



Public Affairs

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September 26, 2002



NATIVE SON RETURNS HOME WITH HOPES TO STRENGTHEN NEW MEXICO ECONOMY

For Andres (Andy) Salazar, the journey to reach his destination has come full circle. It's been a long trip for the New Mexico native who returned to his home state earlier this year. In fact, it's been 37 years, five

states and one foreign country to be exact.

"I feel a little like the prodigal son," said Salazar. "Everyone says, 'We're glad you're back. We're glad you're here.' It's a great feeling to be among old friends and relatives, not to mention the great food and ambiance of New Mexico. ...the blue skies, the mountains and the green chili, it's refreshing to experience these things again."

Salazar, who was born in San Juan Pueblo, returned to New Mexico last February after living in Michigan, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Florida and Georgia. Shortly after his arrival, he was presented with the University of New Mexico's "Outstanding Engineering Alumnus" award and then an opportunity presented itself with the newly-created PNM Chair in Microsystems, Commercialization and Technology at UNM.

The endowed chair, originally funded by PNM in 1985, was redesigned last year to recruit and support a faculty member in the Anderson Schools of Management (ASM) and the School of Engineering (SOE). The position, advertised in a nationwide search process, appeared to be a perfect fit for Salazar's experience that includes research, business development and leadership in high tech companies. These were traits that SOE Dean Joe Cecchi and ASM Dean Howard Smith were seeking in the person that would fill the position, but they got other attractive attributes in Salazar as well. Notably, he had international training, experience in economic development, spoke Spanish and was a native New Mexican.

"We are indeed lucky to have a relationship with someone whose reputation and qualifications are as outstanding as Dr. Salazar's," said Smith, who chaired the search committee along with Dean Cecchi.

"The creative and innovative ways in which Professor Salazar has combined commercialization and technology throughout his illustrious career exemplifies what Dean Smith and I envision for our business and engineering partnership," said Cecchi. "Given his background and accomplishments, Andy is ideally positioned to lead this exciting, collaborative engagement."

Salazar knew that one day he would return to New Mexico and the timing couldn't have been better. Last year, he was CEO at DTS, a public company in Atlanta that had been given the "Georgia Top 100 Award" in 2000, when the telecom industry was hit hard in Wall Street and equity capital markets dried up. The company divested itself of a number of telecom equipment subsidiary assets and Salazar felt it was time to move on.

"I knew late last year that I wanted to try something new, so I decided to come back to New Mexico," Salazar said. "I always wanted to return and it was a good time to make the break. I had done a lot of interesting things already on the East Coast, spending 13 years in technical research and development, and 22 years in executive management that included eight years of running a company and taking that company public, with plenty of recognition for my work.

"I thought UNM would be a great place to work from in some economic development role. I talked to people at the business school and at the school of engineering. When I learned about the PNM Chair it just felt like the right fit for me. It allows me to teach, to work with industry and to reach out to the economic development community."

Salazar spent much of the last two decades working in the corporate world since leaving New Mexico in 1965 with three degrees from UNM including a master of science and bachelor's of science, both in electrical engineering, and a bachelor of arts in Math. After receiving his Ph.D. in electrical engineering from Michigan State University at the age of 24, he had several stints at AT&T Bell Labs, first as a researcher, then as a developer, manager and eventually vice president. In 1991-93 he was chief technical officer (CTO) of AT&T Paradyne, one of only 23 people to hold the CTO title in AT&T and its divisions at that time.

In the last 22 years of his senior management career, he has held positions ranging from chairman, chief executive officer, general manager, group vice president, vice president at various companies located in California, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Florida and Georgia. Salazar received business management training at AT&T and through seminars at the Wharton School and Stanford University. He eventually received his MBA at the Edinburgh Business School of Heriot-Watt University in the U.K. In 1975-76 he served as a telecommunications expert for the Geneva, Switzerland based International Telecommunication Union agency of the United Nations.

"I was trained in Geneva and sent to Mexico City, representing the UN as an advisor to the Secretaria de Comunicaciones y Transporte," he said. "That post really cleaned up my technical Spanish because I had to speak it in all business meetings and classes. Working for the UN forces you to learn diplomatic relations and economic development first hand. That year, my family experienced the living conditions in a developing country by traveling throughout Mexico."

During his business management career Salazar traveled extensively in Europe, Asia and South America visiting customers, suppliers and subsidiaries. He is a board member of a company in Mexico City, one of three high tech company board memberships he currently holds. As a senior executive at various companies, he has managed manufacturing, customer service,



marketing and systems development departments. At Bell Labs he was vice president of an advanced development laboratory that developed VLSI chips for switching modules and voiceband modems.

Science has always been a big part of Salazar's life dating back to his years in the Espanola public schools. It's what took him away from the state of New Mexico a number of years ago, and it is what has brought him back. His new position as PNM Chair follows the path he charted at Espanola High School where he played basketball and won awards for service, drama, oratory and where he graduated as co-valedictorian.

Salazar's interest in science began during the days of Sputnik, which made an impression on the would-be scientist. The Soviets launched Sputnik, the first man-made satellite, on Oct. 4, 1957.

"When Sputnik came along, the National Science Foundation (NSF) and several other government-sponsored agencies wanted to encourage high school students to go into science," Salazar recalled. "They funded the science summer camps I attended in 1959 and 1960 at Denver University, Brigham Young University and Montana State College. So there was a lot of emphasis on technical training back then for high school and college students.

"The Espanola Valley was also the home for a lot of workers at Los Alamos National Laboratory, so I was always in contact with science and technology. People in Espanola worked as scientists, engineers and technicians. One of my brothers was a draftsman at Los Alamos. I visited Los Alamos often and saw the nuclear reactors and my interest in science continued to grow."

Following graduation from Espanola High School, Salazar received a scholarship to Purdue University, but continued his education in-state and also received a scholarship to attend UNM where he "filled his plate" with science and engineering for five years, earning three degrees with UNM and NSF scholarships and grants. In 1965, Salazar was awarded an NSF grant to study for a Ph.D. in electrical engineering at Michigan State University in East Lansing, Michigan, which he completed in 1967.

Despite the current struggles of the state's and national economy, Salazar is excited about his new role at UNM. Besides teaching courses in both the engineering and business areas, Salazar will be involved in commercialization of technology in the state and especially helping to grow the microsystems industry base in New Mexico.

"I have witnessed the enormous impact that the miniaturization of electronic circuits has had on society," said Salazar. "On a tiny area of semiconductor material, sensors together with tremendous processing power can be realized so that electronic applications benefiting society can be made smaller, more cheaply and more reliably. And UNM and Sandia National Laboratories scientists and engineers have generated a lot of intellectual capital in microsystems in recent years. This has resulted in a tremendous potential for spawning a collection of

companies that exploit this technology and in that process, create high paying jobs in the state.

“I’ve been talking with state government people,” he says. “Over a third of the jobs in this state are government funded in some way. We need to bring about other industry here to diversify the labor market. The question is ‘what forms of technology do we have here that we can build upon and leverage and grow an industry cluster?’ That’s the challenge.

“How do we prepare people to get some of these things going? It is not enough to have technology available. The state and the University each play an important role, and the investment community plays an important role. My position here at UNM, as funded by PNM, is to find ways in which these three stakeholders can work together to produce a more diversified economy by helping to create companies that take advantage of the technology available in the state. These companies would have to compete globally and generate sales of products and services to businesses and customers outside the state. New Mexico needs more exports to other states and other countries in order to increase its overall economic wealth. Only six percent of our jobs in New Mexico are in manufacturing of products, where the national average is 16 percent. Work being conducted by the RDC in Northern New Mexico and by Next Generation Economy, Inc, in Central New Mexico is already generating results.

“The hope is that my experience in industry, management, technology, commercialization and my knowledge of New Mexico can contribute to the work of those organizations and others that aim to diversify New Mexico’s economy,” he said.

Salazar met his wife, Jean, at Bell Labs in New Jersey after she had been hired there from Akron University. They married after a year of courtship and they have lived more than 15 years in New Jersey, eight years in the Boston area, three years in Florida and eight years in Georgia. In addition to the home being built in Santa Fe, the two have a house in Albuquerque and have three grown daughters all living out of state. “We’re frequent flyers,” he jokes. Closer to home, Salazar has a sister living in Albuquerque and a brother residing in San Juan Pueblo as well as numerous relatives throughout northern New Mexico.

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