



Aubrey Dunn, State Land Commissioner
State of New Mexico

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NMSLO pumpjack heading to San Juan College

SANTA FE, NM – One of the most iconic symbols of the New Mexico State Land Office (NMSLO) under Commissioner Aubrey Dunn will soon grace the grounds of a different institution in the state’s Four Corners region.

NMSLO’s pumpjack – a curious attraction to countless visitors to the City Different – is headed to San Juan College thanks to Commissioner Dunn’s decision to donate the oft-ogled artwork.

The statue, installed in August 2015, is a working model of an oil and gas pumpjack, powered by renewable energy (solar). It represents the “Flynn-Welch-Yates State #3” well, which was the first commercial oil well on State Trust Lands, drilled in 1924.

Commissioner Dunn said the piece was chosen for display in order to symbolize the critical role the oil and gas industry plays in New Mexico and at the State Land Office in particular.

“More than 90 percent of our operating budget is comprised of revenues from oil and gas,” Commissioner Dunn said. “With the installation, we were able to pay tribute to the industry and display a piece of art that has captured the attention of thousands of people over the past few years.”

But in an election year, when political winds are bound to shift and various administrations including NMSLO prepare for a change of the proverbial guard, Commissioner Dunn said he didn’t want the artwork’s fate to be determined by political whim.

“My primary reason for choosing to donate the pumpjack to San Juan College is to ensure that the next administration doesn’t destroy or desecrate this important symbol,” Commissioner Dunn said. “I refuse to let this sculpture be sacrificed at the altar of political gamesmanship.”

Although the donation will leave a temporary void among the agency’s carefully tended grounds, it won’t remain empty for long. Commissioner Dunn is hoping to bring life-sized bronze sculptures that reflect perhaps the most critical component of the agency itself – children and education.

“Everything we do at the State Land Office is done for our beneficiaries,” Commissioner Dunn said. “And with multiple beneficiaries that fall under the education banner, we’re looking for a special piece that pays tribute to the school children of this state.

“These young students are our future,” Dunn continued. “The State Land Office is so important to education in New Mexico; I look forward to installing a new work that immortalizes the importance of this relationship in bronze.”

Anyone interested in donating existing sculptures or creating new pieces specifically for display at NMSLO should contact Assistant Commissioner Kris McNeil at (505) 827-3650. Photos or artist’s renderings can be submitted for consideration via e-mail to kmcneil@slo.state.nm.us.

Oil, gas, and mineral production, ranching and farming, and commercial development on State Trust Lands support public schools, seven universities, New Mexico Military Institute, New Mexico School for the Deaf, New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, three hospitals, correctional facilities, water conservation projects, and public building construction and repair. In fiscal year 2017, the State Land Office collected \$664 million from lease payments, oil and gas lease sale earnings, rights-of-way, permits, interest, fees, and oil, gas, and mineral royalties.