

# **New Mexico State Land Office**

**Patrick H. Lyons, Commissioner of Public Lands**



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Land Commissioner Announces Land Sale in Dona Ana County**

Santa Fe – Commissioner of Public Lands Patrick Lyons says 2,220 acres of state trust lands in Dona Ana County will go on the auction block in September to create a commercial and industrial zone in Santa Teresa.

Union Pacific, the largest railroad in the United States, has identified the area as the site of its intermodal, or train-to-truck transfer facility, and has announced its intentions to bid on the property during the live auction which will be held on the steps of the Dona Ana County Courthouse at the conclusion of a 10-week advertisement period.

The majority of land – 1,840 acres – is being acquired from the Bureau of Land Management through a land exchange. The State Land Office already owns the remaining 380 acres that will complete the parcel.

In addition, the Land Office is picking up 320 acres on Las Cruces' west side where development is likely in the future.

The BLM will acquire 9,980 acres of trust lands located in Chaves and Dona Ana counties. Most of the acreage – 9,340 acres – is located within the Sand Ranch, an important habitat for the lesser prairie chicken and the sand dune lizard, both candidates for the federal Endangered Species list. Another 640 acres is located on Las Cruces' East Mesa.

During Commissioner Lyons' administration, the Land Office has completed two land exchanges with the BLM.

Federal lands and trust lands are often intermingled, which prevents the BLM and the Land Office from effectively managing their respective lands. Land exchanges are significant because the BLM can consolidate its holdings in wilderness study areas and areas of critical environmental concern, and the Land Office can acquire revenue-generating lands to achieve its mission to support public education.

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“By acquiring these lands the Land Office can create new business and new jobs, and improve the tax base,” Lyons said. “Furthermore, proceeds from the sale of trust lands are paid into the Land Grant Permanent Fund and will continue to generate revenue for public schools and universities.”

Commissioner Lyons and the State Land Office manage nine million acres of surface estate and 13 million mineral acres held in trust primarily for public schools. Revenues earned from energy production, agricultural leasing, and business and community development activity on trust lands support public schools, seven universities, the New Mexico Military Institute, the New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, the New Mexico School for the Deaf, three hospitals, correctional facilities, public building repair and construction, and water projects.

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