didn't wipe out a forest? How can you connect with free weatherization assistance for low-income families?

The answers to those questions — and many more — can be found in the brand-new Viva Verde Guide. The booklet is a directory of businesses large and small throughout southern New Mexico that offer products and services designed to reduce energy use (and thus cut energy bills), increase efficient use of water and other scarce resources, boost the use of renewable and recycled materials, and generally ease our impact on the environment.

The guide also provides plenty of useful "Green Tips" to help homeowners and business owners reduce energy use, increase efficiency, recycle more, cut water demand, and take other steps toward lowering both financial costs and environmental impacts.

"There's a lot of research out there telling us that people want to buy green and do their part to reduce their carbon footprint," says Allyson Siwik, executive director of GRIP, which took the lead on the Viva Verde Guide project with financial support from the Sierra Club's Rio Grande Chapter, PNM Resources Fund, and McCune Charitable Foundation. "We don't need research to tell us that folks are always looking for ways to cut their energy bills. This guide will help them connect with information and vendors who have what they need."

Mattie Eagle, a GRIP member and Viva Verde volunteer who owns Material Good — "Your Eco Home Store" in Silver City — believes the guide fits into her marketing needs by giving her a tight connection with the people she needs to reach, when they're ready to buy. "I think it certainly is something that will catch the eye," she says. "The 'green' industry is still kind of young ... and many of us operate smaller businesses that have limited budgets for marketing and advertising."

Merchants and vendors from

*"We believe this will be a handy resource for a long time to come. We hope it gets used a lot, so people can save money — and ease their impact on the environment."*

— Allyson Siwik, GRIP Executive Director

throughout southwestern New Mexico are included in the Viva Verde Guide, thanks to volunteers from GRIP, the Southwest Environmental Center, and the Sierra Club's Rio Grande Chapter who worked hard to bring in regional listings and advertisers. Given that the Viva Verde project is part of the education recommendation of its Climate Action Plan, the Silver City Climate Protection Agreement Citizens' Advisory Committee also has been actively involved, providing input on "Green Tips" and other elements of the guide.

Besides a business directory and list of educational resources, the guide contains a calendar of green events throughout the region and various promotional coupons. Its release is in connection with GRIP's Viva Verde Expo, being held the weekend of June 26-28.

More than 200 businesses and organizations from across southern New Mexico are listed in the guide, and over 30 will attend Expo to show off their goods and services. Scores of businesses placed advertising, which helped defray publication costs. The guide is available for free at the Expo, advertisers' place of business, GRIP's office, libraries, and other public locations or on-line at [www.vivaverdenm.com](http://www.vivaverdenm.com). The on-line version has a calendar of southern New Mexico green events. Sign on to the Viva Verde e-mail list and get monthly notices of such activities.



## Gila Resources Information Project

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www.gilaresources.info

### Mission Statement

Recognizing that human and environmental systems are inseparable and interdependent, Gila Resources Information Project pursues two goals: to protect and nurture human communities by safeguarding the natural resources that sustain us all; and to safeguard natural resources by facilitating informed public participation in resource use decisions.

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GRIP was founded in 1997. It is supported by foundation grants and individual donations. Special gratitude for ongoing support is owed to the McCune Charitable Foundation of Santa Fe.

To become a member and receive a copy of Get A GRIP, a minimum donation of \$10.00 is appreciated. GRIP is a 501(c)(3), tax-exempt organization; your contribution is tax-deductible.

# VIVA VERDE EXPO SPEAKERS LINED UP

by Richard Mahler, Editor



Pat Murphy, Executive Director of Community Solutions and Viva Verde Expo's keynote speaker



Catherine Wanek, author and founding member, Builders Without Borders



Miguel Santistevan of Sol Feliz

A wave of enthusiasm is building for Viva Verde Expo 2009, the multi-dimensional "living green" educational conference being organized by GRIP and the Silver City Climate Protection Agreement Citizens' Advisory Committee, and offered to the public during the weekend of June 26-28 in Silver City. The main goal of the event is to raise awareness of the substantial — and ever-expanding — assortment of local strategies, services, stores, and other resources that support sustainable lifestyles, work, and leisure while also sharing a common vision of preserving our planet. Most events require a fee and advance registration, accomplished easily at [www.vivaverdenm.com](http://www.vivaverdenm.com).

Highlights of the Expo include workshops and presentations on "green" jobs, agriculture, construction, energy, and transportation. Featured speakers include keynoter Pat Murphy, executive director of Community Solutions and author of *Plan C: Community Survival Strategies for Peak Oil and Climate Change*. A symposium on government will consider Gov. Bill Richardson's Green Economy Initiative while other discussions examine such topics as climate change, oil depletion, rainwater harvesting, spirituality, native foods, and "animal husbandry for beginners." The dozens of presenters include James Marshall, Silver City Mayor; Catherine Wanek, writer-photographer and founding member of Builders Without Borders; Doug Fine, Mimbres-based NPR commentator and author of *Farewell, My Subaru*; Franciscan Sister Joan Brown of New Mexico Interfaith Power & Light; and Miguel Santistevan, expert on traditional agriculture at Taos-based Sol Feliz. In addition to browsing among informational vendor tables, participants can watch a solar toy car race, taste locally-grown and wild foods, see art made from recyclables, pick up permaculture techniques, attend a "green" film festival, and learn how to repair their own bicycles, operate a solar oven, and build a sun-powered garden dehydrator. Also slated are hands-on workshops, garden tours, group discussions, break-out sessions, information booths, and live entertainment.

The site for most indoor events will be the Global Resource Center of Western New Mexico University and downtown Silver City's Silco Theater. Specialized tours and workshops will be at various locations around the Silver City area. (See a full schedule and locator maps at [www.vivaverdenm.com](http://www.vivaverdenm.com).)

The Expo will run concurrent with release of the Viva Verde Guide, a free resource and education directory detailing information about "green" businesses, organizations, goods, and services available in southern New Mexico (see separate story). Co-sponsors with GRIP for Viva Verde include the Río Grande chapter of the Sierra Club, the Gila Conservation Education Center, and the Town of Silver City's Climate Protection Agreement Citizens' Advisory Committee.

# TYRONE MINE APPEALS WQCC PERMIT DECISION CLOSURE GOES BACK TO COURT OF APPEALS — A SECOND TIME

by Allyson Siwik, GRIP Executive Director

Freeport-McMoRan's Tyrone Mine has appealed a February decision by the New Mexico Water Quality Control Commission (WQCC) requiring that the polluted groundwater underneath the 12,000-acre Tyrone Mine Site be reclaimed and protected from further pollution by Tyrone's ore and waste rock stockpiles. The company's notice states that the appeal is taken on "all substantive, procedural and evidentiary issues" related to the WQCC decision. Bruce Frederick, the New Mexico Environmental Law Center attorney who represents GRIP in the Tyrone appeal, stated that "the company is basically taking the position that its ownership and control of property allows it to pollute the groundwater below the mine."

A review of the legal history of this case demonstrates that the firm doesn't give up easily. Apparently, Freeport has sufficient resources to continue its legal efforts to get out of environmental requirements, despite repeated denials of its petitions and years of legal proceedings. In April 2003, for example, Phelps Dodge Mining Company (now a subsidiary of Phoenix-based Freeport-McMoRan) appealed two conditions for reclaiming the Tyrone mine site upon closure, arguing that water under the mine is not "a place of withdrawal of water for present or reasonably foreseeable future use" and is thus not protected under the state's Water Quality Act. A decision in the company's favor would have relieved it of some reclamation requirements at the site designed to protect groundwater quality.

After a 10-day appeal hearing in June 2004, the WQCC reaffirmed the original Tyrone permit conditions. Phelps Dodge then appealed to the New Mexico Court of Appeals, which reversed the WQCC's decision. The court remanded the case back to the commission and directed the WQCC to develop factors for determining where water quality standards must be met. After more than a year of study and 24 days of expert testimony, the WQCC ruled last winter that New Mexico has the right to protect the quality of *all* groundwater now and for future generations. Additionally, it outlined the factors appropriate for identifying a "place of withdrawal of water for present or foreseeable future use."

At press time, the appeal had not yet been briefed and no date for oral argument was scheduled.

# FREEMPORT-McMoRAN FINED \$276,000 FOR MILLION-GALLON 2007 CHINO ACID SPILL

by Allyson Siwik, GRIP Executive Director

The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) has fined Freeport-McMoRan \$276,000 for violations of the New Mexico Water Quality Act and Water Quality Control Commission regulations. The action follows discharge of an estimated one million gallons of highly acidic pregnant leach solution into a tributary of Lampbright Draw during the summer of 2007. The liquid, which contained a solution of copper and heavy metal-laden sulfuric acid, flowed more than 2 ½ miles down the creek, contaminating surface and groundwater in its path.

According to NMED, the company's four violations included: "allowing the acidic mine waters to move into groundwater without a discharge permit; failing to report the spill on time; degrading groundwater quality with that discharge by allowing the spill to flow into a clean storm water diversion ditch; and failing to lessen impacts from that contamination on time."

As part of the company's corrective action, Chino removed 16,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediment and installed three wells to monitor groundwater contamination. According to NMED, this was the third occurrence of a spill at the same sump within two years.

Although the risk of accidents is inherent to the mining industry, plans are put in place to prevent accidents, as well as to respond to them should they occur. However, in this case the company did not follow its own plans (see GetAGRIP, Winter 2008) due to an apparent lack of sufficient employee training. Strong enforcement by NMED is critical to holding Freeport-McMoRan's feet to the fire in complying with environmental regulations. GRIP hopes that the penalty payment, in conjunction with a settlement-stipulated corrective action proposal and staff training, will help prevent future spills.

## DAVE FOREMAN TO SPEAK AT FESTIVAL

by Donna Stevens,  
GCC Outreach Coordinator

Controversial. Inspiring. Magnetic. These are some of the adjectives used to describe Dave Foreman, keynote speaker for the fifth annual Gila River Festival. The September 17-



20 festival is a series of community-wide events sponsored by the Gila Conservation Coalition, of which GRIP is a partner.

Foreman is currently the Director

and Senior Fellow of the Rewilding Institute, a non-profit organization based in Albuquerque, Dave's hometown. Not content to save a species here or a species there, the Institute has an ambitious vision. It is working to advance continent-scale conservation in North America, with particular emphasis on the needs of large carnivores and for the "landscape permeability" that allows them to move safely and freely.

A man with a long history in the conservation movement, Foreman has worked for The Wilderness Society, served on the boards of the Sierra Club and the New Mexico chapter of The Nature Conservancy, and is a co-founder and past board member of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance. In 1998, Foreman was named by *Audubon* magazine as one of the 100 Champions of Conservation of the twentieth century. This tireless conservationist makes sure he continues to enjoy our remaining wildlands through backpacking, river-running, fly-fishing, hunting, and wilderness photography.

Foreman is the author of several books, including *Rewilding North America*, a 2004 volume in which he describes worldwide major extinction events, the evolution of conservation biology, and the actions we must take to save what's left of our natural world. In *Lobo Outback Funeral Home*, Foreman

SEE DAVE FOREMAN ON PAGE 5

# VIVA VERDE: GREEN JOBS AND MORE

A "green jobs track" is one of several featured sequences available to those attending the Viva Verde Expo. As put forward earlier this year by the Obama Administration, and subsequently passed by Congress, the federal economic stimulus package include billions of dollars for renewable energy, weatherization, and other environment-related projects. Besides mitigating climate change and reducing dependence on fossil fuels, the initiative is said to hold the potential for creating more than two million jobs.

Learn more about the "green" stimulus beginning at 10:15 a.m. on June 27, with a discussion led by Sandra McCardell of the New Mexico Green Collaborative and other distinguished presenters.

Later Viva Verde sessions that day will focus on vocational training, mentorship, education, entrepreneurship, creating a business plan, and business marketing. Presenters will include Bonnie Zelinko of New Mexico's Department of Workforce Solutions, Martin Gomez of NMSU's Institute for Energy and the Environment, Hamilton Williams of Western New Mexico University, and Mary Vigil-Tarazoff of Silver City's Small Business Development Center.



## Viva Verde Expo

JUNE 26 - 28, 2009  
SILVER CITY, NEW MEXICO

**SAVE MONEY & ENERGY  
FUN FOR THE FAMILY**

Learn About:  
The Stimulus  
Green Jobs  
Food Sustainability  
Alternative Transport  
Green Building  
Renewable Energy  
and much, much more!

[www.vivaverdenm.com](http://www.vivaverdenm.com)  
p/f:575.538.8078

## GET A "GREEN" GRIP

Printing and distributing GetAGrip costs money, takes time, and consumes natural resources. We now offer an electronic version of our newsletter via-mail to those who are interested. (The newsletters are also always posted on our website, [www.gilaresources.info/newsletters.shtml](http://www.gilaresources.info/newsletters.shtml).) The content is exactly the same as the print version, but you will help us save postage, paper, and labor while receiving time-sensitive information that much faster. If you would like to make the switch, please let us know. Phone in your request at 538.8078, or send an e-mail message to [grip@gilaresources.info](mailto:grip@gilaresources.info). Thank you!



## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

**Interested in contributing to your community and helping your local non-profit organizations? GRIP and GCC are offering a number of volunteer opportunities: see examples below. For information, contact GRIP at 538.8078 or [grip@gilaresources.info](mailto:grip@gilaresources.info).**

- **Volunteer with Viva Verde and Attend Expo 2009 for FREE!** - Call Marta Goodman, Viva Verde Volunteer Coordinator (388.5557), if you'd like to help out with Viva Verde Expo 2009. We have a variety of volunteer opportunities to choose from — and the registration fee is waived for all Viva Verde volunteers. Volunteers are sought in a number of capacities. For more information, write [info@vivaverdenm.com](mailto:info@vivaverdenm.com) or see [www.vivaverdenm.com](http://www.vivaverdenm.com).
- **5th Annual Gila River Festival** - Numerous volunteer opportunities are available for this September's four-day event.

# CLIMATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE WORKING ON PROPOSAL TO FUND CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

With millions of dollars coming to New Mexico for energy efficiency and conservation, the mayor's Climate Protection Agreement Citizens' Advisory Committee hopes to get a piece of the pie for funding an Office of Sustainability and other energy efficiency and renewable energy projects outlined in its Climate Action Plan. Issued early this year, the plan seeks to reduce municipal emissions of greenhouse gases while saving the town and its taxpayers money, building the local economy, and improving quality of life.

The committee estimates that the Town of Silver City could save between \$115,000 and over \$1-million annually if committee recommendations are followed, that the Town and its residents could reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 23,000 tons each year if the Action Plan is implemented, and that "the 'green collar economy' is an opportunity for Silver City to mitigate the impacts of mine lay-offs."

Specific "action recommendations" by the committee include implementing energy efficiency retrofits in town facilities, promoting residential energy efficiency measures through education and outreach, and facilitating renewable energy generation projects through Solar Financing Districts, installation of photovoltaic solar power systems at town facilities, (see Renewable Energy Incentives article on page 6). The plan and its appendix can be viewed at [www.townofsilvercity.org/legal/2009\\_01\\_15\\_version\\_Town\\_Climate\\_Action\\_Plan.pdf](http://www.townofsilvercity.org/legal/2009_01_15_version_Town_Climate_Action_Plan.pdf) or by contacting the Silver City Town Clerk at 538.3731.



## GRIP CFL Giveaway

GRIP has a supply of compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulbs to give away to those who are interested, with a limit of four per person. Each bulb uses about 13 watts and emits 900 lumens, or the "light" equal to a 65-watt incandescent bulb. Distribution is part of a Sierra Club grant in support of the Viva Verde Expo. Contact the GRIP office if you would like to pick some up before June 26, otherwise they will be available at the Expo. CFL bulbs may be recycled at any Home Depot store. At present local solid waste authorities are not recycling CFLs but it is suggested used bulbs be wrapped in a plastic bag when discarded in household trash.

FROM DAVE FOREMAN ON PAGE 3

branches into fiction, with an eco-thriller that integrates what Dave knows best: biology, backcountry, and disillusionment with the environmental movement.

Because this year's festival theme is "Celebrating 100 Years of Aldo Leopold's Legacy in the Southwest," Foreman's talk will explore the connections between Leopold's conservation ethic and Gila River protection. He will address the question: "Local conservation groups continue in Leopold's footsteps, but how will his legacy be carried into the future?" Everyone is invited to hear Foreman's response — and to get inspired about conservation activism. This keynote talk is scheduled for Friday, September 18, at 7 p.m. at the historic Silco Theater in downtown Silver City. For information about the Gila River Festival,

check out [www.gilaconservation.org](http://www.gilaconservation.org) or call 575 538.8078.



\*

COMING  
SEPTEMBER  
17 THROUGH  
20, 2009

\*



## RENEWABLE ENERGY INCENTIVES WIN BIG IN NM LEGISLATURE

Despite a dismal budget situation, the 2009 New Mexico legislature rallied to pass key pieces of legislation designed to develop “green” jobs, provide incentives for residential renewable energy development, and create alternative energy-efficiency programs at the state’s colleges and universities.

Although the bills were slightly different, both SB 647 (Sen. Peter Wirth) and HB 572 (Rep. Brian Egolf) allow counties and/or municipalities to create special assessment or financing districts in order to facilitate funding of renewable energy improvements. SB 647 specifically allows local governments and homeowners to take advantage of tax-free federal “Qualified Energy Conservation Bonds” that finance renewable energy projects. The bonds are paid off through special assessments. The N.M. Energy Conservation Management Division is currently developing a model ordinance that counties and municipalities can use to establish such districts at the local level.

A number of bills provide tax credits for energy efficiency upgrades and renewable energy development. For instance, the Solar Market Development Tax Credit (SB 257) sponsored by Sen. Keller establishes a state-level 10% solar tax credit that, in combination with the current federal tax credit of 30%, will offset up to 40% of the cost of installing a photovoltaic or thermal solar system.

For a summary of clean energy-related bills passed during the 2009 session or for more information on solar development tax credits and other programs, visit the New Mexico Energy Conservation Management Division at [www.emnrd.state.nm.us/ecmd](http://www.emnrd.state.nm.us/ecmd).

# UPDATE ON ARIZONA WATER SETTLEMENTS ACT PLANNING

by Allyson Siwik, GRIP Executive Director

The Arizona Water Settlements Act (AWSA) Stakeholders Group is poised to initiate a number of water supply, demand, and ecological studies intended to assist the region in assessing the future water supply needs of southwestern New Mexico’s four-county area. The AWSA provides the state “consumptive use” of an additional 14,000 acre-feet of water per year from the Gila and San Francisco Rivers and a federal subsidy of \$66-million to meet water supply needs, regardless of whether additional water is developed in the Upper Gila Basin. The planning process was established to facilitate consensus on how to utilize the AWSA in a cost-effective manner and to balance both historical and future water demands against uncertain supply while protecting the environment.

In 2008, the New Mexico legislature made available \$800,000 for the AWSA planning process. The Stakeholders Group has allocated this funding for contractor support in development of planning studies and other services, including facilitation, data compilation, communications coordination, and modeling.

A draft work plan is being reviewed and discussed for water supply/demand studies and a meeting will be held June 17 to present preliminary results and obtain public input. The 2009 Gila Science Forum is scheduled for June 3 to develop a work plan for ecological studies work based on recommendations of a seven-member expert panel. In late May an economics forum will be held to provide an overview of the economics tools available to assist in the AWSA planning process. All meetings are open to the public.

**2009 Gila Science Forum – June 3; 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.,** Global Resource Center, WNMU. The purpose of this forum is to identify, discuss, and recommend:

- ways of determining the potential effects of flow modification on aquatic and riparian resources of the Gila River (including risks and uncertainty), and
- how information gleaned from such efforts might be integrated to provide an ecosystem-based assessment of effects.

**AWSA Water Supply Study – June 17; 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.,** Grant County Administration Building; Silver City.





“Most of the recovery funds are designed for specific, existing programs — with very little local discretion.”

— NM Governor Bill Richardson

allocated as Medicaid matching funds and \$318-million expected to offset state cutbacks in education and related programs. (New Mexico’s state government predicts a revenue shortfall of about \$575-million in 2009.) Gov. Bill Richardson advised reporters that “most of the recovery funds are designed for specific, existing programs — with very little local discretion.” Nevertheless, more than \$79-million in New Mexico’s stimulus allocations will go to Green Jobs training and renewable energy development as well as energy efficiency, conservation, weatherization, retrofit, and sustainability initiatives. Additional funds are being made available for improving watersheds, reducing erosion, bolstering public transportation, and protecting natural resources. (For a list of state allocations by program title, see [www.recovery.gov](http://www.recovery.gov).)

Stimulus earmarks for Grant County include \$1.34-million for road improvements, about \$3.2-million for schools, and \$210,000 for low-income

housing. The county also will receive a \$126,400 block grant from the Energy Efficiency and Conservation portion of the stimulus package. Projects under consideration for this funding include installation of insulation in the county-owned building at 32nd Street and Highway 180 that previously housed the Teleperformance USA call center. The county government plans to turn the now-empty complex into a multi-purpose facility. A separate stimulus allocation of \$286,200 is slated to improve the region’s public transportation while a portion of an \$82,000 award will improve energy efficiencies at Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument. A little over \$6,000 will supplement emergency food and shelter programs.

Allocations for Luna County include \$10.7-million for Deming schools, \$1.3-million for water and sewage improvements, \$840,000 in highway funds, and \$2.4-million for the Columbus port of entry at the U.S.-Mexico border. In Hidalgo County, \$15.16-million will be spent on the Antelope Wells port of entry, about \$900,000 on area schools, \$400,000 on highway improvements, \$238,000 on health services, and \$231,000 on public housing. Catron County’s stimulus grants include \$1.52 million for road improvements and \$502,000 for schools. The Community Action Agency, which conducts low-income weatherization in all four counties, received just over \$1-million. This will allow for weatherization of 30 to 60 houses in Grant County and roughly the same number in Luna County.

New Mexico’s congressional delegation has set up an online directory to agencies overseeing distribution of stimulus funds. Available to the public, the Recovery Package Resource Guide ([www.bingaman.senate.gov/policy/stimulus\\_guide.cfm](http://www.bingaman.senate.gov/policy/stimulus_guide.cfm)) is intended help agencies and organizations navigate the process of applying for and receiving funds. Detailed data for southern counties are posted on-line by the Southwest



New Mexico Council of Governments at [www.swnmcog.org](http://www.swnmcog.org).

In a related development, U.S. Rep. Ben Ray Lujan of northern New Mexico issued a statement earlier this year urging expansion and extension of “tax credits that encourage renewable energy production and stabilize the industry. An aggressive investment in wind, solar, and biofuels will create millions of new clean energy jobs. We need to modernize our energy grid to accommodate clean energy production, and we need heavy investment in research and development to make renewable energy easier to store and transport.”

In mid-May, Lt. Gov. Diane Denish told an Albuquerque audience that state officials receive inquiries each day from companies interested in developing solar energy, wind farms, and geothermal projects in New Mexico. Denish predicted that our state could become the energy capital of the country and perhaps of the Western Hemisphere.

Earlier during May, Germany-based Schott Solar dedicated its flagship U.S. manufacturing plant in Albuquerque. The 200,000-square-foot facility already employs more than 300 workers and expects to make a long-term investment in New Mexico of up to \$500-million. According to the Associated Press, the plant is the first in the world capable of producing simultaneously both photovoltaic panels for homes and businesses as well as thermal receivers for large-scale power plants.

Meanwhile, construction of a 500,000-panel solar photovoltaic power plant is scheduled to begin next April on the sunny high plains of northeastern New Mexico between Springer and Cimarron. Colorado’s Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association is developing the facility in an agreement with Arizona-based First Solar Inc. It is expected to produce 30 megawatts, or enough electricity to power about 9,000 households.





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## **IN THIS ISSUE:**

- **VIVA VERDE EXPO & GUIDE**
- **TYRONE MINE APPEAL**
- **STIMULUS UPDATE**
- **CHINO SPILL FINE**
- **DAVE FOREMAN TALK**
- **LEGISLATIVE WRAP-UP**
- **AND MORE...**

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## **CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS**

**JUNE 3 - 2009 Gila Science Forum** - 8 am to 5 pm; Western New Mexico University, Global Resources Center Auditorium, Silver City.

**JUNE 17 - Presentation on Southwest New Mexico Water Supply Assessment** - 1 pm to 4 pm, Grant County Administration Building, Silver City.

**JUNE 26-28 - Viva Verde Expo 2009** - Most activities at Western New Mexico University, Global Resources Center and Silco Theater, Silver City. See [www.vivaverdenm.com](http://www.vivaverdenm.com) for schedule, registration, and other details.

**JULY 25 - Gila Conservation Coalition "25th Anniversary at the River"** - 3 pm; check for more information at [www.gilaconservation.org](http://www.gilaconservation.org).

**ONGOING** - For a monthly calendar of upcoming "green events" in southern New Mexico, please visit [www.vivaverdenm.com](http://www.vivaverdenm.com).

## **WATCH "SAVING THE GILA" ON THE INTERNET**

The Gila Conservation Coalition's 25th anniversary video, "Saving the Gila: New Mexico's Last Wild River," now may be viewed via the home page of the group's website: [www.gilaconservation.org](http://www.gilaconservation.org). The production, which runs nine and one-half minutes, provides an excellent overview of the Gila River and its natural communities, including informative commentary and vivid photography.