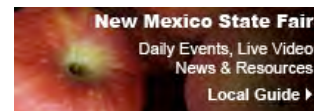




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Advocates bend governor's budget ear

Updated: Wednesday, 16 Sep 2009, 9:47 PM MDT
Published : Wednesday, 16 Sep 2009, 9:47 PM MDT

ALBUQUERQUE (KRQE) - Everyone from the symphony leader to WNBA basketball fan had pretty much the same budget advice for Gov. Bill Richardson Wednesday: "Spare us!"

A \$433 million hole in New Mexico's budget needs to be closed, and Richardson already has been getting a steady earful from lawmakers about what to do during a special session of the Legislature expected to be called next month.

On Wednesday he held open office hours and heard from those who don't want their programs cut and every-day citizens who had five minutes to make their pitches.

When Guillermo Figueroa, the music director of the New Mexico Symphony Orchestra, got his time, he got straight to the point.

"We're in the midst of a very difficult situation," he told the governor.

The symphony leader joined advocates for adult literacy programs, professionals running drug treatment programs and even a Santa Fe retiree wanting the state to bring a Women's National Basketball Association team to Albuquerque. Each got one-on-one time with the governor and some staffers.

The New Mexico Symphony recently laid off several staffers and cut insurance coverage for others. It gets \$47,000 from the state through the Office of Cultural Affairs.

And Figueroa wants Richardson to find more money for the symphony.

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"Because of the breakdown of corporate and individual funding, we are in a very serious crisis," said Figueroa. "Well over 100 jobs at stake."

The governor told symphony leaders he supports them and offered to guide them towards getting corporate help.

Richardson will hold office hours Friday to get feedback from people in Albuquerque. He'll be at the CNM Workforce Training Center, 5600 Eagle Rock Ave. NE, from 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

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 DANNY · 5 days ago

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TIL THE DAY THAT THIS CLOWN LEAVES OFFICE I WILL SAY WHAT I HAVE TO SAY ABOUT HIM. HE IS A JOKE HE HAS SPENT TO MUCH OF THIS STATES MONEY FOR HIS OWN AGENDA SO I ASK YOU A.. CLOWNS WHO THINK HE HAS DONE GOOD SHOW ME WHERE IT IS BECAUSE ALL I SEE IS THIS A.. CLOWN COSTING MORE AND THE STATE GETTING LESS

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 Let them eat cake · 5 days ago

0

It should be clear to anyone "bending his ear" by now that all you have to do to get money is cut him in for part of your deal. Like when the state gave \$68 Million to BNSF for their Northern Route trackage in New Mexico after they made a big donation to Bill's campaign. They had to be dancing in the streets after unloading that trackage that the state now pays huge dollars to maintain. Pay to play, boys, pay to play.

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