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NEWS RELEASE

Valles Caldera Board of Trustees Selects Executive Director

The Valles Caldera Trust is pleased to announce the employment of Gary D. Bratcher to the position of Executive Director, effective January 4, 2009.

Mr. Bratcher grew up in Artesia, New Mexico, where the family owned and operated farming operations producing cotton, alfalfa, grain, chile and livestock. His wife, the former Jeanette Machura, is from Carlsbad, New Mexico. Mr. Bratcher is a graduate of Eastern New Mexico University with a Bachelor's Degree in Agribusiness and a Master's Degree in Business Administration. Gary is bilingual speaking English and Spanish. Gary and his wife presently reside in Decatur, Texas, where they raise quarter horses. Gary will report to the Valles Caldera Trust on January 5, 2009.

Bratcher has over 30 years experience in supervision and management. He started his career in agricultural operations and management with the United Fruit Company in the Republic of Honduras. His career with United took him from Honduras to Colombia, Costa Rica, and the Corporate Office in New York City. Upon leaving United, Gary joined the Del Monte Banana Company, today known as Del Monte Fresh Produce. At Del Monte, he served in executive positions in sales and production operations in Florida, the Philippines, Guatemala, and Costa Rica. He ended his career with Del Monte Fresh Produce as President and CEO in Coral Gables, Florida.

After a short retirement, Gary was appointed to the position of Cabinet Secretary for Economic Development by the State of New Mexico and subsequently served as Interim Chief Executive Officer of the New Mexico State Lottery. He also served on several Boards and Commissions for the state including the New Mexico Space Commission, is a Past Chairman of the New Mexico Border Authority, and was on the Board of Leadership New Mexico.

In accepting the position with the Trust, Bratcher said "I am looking forward to playing a role in the most unique program in the country dealing with public land. The concept of organizing and operating a financially self-sufficient working ranch within a national preserve is something new and the success of this venture will be a big factor in the government's ability to create similar preservation programs for public benefit. I look forward to working with the Board, the Trust staff, and the public to achieve this".

Valles Caldera Board Chairperson William Keleher said "the preserve is fortunate to engage an Executive Director with both private and business experience. Gary understands the mandate of

Congress that the Preserve become financially self-sufficient, yet, he also understands the Preserve is extremely important from an environmental and recreation standpoint. Also, if the Preserve is to become financially self-sufficient it must do so while at the same time working in harmony with the other mandates of Congress”.

The Valles Caldera Trust oversees the Valles Caldera National Preserve, formerly the privately owned “Baca Ranch”. The 89,000-acre property is located in the Jemez Mountains in northern New Mexico. It was purchased by the federal government in 2000 under the Valles Caldera Preservation Act. The property is known for its huge meadows, abundant wildlife, meandering streams, and remarkable scenery. The mission of the Valles Caldera Trust is to create a successful model of public land management that protects and preserves the Valles Caldera National Preserve’s unique values. Toward that end, the Trust will operate the Preserve as a working ranch; strive to become financially self-sustaining; meet varied needs of visitors; strive to utilize and steward the multiple resources of the preserve; and work collaboratively with our neighbors.

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