

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### ***Ground Zero in New Mexico: Award-Winning Documentary First We Bombed New Mexico Screens April 9 in Mescalero***

**Mescalero, NM** — A newly re-edited and re-released version of the acclaimed feature documentary *First We Bombed New Mexico* will screen at the Inn of the Mountain Gods in Mescalero **at 3:00 PM** — near the very county where the atomic age began.

On July 16, 1945, the world's first atomic bomb was detonated at the Trinity Site — located in **Socorro County**. What followed was widespread radioactive fallout that blanketed surrounding communities. For decades, residents were never warned, never evacuated, and never compensated. Now, 80 years later, the story returns home.

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#### **New Mexico: The Epicenter of Exposure**

Socorro County was the geographic epicenter of the Trinity test and its immediate fallout. Nearby counties like Lincoln were certainly over-exposed to radiation as well. Families living near the blast site were unknowingly exposed to radioactive ash that settled into soil, water, crops, and livestock. Children played in the white powder. Mothers cooked with contaminated water. Ranching and farming communities absorbed the fallout into daily life — without ever being told the risks.

The documentary brings forward the long-term human cost of that silence.

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#### **A Story of Persistence and Historic Victory**

*First We Bombed New Mexico* follows cancer survivor and activist **Tina Cordova** and the Tularosa Basin Downwinders Consortium in their decades-long fight to secure federal recognition and compensation for those harmed by the Trinity test.

The film earned multiple honors during the 2024 festival circuit, including **Best Documentary at the 2024 Las Cruces International Film Festival**, and generated standing ovations and added screenings nationwide.

After 80 years of exclusion, a historic breakthrough came on **July 4, 2025**, when the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA) was expanded to include New Mexico Downwinders. Eligible residents may now apply for compensation ranging from **\$100,000 to \$300,000 per claim**.

In addition, New Mexico legislators unanimously approved a permanent historic marker at the Stallion Gate entrance to Trinity Site on Highway 380 — just miles from Socorro — formally recognizing the suffering of impacted communities.

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## A Newly Updated Film Reflecting a Turning Point

In response to these long-awaited victories, award-winning Santa Fe director **Lois Lipman** filmed new material and re-edited the documentary, creating a more complete and victorious narrative arc.

Lipman, whose career includes producing for *60 Minutes* and earning Emmy and Peabody honors, underscores the urgency:

“The updated film stands as both a testament to grassroots activism and a call to action for continued environmental justice. As Downwinders begin the long-overdue compensation process, New Mexican communities continue to face generational health impacts — and global nuclear instability once again looms.”

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## Community Discussion & RECA Information Session

The screening, a Special Event, is part of the Center for Excellence in Social Work's 3rd Annual NM Social Work Education Summit, A spectrum of liberatory social work: From education to social transformation from April 9–10, 2026. Attendees will participate in a live discussion with the filmmaker and Tina Cordova. The conversation will include practical guidance on RECA eligibility and how to apply for benefits.

This screening is not only a film event — it is an opportunity to learn how to connect communities at the center of the original exposure to access long-overdue justice.

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## Event Details

**What:** Screening of *First We Bombed New Mexico* (Updated Version)

**When:** April 9, 3:00 PM followed by a Q&A with Lois Lipman and Tina Cordova

**Where:** Inn of the Mountain Gods, Mescalero NM



Lois Lipman



Tina Cordova

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## Learn More

Film: <https://www.firstwebombednewmexico.com/>

Co-Sponsor: Native American Social Work Studies Institute- <https://www.naswsi.org/>

The Native American Social Work Studies Institute (NASWSI) is established to respond to the unique needs and challenges faced by Tribal communities (Diné, Apache, and Pueblo) and their families and children in the state of New Mexico. NASWSI is situated within New Mexico Highlands University, Facundo Valdez School of Social Work and is the first effort anywhere in the country by a school of social work to establish a program of study to respond directly to the call of Tribal governments for education of their people and their right to define an adaptable response to societal changes.

Co-Sponsor: Center for Excellence in Social Work - <https://nmcesw.org/>

Situated within New Mexico Highlands University's Facundo Valdez School of Social Work (FVSSW), the Center for Excellence in Social Work (Center) was established in 2022 by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham with the aim of enhancing our state's capacity to train and prepare social workers for competent practice with multicultural populations and communities.

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