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**PNM'S ENCHANTMENT ENERGY TRUST HELPS BRING POWER
FROM THE SUN TO OBSERVATORY**

(ALBUQUERQUE, NM) –The Albuquerque Astronomical Society's General Nathan Twining Observatory west of Belen will now use solar energy to run its telescopes and other equipment. A grant from PNM's Enchantment Energy Trust and technical assistance from Energía Total of Corrales, a company specializing in design, procurement, and installation of small alternative energy systems, made the energizing of the observatory possible. The solar system was installed on February 26 and February 27.

The Albuquerque Astronomical Society Observatory is located several miles from the nearest power line/substation, so interconnection to regular electrical service was not workable.

"There are areas in the state that need electric service; and running lines from the closest service is not feasible for various reasons," said Toni Ristau, of PNM's Enchantment Energy Trust. "In addition, a growing number of people and organizations are interested in exploring the use of energy sources that may have fewer adverse environmental impacts than the conventional energy sources that provide power for most of us. The goal of this project was to demonstrate that alternatives such as solar energy can provide cost-effective solutions when remote locations, such as this observatory, need a reliable energy source," Ristau said.

"The most important thing about this project is that it sets precedent for serving remote applications with solar energy," said Ron Orozco of Energía Total. "Thousands of homes in remote locations are without good power, and solar is an applicable choice for those residents. The observatory project shows that we can even go beyond residences with solar power."

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“The addition of stable power makes the observatory a public resource and a serious scientific tool, “ Michael Pendley of The Albuquerque Astronomical Society said. “Soon the Society will make the facility available to the public through special viewing sessions, student science fair projects, and on-site technical presentations. Having power will also allow the Society to gather and process data on-site.”

Photos of the observatory and its new solar array can be viewed at www.taas.org, the Society's web address.

Other projects selected by PNM's Enchantment Energy Trust for installation later this year include:

- Greater World Community/Solar Survival/Paradise Power's proposal for solar/wind electrical and direct power to serve the non-profit organization's community center located near Taos; and
- The City of Albuquerque/Sacramento Municipal Utility District's proposal for a solar powered bus wash at the City Transit Department's facility in Albuquerque.

PNM's Enchantment Energy Trust was formed in mid-1997, when PNM shareholders provided \$100,000 in seed money for alternative energy demonstration projects. An Advisory Group, made up of New Mexican experts in renewable energy, conservation, and environmental issues, was formed to assist PNM in selecting recipient sites and technologies for demonstration.

The Enchantment Energy Trust is part of PNM's overall “green initiatives.” Related efforts include PNM's participation in the Climate Challenge Program. The Climate Challenge Program is a joint, voluntary effort of the U.S. Department of Energy and the electric utility industry to reduce, avoid or isolate greenhouse gas emissions.

PNM is an integrated energy company providing electric and natural gas service to more than 1.3 million people in the state of New Mexico. It markets power to wholesale customers throughout the United States and offers a comprehensive range of energy and water management services to municipalities, government agencies and other institutional clients.

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