

Glorieta cancels event on aging

Associated Press
Thursday, February 1, 2007

SANTA FE — A state-sponsored annual conference on aging has moved from the Baptist-owned Glorieta Conference Center because the center tried to restrict discussions on gay issues.

A spokesman for the state Aging and Long-Term Services Department said the annual conference will be held this August at Sandia Pueblo's resort just north of Albuquerque, the Santa Fe New Mexican reported in a copyright story Wednesday.

Last year's conference drew about 1,000 people to the LifeWay Glorieta Conference Center, about 20 miles from Santa Fe, that is owned by a Southern Baptist organization in Nashville, Tenn. The state agency paid about \$51,000 to hold the three-day event at the conference center.

The annual conference, which discusses subjects of interest to older New Mexicans, has been held at Glorieta for 26 years.

Last year, marketers for RainbowVision, a Santa Fe residential community that caters to older gays, made a presentation at the conference on "Designing Communities for the Gay and Gray."

No one made an issue of it during the conference. But the center's manager, Hal Hill, later questioned why the department's contract shouldn't prohibit teachings that do not reflect Baptist heritage. He said Tuesday the problem wasn't with the retirement community, rather with teachings that run counter to "what the Bible tells us in regard to family."

The state agency for years agreed to a contract provision that was intended to prohibit teachings that would be against Baptist teachings. However, the center removed the clause a year or two ago when the state agency's attorney questioned it, Hill said.

Hill wanted the provision reinstated in this year's contract, but the state agency would not agree.

Agency spokesman John Arnold, in a statement, wrote that the proposed contract language "would have denied First Amendment rights to individuals and-or aging network providers."