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**TELLURIDE FOUNDATION RECEIVES \$ 999,684 TO HELP STRENGTHEN
COMMUNITIES AND NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS IN RURAL SOUTHWEST
COLORADO**

TELLURIDE, Colo. (October 7, 2009) – The Telluride Foundation was one of 35 nationwide grantees to receive American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Stimulus funding from Department of Health and Human Service’s Strengthening Communities Fund for the west ends of San Miguel, Dolores, Montrose and Montezuma Counties. The purpose of the Strengthening Communities Fund is to improve the ability of nonprofit organizations to promote the economic recovery of people with low incomes. Grant funding of \$999,684 will be used to build the capacity of nonprofit partners in order to address the broad economic recovery issues present our community, including helping low-income individuals secure and retain employment, earn higher wages, obtain better-quality jobs, and gain greater access to state and Federal benefits and tax credits in the western and rural portions of San Miguel, Montrose, Dolores and Montezuma counties, including the communities of Norwood, Egnar, Naturita, Nucla, Paradox, Dolores, Dove Creek and the unincorporated areas of western Montezuma County.

“We will work to make this a breakthrough opportunity for our neighbors west to create new and sustainable enterprises, products, services and jobs,” said Paul Major, President and CEO of the Telluride Foundation, “The purpose of this grant money is not to fund direct services but to create new grassroots enterprises and to boost the operational capacity of existing organizations with such things as purchasing new computers, hiring additional staff, or developing a marketable product and plan. This will be tremendous opportunity for the region to define and guide what their economic recovery will look like.”

In partnership with JVA Consulting, and the National Center for Social Entrepreneurs, over two years, grant funding will enable the Telluride Foundation and its partners to build the capacity of over 60 community based organizations to not only address broad economic recovery issues, but also to become job creators through development of social enterprises. The goal of the project is to build nonprofit organization’s capacity to operate more effectively, deliver higher quality services, support access to public benefits and contribute to the economic recovery of the area through

earned income strategies and social enterprises that employ low-income individuals. A two-track training and technical assistance approach (social enterprise and operational effectiveness), complemented by two competitive financial assistance cycles awarding 60% of federal funds, will build the nonprofit organization's operational capacity, as well as their capacity to run and to partner with effective social enterprises, establishing a new model for supporting economic recovery and renewal in rural America.

Nonprofit capacity building will include: comprehensive assessment of each organization and tailoring the capacity building to address its particular needs and strengths; a deliberate focus on identifying and building on the strengths and assets of each organization in the context of its community (finding and using hidden capital: peer learning cohorts; inclusion of community organizations who can contribute to economic recovery; trainers and consultants who are knowledgeable about rural communities; and minimizing the burden of travel and time away for the nonprofit organizations.)

The overarching goal is to build the capacity of nonprofit organizations in the area to address broad economic recovery issues present in their distressed communities. Long affected by the boom-and-bust cycles of resource extraction (uranium, oil and gas), now exacerbated by declines in tourism and in farm prices, the targeted area of Montrose, San Miguel, Dolores and Montezuma counties are economically distressed. Dolores County has Colorado's highest unemployment rate, and each county's poverty and unemployment rates exceed the state's.

“Our approach will be to integrate best practices for capacity building in rural communities, building not only the capacity of individual nonprofit organizations, but also the overall community capacity, said Major. “For the purposed of this grant, non profit will be broadly defined. Organizations with a nonprofit 501 c-3 status will be eligible as well as faith based organizations and community groups.”

JVA Consulting (www.jvaconsulting.com) will provide much of the training and technical assistance. The Colorado based research and consulting firm has a 21-year track record working to advance the effectiveness and sustainability of nonprofit organizations in Colorado and across the country, working with hundreds of organizations annually. Since 2002, JVA has served as the Colorado intermediary for the Compassion Capital Fund, with demonstrated results. A study of JVA's work with 126 faith-based and community organizations found that all increased their organizational capacity and on average experienced a 25 percent growth in revenues. These findings have been presented nationally and were published in the March 2007 issue of *Research on Social Work Practice*.

The National Center for Social Entrepreneurs has an over 25-year history of providing training, consulting and technical assistance to nonprofits for the purpose of creating mission-driven new business ventures. As a 501c3 nonprofit organization, NCSE has helped nonprofit organizations launch hundreds of successful social enterprises in urban, suburban and rural communities across the country.

The Telluride Foundation exists to create a stronger Telluride community through the promotion and support of philanthropy. It is a non-profit, apolitical community foundation that provides year-round support for local organizations involved in arts, education, athletics, charitable causes, land conservation and other community-based efforts through technical assistance, education and grant making. As a grant maker, The Foundation awards grants to qualified applicants that serve the people living and working in the Telluride area for the purpose of enhancing the quality of life within the region. For more information on the Telluride Foundation, visit www.telluridefoundation.org.

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