



## FRIDAY THE 13<sup>TH</sup> IS LUCKY FOR BELEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

ALBUQUERQUE – March 6, 2009 – School students at La Merced Elementary School in Belen will be feeling lucky on Friday, March 13<sup>th</sup>, at 9:00 a.m., when they plant a Burgundy Desert Willow tree on their campus in celebration of New Mexico Arbor Day.

Joining the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students for the occasion will be “Dusty Roadrunner,” Keep New Mexico Beautiful’s popular mascot, along with Molly Madden, KNMB’s education and outreach specialist, plus 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher Rebekah Gutierrez and Donnette Henderson, Outdoor Club sponsor. A proclamation signed by Belen mayor Ronnie Torres will be read. Sponsors of the day’s event are Keep New Mexico Beautiful, the PNM Foundation and the U.S. New Mexico Federal Credit Union.

Arbor Day is a nationally-celebrated observance that encourages tree planting and care. National Arbor Day was founded by J. Sterling Morton in 1872 and is celebrated on the last Friday in April. In New Mexico it is celebrated each year on the second Friday of March.

Last fall “Dusty Roadrunner” and Ms. Madden traveled to 20 schools in seven counties throughout New Mexico to teach important lessons about waste reduction and management. To offset the carbon emitted by Dusty’s travels and combat climate change, each participating school is given a tree to plant on their school campus. La Merced Elementary School was a “Dusty Roadrunner on the Road” participant. This program was made possible by a grant to Keep New Mexico Beautiful from the PNM Resources Foundation.

For more information about Keep New Mexico Beautiful, Inc. and its grant program, please visit [www.knmb.org](http://www.knmb.org) or call the KNMB office at 883-5559 in Albuquerque. KNMB is the statewide clearinghouse for sustainable beautification efforts, through education, assistance, programs and recognition. In 2008, KNMB funded 74 grant applications.

###