

SOUTHWEST  
NEW MEXICO

2016

# Legislative GUIDE

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# STAYING THE SAME?

More change than you might think



You hear it all the time in politics.

"Vote the bums out!"

"We need to clean house!"

"Term limits!"

Most politically aware New Mexicans have had those feelings more than once about one elected official or another.

By and large, though, voters make the system work. Unfortunately, the number of voters is far fewer than it should be.

This is the 12th year for the Las Cruces Bulletin's Southwest New Mexico Legislative Guide, and the sixth I've helped produce.

In just those six years, there has been more change in the New Mexico Legislature than you would guess.

Of the 11 state senate positions we profile closely, only four of them are held by the same people who held them in 2011.

Of the 16 representatives of the House, nine are the same as they were in 2011. However, two of them had interruptions of service and came back: Rick Little and Andy Nuñez each lost elections, but came back in later cycles and won.

Some legislators were defeated after decades of public service.

We lost another representative when Philip Archuleta passed away.

As in life, change is ever-present in the New Mexico Legislature.

The biggest change, of course, came in the 2014 elections, when Republicans took over leadership of the House for the first time in more than 60 years.

Critics will say the divided legislature only created more gridlock.

Others say that's why the legislature exists — to provide checks and balances on each other.

At any rate, some of you who asked for change got it. Others are still bucking for different changes. Those will likely come, too, sooner or later.

The last six years have brought other changes to Santa Fe and the nine counties we cover closely in our guide.

Some counties and cities have had continuity in that time. Mayor Ken Miyagishima and Mayor Ravi Bhasker, Las Cruces and Socorro, for example, have been in those positions for a number of years. Other municipalities have seen near-complete turnover in their elected officials.

New businesses and opportunities have come and other entities have gone away as New Mexico battles the entropy of its economy.

We've lost some icons, such as the Outpost Bar & Grill in Carrizozo (the best green chile cheeseburger ever) and the Buffalo Bar in Silver City (though some locals said good riddance).

On the other hand we've gained new possibilities. Union Pacific's expansion and some timely decisions with border commerce at Santa Teresa, along with efforts in other areas in the state, have helped New Mexico rise to No. 1 in the country in export growth to Mexico, and No. 1 in job growth associated with exports.

Here's hoping this year's legislative session can lay groundwork for our rising in other lists where we typically find ourselves near the bottom.

As we know from visiting the many majestic mountain vistas in the Land of Enchantment, the view's a lot better from the top.

**RICHARD COLTHARP**  
*Publisher, Las Cruces Bulletin*



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## SHORT SESSION TACKLES BUDGET, INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS, REAL ID ACT, EDUCATION

BY TRACY ROY

Throughout the 30-day, budget-focused legislative session in Santa Fe, beginning Jan. 19, 70 representatives and 42 senators come to the table with proposals and requests for the New Mexicans they represent.

Topping most districts' list of priorities are infrastructure needs.

Dist. 53 Rep. Rick Little (R-Doña Ana, Otero) described New Mexico's infrastructure as being in "critical condition," and believes the Legislature should reevaluate how funds are allocated. The legislator profiles and county snapshots throughout this guide detail an abundance of infrastructure needs throughout the state.

"I believe government should and could run more efficiently and taxpayer funds should be spent on mandatory state infrastructure and requirements, such as roads and education, first," Little said.

As legislators nail down budgetary requests, revenue projections are shrinking, according to a recent report from the Associated Press. Testimony during a Legislative Finance Committee meeting in Santa Fe pointed to declining revenue from oil and gas production tempered by "slow but stable" growth in the state economy. Despite economic gains, finance officials reported New Mexico is expected to have less revenue than expected by the end of the current fiscal year, trimmed to approximately \$232 million.

"State Finance and Administration Secretary Tom Clifford says revenues could be bolstered by increases in federal spending and lower retail gasoline rates could result in more spending by consumers," the AP article said.

Dist. 39 Rep. John Zimmerman (R-Doña Ana, Grant, Sierra) doesn't expect there to be much capital outlay funding to go around.

"With the declining price of a barrel of oil, it will be difficult to fund state government even with modest increases to their budgets, and some will have to be held flat," he said. "Until we have a budget approved, it isn't known how much, if any, capital outlay will be available."

In addition to balancing the budget, legislators will address a handful of issues, hand-picked by Gov. Susana Martinez.

Roundly considered a "sure-thing" issue by legislators, including Zimmerman, is a recent announcement New Mexico drivers licenses would no longer meet criteria established by the federal REAL ID Act, invalidating them as means to enter federal buildings and bases in 2018.

"I'm interested in seeing what kind of legislation is brought forward," Dist. 52 Rep. Yvette Herrell (R-Otero) said. "I've heard the governor is wanting to get completely compliant with the REAL ID act so I don't know what that will look like, if it will be a repeal of what we currently have on the books or a completely different bill."

A divisive issue likely to come up is Martinez' opposition to the practice of "social promotion" in schools, which allows children to progress past third grade when they are not proficient in reading at their grade level. In December 2015, the Office of the Governor announced a series of legislative proposals to keep more kids in school and on track to graduate through dropout and truancy prevention efforts.

Lawmakers may also vote on legislation to make New Mexico a right-to-work state, and many legislators seem to have strong opinions on either side.





Dist. 52 Rep. Doreen Gallegos (D-Doña Ana) is opposed to the idea, and believes her constituents are, too.

“For my constituents, labor is state workers, teachers, those we are trying to protect, and if there are unsafe work conditions or they’re facing discrimination at work and they don’t have that protection, where does that leave them?” she said.

If Martinez introduces right-to-work legislation during the session, those in favor retain support in the House and conservative Senate Democrats are pressured to vote in favor, it is possible that New Mexico could become the 26th right-to-work state. Some legislators, however, are doubtful right-to-work legislation will fare better than it did in the 2014 session, when it passed in the House but was tabled in the Senate Public Affairs Committee. Those in favor argue it will draw companies to the state, creating jobs and economic growth. Those opposed say there’s no evidence that it comes with significant economic benefits, but instead puts union workers at risk.

Bills filed for the session include one carried by Dist. 33 Rep. Bill McCamley (D-Doña Ana) that would legalize recreational marijuana and clear the way for hemp production in the state, and one sponsored

by Rep. Miguel Garcia (D-Albuquerque) that would require unlicensed gun dealers to conduct background checks before selling firearms at gun shows.

Martinez announced a series of proposals to enact tougher DWI penalties, including increased jail time for repeat offenders, expanding laws to include felony DWI offenses and cracking down on those who enable repeat offenders.

Despite public outcry for reform in the arena of campaign ethics, and some high-profile scandals such as the resignation of former Secretary of State Dianna Duran who pled guilty in October 2015 to felony embezzlement charges, there’s historically not been much movement in the Legislature to combat campaign-ethics problems.

House Democrats announced in a news conference in November 2015, in front of Duran’s former office, their intent to sponsor specific bills in the 2016 session that would crack down on corruption and introduce measures to overhaul the state’s campaign finance reporting system. Whether there will be time or enough support to bring the proposed bills to the table in 2016 remains to be seen. ■

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# U.S. Senators



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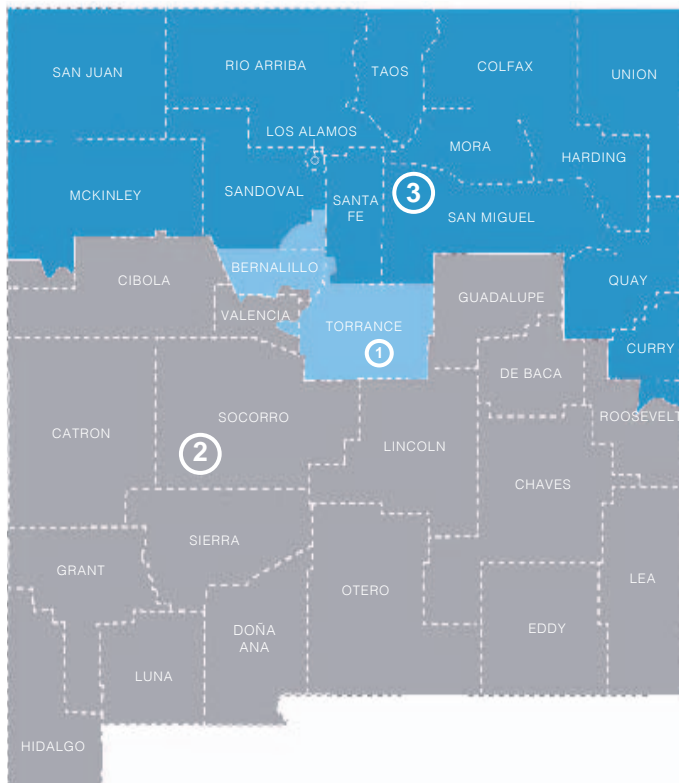
Democrat  
Address: 201 N. Church St., Suite 201B  
Las Cruces, NM 88001  
Phone: 575-526-5475  
Website: [www.tomudall.senate.gov](http://www.tomudall.senate.gov)



## SEN. MARTIN HEINRICH

Democrat  
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Las Cruces, NM 88001  
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Website: [www.heinrich.senate.gov](http://www.heinrich.senate.gov)

# U.S. Representatives



## MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM

Democrat, District 1  
Address: 505 Marquette Ave., NW, Suite 1605  
Albuquerque, NM 87102  
Phone: 505-346-6781  
Website: <http://lujangrisham.house.gov>



## STEVE PEARCE

Republican, District 2  
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## BEN RAY LUJAN

Democrat, District 3  
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Chair Martin Swinney, 575-648-4240  
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### Natural Law Party of New Mexico

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### New Mexico Constitution Party

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# NM POLITICAL PARTIES

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info@greenparty.org  
www.greenpartynm.org

### Reform Party of New Mexico

2924 Espanola Street Northeast  
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rpnm@rpusa.info  
http://reformpartynm.org/

### Republican Party of New Mexico

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### Unity Party of New Mexico

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# ABOUT THE LEGISLATURE

The New Mexico Legislature consists of the New Mexico House of Representatives and the New Mexico Senate.

The House of Representatives consists of 70 members who represent about 25,980 residents each, while the 42 members of the Senate represent around 43,300 residents. Legislators are unpaid for their work; however, they receive a daily living allowance for each day of official legislative work.

Legislators are elected from districts of

approximately equal population. Several counties with small populations, or parts of counties, may be combined to form a single district. Redistricting occurs every 10 years in line with the U.S. Census outcome.

There currently aren't any term limits for legislators, with House members elected every two years and Senate members elected every four.

The New Mexico Legislature meets in regular session the third Tuesday in January.

During even-numbered years — as in 2016 — the Legislature meets for 30 days and primarily focuses on the state's budget.

During odd-numbered years, it meets for 60 days.

Between regular sessions, legislators serve on interim committees that study a variety of issues.

For more information on the New Mexico Legislature, visit [www.nmlegis.gov/lcs](http://www.nmlegis.gov/lcs).

## HOW TO PASS A BILL

### 1. INTRODUCTION AND COMMITTEE REFERRAL

A bill may be introduced in the House of Representatives or in the Senate. It is assigned a number, read twice by title, ordered, printed and referred to the proper committee.

### 2. COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

Committee meetings are usually open to the public. A bill may receive one of the following recommendations:

- Do pass
- Do pass as amended
- Do not pass
- Without recommendation
- Without recommendation as amended

### 3. ADOPTION OF COMMITTEE REPORT

Reports of committees are subject to adoption by the full House and Senate. When a favorable committee report is adopted, the bill is placed on the calendar, which is the list of bills scheduled for third reading and possible final passage.

### 4. THIRD READING AND FINAL PASSAGE

This is the stage at which the fate of a bill is usually decided. Action may be to amend a bill, substitute one bill for another, send a bill back to committee, refer it to another committee or defeat it altogether.

### 5. VOTING ON A BILL

Following sometimes lengthy debate on a bill, a final and recorded vote is taken on whether it is to pass. There must be a quorum of the committee present and every bill requires at least a majority vote of the members present and voting in order to pass. A quorum is generally a simple majority of the members.

### 6. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

If a bill passes, it is sent to the other house and repeats much of the same procedure. Both houses must agree on the final form of a bill. If either house fails to concur with an amendment, the differences must be reconciled by a conference committee representing both the House and Senate. A compromise worked out in a conference committee is subject to approval by both houses.

### 7. ENROLLING AND ENGROSSING

After passage by both houses, a bill is carefully copied by the enrolling and engrossing staff of the house in which it originated, signed by the presiding officers of each house and sent to the governor.

### 8. GOVERNOR'S ACTION

The governor may sign a bill, veto it or, if it carries an appropriation, partially veto it. The Legislature may override the governor's veto by a two-thirds majority vote of each house.

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# STATE CABINETS & DEPARTMENTS

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Executive Director: Yvette Kaufman-Bell  
505-222-9405  
1015 Tijeras Ave., NW #102, Albuquerque, NM 87102  
[www.oaaa.state.nm.us](http://www.oaaa.state.nm.us)  
The African American Affairs Office sets out to positively affect the perception, education, health and development of African-Americans in New Mexico.

## Aging and Long-Term Services

Secretary: Myles Copeland  
505-476-4799  
2550 Cerrillos Road, Santa Fe, NM 87505  
[www.nmaging.state.nm.us](http://www.nmaging.state.nm.us)  
Aging and Long-Term Services is dedicated to helping New Mexico lead the nation in healthy aging and supporting older adults and adults with disabilities.

## Department of Agriculture

Director: Jeff Witte  
575-646-3007  
3190 Espina St., Las Cruces, NM 88003  
[www.nmda.nmsu.edu](http://www.nmda.nmsu.edu)  
The New Mexico Department of Agriculture's responsibilities include ensuring a safe and secure food supply and a uniform and fair marketplace, protecting natural resources and the environment and supporting domestic and international trade.

## Children, Youth and Families Department

Secretary: Monique Jacobson  
505-827-7602  
P.O. Drawer 5160, Santa Fe, NM 87502  
[www.cyfd.org](http://www.cyfd.org)  
The New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department provides an array of prevention, intervention, rehabilitative and after-care services to New Mexico children and their families.

## Corrections Department

Secretary: Gregg Marcantel  
505-827-8645  
4337 State Highway 14, Santa Fe, NM 87508  
[www.cd.nm.gov](http://www.cd.nm.gov)  
The New Mexico Corrections Department is in charge of six state-owned and operated prisons and five private facilities. It also monitors parole and probation, assisting in offenders' re-entrance into society.

## Department of Cultural Affairs

Veronica Gonzales  
505-827-6364  
407 Galisteo St., Suite 260, Santa Fe, NM 87501  
[www.newmexicoculture.org](http://www.newmexicoculture.org)  
The Department of Cultural Affairs represents New Mexico's dedication to preserving and celebrating the cultural integrity and diversity of the state. The department oversees a broad range of New Mexico's arts and cultural heritage agencies.

## Economic Development Department

Secretary: Jon Barela  
Phone: 505-827-0300  
Address: 1100 S. St. Francis Drive, Santa Fe, NM 87505  
Website: [www.gonm.biz](http://www.gonm.biz)  
The New Mexico Economic Development Department is the state's main agency in recruiting businesses and improving the state's economy. The department also provides a variety of assistance to New Mexico businesses.

## Energy, Minerals & Natural Resources Department

Secretary: David Martin  
Phone: 505-476-3200  
Address: 1220 S. St. Francis Drive, Santa Fe, NM 87505  
Website: [www.emnrd.state.nm.us](http://www.emnrd.state.nm.us)  
The Energy, Minerals & Natural Resources Department oversees

the state's energy conservation, forestry, mining and minerals, oil conservation, state parks and the youth conservation corps.

## Office of the State Engineer

Secretary: Tom Blaine  
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[www.ose.state.nm.us](http://www.ose.state.nm.us)  
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## Environment Department

Secretary: Ryan Flynn  
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1190 St. Francis Drive, Suite N4050, Santa Fe, NM 87505  
[www.nmenv.state.nm.us](http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us)  
The New Mexico Environment Department is tasked with the responsibility of safeguarding the state's air and other natural resources as well as overseeing food, medical and workplace safety through inspections and enforcement. The department also monitors groundwater quality and waste disposal, including hazardous and nuclear waste.

## Department of Finance and Administration

Secretary: Tom Clifford  
505-827-4985  
407 Galisteo St., Room 180, Santa Fe, NM 87501  
[www.nmdfa.state.nm.us](http://www.nmdfa.state.nm.us)  
The mission of the Department of Finance and Administration is to provide sound fiscal advice and problem-solving support to the governor and budget direction and fiscal oversight to state agencies and local governments to ensure a positive impact on the daily lives of all New Mexico citizens and ensure every tax dollar is spent wisely.

## General Services Department

Secretary: Edwynn L. Burckle  
505-827-2000  
715 Alta Vista St., Santa Fe, NM 87502  
[www.generalservices.state.nm.us](http://www.generalservices.state.nm.us)  
The New Mexico General Services Department is the "heart and soul of state government" and furnishes essential resources and services that support the operation of state government by providing professional services to state agencies, public employees and their dependents, local public bodies, public schools and institutions of higher education, state employee insurance coverage and health benefits, facility design, construction management and printing and graphic design services.

## Department of Health

Secretary: Retta Ward  
505-827-2613  
1190 S. St. Francis Drive, Harold Runnels Building  
Santa Fe, NM 87505  
[www.health.state.nm.us](http://www.health.state.nm.us)  
The mission of the New Mexico Department of Health is to promote health and sound health policy, prevent disease and disability, improve health services systems and assure that essential public health functions and safety net services are available to New Mexicans.

## Higher Education Department

Secretary: Barbara Damron  
505-476-8400  
2044 Galisteo St., Suite 4, Santa Fe, NM 87505  
[www.hed.state.nm.us](http://www.hed.state.nm.us)  
The Higher Education Department was created to provide New Mexicans with the support and advocacy needed to succeed in reaching their full potential through higher education. This is done

through policies, programs and services.

### **Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management**

Secretary: M. Jay Mitchell  
505-476-9600

13 Bataan Blvd., Santa Fe, NM 87508

[www.nmdhsem.org](http://www.nmdhsem.org)

The Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management is responsible for preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery at a state level. It helps to lead New Mexico's response to emergencies and disasters while providing for the safety and welfare of citizens.

### **Human Services Department**

Secretary: Sidonie Squier  
505-827-7750

P.O. Box 2348, Santa Fe, NM 87504-2848

[www.hsd.state.nm.us](http://www.hsd.state.nm.us)

The Human Services Department serves more than 800,000 New Mexicans by administering several large state and federally funded programs including health insurance for most low- and middle-income children and many elderly, disabled and poor adults. It also provides financial assistance, job training, food stamps and child support enforcement services.

### **Indian Affairs Department**

Secretary: Kelly Zunie  
505-476-1600

1220 S. St. Francis Drive, Wendell Chino Building, 2nd floor

Santa Fe, NM 87505

[www.iad.state.nm.us](http://www.iad.state.nm.us)

With a large population of American Indians residing in New Mexico, the Indian Affairs Department implements policies by working with communities to assist American Indians with better access to health care, economic development, getting better infrastructure and improving quality of life.

### **Information Technology Department**

Secretary: Darryl Ackley  
505-827-0000

715 Alta Vista St., Santa Fe, NM 87505

[www.doit.state.nm.us](http://www.doit.state.nm.us)

The Information Technology Department strives to provide state government a strong technical foundation to better serve its citizens and to create more accountability and efficiency in the information technology arena.

### **State Personnel Office**

Director: Justin Najaka  
505-476-7759

2600 Cerrillos Road, Santa Fe, NM 87505

[www.spo.state.nm.us](http://www.spo.state.nm.us)

The State Personnel Office provides to the State of New Mexico human resource leadership, direction, guidance and services to maximize state government's ability to better serve the citizens of New Mexico.

### **Public Defender Department**

Chief Public Defender: Jorge A. Alvarado  
505-395-2888

301 N. Guadalupe St., Santa Fe, NM 87501

[www.lopdnm.us](http://www.lopdnm.us)

The New Mexico Public Defender Department has offices throughout the state to provide defense counsel for those who cannot otherwise afford a private lawyer. The Chief Public Defender is charged with carrying out general administration of the whole department, which employs approximately 375 people statewide.

### **Public Education Department**

Secretary: Hanna Skandera  
505-827-5800

300 Don Gaspar Ave., Jerry Apodaca Education Building

Santa Fe, NM 87501

[www.ped.state.nm.us](http://www.ped.state.nm.us)

The Public Education Department oversees all public schools and its charters throughout New Mexico. The department strategically works to improve the quality of New Mexico's students.

### **Department of Public Safety**

Secretary: Gregory Fouratt  
505-827-9000

4491 Cerrillos Road Santa Fe, NM 87507

[www.dps.nm.us](http://www.dps.nm.us)

The New Mexico Department of Public Safety (NMDPS) protects human life and property through the detection and prevention of criminal activity and enforcement of state laws and regulations. Additionally, the NMDPS provides vital leadership, scientific training, technical and operational support to the criminal justice community and public at large.

### **Regulation and Licensing Department**

Superintendent: Mike Unthank

505-476-4500

2550 Cerrillos Road, Second floor, Santa Fe, NM 87505

[www.rld.state.nm.us](http://www.rld.state.nm.us)

The Regulation and Licensing Department licenses and regulates approximately 211,000 individuals and businesses in 35 separate industries and professions. RLD is responsible for examining and licensing qualified applicants in professional and industry occupations; issuing permits, charters and licenses; performing code inspections; and resolving claims in the construction industries. The RLD also licenses the sale, service and public consumption of alcoholic beverages, industry training and education on statutory compliance, prosecuting citations and otherwise enforcing the provisions of the Liquor Control Act.

### **Taxation and Revenue Department**

Secretary: Demesia Padilla  
505-827-0700

1100 S. St. Francis Drive, Santa Fe, NM 87504

[www.tax.newmexico.gov](http://www.tax.newmexico.gov)

The Taxation and Revenue Department, charged with the task of collecting tax dollars and distributing them according to state law, answers to the governor as part of the executive branch of state government. It also administers driver's licensing and motor vehicle registration laws.

### **Tourism Department**

Secretary: Rebecca Latham  
505-827-7400

491 Old Santa Fe Trail, Santa Fe, NM 87501

[www.newmexico.org](http://www.newmexico.org)

The state Tourism Department promotes New Mexico as a tourist attraction by working with communities, travel agencies and individual businesses.

### **Department of Transportation**

Secretary: Tom Church  
505-827-5100

1120 Cerrillos Road, Santa Fe, NM 87504

[www.dot.state.nm.us](http://www.dot.state.nm.us)

The Department of Transportation provides a safe and efficient transportation system for the traveling public, while promoting economic development and preserving the environment of New Mexico.

### **Department of Veteran Services**

Secretary Designate: Jack R. Fox  
866-433-8387

407 Galisteo St., Room 142, Santa Fe, NM 87504

[www.dvs.state.nm.us](http://www.dvs.state.nm.us)

The vision of the Department of Veteran Services is to assist veterans, their widows and their children in establishing the privileges to which they are legally entitled.

### **Workers' Compensation Administration**

Director: Darin Childers  
505-841-6000

2410 Centre Ave., SE, Albuquerque, NM 87125

[www.workerscomp.state.nm.us](http://www.workerscomp.state.nm.us)

The New Mexico Workers' Compensation Administration provides many programs and services to employers, workers, insurance carriers and self-insured businesses, health care providers and related organizations.

### **Department of Workforce Solutions**

Secretary: Celina Bussey  
505-841-8405

401 Broadway, NE, Albuquerque, NM 87102

[www.dws.state.nm.us](http://www.dws.state.nm.us)

New Mexico provides a variety of services to help people find jobs and achieve their career goals. The statewide Workforce Connections system also connects businesses with skilled job seekers.





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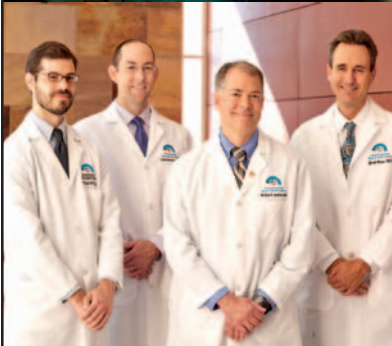
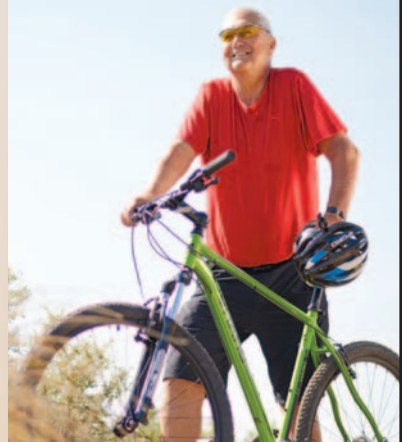
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# SUSANA Martinez

## Governor eyes continued economic growth

BY BROOK STOCKBERGER

Susana Martinez often proudly points out the fact New Mexico has had more than three years of job growth.

Still, New Mexico's 31st governor knows the state cannot rest in the area of economic development. Martinez said she wants the Land of Enchantment to be prepared to act quickly when the opportunity arises to entice a company to the state, or to help one already here grow.

Recently Martinez proposed a \$1.25 million investment to establish a Rapid Workforce Development Fund that can be used to quickly train and certify employees in specialized fields to fulfill a company's workforce requirements.

The fund would be filled with one-time, non-recurring money, to be used only in instances when an expansion or recruitment of a large company would not be possible without the swift development of a specialized type of worker in the state.

"As we continue to grow and diversify our economy, we will need to continue to build a skilled and talented workforce pipeline to help our businesses thrive and keep more of our graduates in New Mexico," Martinez said. "By establishing this fund, we can tap into yet another resource to recruit companies from out of state."

The governor pointed out there is no incentive available to state economic developers to quickly generate specialized workers for prospective businesses.

In addition, Martinez has proposed a \$10 million expansion of the New Mexico Reads to Lead initiative, a statewide program to identify struggling students in kindergarten through third grade and provide them with help to strengthen reading skills.

Martinez's executive budget recommendation will include \$10 million for Reads to Lead, in addition to the current funding of \$15 million. The proposed expansion would be targeted on as many as 60 struggling schools, infusing dozens more interventionists and reading coaches to support teachers, administrators and students in improving literacy performance.

Martinez also hopes to bring high-speed Internet to every New Mexico classroom by the 2018 school year. By leveraging \$49 million in appropriated state funds over

the next few years, several state agencies and a national nonprofit will team up with local districts.

Currently, more than 30 percent of New Mexico's school districts don't have access to high-speed Internet.

"For many of New Mexico's kids, this commitment will be a game-changer," the governor said.

The Office of the Governor announced Martinez' proposed budget of \$6.46 billion for fiscal year 2017 on Jan. 5, 2016. For more information and a detailed breakdown, visit [www.governor.state.nm.us](http://www.governor.state.nm.us). Her proposal includes:

- \$11 million for pay increases on hard-to-recruit and retain positions
  - Nearly \$1 million to expand unit that targets those who abscond from parole
  - \$9 million in Dept. of Public Safety initiatives
  - More than \$8 million to fund child well-being initiatives
  - \$101 million in new education funding, including funds to raise base salaries for new teachers, launch early intervention programs, expand new teacher mentorship program, provide scholarships, and provide textbooks and other materials
  - \$10 million for successful Job Training Incentive Program
  - \$10 million for Local Economic Development Act grants
  - \$1.25 million for new Rapid Workforce Development Fund
  - \$2.3 million in new funding for Dept. of Tourism and New Mexico True campaign
  - Various proposals to increase staffing for international trade, expand use of business incubators, invest in MainStreet programs and fund Technology Research Collaborative
  - \$4 million for targeted tax relief
  - \$69 million in Medicaid spending to compensate for loss of federal match
  - \$117 million in FY16 and FY17 to cover one-time obligations, initiatives and various contingency items
- "This budget prioritizes keeping our communities, families and children safe, while investing in critical education reforms to help our kids learn," Martinez said in a press release. "We must also focus on creating jobs and developing a more diverse economy throughout the state."
- She said she is confident in the Legislature's ability to craft a responsible budget and ensure fiscal stability. ■

## SUSANA MARTINEZ

**POLITICAL PARTY:** Republican

**YEARS IN OFFICE:** Five

**AGE:** 56

**EDUCATION:** University of Texas-El Paso and University of Oklahoma School of Law

**OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:** Doña Ana County District Attorney, 1997-2011

### CONTACT INFO

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# JOHN Sanchez

## Sanchez to promote reform, license change

BY BROOK STOCKBERGER

The upcoming New Mexico legislative session will be a busy time for John Sanchez.

As the state's lieutenant governor, he will be busy promoting the agenda of Gov. Susana Martinez.

Sanchez said the New Mexico Legislature must take action on impending problems with driver's licenses.

New Mexico's driver's licenses fail to meet federal requirements under the REAL ID Act, passed in 2005 as an anti-terrorism measure.

Without intervention, New Mexico licenses might no longer be accepted as identification to be a passenger on an airplane or to enter federal facilities beginning in 2018.

A major sticking point is the state's issuance of driver's licenses to undocumented immigrants. If the Legislature does not fix the situation with the federal government, travelers from New Mexico might need a passport to pass security at airports, or to enter military facilities.

"We are continuing to push for a fix," Sanchez said.

He also hopes to carry the water for "education reform that makes vocational opportunities a priority, a jobs bill that increases New Mexico employees' right to freely join or refrain from joining a union."

"I and my office will set out to promote economic development," Sanchez said.

He said there are many other areas in need of attention.

"There is much more to do as reflected in the priorities that we are still fighting," he said. "Establishing labor reforms such as right-to-work, exempting veteran pensions from our state income tax and supporting a responsible state budget in the face of declining revenue projections."

Sanchez said there also needs to be legislation that slows the rate of repeat DWI offenders by enforcing tougher penalties.

Sanchez said much was accomplished in 2015.

"We established the Aerospace States Association, New Mexico Chapter to focus on improving the access students have to STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) opportunities and the development of jobs in the aviation and aerospace industries," he said.

"We also presented at the nation's first-ever, foreign-direct investment expo for aerospace in October, traveled to Taiwan in June and throughout the state this year advocating for jobs," Sanchez said. "I traveled to Washington, D.C. to meet at the Pentagon and the VA to work toward resolving issues facing our national investment in New Mexico and to fight for services for our military veterans."

"We provided constituent services across New Mexico and followed up on our veteran cemetery and water-infrastructure projects from last year," he said.

An Albuquerque native, Sanchez has served as lieutenant governor since January 2011, and was re-elected on Nov. 4, 2014.

He said he can trace his public service roots to his great-great grandfather, who was a territorial legislator from San Miguel County in 1860.

Sanchez has also been a councilman for the village of Los Ranchos and served in the New Mexico House of Representatives. In 2005, he was recognized as one of the Top 40 Most Influential Hispanics in the Country.

Sanchez and his wife, Debra, started a small businesses in Albuquerque — Right Way Roofing — that has operated for more than 30 years and was twice honored as Small Business of the Year.

As lieutenant governor, Sanchez presides over the New Mexico State Senate, serves as the state's ombudsman and sits on several boards and commissions. He is also West Regional Chairman of the National Lieutenant Governors Association. ■



### LT. GOV. JOHN SANCHEZ

#### CONTACT INFO

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Santa Fe, NM 87501

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[www.ltgov.state.nm.us](http://www.ltgov.state.nm.us)



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# BRAD Winter

**Albuquerque city councillor tabbed  
as Secretary of State for 2016**

## BULLETIN REPORT

In New Mexico, the secretary of state is next in line in succession after the governor and lieutenant governor. If they are both out of state, incapacitated or cannot perform their roles, the secretary of state must step in and perform the functions of the governor.

Brad Winter was appointed to the position in December 2015.

Former Secretary of State Dianna Duran resigned and pleaded guilty to felony embezzlement and other charges in October 2015 for using campaign funds to finance personal gambling. Her deputy, Mary Quintana, moved into the position of acting secretary of state until Gov. Susana Martinez tabbed Winter for the job in December.

He will not seek election for a full term in 2016 and will step down Jan. 1, 2017, when an elected secretary of state takes office.

When chosen, Winter was in the midst of his fourth term as an Albuquerque city councillor, where he was council president in 2001, 2002, 2005 and 2008. He also served as the interim superintendent of Albuquerque Public Schools after working for the school district for more than 20 years in various positions, including chief operations officer, executive director of facilities and operations and director of capital master plans.

"Brad Winter has the integrity, skills and temperament to step in as Secretary of State and serve New Mexicans with distinction," Martinez said. "He's a proven leader, routinely praised by Republicans and Democrats alike, and his experience as a long-time

administrator who has managed large budgets, capital and information technology projects, and sizeable staffs will be key to overseeing a successful and well-run election next year."

Winter will oversee an election Nov. 8, 2016 that will include the presidential race as well as voting for all three of New Mexico's U.S. House of Representative seats and a variety of state races and all members of the state Legislature.

"These are unique circumstances, but I believe that we will be able to rise to the challenge and uphold New Mexico's election laws, operate an efficient secretary of state's office, and oversee a professionally managed presidential-year election," Winter said.

The secretary maintains records of signed bills, referendum petitions and legislative journals, as well as ensuring proposed amendments to the New Mexico Constitution are published in at least one newspaper in every county in the state for four consecutive weeks, in both English and Spanish. The secretary serves as registered agent for service of process for foreign corporations in some lawsuits.

"I'm honored to have the governor's trust and confidence to serve as New Mexico's Secretary of State," he said.

As for Duran, she was sentenced to 30 days in jail, fined \$14,000 and ordered to pay another \$13,866 in restitution. She also must place ads in six publications across the state to apologize to the people of New Mexico for her crimes. Duran will be on supervised probation for five years, and she will have to complete 2,000 hours of community service. ■

## SECRETARY OF STATE BRAD WINTER

### CONTACT INFO

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# JON Barela

## Secretary hopes to keep economic momentum alive

BY BROOK STOCKBERGER

Jon Barela loves New Mexico, which is a good thing because the Las Cruces native sure visits much of the Land of Enchantment.

As New Mexico's Secretary of Economic Development, Barela often joins Gov. Susana Martinez at announcements when new companies open in the state, or when current companies expand.

Jobs are the name of the game and Barela wants to spread the word when more are created.

"We've been really busy," Barela said. "2015 was another good year in economic development. Right now we're in the middle of the 37th straight month of year-over-year job growth."

He said the Land of Enchantment is now on the rest of the nation's radar.

"New Mexico is now emerging as a star in transforming its business climate," Barela said. "We're gaining recognition by national publications."

He pointed out Kiplinger's "Finance" magazine ranked New Mexico as the eighth best state for tax competitiveness. CNBC recognized New Mexico as a state that has moved up the most in rankings in year-over-year growth.

For the state's 2016 legislative session — Jan. 19 to Feb. 18 — Barela said he'll be very active.

"I'm at the Legislature every day," he said "I have a very active role in promoting the jobs bill and do it in a bipartisan way."

Barela said the state needs to be able to help in the form of the "rapid workforce development fund" and hopes to see more than \$1 million set aside for customized training and post-secondary education.

"We want to be able to immediately respond to employers' particular needs of workforce," he said.

Another area to keep an eye on during the 2016 legislative session is a bill intended to reduce the tax on veterans' pensions.

"This'll encourage New Mexico veterans to come home and encourage veterans to stay here

in New Mexico," Barela said.

He said the state needs to work to improve economic enterprise zones and provide incentives to develop areas.

In addition, he wants to keep Local Economic Development Act (LEDA) funds at \$50 million. For the current fiscal year, which ends June 30, 2016, Barela's department has received an appropriation of \$50 million in LEDA capital outlay. The department hosted town hall events throughout the state to gather public input toward development of guidelines and policies for use of the funds.

Barela said the Legislature needs to keep the LEDA outlay fully funded.

"(LEDA) helps with downtown revitalization in many communities," he said.

The Economic Development Department reports that LEDA funds go to local governments to help stimulate economic development efforts pursuant to the State Wide Economic Development Finance Act. Funding of grants is strictly based on the receipt of capital outlay funds appropriated by the New Mexico Legislature.

A Las Cruces native, Barela graduated from Las Cruces High School and earned a bachelor's degree in history and diplomacy from the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.

He worked with New Mexico Congressman Joe Skeen. As a senior aide to the congressman, he also picked up a law degree from Georgetown.

He then practiced law in Albuquerque, spent time as an assistant attorney general and then turned to the business world as government relations manager with Intel.

Barela co-founded his own company, Cerelink, a technology start-up firm and he even ran for Congress in 2010. He was eventually named the head of the Economic Development Department by Martinez. ■



### SECRETARY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT JON BARELA

#### CONTACT INFO

##### EDUCATION:

Las Cruces High,  
Georgetown University

**PHONE:** 505-827-0300

##### WEBSITE:

[www.gonm.biz](http://www.gonm.biz)

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# JEFF Witte

## Ag czar remains optimistic about future despite challenges

BY TRACY ROY

New Mexico Secretary of Agriculture Jeff Witte is a self-professed optimist. Drought and other water concerns play a huge role in agriculture, but Witte still looks for the bright side. Years of drought in New Mexico have challenged farmers to find new and improved ways to produce crops, he said.

"I'm probably the most optimistic guy in agriculture that there is, but I have to be," he said. "I'm optimistic on the drought situation for a couple of reasons. I think the cycle is changing a little to allow for more rain, more snowfall. But I think the thing I'm most optimistic about is that our farmers, because of the drought, became better.

"They know how to use limited amount of water that's allocated to higher efficiencies and better uses than what they did prior to the drought. Their farming techniques are better. Their water-conservation measures improved. And the crop yields, in some cases, are better than they were before the drought because management is better.

"You put all those things together; it's really neat. We've got some really great farmers in this state and they grow some of the highest-quality food in the world, and they did it through stress of drought and they continue to do it," Witte said.

A wet 2015 will help farmers, he said, but what will help more is a strong snowpack up north, as our area is dependent upon runoff. The less snow that evaporates or soaks into dry earth, the more water we'll get.

He said New Mexico is an evolving state and one of the most diverse, both agriculturally and culturally.

"We grow a wide variety of crops," he said. "We're also a state that is in transition because we're the oldest state in the nation, agriculturally, and yet we're also the state that had the fastest-growing percentage increase in young farmers in the nation, according to the (USDA Census of Agriculture). So you're seeing a transition. You've got new folks coming in; they're not afraid to dive into alternate crops or direct marketing ... They produce from the farm to the plate."

Witte also noted the importance of technology in agriculture, especially as the state faces water and labor shortages. Solutions, he believes, lie in high-tech, high-intensity agricultural methods like aquaponics and specialized technology that allow farmers to control water and nutrients to specific crops based on need. He views the mechanization of agriculture as something to help, not hinder, people and agriculture.

"We're trying to find a solution to (labor shortages) by going the mechanization route," he said. "Those folks whose livelihood is picking chile for a living, once we go to mechanization,

we're going to have many more acres, more product in the processing and fresh markets. So you'll have a higher-value job market. Different kinds of jobs that pay more."

Optimism is not to be confused with turning a blind eye to the issues surrounding water management. One of the biggest concerns facing the state, Witte said, is watershed infrastructure and management. A third of New Mexico's land is owned by the federal government, a third is owned by the state and tribes and the remaining land is owned by private citizens. Overgrown land and a lack of management on the federal side creates infrastructure issues, as well as time, which ages existing infrastructure, he said.

Going into the legislative session, the Department of Agriculture has a couple of requests. One involves a general fund appropriation request of \$125,000 to keep the Organic Commodities Program (formerly known as the Organic Commodities Commission) intact, which was reorganized a few years ago to fall under the Department of Agriculture. With that change, the program lost its appropriation; it became a fee-based program and fees aren't keeping up expenses, he said.

Another request would allow the Department of Agriculture to raise the grade of its lowest-paid employees to "make them at least competitive in the real market," Witte said. Historically, the department has a low employee-turnover rate. In recent years, that turnover rate is about a third of the total employees each year.

"We want to retain our employees and bring stability to our programs," Witte said. "When inspectors are not in the field, you see error rates go up. Across the state, you run into error rates in the 6 percent range (when fully staffed). When there are vacancies, those error rates go up to 20-40 percent."

An ongoing priority for Witte is the education and development of the future generation of farmers. He said the 2016 AgriFuture Educational Institute will showcase small-acreage producers, and help educate and attract the next generation of farmers in the 20- to 40-year-old age range.

"We use farmers and ranchers to tell their successes and their challenges," he said. "One of the themes of the conference is going to be worldwide opportunities. The world wants American food. They view it as the safest in the world. They appreciate, and in many cases, admire our food safety programs."

Witte believes there is real opportunity in the farm-to-fork movement.

"These are opportunities for our younger generation to get into," he said. "The younger generation really is open to taking their produced goods into the retail market. Those are some of the things that really attract that next generation to the farm." ■

## SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE JEFF WITTE

**YEARS IN OFFICE:** Four and a half

**AGE:** 52

**BIRTHPLACE:** Santa Fe, New Mexico

**EDUCATION:** Bachelor's degree in agriculture business management and master's degree in agriculture economics and economics, New Mexico State University.

**OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:** Public Service Commission, Director of Government Affairs for Farm & Livestock Bureau

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# Balderas

HECTOR

## Improving public safety, welfare of children are top priorities

BY TRACY ROY

Heading into his second year as New Mexico's attorney general, Hector Balderas has a clear set of priorities: close a child pornography and exploitation loophole; support initiatives that ultimately reduce violent crime; support the reinstatement of penalties and fines for campaign finance violations; and continue to fund a U.S. Supreme Court water litigation case — Texas vs. New Mexico and Colorado — in order to identify a long-term resolution.

He will also play a key role in the legislative session.

"Our office will provide bill analysis for nearly 75 percent of the legislation, and I will specifically advocate for children and victims," Balderas said.

One specific way to do that is by creating a bill to close a loophole surrounding the way child pornography cases are handled.

Balderas' office said in the recent New Mexico Supreme Court cases State vs. Olsson and State vs. Ballard, the court determined the statutory language criminalizing child exploitation by possession was ambiguous, and the Legislature had not clearly defined the unit of prosecution. The result is that defendants who possess multiple images of children being raped, objectified or exploited in multiple forms of media and online are currently only subject to prosecution of one count of child exploitation by possession, irrespective of the number of images they possessed.

A bill has been drafted to repair the perceived infirmity of the statute and provide protection to children in New Mexico against anyone who would seek to collect images of child rape and exploitation, Balderas' office reported. Balderas believes the only way to shut down the black-market industry responsible for the dissemination of these images is to criminalize

the possession of each depiction.

"We want to strengthen the penalties and clarify the law," Balderas said.

Public safety and education are issues considered critical by Balderas.

"Clearly, (the state) needs to invest in essential public safety services. We also need to make investments in education and job creation in order to strengthen prosperity," he said.

An issue that's likely to be on many legislators' minds going into the session is campaign finance accountability. In August 2015, Balderas filed a criminal complaint against former Secretary of State Dianna Duran, accusing her of illegally transferring campaign donations to personal accounts, which were then used in casinos around the state. Duran pleaded guilty in October 2015 to embezzlement and money laundering and was sentenced to 30 days jail time, five years of probation, community service and fines.

"It was very important to properly investigate and convict bad acts of the secretary of state and we will continue to ask the Legislature to make the necessary reforms for greater accountability in campaign finance," Balderas said. "At this time, we're still verifying what the governor's priorities will be, but our office will be requesting important legislation moving forward."

Other initiatives include a request for funding for a mobile forensics van to aid in investigations and help train law enforcement in rural areas on combatting Internet crime against children.

"We're also offering statewide training on financial literacy and domestic violence prevention," Balderas said. "We continue to be very aggressive in advocating for safe communities and that we can only have prosperity when we improve public safety in New Mexico." ■



### ATTORNEY GENERAL HECTOR BALDERAS

**YEARS IN OFFICE:** One

**AGE:** 42

**BIRTHPLACE:** Denver, Colorado

**EDUCATION:** Graduated from New Mexico Highlands University before going to University of New Mexico School of Law to earn a Juris Doctor degree.

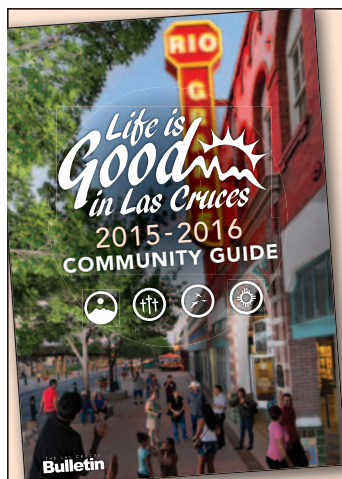
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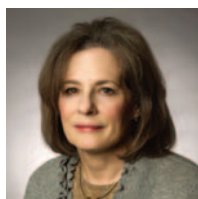
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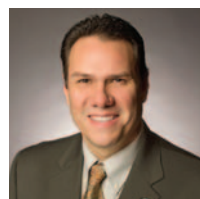
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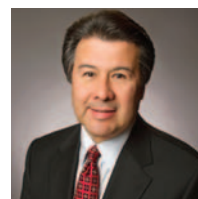
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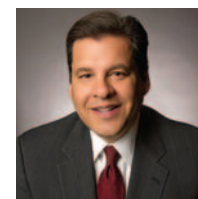
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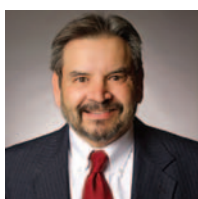
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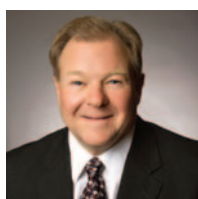
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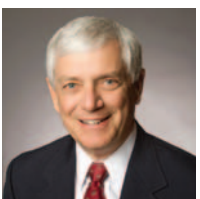
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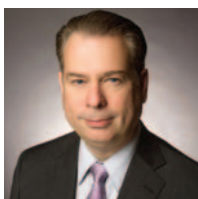
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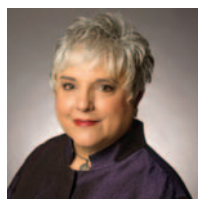
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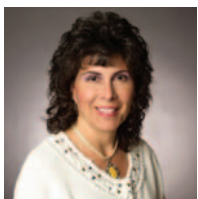
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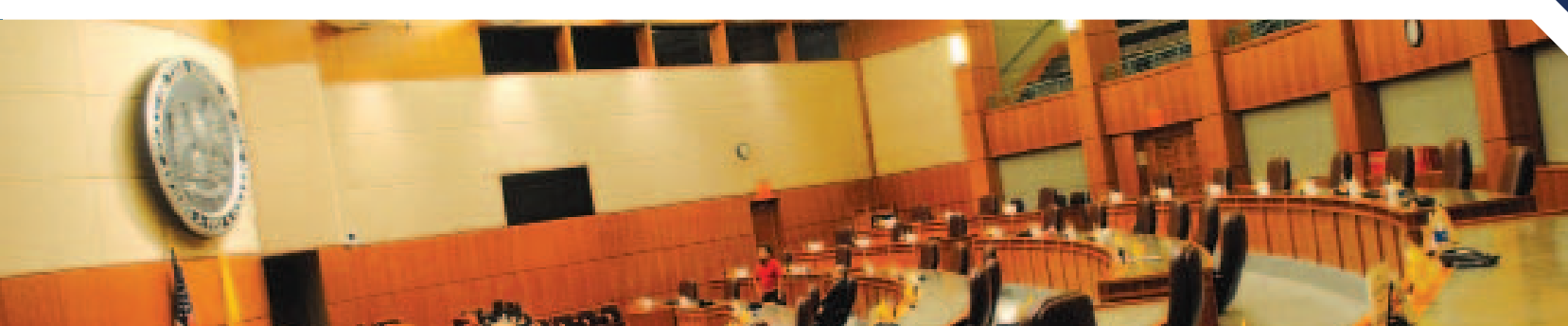
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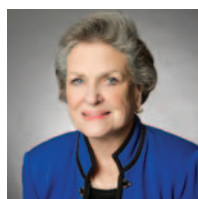
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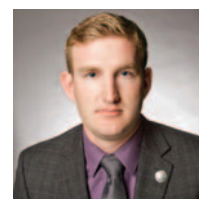
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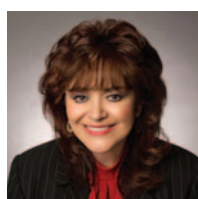
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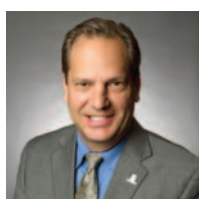
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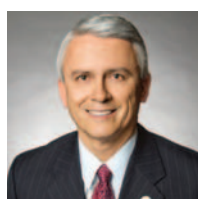
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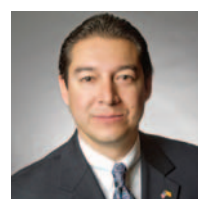
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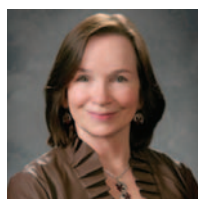
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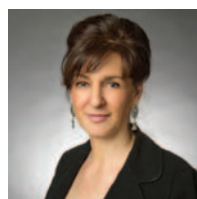
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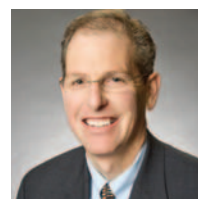
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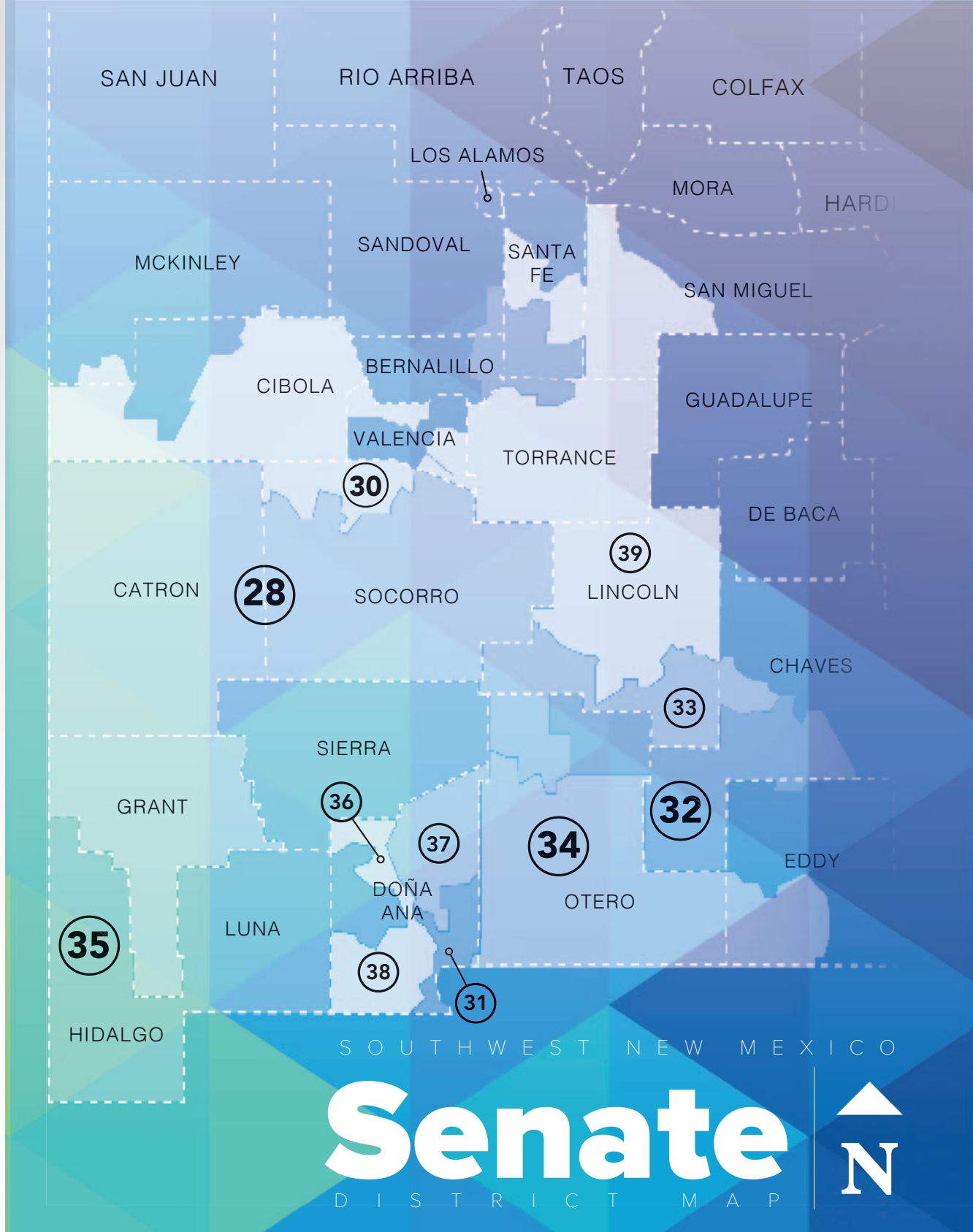
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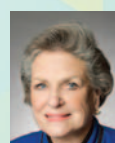
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# HOWIE Morales

Focused on the people, asking questions to make a difference

BY ELVA K. ÖSTERREICH

In 2016, the 30-day legislative session will be focused on New Mexico's budget, and state Sen. Howie Morales is focused right along with it.

At the top of his mind for this budget session is the price of oil and gas, which has a huge impact on state finances, he said.

"New Mexico is reliant on gas and oil revenue," Morales said. "Every dollar change in the price of oil makes a 7 to 12 million dollar impact in the state."

Capital outlay funding is determined on price per barrel as well as on some severance tax bond money. Morales said he sees capital outlay distribution to be similar to last year. The governor gets a third, the House gets a third and the Senate gets a third, to spend in their districts, he said.

Before that division, 5 percent of capital outlay funding is taken off the top and put into the Colonias Infrastructure Program, some of which is important to Morales' district. Another 5 percent is taken off the top and put into reservation infrastructure, he said.

"I look at the impact that the colonias program has on the southern part of the state; what can we complete and what can we leverage, whether in federal funds or grant money?" he said.

Morales said he is proud of his history of good working relationships with local governments. Some of the things he is working to find funding for include a regional water system to connect all municipalities in Grant County; the completion of a rodeo facility in Socorro County; and several upgrades in Catron County. As the only senator with two four-year higher learning institutions in his district, Morales puts in extra time working on the funding aspects of his job.

Also falling in Morales' district, the Gila River diversion project, signed in November 2015 by the U.S. Department of the Interior, leaves a lot of questions in his mind, he said. As a senator who has carried several bills related to conservation, the spending proposed on the project concerns him.

"The question that's unable to be answered is the total cost of the project," he said. "This could be in the higher millions (of dollars), maybe a billion and I want to make sure the local governments don't take the stress. I would rather have the money available today put to

work on conservation projects and putting people to work. There are so many unknowns and so many benefits that can be taken advantage of now."

Morales said he has been a proponent of the SunZia project since the beginning. The SunZia Southwest Transmission Project consists of about 515 miles of power transmission lines that will deliver electricity generated in Arizona and New Mexico to population centers in the desert Southwest.

Stringing the power lines across the state has been the source of much controversy.

"There has been a lot of compromise," Morales said. "The reality is that is the nature of New Mexico (wind and solar power). We really need to make investment and take advantage of that."

On the operational side, Morales said he is very committed in seeing that state employees — including teachers, counselors, bus drivers, law enforcement and others — are fairly compensated.

"These are the people that bear the brunt of the recession," he said. "I will continue to advocate for higher compensation for all of our state employees."

He also said the state needs to be putting in the dollars to ensure those who are most vulnerable are being taken care of, including veterans, the education community, senior citizens and

individuals with disabilities.

Actions taken by the current administration in regards to the behavioral health system have been detrimental, Morales said.

"We need to get back to the root," he said. "We need to provide those resources and make sure people aren't falling through the cracks and are able to get help and medication that is so important."

Morales said Medicaid expansion has been a good thing for people and the only sector that has grown in jobs. It is important to remember most of those expansion dollars come from the federal side where there are questions about how are we going to pay this, he said.

Also in favor of raising the minimum wage, Morales said when people are paid a fair wage, money goes right back into the community. He said people should be able to work their way to a livable wage.

Proud to be born and raised in New Mexico, Morales said he wants to take care of the people in the state. ■

**"It's my home. I'm proud to be born and raised here. I love the people and the connection. I want my children to have every opportunity to be raised in and stay in New Mexico."**

**— On what Morales loves about New Mexico**



## HOWIE MORALES, DISTRICT 28

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**YEARS IN OFFICE:** Eight

**AGE:** 43

**BIRTHPLACE:** Silver City, N.M.

**PROFESSION:** Educator

**EDUCATION:** Bachelor's and master's degrees in education, Western New Mexico University; doctorate in education, New Mexico State University

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**YEARS IN OFFICE:** Three

**AGE:** 57

**BIRTHPLACE:** Cubero, New Mexico (eastern Cibola County)

**PROFESSION:** Economic development and business finance; director of New Mexico State University's Grants campus since 1991

**EDUCATION:** Bachelor's degree in accounting, Eastern New Mexico University; master's degree in business, New Mexico Highlands University.

**OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:** None

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# CLEMENTE Sanchez

**Committed to a responsible budget**

BY MIKE COOK

Sen. Clemente Sanchez, a Democrat from Grants, represents New Mexico Senate District 30, which includes Cibola County and portions of Socorro, McKinley and Valencia counties. Sanchez defeated incumbent state Sen. David Ulibarri and two others in the 2012 primary and defeated Republican Vickie Perea in the November general election. Sanchez said he plans to be a candidate for re-election in 2016.

Sanchez has worked in economic development and business development in Grants for the past 25 years. He currently serves as director of the New Mexico State University Grants Campus Small Business Development Center. In the state Senate, he is chairman of the Compacts Committee, vice chair of the Corporations and Transportation Committee and a member of the Committees' Committee and the Rules Committee, among others.

Sanchez said his main goal for the 30-day session of the 2016 New Mexico Legislature will be "to get a balanced budget passed. And, we will, because constitutionally, we have to. There are some things we might need to fix as far as policy, but the main thing we need to do is pass a responsible, balanced budget. That's my main issue, my main goal," Sanchez said.

Sanchez said he also expects to see a right-to-work bill introduced in the session, and said he won't have a position on it until he sees it.

"I really don't take a position on a bill until I read it. Those bills go through changes through the committee process," he said. "You never know what it's going to look like."

A right-to-work bill introduced in the 2015 session passed the House but was tabled in the Senate Public Affairs Committee.

Bills mandating third-grade retention — holding back third graders who cannot read at grade level — and restricting drivers licenses for undocumented immigrants in the state also may be on the governor's call in 2016, Sanchez said. Both are bills Gov. Susana Martinez has supported in the past. The third-grade retention bill introduced in the House in 2015 was tabled in the Senate's Public Affairs Committee. Legislation aimed

at repealing the law passed in 2003 that allows state residents to get a driver's license without proof of immigration status failed during the 2015 session.

Sanchez also said he would commit to supporting restrictions on late-term abortions and on mandating parental notification of a minor seeking an abortion if those issues come before the state Senate during the 2016 session.

Sanchez said he supports the state's oil and gas extractive industries, and has sponsored legislation to create additional alternative-energy tax credits, including for solar energy. The issue of alternative-energy tax credits likely will come up during the 2016 session, he said.

Sanchez said the state prison system is another issue that needs to be considered by the Legislature.

"We are way down in employees in corrections, which is dangerous to employees," he said.

Low pay, Sanchez said, makes it hard to recruit new employees to the New Mexico Corrections Department (NMCD). NMCD Secretary Gregg Marcantel told the state Legislative Finance Committee in late October 2015, that vacancy rates among corrections officers

at three state prisons are above 40 percent. Salaries for corrections officers in New Mexico are the second worst in the nation, he said. Marcantel said the state prison system will be at 98 percent capacity next July.

Sanchez said he received about \$100 million in requests for capital outlay spending during the 2015 legislative session, when each legislator had about \$1.1 million to spend. That is likely to be the amount each legislator is allocated again in 2016, he said. Revenue "will be pretty flat when it comes to the general fund," Sanchez said, and capital outlay likely will continue to be down because of low oil and gas prices. Sanchez said the state needs to reform the way it handles capital outlay.

"We need to be careful how we do it so rural communities aren't left out," he said.

Water will continue to be a big issue in New Mexico, Sanchez said.

"Water and sewer are big issues in my district and throughout the state," he said.

Those issues include repair, construction of water lines and bridges spanning bodies of water. And, in Grants, "We need a new wastewater treatment plant," he said. ■

“The beauty and friendliness of its people and landscape, the resilience of how New Mexicans don’t give up. And most importantly, I am a native New Mexican.”  
— On what Sanchez loves about New Mexico



# JOSEPH Cervantes

## Democrat to focus on school calendar reform, jobs, infrastructure

BY MIKE COOK

Joseph Cervantes, a Las Cruces Democrat whose state Senate district is located entirely in Doña Ana County, said he will press Gov. Susana Martinez to support a number of issues in the 2016 New Mexico legislative session, including a reform of the public school calendar.

Since the 2016 session is just 30 days long and is limited to matters of budget, as well as the governor's call, Cervantes said he will do everything he can to bring these issues as a priority for the governor and hope she will embrace them.

Cervantes said the state should consider school-calendar reforms like adding to the current 180-day school year and moving to year-round schooling. He said many countries now have 200-day school years, and the U.S. and New Mexico need to keep pace.

He said there is also strong evidence that summer break causes a significant lapse in student progress and signifies a great deal of effort is needed to restore the information that is lost during the nearly three-month summer vacation.

The current school calendar is "antiquated," Cervantes said, and was created when New Mexico had an agriculture-based economy and children were needed to help on family farms.

Cervantes, who served 12 years in the New Mexico House of Representatives before being elected to the state Senate in 2012, said water issues throughout the state and job creation in the southern part of Doña Ana County are also important issues he hopes the governor will address.

Taking "the recent wet year as an opportunity to ignore important (water) issues is a big mistake," he said.

Cervantes said he also would like Martinez to address job creation in Santa Teresa and throughout the southwestern corner of the county along the borders with Mexico and Texas. Current tax policies, he said, have "failed to create promised jobs and opportunities."

Cervantes said pursuing alternative energy is also important. New Mexico should be a leader in renewable resources research, he said, but the governor has vetoed legislation to extend tax credits for alternative energy, and he said he doesn't expect her to change her long-standing commitment to fossil fuels.

Cervantes said he does expect issues the governor has supported in the past to come up again in 2016, including restricting driver's licenses to undocumented residents, third-grade retention for students who can't read at grade level and right-to-work legislation.

The Legislature failed to pass any of the

three issues in the 2015 session, but they likely will be brought forward again, he said.

"It's an election year," Cervantes said. "There are certain issues that come up on the governor's agenda when an election is coming."

Cervantes said the state Senate passed a bipartisan driver's license bill in 2015, which failed in the Republican-controlled House. He said there is "an erosion of those supporting the governor's position," and the state needs to take action.

"The governor may no longer have an alternative but to accept the compromise that has been offered," Cervantes said.

"The country is moving in the direction where New Mexico has been for a decade (issuing driver's licenses to undocumented residents)," he said. "I don't see any support for the governor's position to roll back that policy."

While Cervantes said he expects to see a third-grade retention bill introduced, he doesn't "expect that agenda to advance when it hasn't advanced in the preceding five years."

There is no new data showing that the change would provide better education for our students or improved graduation rates, he said.

"Right-to-work will undoubtedly come up again, because it sounds good in campaign advertising," Cervantes said, but, he believes the country is not moving in the direction of the governor's position in support of right-to-work. Passing a right-to-work bill, he said, won't have any meaningful impact on New Mexico's ability to create jobs.

"The number of people or businesses impacted by this is inconsequentially small," he said.

With regard to the state budget, Cervantes said the Legislature likely is looking at "a substantial decrease in new revenues because of the continuing low prices of oil and gas. I can't think there will be much appetite for new spending," he said.

Cervantes said he expects capital outlay spending to be about where it was last year, when it totaled about \$150 million and about \$1.1 million per legislator. But, he said, that amount may go down because of low oil and gas prices.

Cervantes said he hopes to work with his colleagues to use capital outlay funds for water, sewer and infrastructure in communities like Sunland Park which do not have strong tax bases.

"Tremendous progress" has already been made in the southern part of the county, he said, with new water lines and wastewater systems. The state, Cervantes said, should "continue to make progress to protect our underground water resources." ■



## JOSEPH CERVANTES, DISTRICT 31

**POLITICAL PARTY:** Democrat

**YEARS IN OFFICE:** Three

**AGE:** 54

**BIRTHPLACE:** Las Cruces, New Mexico

**PROFESSION:** Attorney

**EDUCATION:** Bachelor's degree in architecture, University of New Mexico; master's degree in architecture, California Polytechnic State University; juris doctorate, UNM.

### OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:

Member, Doña Ana County Commission, 1998-2001; member, New Mexico House of Representatives, 2001-12.

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## CLIFF PIRTLE, DISTRICT 32

**POLITICAL PARTY:** Republican

**AGE:** 30

**YEARS IN OFFICE:** Three

**PROFESSION:** Farmer

**EDUCATION:** Roswell High School with honors

**OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:** None

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# CLIFF Pirtle

## Senator heads into third session

### BULLETIN REPORT

A farmer and businessman who represents a fairly rural district, state Sen. Cliff Pirtle represents District 32, covering southern Chaves County — including Roswell where he makes his home — and a small piece of Eddy County.

Pirtle is heading into his third legislative session — a 30-day gathering with a concentration on budget.

Before the 2015 session, Pirtle said the state should not raise the minimum wage. With such a tight window, no one knows if the issue of an increased minimum wage will even surface in 2016.

“We get these issues brought before us (at the Legislature), but at the local level they’re often handled more effectively,” Pirtle said. “For instance, a \$10 minimum wage in Hobbs is a drop in the bucket. A state-wide, cookie-cutter type of situation I don’t think is the right idea.”

He was unavailable to discuss his plans for the upcoming legislative session. ■

# the bottom line

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# WILLIAM Burt

## Pushing for tax reform to retain military retirees, skilled employees

BY MIKE COOK

State Sen. Bill Burt, an Alamogordo Republican who represents District 33 (Chavez, Lincoln and Otero counties) said he will support a bill in the 2016 New Mexico Legislature that would phase in a repeal of state income tax on military retirement pay.

Currently, Burt said, 95 percent of those who retire after long military careers in New Mexico move out of state because, unlike Colorado, Texas and others, New Mexico taxes military retirement pay. Burt said his bill would phase out the tax over three to four years so the state would have time to compensate for the tax loss.

Of about 172,000 veterans in the state, approximately 21,000 would qualify under the repeal, Burt said. He said most earn about \$24,000 a year from their military retirement. His legislation would cap tax-free military retirement income at \$25,000.

Many of those who retire after 20 years of service are in their early 40s, Burt said, and would begin another career, buy goods and services, purchase homes and pay taxes in New Mexico.

"Just about every one of them has a college degree; many have ... multiple master's degrees, and a few have Ph.D.s," he said.

Phasing out the tax would create a highly skilled, well-paid employment pool that the state shouldn't lose, he said.

Burt said he would advocate a total restructuring of the state's tax system.

"I think we just need to sit down and look at where we are," he said. "I think our current tax structure was done in the 1970s. There are so many waivers and dispensations within our tax code ... it's going to get to the point where we won't be able to operate the state," he said.

In terms of 2016 spending, Burt said most agencies in the state need help.

"Since I've been in the Legislature, we've had to play catch-up from the previous administration with regard to salaries, retirement plans and making sure that ... budgets accommodate where we are in 2015," he said.

"(Gov. Susana Martinez) has made great strides in literally saving retirement funds for educators and police and fire folks. We need to look at continuing to try and keep pace with what is the fair wage in our region ... for teachers, our safety officers and our firefighters," he said.

Burt said meetings are being held in the three counties he represents to determine priorities for capital outlay projects.

"Seventy five percent of what we look at with capital outlay ... has to do with water," he said, including dams for drinking water, broken, outdated water- and sewer lines and extending infrastructure for communities.

"Here in Alamogordo," Burt said, "we're developing the first municipal desalinization plant in the state," which he said will be operational in 2016.

Capital outlay projects likely also will focus on infrastructure, Burt said, including highways and bridges. "Our infrastructure, our highway system in particular, is in dire need of upgrade," Burt said, adding that there is a 10- to 12-year backlog on some projects.

Burt said the state's oil and gas production, which is a major source of capital outlay funds, is down.

"If you look at the price of oil, it's not good," he said. "It needs to be in the \$65- to \$70-a-barrel range and we've been far from that for some time."

Burt said he expects the governor to again introduce bills to restrict driver's licenses for undocumented immigrants and to mandate holding back third graders who cannot read at grade level.

Burt said Martinez also may reintroduce right-to-work legislation.

"Unions for many people are a good way to go," Burt said. "But we're all Americans. Why can't we choose whether or not we want to join a union? Everybody who works in the state ought to have a right to choose."

With regard to energy, Burt said he thinks everybody is interested in alternatives. He is concerned about federal regulations that will force the closure of "two of the five energy-producing plants in the Farmington area — all because they have coal-fired furnaces."

"We always want a clean environment," Burt said. "But, I also think there needs to be a balance for shutting down a whole industry where people lose their jobs. There is always a median place where we can meet ... save those jobs and keep coal-burning plants open until alternative energy can be produced at such a level that it becomes competitive with traditional sources of energy."

Burt was appointed to the District 33 state senate seat in 2011 to replace Dianna Duran when she became New Mexico's secretary of state. He was elected to a four-year term in 2012 with more than 65 percent of the vote. A native of Deming, Burt is a broadcaster in Alamogordo. ■



### WILLIAM "BILL" BURT, DISTRICT 33

**POLITICAL PARTY:** Republican

**YEARS IN OFFICE:** Four

**AGE:** 64

**BIRTHPLACE:** Deming, New Mexico

**PROFESSION:** Broadcaster

**EDUCATION:** Bachelor's degree in mass communications, New Mexico State University

**OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:** None

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“I love the unique diversity of geography and culture. The people of New Mexico are our true treasure.” ”

— Burt, on what he loves about New Mexico



## RON GRIGGS, DISTRICT 34

**POLITICAL PARTY:** Republican

**YEARS IN OFFICE:** Three

**AGE:** 63

**BIRTHPLACE:** Portales, New Mexico

**PROFESSION:** Retired  
business owner

**EDUCATION:** Bachelor of  
Business Administration from  
New Mexico State University.

**OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:**  
Alamogordo City Council and  
Mayor of Alamogordo.

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# RON Griggs

## Seeking sound financial footing

BY JESSICA WHITE-CASON

As a former business owner, Sen. Ron Griggs (District 34 – Doña Ana, Eddy, Otero) has his eye on the state's bottom line.

High on his list of concerns for the upcoming 2016 budget and capital outlay session are New Mexico's roads. Griggs is confident there will be some discussion on the topic in January.

"One of the challenges we've been talking about, trying to deal with and come up with solutions for, is how to take care of state roads," he said.

In the process of serving his communities, Griggs is regularly reminded of how important it is to find funding for our highways, which he described as "in bad need of repair." He emphasizes that roads will be particularly important to him in the coming session, because it would address a state need and one within his own District 34.

While unsure of what might make the agenda during the session, Griggs does know issues such as road maintenance and repair will continue to come up until they are dealt with.

"Last year, I carried two or three different things, initially, and wound up having eight," he said.

It is his hope this particular session will fix some of the financial issues the state has, so during future sessions, they can focus on other pressing issues, beyond budget.

"The understanding is that we will not have as much money to deal with from the severance tax, so capital may be greatly reduced this time... It's hard to deal with anything if you're not on sound financial footing," Griggs said.

Within his community, Griggs is eager to move forward with the initial phase of construction for Alamogordo's water

desalinization plant. He said there is money set aside to build the first part of the plant, and the sooner construction begins, the sooner they will know if additional capital will be necessary. Griggs believes the ability to desalinate brackish water will make New Mexico more attractive for both individuals and businesses. It would help to balance out drought conditions, and support an increased population.

Griggs is also hopeful right-to-work legislation will make New Mexico more attractive to businesses. He believes many businesses looking to expand into a new state will first look to see if it's a right-to-work state.

"I think some of those companies, if that box is not checked, they just ignore you," Griggs said. "That's a big thing that would have to be put on the governor's call, because it doesn't clearly have a budget impact."

Griggs said if the legislature passes right-to-work, and it turns out to be less helpful than originally thought, other avenues can still be explored.

"We may be right, we may be wrong," Griggs said. "If we are to grow our state, we've got to do some things that allow us to grow."

When asked about the state's alternative energy needs, Griggs wanted to be clear about what a heavy reliance on the use of alternative energies could mean for the state's budget. He indicated the earnings from oil and gas are around one third of New Mexico's general fund budget. He says the state cannot afford to give up the revenues that come to the state from taxes on oil and gas. Though Griggs is not opposed to the use of alternative energy, he believes "there's a place for everything, we just have to continue to work to find the balances and to provide for our state."

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# JOHN ARTHUR Smith

## Legislator looks to balance the books

BY MIKE COOK

When the 2016 session of the New Mexico Legislature convenes in January, John Arthur Smith will begin his 28th year in the state Senate. He and predecessor Ike Smalley, both of Deming, have held the District 35 seat for the past 60 years, and Smith is already making plans to run for re-election to an eighth term in 2016.

Smith, 74, a Democrat, represents Dist. 35 — which extends into Doña Ana, Hidalgo, Luna and Sierra counties — and is the longtime chair of the Senate Finance Committee. He said the 30-day 2016 legislative session will have “everything to do with balancing the books” and will be “a battle over what the revenues are going to be.”

The New Mexico Department of Finance and Administration is projecting a \$6.3 billion general fund in 2016, Smith said, including as much as \$293 million — five to six percent — in new spending.

But as Smith points out, there were also optimistic projections before the 2015 session, with expectations of \$280 million in new spending. The actual amount was below \$100 million.

“I would rather build a budget based on \$150 million (in new spending), based on 3 percent growth, not 5 or 6 percent,” Smith said, preferring to “start low and add rather than start high and cut back.”

“We have to have a balanced budget,” he said.

New Mexico has a “very volatile revenue stream,” Smith said, and too much reliance on defense spending and oil and gas revenue. Oil prices were \$100 a barrel a year and a half ago, he said, and are now below \$50 a barrel.

That’s one reason the state has a cash reserve “that is twice what most states carry,” Smith said. It’s currently about 10 percent of the general fund, or \$600 million. If the state starts spending its reserves, he said, it “can only do that for so long.”

The same goes for protecting the state’s permanent fund, which is an important safety net, Smith said. The fund, which comes from oil and gas leases and royalties in the state, generated nearly \$600 million for schools, universities and other programs in 2015. It could generate 5 to 5 1/2 percent more in 2016. But that spending must be approached cautiously.

“If you start eroding it, you can’t sustain a downturn in the market,” he said.

As in past years, Smith said he expects

public and higher education to consume about 60 percent of general fund spending. A priority in 2016, he said, should be to begin phasing in full-day kindergarten.

Smith said another spending priority should be raising the pay of state judges. The salary of the chief justice of the New Mexico Supreme Court, for example, is 49th or 50th in the country, he said.

“I’m concerned about that third branch of government,” he said.

Smith said he expects Gov. Susana Martinez to include tax reductions in her call for the 2016 legislative session, along with bills mandating third-grade retention — holding back third graders who cannot read at grade level — and restricting drivers licenses to undocumented immigrants in the state.

Smith said he hopes the governor also introduces a bill to bring New Mexico into compliance with the REAL ID Act, which became federal law in 2005. Legislation co-sponsored by Smith and New Mexico Senate Minority Leader Stuart Ingle (R-Chaves), Curry, De Baca, Lea and Roosevelt, to create a two-tiered driver’s license program passed the state Senate by a wide margin in 2015, but was defeated in the House. There was a lot of push back from Republicans, Smith said, and the governor did not support the bill.

If right-to-work legislation is introduced in 2016, Smith said it likely will fare as it did in the 2015 session when it was tabled in the Senate Public Affairs Committee after passing the House.

“I’m going to support the committee process, which means I won’t vote to blow (a bill) out of committee,” he said. “Everything should be considered in committee.”

If the bill reaches the Senate floor, Smith said, “I’ll have to look at it very closely.”

Smith said he expects about \$150 million in capital outlay funds to be available in 2016, with one-third each going to the governor, the state Senate and the House. That’s about \$1.2 million per legislator, he said, and “it doesn’t go very far.” The way capital outlay is allocated needs to be reformed, Smith said, with the involvement of a third party so legislators can work with local governments to complete important projects.

Smith also said state roads and highways needed to be funded “on a reliable basis.” ■



## JOHN ARTHUR SMITH, DISTRICT 35

**POLITICAL PARTY:** Democrat

**YEARS IN OFFICE:** 27

**AGE:** 74

**BIRTHPLACE:** Las Vegas, Nevada

**PROFESSION:** Real estate appraiser

**EDUCATION:** Deming High School and University of New Mexico

**OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:** Smith ran for the New Mexico District 2 seat in the U.S. House of Representatives in 2002. He defeated former Las Cruces Mayor Ruben Smith in the Democratic primary and lost to Republican Steve Pearce in the general election.

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## LEE COTTER, DISTRICT 36

**POLITICAL PARTY:** Republican

**YEARS IN OFFICE:** Three

**AGE:** 61

**BIRTHPLACE:** Ithaca, New York

**PROFESSION:** Retired  
business owner

**EDUCATION:** Bachelor's degree  
in civil engineering, New Mexico  
State University; master's degree  
in business administration,  
University of Arizona.

**OTHER POLITICAL  
EXPERIENCE:** None

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# LEE Cotter

Passionate lawmaker candid about  
issues facing state

BY SUSIE OUDERKIRK

Make no mistake. Lee Cotter loves his job.

His enthusiasm is evident in the way he talks about District 36, which includes parts of Las Cruces, San Isidro, Placitas, Rincon, Hatch, Salem and Garfield, home to about 50,000 residents. His track record clearly shows that he favors funding issues that "are the most profitable for the people."

In addition to a civil engineering degree from New Mexico State University, the business owner holds a master's degree and has spent seven sessions in Santa Fe as an analyst, reading proposed legislation. His time spent in the New Mexico Legislature learning the system helped prepare Cotter for his senatorial responsibilities, although he's most inspired being out on the road meeting with the people.

"Once in a while I get to help someone. A while back we put some money into a nonprofit that provides cochlear implants to children" who are deaf or hard of hearing, he said. He admits to having to jump through some metaphorical flaming hoops to get the money into the right hands, but he "worked it out." Afterwards, Cotter had the opportunity to talk to the children themselves and their parents and listened in amazement when the youngsters read to him.

"I could understand every word," he said.

Because the largest part of the state budget is for education (approximately 58 percent), Cotter makes it clear: "Education is the most important thing to all of us."

He has specific ideas that sometimes clash with the status quo.

"I've spent the last three years attending education committee meetings," he said. "And we have, year after year, been spending more money and getting less results."

He has ideas about how to better use the education budget to address problems such as the alarming lack of basic reading abilities of New Mexican children.

Cotter has an uncanny ability to simplify the complex New Mexico political system into layman's terms that are easy to grasp. The number one thing that will change the

prosperity of Doña Ana County is not even in his district.

"Union Pacific is the biggest thing to happen to Las Cruces since the second hospital," he said.

The Santa Teresa railroad facility is a robust hub of Union Pacific that could and should be a huge boon to southern New Mexico if government money can help it grow. Trucking companies, hotels, restaurants and the railroad itself employ hundreds of workers, and the growth potential moving north through Deming, Lordsburg and west into California is unlimited, with money flowing into Las Cruces and surrounding areas.

"We need good roads for freight so trucking companies will relocate their offices and yards to New Mexico," he said.

Even on the more traditional issues, Cotter is passionate. When it comes to water, he said, "The district is in trouble. All of Doña Ana County is in trouble. Farmers are on the edge of 'in trouble.' What we have is not enough."

But he has a rational suggestion for this as well: "It's not as simple as conservation. Conservation has never led to plenty: not oil, water, food or anything. We need to lay a pipe from somewhere such as the Mississippi River to pump in their overflow," he said.

He's in favor of right-to-work legislation because he's in favor of people's choice, and he prefers nuclear energy alternatives to ones that we can't store yet. Cotter believes horizontal drilling will bring a "huge, positive change in our lives," and that the spaceport must spend the taxes collected in Doña Ana and Sierra Counties paying back the capital-investment debt.

Cotter's strong beliefs about what is best for District 36 are tempered by his obvious affection for the area.

"Coming back from northern New Mexico this last time, I saw about 1,000 antelope on the side of I-25," he said.

He spends 180-190 days a year serving the state, and has the car mileage to prove it.

"There's a lot to this job. Dedication. Frustration. Exhilaration. Depression. But it's truly fun. My job is the most rewarding activity in my life," he said. ■



# WILLIAM “BILL” Soules

## Senator looks to long-term benefits of building on strengths

BY JESSICA WHITE-CASON

Sen. William “Bill” Soules has a lot on his mind for the upcoming 2016 Budget and Capital Outlay legislative session, despite its short, 30-day schedule.

“Thirty days goes by awfully quick, even when there’s only a very limited number of issues we’re able to deal with,” Soules said.

But these strict constraints do not seem to have narrowed Soules’ outlook. He has his eye on issues such as the Developmentally Disabled (DD) Waiver, education, infrastructure, economic development and jobs, with an emphasis on responsible growth and long-term benefits for New Mexico.

Among the most critical budget items for Soules during the 2016 session is the DD Waiver. The waiver serves individuals with developmental disabilities by providing services such as medical care, speech and occupational therapies, transportation and, for some, a chance to live independently. Currently, the waiting list is more than 6,000 people long, with many applicants waiting 10 years or more for services.

“I’ve got a bill that is going to request \$25 million in funding to move people off of the DD waiver waiting list,” he said.

Soules also plans to seek additional funding for education.

“Education and education funding is something that I am always working on,” he said.

He believes in order to make the necessary changes that will move New Mexico’s schools and its students up from the bottom of the American education system, education must be appropriately funded.

Currently, Soules does not have any specific capital outlay projects he plans to push, but he will continue to focus on infrastructure.

“I always look at capital outlay as being for infrastructure projects that are going to have long-term benefits for the community,” he said.

Within District 37, Soules listed a few infrastructure projects which could be addressed with capital outlay funds —

roads, flood control, ongoing septic tank remediation and various other projects which could support East Mesa growth in Las Cruces.

Soules said he also intends to focus attention on the Infrastructure and Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP) list provided by the city, county and schools.

“I always try to make sure that we do some of those things,” he said.

When asked what other issues he was expecting the governor to address in the coming legislative session, Soules said “the governor has indicated that she’s going to put the third-grade retention bill back on,” though he did not seem altogether pleased at this prospect. He called the impending action “politically motivated.”

Soules seems optimistic for a discussion on jobs and wages in the upcoming session.

While he admitted legislators are never quite sure what to expect from the governor’s call, he did say economic development and job growth around the state are hot issues.

“We have not seen the job growth that we’d like, and that we need in the state of New Mexico,” he said.

He hopes that Gov. Susana Martinez will reconsider the Industrial Hemp Bill, “which passed overwhelmingly in both chambers, that the governor vetoed.”

Soules believes growing hemp for industrial purposes could have a huge economic impact on the state.

He also believes New Mexico has its foot on the brake when it comes to alternative energy, a resource which could easily create new and lasting jobs.

“We have abundant sunshine, we have good wind resources, but I think we have been limiting those potentials,” Soules said.

Overall, Soules has a lot of faith in New Mexico and its people. His interest is in looking to what New Mexico is particularly suited for, and building on the state’s strengths and “the great resources we have in people,” to foster job creation and growth. ■



## BILL SOULES, DISTRICT 37

**POLITICAL PARTY:** Democrat

**YEARS IN OFFICE:** Four

**AGE:** 61

**BIRTHPLACE:** Las Cruces, New Mexico

**PROFESSION:** Retired teacher

**EDUCATION:** Bachelor in psychology, master’s in psychology and education, and PhD in interdisciplinary studies, New Mexico State University

**OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:** Two terms on the Las Cruces Public Schools board and a stint as president of the New Mexico School Board Association.

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## MARY KAY PAPER, DISTRICT 38

**POLITICAL PARTY:** Democrat

**YEARS IN OFFICE:** 16

**AGE:** 83

**BIRTHPLACE:** El Paso, Texas

**PROFESSION:** Retired business owner

**EDUCATION:** Bachelor's degree in horticulture and post-graduate studies, New Mexico State University

**OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:** None

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# MARY KAY Papen

## Democrat tuned into diverse needs of community

BY SUSIE OUDERKIRK

To Sen. Mary Kay Papen, the best defense is a good offense, and she'll come out throwing for the end zone in 2016 by continuing to push projects as well as sponsoring a number of preemptive bills in an effort to be proactive on hot issues in our nation.

She plans to carry her own Assisted Outpatient Treatment Act again this year, which provides needed support services for seriously mentally ill citizens. Last year the bill passed the House unanimously, but the Senate was unable to concur with some technical amendments as the session ended.

One budget item she's supporting is increased funding for behavioral health programs. Never one to whitewash an issue, Papen said, "We have a long way to go to overcome the damage done to New Mexico's behavioral health infrastructure over the past few years. We need to rebuild and expand services to our seriously mentally ill."

Papen also theorizes there will be many law enforcement and criminal justice bills introduced in reaction to some of the high-profile cases seen in the news recently.

"We must consider each of these carefully," she said, adding she expects a "very high workload for a 30-day session."

It's clear to her the Legislature "must do something to address the problem of repeat offenders, but we must be careful not to create unintended budgetary and other consequences for the future."

The 83-year-old senator keeps her finger on the pulse of Las Cruces and strongly supports economic development issues as the city continues to recover from the recession. On her agenda is updating the city streets of Las Cruces.

"I will be supporting infrastructure capital outlay projects for southern New Mexico, as I have in the past. We have many unmet needs for roads, water supplies and sanitation projects in our area. We also must continue to provide infrastructure funding for our colonias," she said.

She understands how vital New Mexico State University is to Las Cruces, and will continue to support funding initiatives at the university, including an autism program and a competition pool.

"Of course, agriculture continues to be one of the most important focal points in our area. We must continue to support our farms and provide them the support they need, such as water," Papen said.

She will support funding for the Water Resources Research Institute as well as capital outlay "to ensure that our citizens have access to adequate, safe drinking water...especially in our smaller communities and colonias."

Because Papen believes there are diverse needs in the Las Cruces/Dofia Ana community, she sees right-to-work legislation as a two-sided coin.

"My position on right-to-work legislation depends on the particulars of the legislation being considered. I support the right of workers to join a union, but I also respect the desires of those who don't want to join to be free from coercion," she said.

The same is true for economic development efforts. Papen knows New Mexico must continue its efforts to attract employers who can provide well-paying jobs.

"I'm in strong support of the need to ensure working families a decent living wage, but we must weigh that against our ability to attract and retain employers."

Always looking forward, Papen supports initiatives to develop alternative energy.

"We are blessed with wind and solar resources not so abundant elsewhere. We must take advantage of those resources to continue to reduce our carbon footprint," she said.

Papen has represented New Mexico's District 38 since 2001, and served as Senate pro tem since 2013. She is the first woman to hold this position in the New Mexico state senate since 1940.

Papen also served Las Cruces as a volunteer board member for La Casa, Inc., St. Luke's Health Clinic, First Step prenatal and pediatric clinic and the Border Book Festival.

Moving into her 16th year in New Mexico politics, Papen, an NFL fan, understands how crucial it is for the Legislature to work together, not unlike a well-coached football team heading for the playoffs. ■

*Jessica White-Cason contributed to this report.*

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# TED Barela

## Senator looking out for rural communities

BY JESSICA WHITE-CASON

Sen. Ted Barela was appointed by Gov. Susana Martinez in April 2015 to fill the District 39 Senate seat left vacant by Phil Griego. While he may be new to the New Mexico Senate, Barela is working hard and catching up quickly.

A driving force for Barela is his desire to address his district's needs. His first task to achieve this goal is determining how responsible his district has been with funds appropriated for past capital outlay projects. He said he is examining whether or not those appropriations have actually been spent, and if projects are being completed. Barela warned against throwing good money after bad.

He believes infrastructure and job creation go hand in hand, and he is focused on improving both. Barela is relying on his community visits to determine what types of capital outlay projects he will be carrying in the 2016 session, but he looks forward to working with infrastructure projects — items with long-term benefits.

Barela indicated the rural nature of his district is not always conducive to keeping small businesses running, and that many of his district's inhabitants must commute daily for their jobs. He also emphasized state job loss is exaggerated for rural communities.

"We may look at an industry, and if they even lost five jobs, you're probably not going to think about it too much. A small mom-and-pop business shut down and they provided three jobs, might not be a big deal. But, when you look at my communities, it's a huge deal," Barela said.

He said job creation in his district would be best fostered through improving infrastructure. With proper infrastructure in place, Barela hopes to make his communities more whole, and more desirable for businesses.

Job creation is not just a district issue for Barela. From a statewide perspective,

he believes the tax structure could be more business-friendly.

"If a neighboring state has better tax rates, why would anyone choose to do business with New Mexico?" Barela asked.

With better tax rates, come better opportunities for businesses to move in and create jobs in New Mexico.

Barela said the loss of the state's educated workforce to other states is due in large part to the fact New Mexico is not business friendly. He believes New Mexico has provided excellent educational resources, but has failed to create an environment that generates viable job options to offer its graduates.

"I think our universities and our colleges in this state are very good, but we need to stop losing our people," Barela said.

Without more business-friendly policies, Barela said he is certain that the state is going to continue losing its educated workers.

When asked about the state's alternative energy

needs, Barela said he believes New Mexico has already made great progress toward supplementing its energy needs with alternative energy sources. However, Barela is sure the state is too dependent on revenues from fossil fuels to consider replacing them in any major way with alternative energy.

He indicated the severance tax provided by fossil fuels helps to fund things like New Mexico's education budget. If we replace fossil fuels "there's going to have to be another method of paying for these benefits that come from the fossil-fuel economy," he said.

He does not believe this is an impossible prospect, but Barela emphasizes a need for open-mindedness in approaching the issue. The process of finding appropriate sources for filling the financial gap will be difficult, if alternative energies are going to be a viable option for the state.

"We've got a long row to hoe," Barela said. ■

“No matter where you go, you run into someone you know, or talk to someone who knows someone you both know. That’s community.”

— On what Barela loves about New Mexico



### TED BARELA, DISTRICT 39

**POLITICAL PARTY:** Republican

**AGE:** 49

**YEARS IN OFFICE:** Newly appointed

**BIRTHPLACE:** Estancia, New Mexico

**PROFESSION:** Project manager, Bohannon Huston Inc.

**EDUCATION:** High school graduate

**OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:**

Estancia Town Trustee and Mayor of Estancia

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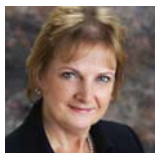
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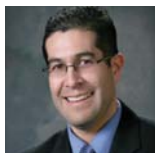
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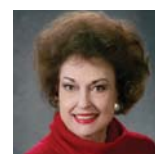
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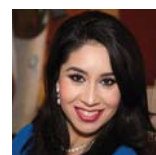
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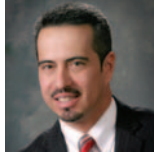
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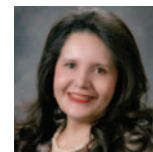
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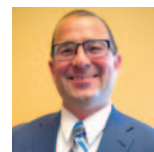
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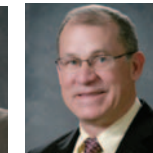
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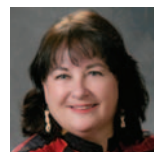
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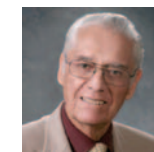
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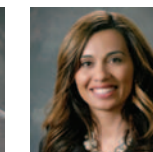
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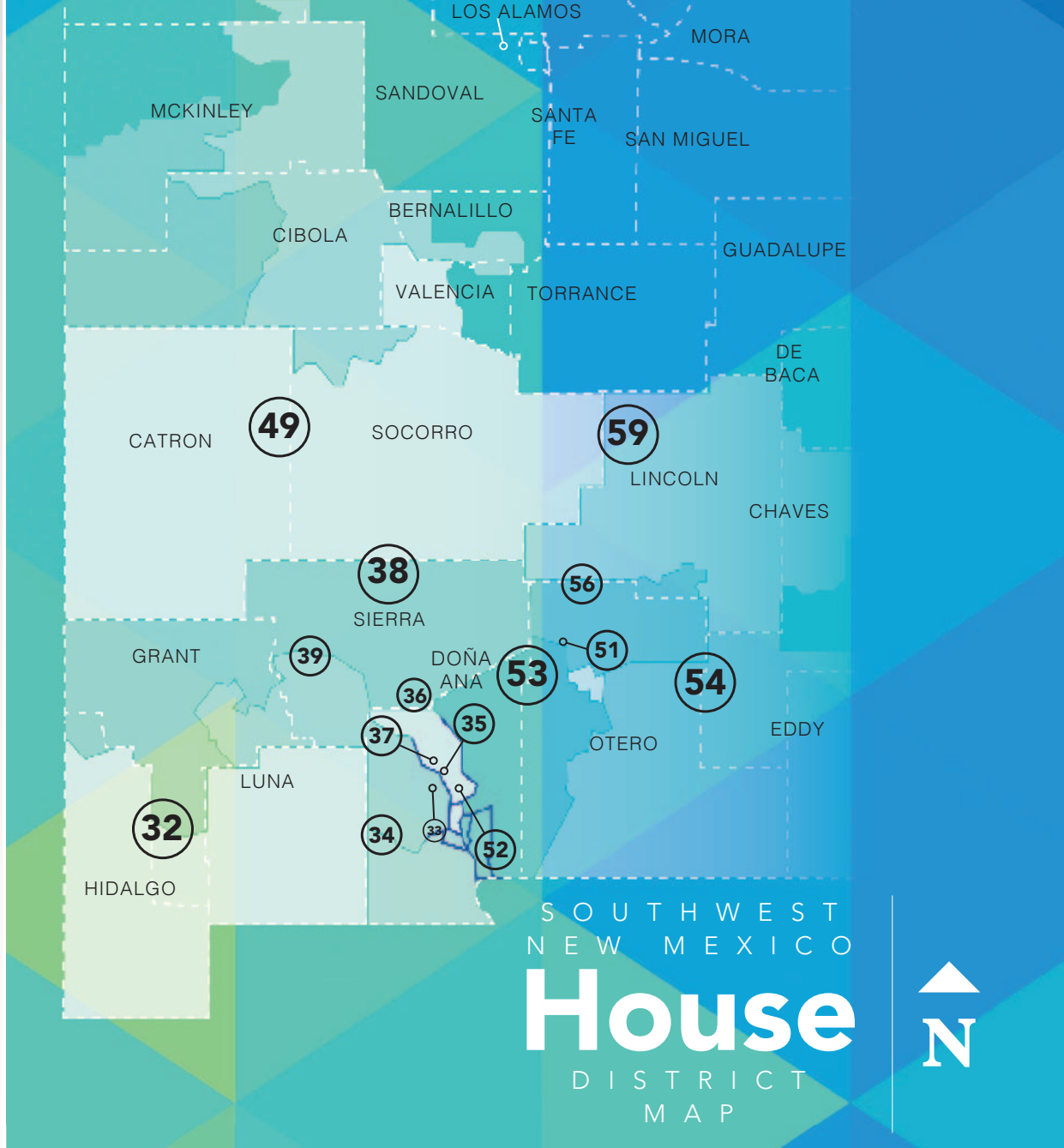
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# Representative Numerical List

- 1 MONTOKA, RODNEY D.
- 2 STRICKLER, JAMES R.J.
- 3 BANDY, PAUL C.
- 4 CLAHCHISCHILLIAGE, SHARON
- 5 JOHNSON, D. WONDA
- 6 ALCON, ELISEO LEE
- 7 FAJARDO, KELLY K.
- 8 BALDONADO, ALONZO
- 9 LUNDSTROM, PATRICIA A.
- 10 ROMERO, G. ANDRES
- 11 MARTINEZ, JAVIER
- 12 RUILOBA, PATRICIO R.
- 13 ROYBAL-CABALLERO, PATRICIA
- 14 GARCIA, P. MIGUEL
- 15 BARNES, SARAH MAESTAS
- 16 MAESTAS, ANTONIO "MOE"
- 17 ARMSTRONG, DEBORAH A.
- 18 CHASEY, GAIL
- 19 STAPLETON, SHERYL WILLIAMS
- 20 DINES, JAMES MITCHELL
- 21 LECHUGA-TENA, IDALIA
- 22 SMITH, JAMES E.
- 23 PACHECO, PAUL A.
- 24 JAMES, CONRAD D.
- 25 TRUJILLO, CHRISTINE
- 26 LOUIS, GEORGENE
- 27 LARRAÑAGA, LARRY A.
- 28 HALL, JIMMIE C.
- 29 ADKINS, DAVID EDWARD
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- 31 REHM, WILLIAM "BILL" R.
- 32 IRWIN, DONA G.
- 33 MCCAMLEY, BILL
- 34 GOMEZ, BEALQUIN BILL
- 35 STEINBORN, JEFF
- 36 NUÑEZ, ANDREW "ANDY"
- 37 MCMILLAN, TERRY H.
- 38 HAMILTON, DIANNE
- 39 ZIMMERMAN, JOHN L.
- 40 SALAZAR, NICK L.
- 41 RODELLA, DEBBIE A.
- 42 GONZALES, ROBERTO "BOBBY" J.
- 43 RICHARD, STEPHANIE GARCIA
- 44 POWDRELL-CULBERT, JANE E.
- 45 TRUJILLO, JIM R.
- 46 TRUJILLO, CARL
- 47 EGOLF, BRIAN F. JR.
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- 49 TRIPP, DON
- 50 MCQUEEN, MATTHEW
- 51 HERRELL, YVETTE
- 52 GALLEGOS, DOREEN Y.
- 53 LITTLE, RICK L.
- 54 TOWNSEND, JAMES G.
- 55 BROWN, CATHRYNN N.
- 56 COOK, ZACHARY J.
- 57 HARPER, JASON CARL
- 58 EZZELL, CANDY SPENCE
- 59 ESPINOZA, NORA
- 60 LEWIS, TIMOTHY DWIGHT
- 61 GALLEGOS, DAVID M.
- 62 SCOTT, LARRY
- 63 DODGE, GEORGE JR.
- 64 CROWDER, RANDAL S.
- 65 MADALENA, JAMES ROGER
- 66 WOOLEY, BOB
- 67 ROCH, DENNIS J.
- 68 YOUNGBLOOD, MONICA C.
- 69 MARTINEZ, W. KEN
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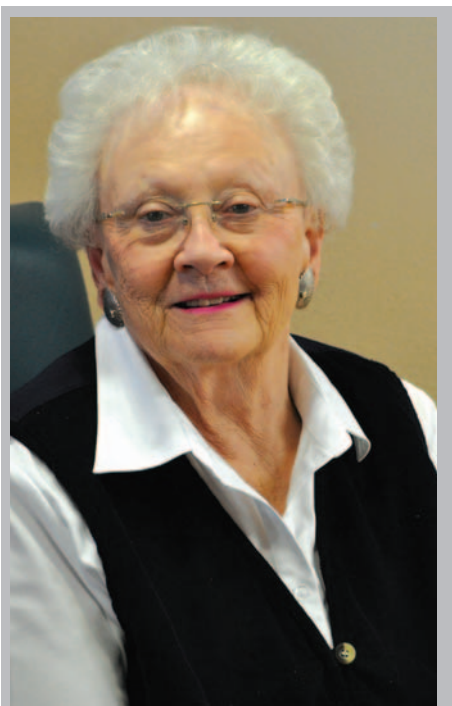
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## DONA IRWIN, DISTRICT 32

**POLITICAL PARTY:** Democrat

**YEARS IN OFFICE:** 17

**BIRTHPLACE:** Silver  
City, New Mexico

**PROFESSION:** Marketing,  
First New Mexico Bank

**EDUCATION:** Attended Western  
New Mexico University

**OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:**  
Luna County Commissioner, 1982-86;  
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# DONA Irwin

## After careful consideration, Irwin votes what she feels is right

BY ELVA K. ÖSTERREICH

Born in Silver City, Rep. Dona Irwin said she has had no desire to live anywhere but southern New Mexico. The District 32 Representative listens and advocates for her constituents in Hidalgo, Luna and a sliver of Grant counties with a no-nonsense attitude.

She has no patience for those who are in politics for their own reasons to talk about themselves, or to speak for their own businesses.

"What you see is what you get," Irwin said about herself.

She is a Democrat but will never vote a straight Democratic Party ticket; she will do what she sees is best for her counties.

"I was elected by the people in my district," Irwin said. "That's who I represent and how I vote. Deming's been really good to me, so this is a good way of giving back."

Irwin's voting record reflects that she is not the typical Democrat. While she has voted in the past in favor of such topics as increasing contributions to the Legislative Pension Plan, she also voted against prohibiting corporal punishment in schools and creating a surtax on income tax. Indeed, it's hard to pinpoint exactly what camp Irwin follows; she might be a camp all to herself.

Irwin attended Western New Mexico University in Silver City for a time before marrying and starting a family.

She and her husband, now deceased, raised their two children, Craig and Janet, in Deming. Irwin has six grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

"Deming is a friendly, wonderful place to grow up in and raise a family," Irwin said.

She said the current issues are the same as always — jobs, business and schools top the list of things people are concerned about.

Irwin said she has been on the same two committees since she was first elected in 1999: Agriculture, Water & Wildlife and the New Mexico Finance Authority.

Irwin's background is finance; she is a longtime banker at First New Mexico Bank in Deming. As such, she takes a keen interest in business matters, serving on the Business and Industry, Agriculture and Water, and Government and Urban Affairs Committees.

"I am pro-business," Irwin said. "I've just always been in business, and I believe in it. Without business, there are no jobs."

She also understands the importance of agriculture to rural southern New Mexico.

"Agriculture is the backbone, and if we don't have it, where is our food going to come from?" Irwin asked.

During the past several sessions Irwin has introduced bills relating to the wine industry and alcohol distribution, including a request for a wine study in 2014 and a bill about Internet wine sales in 2015.

Irwin attributes her district's successes to a spirit of cooperation.

"Everyone always needs money for city and county projects," she said, "and we've always been fortunate that our city and county work together so well. One year, one will have a project, and the next year, the other has a project."

"We've never been one of those counties that didn't spend their money and get something done," she continued.

She stressed that cooperation has allowed for a great deal of progress.

Irwin said she is careful to look at all sides of any given issue before voting against or for any bill.

Her ability — and willingness — to see both sides of the coin is also apparent when she discusses the state's budget and its deep reliance on gas and oil money.

"I think one of the hardest things for people to understand is that, when prices go down at the gas pump, that's really great for the consumer but really bad for the state, as we depend on oil and gas revenues for most of our budget," she said. ■



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# BILL McCamley

## Working to bring legislators together

BY SUSIE OUDERKIRK

One basic idea permeates Bill McCamley's politics: finding common ground. Underlying all of the District 33 Representative's concerns is the tenet of collaboration.

"We have the best results when we come together and choose one item to work on," he said.

Whether discussing education, job creation or drought (three issues he is passionate about), it all comes down to the ability of the Legislature to work as one.

McCamley, 37, is adamant about the importance of education, specifically STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) concentrations. Because more than 40 percent of the budget goes toward K-12 education, "this is not just most important to me, but to the whole state legislature," he said.

"We have to come up with educational strategies to support STEM programs. There are 2.1 jobs open for every STEM graduate," he said, which is twice the number of options for students graduating in other areas.

He believes in limits on standardized testing and admits that New Mexico has to be creative in finding a way to have accountability in our schools. He said any new educational strategies have to not only work, but work well.

Producing students with degrees that are actually leading to full time employment fills two buckets: creating jobs and keeping our young people here.

"We have to keep our STEM people here, not send them to bigger cities like Dallas. The economy will grow if we keep our people here," he said.

And again, the best way to do that, according to McCamley, is for legislators to work together on one strong issue at a time.

Not that he doesn't have specific issues that he's willing to stand alone on: he's openly

critical of the right-to-work legislation and supports unions and their protection of hard-working people.

"Unions should be able to fight for their workers," he said.

One issue McCamley addresses is definitely not sexy: septic tank abatement. He has worked to have the now-illegal septic tanks in his district changed over to sewer systems to improve the quality of life in District 33. He'd also like to see a change in the divide between the middle class and the wealthy.

"The minimum wage should be a living wage," he said.

And near and dear to his heart is a push to legalize marijuana and tap into the financial benefits of hemp production.

When it comes to more popular, hot-button issues such as water, McCamley insists that the state's biggest challenge is to use existing resources in the most efficient way.

"Crop selection should be an issue. Drought is the new normal," he said.

Because there are more people and less water in New Mexico, he said more accurate ways to measure water depletion need to be created. The Legislature may need to develop benchmarks that

cities use to better measure water use per-person-per-day. He disagrees with the "use-it-or-lose-it" water plan, and he'd also like to collaborate with other legislators to bring big oil and gas together for the purposes of efficiency.

"Of course, we need clean energy. We need more wind, solar and geothermal, and the tax credits for residents (who make the effort to go green,)" he said.

McCamley understands that residents need to work together to make things better.

"I want people to stay positive about our community. Of course there are problems we need to fix, but we also need to focus on community pride," he said.

McCamley can boil down his advice to every citizen: "Everyone should take pride in making things better. I do." ■

**"I want people to stay positive about our community. Of course there are problems we need to fix, but we also need to focus on community pride... Everyone should take pride in making things better. I do."**

**— On McCamley's goals for his community**



### BILL MCCAMLEY, DISTRICT 33

**POLITICAL PARTY:** Democrat

**YEARS IN OFFICE:** Three

**AGE:** 37

**BIRTHPLACE:** Busan, South Korea

**PROFESSION:** Works for Sunspot Solar Energy Systems

**EDUCATION:** Bachelor's degree in government from New Mexico State University; master's degree in public policy from Harvard University.

**OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:** Doña Ana County Commissioner, 2005-08.

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## BEALQUIN "BILL" GOMEZ, DISTRICT 34

**POLITICAL PARTY:** Democrat

**YEARS IN OFFICE:** One

**AGE:** 70

**BIRTHPLACE:** Roswell, NM

**PROFESSION:** Retired New Mexico State University Extension Service economist

**EDUCATION:** Bachelor's and master's degrees in agriculture economics and business from New Mexico State University

**OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:** New Mexico Tourism Commissioner for five years

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# BEALQUIN "BILL" Gomez

Change starts by getting  
projects "on the list"

BY SUSIE OUDERKIRK

Democrat Bealquin "Bill" Gomez has a lot of irons in a lot of fires for District 34. The apple of his political eye is a whole bushel.

"These things don't just affect my district. Everything I work for also affects the whole state," he said.

A recurring issue for Gomez is water, specifically the sewer issues in Sunland Park, Chamberino and San Miguel, as well as a recurring flood problem in La Union. He also continues to fight for transportation safety improvements such as highway maintenance all over the state. And he's passionate about helping farmers and ranchers stay in business with a variety of projects from hemp production to boll weevil eradication to compensating ranchers for damage done by invasive elk.

Education also is an issue dear to his heart (he's a retired university Extension Service economist) and he wants to find ways to keep our teachers in the state. He continues to fund necessities for the Sunland Park Fire Department and the Doña Ana County Sheriff's Department. He's also working on two new parks and a library in rural District 34. And that's just a sampling of his pet projects.

The 70-year-old is on seven committees, and that's just during the interim. Add three more to that during the session. Just keeping track of his many political commitments is exhausting, but, like the Energizer Bunny, he never stops working.

Several of Gomez's projects are in a holding pattern; he has come to the realization that to get things done in the Legislature the first step is to get each issue on the list of capital outlay items. It's tricky, he said, because representatives may not know when an item makes it onto that list.

One capital outlay item critical to Gomez is the transportation budget. As a member of the Transportation Committee, he helped bring \$9 million into his district last year, and he plans to fight for even more than that this year.

"Texas gets 1.2 billion dollars a year for metropolitan planning. New Mexico gets only \$860 million," he said. "We don't have money for even basic maintenance of our roads. I was driving from Artesia to Hagerman and the highway is just plain dangerous."

He continues to advocate for area farmers on the Right to Farm Act, and supports the growth of alternative crops to compensate for the loss of, among other things, alfalfa revenue.

"Hay farmers are seriously impacted by the importation of alfalfa from Mexico. A ton of alfalfa went from \$300 a ton to \$100 a ton," he said.

In addition to emphasizing cotton as an alternative, Gomez will carry a bill to advance industrial hemp farming.

"We need new crop options for farmers. Hemp has lots of uses, lots of potential and lots of versatility," he said.

Politically, hemp gets a bad rap as a relative of marijuana, but Gomez is quick to point out that growing hemp can negatively offset the growing of illegal marijuana.

"Hemp is very invasive and can destroy an illegal marijuana crop," he said.

In terms of education, Gomez would like to cut back standardized testing to what he considers a more-reasonable level in an effort to keep teachers in the state.

Last year, he helped get \$250,000 into the Anthony sanitation district to install a water line into Gadsden High School.

He stands against right-to-work legislation because he sees no benefit.

"When other states pass it, it doesn't make an impact, so why are we supporting it?" he asked.

His support of issues that directly affect the quality of life in the rural towns of his district is evident. He wants to make the rural roads in his district safer with the addition of speed indicator signs and flashing stop signs along N.M. Highway 28 and down into Anthony and Sunland Park.

"We need to get drivers' attention. They need to slow down," he said.

Last year, Gomez channeled \$250,000 toward a new fire truck in Sunland Park. He doubled the amount of funds available to rural fire departments, sent \$50,000 to the Doña Ana County Sheriff's Department for a new police car, and updated the New Mexico Cooperative Extension Service's statewide computer system, which cost \$25,000. The old fire station in Las Mesa is going through a renovation to become a library and San Miguel and Chamberino both have new community parks. ■



# JEFF Steinborn

## Democrat gets back to basics to improve quality of life for New Mexicans

BY SUSIE OUDERKIRK

To Jeff Steinborn, representative for District 35, it's all about getting the basics right.

Items and capital outlay projects most important to Steinborn are the items that affect the community's quality of life: education, healthcare, infrastructure, water and poverty. A representative since 2007, Steinborn will be taking his interests even further by becoming a candidate for state Senate in 2016. But in the meantime, his focus will be on his House responsibilities and continuing to push for the budget items and capital outlay projects he's supported so far.

Transparency and ethics in government are things Steinborn will continue to work toward in 2016. He recently received the First Amendment Freedom Award for his work to establish webcasting of all committee meetings and development of campaign contribution limits.

"We need better oversight of lobbyists and their spending and of candidates and their financial findings," he said.

It's also time, he said, to start recording and archiving committee meetings.

Because education is an important priority to Steinborn, he continues to promote improvements in the education system in New Mexico. His priority is to listen to and take care of the state's teachers.

He also insists education for children does not work in a "one-size-fits-all" system. One project currently in discussion is the development of a "creative campus" at New Mexico State University that will provide a cutting-edge academic facility for training students in the film, media and entertainment industries.

He's excited about funding healthcare projects such as the proposed mental health facility that will be developed in conjunction with La Clinica de Familia, and those that provide high-quality services for senior citizens.

"We need to take care of our seniors," he said.

Core essentials of infrastructure, according to Steinborn, include those concrete things that improve quality of life — roads, sewers, parks, alternative energy sources. These things also bring industry

into Las Cruces which creates more jobs.

"Solar provides thousands of jobs across New Mexico. We need tax policies that support industries such as solar," Steinborn said.

A tax credit recently eliminated by Gov. Susana Martinez needs to be reinstated before it affects the solar industry in 2017, he said.

In addition to tax credits, he believes New Mexico must continue to move its utilities toward solar, geothermal and wind. Citizens need to be empowered to take advantage of renewable energies by lowering energy costs across the board, he said. He plans to vote against bills that may reduce the amount of renewable energy utility companies must offer.

In regard to non-renewable resources, he admits our state has a water problem.

"We must develop a plan for a future with less water," he said.

He said current water laws don't address efficient water use.

Because District 35 includes the city of Las Cruces, Steinborn keeps a sharp eye on the steps being taken by local government to maintain sustainability, such as the methods the city uses to get water to

the citizens and how storm water and runoff are handled.

Quality of life is affected by what New Mexicans earn, and as a state, he believes minimum wage should be increased.

"A higher minimum wage is a good tool to raise people out of poverty," he said, noting that was the original intent when it was designed decades ago by FDR.

"A low minimum wage is not family- or child-friendly. How can parents spend time with their kids when they work two or three jobs?" he said.

Steinborn would like to keep current right-to-work legislation as it is to ensure that people get decent benefits. What he calls "right-to-work-for-less" legislation guts the middle class and will actually make New Mexico poorer.

With his eye on a Senate seat in 2017, Steinborn is planning to wrap up his days as a representative for District 35 by going back to the basics.

"We must fully fund the core essentials to make sure our citizens are taken care of," he said. ■



### JEFF STEINBORN, DISTRICT 35

**POLITICAL PARTY:** Democrat

**YEARS IN OFFICE:** Seven

**AGE:** 45

**BIRTHPLACE:** Las Cruces, NM

**PROFESSION:** Land conservation

**EDUCATION:** New Mexico Military Institute; bachelor's degree in political science with a minor in business administration, University of Texas at Austin; some graduate course work at Institute of World Politics.

**OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:**

Former aide to U.S. Sen. Jeff Bingaman and aide to then-U.S. Rep. Bill Richardson; House of Representatives District 37, 2007-2010.

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## ANDY NUÑEZ, DISTRICT 36

**POLITICAL PARTY:** Republican

**YEARS IN OFFICE:** 14

**AGE:** 80

**BIRTHPLACE:** Roswell, New Mexico

**PROFESSION:** Rancher, farmer

**EDUCATION:** Bachelor's degree in animal science, New Mexico State University; master's degree in animal science, New Mexico State University.

**OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:** Mayor of Hatch.

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# ANDY Nuñez

## Legislator brings specific solutions

BY SUSIE OUDERKIRK

Retired educator and current mayor of Hatch, Republican Andy Nuñez has worn many political hats, which helps him see politics from a wide and varied perspective.

He started his political career as a member of the Democratic Party, switched his affiliation to Independent, and is now a Republican representing District 36. Although there are many budget items and capital outlay projects with which he is involved, Nuñez brings to the table very specific ideas to solve problems in his district.

Two of his most pressing budget items this year are economic development and water. A proponent of international trade, Nuñez supports continued development such as the Santa Teresa border crossing.

"We have to make sure we get the money we need to fix up the roads and the airport in Santa Teresa for crossing into Mexico," he said. "We need international trade."

And when it comes to water, he's done his homework. As vice chair of the Agriculture and Water Committee, he believes he knows what needs to be done. When Elephant Butte runs low on water, farmers must start pumping from wells, which in this area are shallow and highly saline, affecting both yield and quality of prolific crops such as chile and onions.

The water issue has carried over from years past and Nuñez continues to push for an effective plan.

"My big thing is to get the state engineer to get the adjudicating issue going in the Hatch and Rincon valleys," he said, which involves accepting the numbers and statistics from Elephant Butte Irrigation District to determine how water is distributed. "The past two engineers claim it will take 40 years, but we could get this done in one."

A supporter of the oil and gas industries, Nuñez puts a lot of faith into right-to-work

legislation. He co-sponsored a bill last year and will continue to support right-to-work legislation this year. He's confident the state is making strides toward environmentally friendly alternative energy with sufficient federal tax credits and funds.

In 2014, he pushed a capital outlay project that contributed to improvement of a homeless shelter in Las Cruces, and will work toward refurbishing La Clinica de

Familia into a much-needed mental health facility.

Fourteen years in office have taught Nuñez to come up with ideas that are very specific.

"One thing I want to carry is a bill about the vehicles confiscated by the police from drug arrests. The money they make when they auction the cars goes into the general fund, but it should go to the agency, the county or the community it falls under," he said.

It may not be a lot of money in the grand scheme of things, but for a village like Hatch,

it could mean anywhere between \$17,000 and \$70,000.

Another concern is the ethics of New Mexico's governmental administration: "The way the legislators behave," he said.

He insists campaign finance needs to be reformed, and is proud of the fact that he has, "never, in 14 years, accepted campaign contributions."

Not only is campaign transparency important to him, but he also believes New Mexico government needs to get in line and start being more bipartisan in all areas.

Although retirement from government has crossed his mind, he's not ready to give up the issues he believes in just yet. And like Hank Williams Sr., one of the representative's favorites, Nuñez will keep plugging along.

"It don't matter what I feel inside as long as the job I'm working gets done on time." (From the song "Workin' Man" by Hank Williams Sr.) ■

“One thing I want to carry is a bill about vehicles confiscated by the police from drug arrests. The money they make when they auction the cars goes into the general fund, but it should go to the agency, the county or the community it falls under.”

— On a bill Nuñez plans to carry this year



# TERRY McMillan

Doctor believes education, economy need long-term plan

BY MARISSA BOND

For District 37 Rep. Dr. Terry McMillan, education and economic development go hand in hand.

"My understanding is that states compete for jobs and job-producers," McMillan said. "The resources necessary to your businesses that have large numbers of good-paying jobs have to do with the tax and regulatory environment — and, even more importantly, the availability of trained, motivated workers."

"If you're going to provide a \$35,000-\$45,000 job with benefits, you're going to have some expectations about what that person's going to be able to deliver," he said. "High school dropouts, in general, probably can't, or at least that prospective employer isn't going to think so, so you've got to keep kids in school, and continue to try to innovate in terms of how we educate them and keep them interested in completing their education. The early-college high school is as great an innovation as we have around here."

During the last legislative session, funding was expanded for the Job Training Incentive Program (JTIP), which provides on-the-job training for prospective employees. McMillan said JTIP has a positive effect in terms of creating a long-term environment in which businesses are going to be interested.

For the upcoming session, McMillan said he will be responsive to the prioritization of the Doña Ana County Legislative Coalition's requests for capital outlay. He said one of the things he likes about serving Las Cruces is that city, county, business and education interests have come together to form a coalition.

"They will all come to an agreement — in terms of priority — on a nice list of things that they think are most important to the area. And I always listen to that, and I will undoubtedly choose things that they are asking for," McMillan said.

He said he was pleased with the capital outlay for the previous session, including an allotment to the rehabilitation of the long-vacant downtown hospital for La Clinica de Familia.

McMillan said he would consider bringing forward a pregnant worker accommodation act, which would organize a way in which employers and their pregnant employees could negotiate appropriate accommodations to the pregnancy. McMillan introduced the bill during the previous session and it was passed in the House, but stalled in the Senate.

"I'll consider bringing that again," he said. "It's a non-budgetary item, so it'll depend upon the governor's support or not."

McMillan had a successful session last year, with several bills signed by the governor.

"The last session was tight, but I had several bills passed, including a bill providing more funding for nurses seeking advanced education and a vaccine bill ensuring vaccines continue to be purchased in bulk and distributed to providers," he said.

During the previous session, the Legislature secured funding for continued water research at NMSU's Water Research Institute, and McMillan will help that continue.

"That's a statewide, if not regional, concern," McMillan said. "We compete with all the states around us contentiously, and in the courts, for water resources. And so there is little likelihood of cooperation or agreement for major projects."

"I want to do what I can to continue to see that the Water Research Institute is adequately funded, in particular with respect to its work at developing a more appropriate emergency plan for that circumstance in which Texas calls for more water from New Mexico and our supplies are at or near the bottom. ... That has nothing to do with a long-term solution to our water-shortage issues, but it's what could devastate us economically if it's not addressed." ■



## TERRY MCMILLAN, DISTRICT 37

**POLITICAL PARTY:** Republican

**YEARS IN OFFICE:** Five

**AGE:** 59

**BIRTHPLACE:** Lubbock, Texas

**PROFESSION:** Otolaryngologist

**EDUCATION:** Bachelor's degree from Baylor, medical degree from University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston

**OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:** None

### CONTACT INFO

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## 2016 DACLC LEGISLATIVE SUPPORT INITIATIVES

The Dona Ana County Legislative Coalition (DACLC) seeks to identify and promote significant legislative initiatives to benefit Las Cruces and our surrounding communities' economic & developmental needs. Below are the member's Legislative Initiatives supported by the Coalition for the 2016 Legislative Session.

1. Runway 10-28 Upgrade and Reconstruction at Dona Ana County Jetport - \$250,000
2. Repeal NMSA 1978, § 4-59-15 (IRB Protest Provision) - none, policy change
3. Interest and Fee Caps on Non-Bank Lending Institutions - none, policy change
4. Doña Ana County Fairground Improvements - \$250,000
5. Capital Investment for New Facility Equipment for La Clinica De Familia - \$675,000
6. NMSU-DACC College Infrastructure Upgrades & Replacement - \$1,600,000
7. NMSU-LC Williams Hall Renovations & Additions - \$25,000,000
8. PERA Rules for Retirees Reentering the Workforce - none, policy change
9. City of Las Cruces Competitive Pool Enclosure - \$3,000,000
10. City of Las Cruces Septic Tank Remediation - \$570,000 to \$3,500,000
11. City of Las Cruces Street Improvements - \$1,000,000
12. City of Las Cruces Traffic Signal Synchronization Plans - \$1,000,000
13. Tax Policy Overhaul - none, policy change
14. Operational Funding and License Authorization for Spaceport America - \$2,800,000 + policy change
15. Center for Educational Innovation established & administered by The Bridge of Southern New Mexico - \$500,000





## DIANNE HAMILTON, DISTRICT 38

**POLITICAL PARTY:** Republican

**YEARS IN OFFICE:** 16

**AGE:** 81

**BIRTHPLACE:** Kansas City, Missouri

**PROFESSION:** Retired talk-show host

**EDUCATION:** Bachelor's degree in secondary education, University of Kansas

**OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:** None

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# DIANNE Hamilton

## Representative uses interim to connect with constituents

BY MARISSA BOND

For District 38 Rep. Dianne Hamilton, the time between legislative sessions is a time to reconnect with her constituents and find out their needs.

"I find the interim is my favorite time, rather than being in Santa Fe, because we get to talk with people all over the state; we get to find out the needs," she said. "I serve on Economic and Rural Development and Veterans Affairs (committees). And I really, really enjoy the interim committees. I also enjoy ... being able to spend more time with my constituents. And that is when we really learn and are more fit to go back to Santa Fe because we know what our people want."

Of the needs her constituents bring up, economic development is one of the most important.

"We are one of the best-kept secrets in the country, as we well know," Hamilton said.

In order to grow, Hamilton said, the state must focus on becoming more business-friendly. She praised the work Gov. Susana Martinez has done, describing her efforts as making the state "more viable, tax-wise."

However, gross receipts taxes remain a concern Hamilton would like the Legislature to explore, saying they can dissuade potential employers from building their business in the state.

Hamilton said she is in favor of right-to-work legislation, which she believes will attract business to the state.

Veterans' affairs are a cause near and dear to Hamilton, as her husband and three of her children are proud veterans of the armed services with a combined 68 years of military service. Truth or Consequences is home to the Hamilton Military Museum, named in her family's honor.

"I think of what I want — anything for the veterans," Hamilton said. "I know there will be more veterans' bills coming out."

One of those bills is Hamilton's own, which partners with Western New Mexico University to provide much-needed support services to veterans suffering from post-

traumatic stress disorder.

Hamilton also said she hopes to make New Mexico viable as an appealing place for retired veterans, who, she said, bring income and expertise to the state.

In Hamilton's district, water is a "touchy situation," with contentious long-term projects in the works.

"We are looking to the future," she said. "We are trying. (There's) one big project that (New Mexico Department of) Game

and Fish has said they are behind to dam some of the water in the area, but environmentalists do not like it. So it's not an easy thing. And we are just hoping that it all comes out. ... If we have another source of water, I think it is going to make a huge difference. I think it will benefit the entire area."

Capital outlay is another contentious topic with implications for her district. Some legislators would like to see capital outlay go only to statewide projects, she said, and

while she is open and amenable to any ideas, as a legislator representing small areas, she prefers the way it is currently distributed.

"I like the way it is set up because in many of the small areas the only way they can afford certain things in their town is through capital outlay," she said. "Silver City is the largest city in Grant County, and I do think we can handle ourselves pretty well, but so much is needed in Sierra County, so much is needed in Hidalgo County. I, being an old timer, like the old way we do it."

When balancing the budget, Hamilton said it is extremely important that money be spent wisely. Education is one area she said needs careful budgetary consideration.

"We have tried so many different educational programs that I think our teachers' heads must be spinning," she said. "I do think we need to spend our money prudently and of course, very much with our students always the first thing we consider."

She emphasized that listening to teachers — and all constituents — is important.

"We have to always remember in the Legislature that we are working for our constituents and the good of our state," Hamilton said. ■

**"We have to always remember in the Legislature that we are working for our constituents and the good of our state."**

**— On what's important to Hamilton heading into 2016 session**



# JOHN Zimmerman

## Republican plans to carry, support a number of bills

BY ZAK HANSEN

Sophomore Rep. John Zimmerman brings the decisiveness that comes with a more than 40-year career in the military to his representation of communities in Grant, Sierra and Doña Ana counties.

Given the budgetary focus of the 30-day legislative session, Zimmerman said it's unlikely he'll push any capital outlay projects. The reason for this, he said, is twofold.

Without capital outlay requests from his represented communities in Doña Ana, Grant and Sierra counties, Zimmerman said "citing any specific areas would be premature," he said.

Then there are fiscal considerations tied to the state's reliance on oil and gas prices.

"With the declining price of a barrel of oil, it will be difficult to fund state government even with modest increases to their budgets, and some will have to be held flat," Zimmerman said. "We do not anticipate much, if any, capital outlay, and until we have a budget approved, it isn't known how much if any capital outlay will be available."

Though the session will be dedicated in majority to the state budget, Zimmerman said there are bills he plans to carry, among them "a bill for New Mexico National Guard concerning awards and decorations," along with two passed and signed by the governor in 2015 but held over. One would allow voluntary contribution funds created for Operation Enduring Freedom (which expired) to be used to help members' families transition to biweekly paydays when their loved ones are mobilized; the other would match life insurance amounts for State Guard members, like those received by regular armed forces members from military branches.

Zimmerman will sponsor a bill clarifying language in the 25-year-old Mining Act — if it appears on Gov. Martinez's call list — and co-sponsor a bill with Rep. Terry McMillan that changes language that makes medical students enrolled in the Burrell College of Osteopathic Medicine at New Mexico State University eligible for a loan-forgiveness program.

"The state funds 18 residency positions at UNM, and we will be asking for a like number of positions to be funded" for the fledgling medical school, he said.

Zimmerman does not mince words when he describes the biggest concerns facing his constituents and all New Mexicans.

"Jobs and the lagging economy when compared to the rest of the country continue to cause concern," he said, though noting under Gov. Susana Martinez's administration, "private sector jobs have increased, but with reduced federal budgets, federal jobs have been eliminated which have kept our job growth essentially flat."

How should New Mexico handle these economic woes?

"New Mexico has a long history of safe mining, farming and ranching," Zimmerman said, however "the increased environmental rules and regulations continue to discourage and eliminate many jobs which support these industries."

In addition, Zimmerman said, "becoming energy independent from OPEC in North America would certainly be one less detriment to our collective economies. Reduced environmental regulations would go a long way to easing the pressures currently put upon our local farms, ranches and oil industry in our state."

Zimmerman is confident supply and demand will solve many of the problems associated with wage and job concerns, though "unnecessary rules and regulations which discourage new businesses from locating in our state need to be eliminated," he said.

"Many employers are looking for experienced workers, and requiring a minimum wage not conducive for entry-level positions is counterproductive in allowing people entering the workforce to get that needed experience. Skills are the basis of wages and competition, for those with needed skills help determine their worth to employers," he said.

New Mexico becoming a right-to-work state, on the other hand, is something Zimmerman strongly supports.

"Studies have shown that states with (right-to-work) legislation enjoy a more robust economy than those that do not," he said.

"Our neighboring states of Texas and Arizona are a testament to this fact. Freedom of choice in education, obtaining a particular skill or trade goes hand-in-hand with the freedom to choose where to put those skills, knowledge and abilities to work for a wage."

Zimmerman said he feels alternative energy industries need to start fending for themselves.

"Both (wind and solar) have enjoyed subsidies from both the federal and state government for at least a decade; both could not have survived without these subsidies in a competitive environment," Zimmerman said. "At some point, they need to compete on their own without these subsidies."

Taxes are another issue Zimmerman said he sees as "ripe for discussion."

"There have been more tax breaks enacted during Gov. Martinez's administration than during any time in recent memory," he said, crediting the reduction of corporate tax rates for strong local economies and low unemployment. "Without them, we might well find our unemployment rates much higher than at present."

Zimmerman cites our export trade with Mexico as not only beneficial to border areas, but to the northern half of the state as well.

"This is something all New Mexicans can be proud of and the jobs produced," he said. ■



## JOHN ZIMMERMAN, DISTRICT 39

**POLITICAL PARTY:** Republican

**YEARS IN OFFICE:** One

**AGE:** 72

**BIRTHPLACE:** El Reno, Oklahoma

**PROFESSION:** Retired Navy commander, retired missile command engineer at White Sands Missile Range

**EDUCATION:** Bachelor's degree in management, New Mexico State University

**OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:** None

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## DON TRIPP, DISTRICT 49

**POLITICAL PARTY:** Republican

**AGE:** 69

**YEARS IN OFFICE:** 17

**BIRTHPLACE:** Pasadena, Calif.

**PROFESSION:** Jeweler, contractor and farmer

**EDUCATION:** Bachelor's degree in history, New Mexico Tech

**OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:** None

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# Tripp

**First Republican Speaker of the House since 1954**

### BULLETIN REPORT

Entering his 17th year in the Legislature and his sophomore session as Speaker of the House — the first Republican to hold the position since 1956 — Don Tripp represents District 49, which encompasses parts of Catron, Socorro and Valencia counties.

Tripp was born in Pasadena, California, in 1946 and moved to New Mexico in 1960. He received his bachelor's degree from New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology in 1969, and became a businessman, owning a jewelry business, a self-storage facility and a construction firm, as well as owning farms near Socorro. He resides in Socorro with his wife, Rosie. They have two children and six grandchildren.

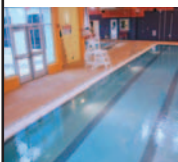
Tripp also served on the board of directors for State National Bank and was the director of Association of Commerce and Industry, a regent of Western New Mexico University and director of New Mexico Educational Assistance Foundation.

Tripp serves on the Appropriations and Agriculture and Water Resources committees and is interim on the Legislative Finance Committee and Technology Committee.

He was unavailable to discuss his plans for the upcoming legislative session. ■

## 2016 City of Las Cruces LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES: Building a Stronger Community

### PROJECTS



#### Community Pool Enclosure: \$3 million

The City of Las Cruces is planning to build a large competitive pool to complement the Regional Aquatic Center and is requesting \$3 million to enclose the facility to enable year-round use. This project will help with wellness, increase public school swim programs, and have a positive economic impact to southern New Mexico.



#### Street Improvements: \$1 million

To improve driving surfaces and traffic flow, the City is requesting \$1 million to help maintain the community's 500 miles of roadways. The city has invested in a computerized pavement management system. The legislative funding will help improve roadways identified as needing maintenance.



#### Traffic Signal Synchronization: \$1 million

Another \$1 million is requested for traffic signal synchronization. The funding will help synchronize the city's 100 signalized intersections and replace half the equipment that is more than 40 years old. Benefits include less idle time for vehicles resulting in less pollution, safer driving conditions and quicker commute times.



#### Septic Tank Remediation: \$3.5 million

(\$570,000 for smaller phases)

Continue removing the 1,880 septic tank systems in Las Cruces and replace with municipal sewer service. Benefits include protecting valuable ground water resources and protecting residents from failed septic systems and associated costs and environmental damage.



### POLICY

#### Tax Policy Overhaul

Advocating for a complete statewide tax policy overhaul with a focus on Gross Receipts Tax. A simplified tax policy and structure will make New Mexico more competitive in the national market when recruiting businesses to our cities.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Robert Garza, P.E., City Manager, 575/541-2076

Lawrence Horan, Lobbyist, 505/859-2895

[www.las-cruces.org](http://www.las-cruces.org)





# YVETTE Herrell

## Balancing books is the state's first challenge

BY ZAK HANSEN

Representing portions of Otero County, which includes Alamogordo, the villages of Cloudcroft and Tularosa and communities including High Rolls, Chaparral, Mescalero, Sacramento and Timberon, along with Holloman Air Force Base and sections of White Sands National Monument and Lincoln National Forest is District 51 Rep. Yvette Herrell.

Herrell, entering her fifth year in the House, knows going into the 2016 legislative session the budget will be the No. 1 priority, especially given the session's short, 30-day running time.

"The budget is going to be the main priority — getting our budget to balance, looking at the commodities market and looking at how we do our projections, may be a challenge," she said. "Everybody needs money ... but getting the budget balanced will be first."

Next in Herrell's mind entering the session are the pending difficulties facing New Mexico regarding noncompliance with the federal REAL ID act, which sets tougher requirements for state-issued driver's licenses and ID cards and requires proof of legal U.S. residency for ID holders.

"We need to address that one way or the other. I'm interested in seeing what kind of legislation is brought forward," Herrell said. "I've heard the governor is wanting to get completely compliant with the REAL ID act so I don't know what it will look like, if it will be a repeal of what we currently have on the books or a completely different bill."

In terms of capital outlay for Otero County, Herrell said she and other representatives with portions of Otero County have met with their communities to hear their concerns and ongoing issues.

"We've seen projects from (Alamogordo) and (Otero County) including everything from police vehicles to infrastructure for the county roads to kitchen facilities in Chaparral," she said. "Cloudcroft is looking for capital for its water project, and some maintenance things in the city of Alamogordo, restrooms at recreation centers have also been brought up."

Though the session is short, Herrell will be carrying once again a bill banning late-term abortions in the state, which easily passed the House in 2015 only to be tabled in the first Senate hearing.

"I think we need to be more mindful of what we are doing in our state, and I don't think that's something New Mexico wants to be known for," she said.

Herrell said she'd like to reintroduce a transfer of public lands commission made up of public- and private-sector groups and individuals to perform an 18-month study of how to best manage New Mexico's public lands and gain revenue from them.

The state's reliance on outside money also troubles Herrell.

"Right now, because we are relying on other sources for our budget — federal funding, at about 35 percent, and of course gas and oil, which is about 36 percent of our budget — we rely heavily on two sources that, at best, we can't count on the certainty of them."

Herrell suggests looking at resources available in-state, along with a reopening of the logging industry "to clean up our forests and make them more accessible."

Like the rest of the state, for Herrell's constituents in Otero County, jobs and the economy are ever-present issues.

"What we're trying to do now is look at ways we can increase gross receipts tax revenues into the city and the county, especially with the (loss of) hold harmless," she said. "The city was very concerned about hold harmless going away. Those go directly into the city's hoppers ... We need to look at ways we can start generating revenues and create jobs in this community and the outlying areas."

"I think we need to do a better job at making sure we are taking care of small businesses in New Mexico," she said. "We need to be really mindful of what kinds of bills we're passing and what the outcomes and effects may be on the small businesses that are here now."

During last session, Herrell did not support a bill making New Mexico a right-to-work state, though that was based only on an attached minimum wage amendment.

"I don't believe we should be the government mandating minimum wage," she said. "I think that's up to the industry standards and the business owner; I think there are so many unknowns (in business) the legislators cannot be aware of."

She is, however, a proponent of making New Mexico a right-to-work state.

"When businesses are looking at site selections and New Mexico as a potential location to start or bring a business, that is discouraging them," she said of New Mexico's current status. "It's a check off the box. It would make us more competitive with our neighboring states. If we can get that passed this year it would be fantastic." ■



### YVETTE HERRELL, DISTRICT 51

**POLITICAL PARTY:** Republican

**YEARS IN OFFICE:** Five

**AGE:** 51

**BIRTHPLACE:** Ruidoso, New Mexico

**PROFESSION:** Self-employed in real estate

**EDUCATION:** Legal administration, ITT Technical Institute; business courses, New Mexico State University and River College

**OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:**

Political campaign work, served as legislative assistant to Diane Hamilton and Nora Espinoza

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# DOREEN Gallegos

Passionate lawmaker  
stands up for constituents

BY ZAK HANSEN



## DOREEN GALLEGOS, DISTRICT 52

**POLITICAL PARTY:** Democrat

**YEARS IN OFFICE:** Three

**AGE:** 46

**BIRTHPLACE:** El Paso, Texas

**PROFESSION:** Executive director, Mesilla Valley CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates)

**EDUCATION:** Bachelor's and master's degrees in social work from New Mexico State University.

**OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:** State Central Committee and finance work.

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doreengallegos.com

District 52 Rep. Doreen Gallegos has devoted the better part of her life — and her three years in the Legislature — committed to giving a voice to those in her community, as well as the rest of the Land of Enchantment, who often go unheard.

As executive director of Mesilla Valley Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) and with two degrees in social work from New Mexico State University, as well as roots in the Mesilla Valley dating back generations, Gallegos cares deeply for the needs of her varied district, which includes the poorer and more rural communities in Doña Ana along with some of the county's more "metropolitan" areas in Las Cruces.

During this year's short session at the Roundhouse, Gallegos — a member of the House Appropriations Committee — said priority No. 1 for her and her fellow legislators will be the budget, especially given the state's low preliminary estimates based on fluctuating oil and gas prices.

"For us, probably 60 percent of the budget goes to public education, and once you add in higher education and social services, you're looking at around 80 percent of the whole budget," she said. "I'm always very interested in how we appropriate out in these times, when it's all about cutting."

"I think we have to be smarter about how we spend money. Big government isn't working, and when you look at some of these agencies, we look for ways to trim without affecting or hurting the most in need."

In terms of capital outlay money, Gallegos hopes to come home to District 52 with funding for the area's decidedly unglamorous but necessary infrastructure concerns, as well as funding for the Anthony Youth Farm located south out Las Cruces on the Texas border — a program for which she's set aside money each year.

"This year we're hoping the walls go up," she said. "They've been producing produce for a while and are selling; there are kids working and they've got internships going with the Gadsden (Independent) School District."

With family roots in the Mesilla Valley, Gallegos said she pays close attention to the needs of those more rural communities throughout Doña Ana County.

"My grandparents lived down there, my family; my mother has lived down there for years, and I go down there and see bars on the windows. Can't get to the door. Gang violence, crime rate, no work. It was depressing. I love that community and the gentleness of the people and the culture and I want them to do well, I see all that potential. I'm invested in them."

Those rural communities especially have infrastructure issues — roads in Vado and Anthony, clean water in La Union and Mesquite — though the more affluent areas of Talavera and Las Alturas, too, need their share of funding for their own basic needs.

One area where Gallegos breaks with some of her fellow Democrats is minimum wage, though much more in practice than in principle.

"I would love to give everyone \$10 an hour minimum wage, but unfortunately I'm more of a realist," she said. "I sit on the appropriations committee, I run a small nonprofit, I've talked to some of the business constituents ... I believe we need to go higher than where we are and that businesses can adjust — if we do it with balance, slowly put in more and more."

However, Gallegos is fiercely opposed to proposals to make New Mexico a right-to-work state, and believes the bulk of her constituents are, too.

"For my constituents, labor is state workers, teachers, those we are trying to protect, and if there are unsafe working conditions or they're facing discrimination at work and they don't have that protection, where does that leave them?" she said. "We've heard hours and hours and hours of testimony, had people wrapped around the capitol, and I don't think I heard any testimony for right-to-work. People came from their jobs, took days to come testify. This was very meaningful to people in this state; for us to even bring it back again to be heard is ludicrous. The people have spoken. This is a no-brainer. New Mexicans don't want this law, and if it's going to be pushed down their throats, this is not a democracy."

Of the budding alternative energy industry in-state, Gallegos said "we have the perfect breeding ground for solar and wind, so I am all for it," but there's a caveat. She said we need to find a way to make it cost-effective and accessible.

Gallegos has a few bills she plans to carry. One would provide small tax incentives for businesses that hire children who have aged out of the foster-care system. Another would provide state-of-the-art dolls to birthing centers statewide to teach new parents of the devastating effects of shaking a baby.

Gallegos plans to carry a bill that would stiffen penalties for anyone who assaults a CYFD employee.

Gallegos said she also plans to provide additional funding for STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) programs, especially for girls, at New Mexico State University, along with the university's College Assistance Migrant Program.

"I'll fight tooth-and-nail for something I'm passionate about and my constituents believe in and I want to do a really good job," Gallegos said.

Entering a divisive session, Gallegos hopes middle-ground emerges.

"It's very divided right now and to be effective we all need to pull toward the middle. We have to start thinking of the people and how to make things better instead of the political ends. You need ebb and flow. If everyone is always at the farthest ends, nothing ever gets done." ■



# RICK Little

## Solving basics should be state's top priority

BY CHRISTOPHE CHINO

With New Mexico's infrastructure in "critical condition" Rep. Rick Little is calling for a serious reconsideration of where and when the state's funding is being allocated.

"I believe government should and could run more efficiently and taxpayer funds should be spent on mandatory state infrastructure and requirements, such as roads and education, first," he said.

Little spoke about failing conditions of several roads in District 53, on which citizens simply cannot drive, he said. He cited the East Mesa and Dog Canyon areas as needing watershed work before the infrastructure on many of the rural roads in the area can even be addressed.

Little will be carrying a bill in the upcoming session he believes will help combat the ailing road systems in his district by "returning the vehicle excise tax back to the road fund where it should be."

He also calls for attention to Chaparral's sewer system which has yet to be completely constructed, leaving many of those in District 53 without amenities that any household would be expected to have. The capital outlay money the district receives is not enough to fix these problems, he said.

"A small amount of capital outlay will not address these issues," he said. "The \$600,000 we are given simply does not pay for anything to be completed."

Each year, the legislative sessions in Santa Fe seem to focus on things other than the basic needs of the state, and since there is much more representation and teamwork in the Albuquerque districts, the needs of the smaller districts tend to go forgotten and unattended, Little said.

He said the general consensus can be that a raise in taxes may help provide more money and services to ailing districts, but rather, there should be a reconsideration of where money is being invested in the first place.

"Before we sit here and raise taxes for New Mexicans, who would be quite surprised where their money is going in the first place, we need evaluate where the money is going and where it needs to be going," Little said.

Business growth and employment are also on the forefront of Little's to-do list, he said. He believes that the failure to pass right-to-work legislation has had a negative effect on the state's economy.

"Less red tape and fair taxes will show the rest of the nation, and the world, that New Mexico is open for business, which will bring better pay and jobs. The free-market system works," he said.

Little also sees the potential for economic growth in the state when it comes to natural resources.

"Oil and gas is in abundance in our state and I believe we should export as much as we can, which will support more jobs. This industry supports almost 40 percent of the whole state government," he said.

Though alternative forms of energy have come to national attention, Little has found himself torn in supporting legislation that would push for an overhaul in the use of alternative energy.

Alternative forms of energy come with high prices many people do not account for when addressing this issue, he said.

"To me, alternative energy is just not cost-effective yet. It may be in the future, but for now it simply is not," Little said. "I, of course, support the efforts that are going into making these alternative forms of energy cost effective, and we will keep going in order to make them cost-effective."

Heading into this year's 30-day budget session, Little understands there is no time to waste.

"We need to address the mandatory issues in the state before anything else at all," he said. "We are seven to 14 years behind in roads and infrastructure in the state." ■



### RICK LITTLE, DISTRICT 53

**POLITICAL PARTY:** Republican

**YEARS IN OFFICE:** Two

**AGE:** 59

**BIRTHPLACE:** Fort Bliss, Texas

**PROFESSION:** Structural mover, general contractor, small business owner

**EDUCATION:** High school diploma, some college

**OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:** None

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## JAMES TOWNSEND, DISTRICT 54

**POLITICAL PARTY:** Republican

**YEARS IN OFFICE:** 1

**AGE:** 60

**BIRTHPLACE:** Carlsbad, New Mexico

**PROFESSION:** Retired senior vice president of Holly Corporation

**EDUCATION:** New Mexico State University

**OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:** Lobbied in Santa Fe and Washington for 15 years

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# JAMES Townsend

## Working for job creation to aid community's success

BY CHRISTOPHE CHINO

District 54 Rep. James Townsend has had business growth and success on the front burner since his rookie season in New Mexico's House of Representatives last year. Ultimately, he believes the success of businesses leads to the overall success of the state.

Born in Carlsbad, Townsend has always felt most at home in the Land of Enchantment. He

grew up in the hard-working household of an agriculture family, and graduated from Carlsbad Senior High School in 1972. After graduation, Townsend attended New Mexico State University-Carlsbad as well as New Mexico Junior College. Townsend has spent more than 20 years in the oil industry, serving as the senior vice president at UNEV Pipeline Co. as well as vice president at the Holly Corp., and has 15 years of experience lobbying for the company in both Santa Fe and Washington. Even after retirement, Townsend still continues to serve on the Board of Directors at Holly Corp.

Townsend believes that with job creation, the success of a community follows. When asked about the most pressing issues of his district, he said many issues go hand-in-hand, such as city improvements and job expansion.

"Roads and related infrastructure (in the district) are critical; good jobs make most things possible," he said.

With a more business-friendly atmosphere, Townsend believes that the State will grow and prosper. In 2014, before last year's legislative session, he stated there should be no excuse for a state riddled with minimum wage jobs, instead, he said, the state needs industry and technology to create good jobs.

With an extensive career based in energy, Townsend also understands the concerns of many residents in his district when it comes to affordable and accessible energy.

"New Mexicans deserve affordable energy and I strongly support affordable energy. We should exploit our ability to produce the most affordable energy through available resources and proven technology," he said.

With job availability and business growth on Townsend's list

of components to the path to the state's success, there will be much work to be done in January.

Last year, Townsend went into the 2015 legislative session with his eyes on passing right-to-work legislation, and though it failed, he says he will be returning to Santa Fe with the same determination as last year to have it become law. ■

“New Mexicans deserve affordable energy and I strongly support affordable energy. We should exploit our ability to produce the most affordable energy through available resources and proven technology.”

— Townsend on energy in New Mexico

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# ZACHARY Cook

**Tourism, budget concerns top of mind heading into session**

BY CHRISTOPHE CHINO

Zachary Cook had education, water use and economic stability on his mind, among many other issues, going into the 2015 legislative session; the beat of his drum hasn't changed too much heading into the 2016 session.

When it comes to water use and water conservation, Cook has nothing but praise for those tasked with the daunting fight against a shortage of water.

"I am constantly impressed with the way the local governments, water districts, businesses, and individuals manage our water resources in my district. We are cooperating every day more with one another and coming up with new ways to handle water throughout the district," he said.

Cook admires his constituents' resilience when it comes to improving water systems in their communities. Before last year's session he made it clear he will advocate for the water-improvement projects that are currently occurring in his district, and reiterated that same emphasis before going into the 2016 session.

"There are several projects currently in motion that I support, including an ongoing project in the Sun Valley water district right outside of Ruidoso in which the residents are investing in the latest technologies to improve a water system that was originally patched together with old irrigation pipes," he said. "I'm just a lawyer by training and I rely heavily on the leadership of the experts in my district to drive the innovation and improvement of our water-management systems."

When asked what issues he may take up during the 2016 session, business retention and expansion was the quick reply.

"I'll introduce legislation that will create jobs in the financial services sector and make New Mexico more competitive with other states that are using similar legislation

to attract business to their states," he said.

In order to make positive movement toward a more financially sound state, New Mexico must attract new businesses and employees, he said.

"We have to become more competitive by passing legislation to say to the rest of the world that New Mexico is open for business," Cook said. "This includes little things like passing right-to-work legislation, improving the tax environment here, and improving the regulatory requirements that businesses have to meet. It can be done. All of the states around us are experiencing growth. I think we can too."

Right-to-work legislation, which would ban union dues as a condition of employment has the majority support of House Republicans, including Cook, but has run into opposition by House Democrats, which led to the legislation not being passed in last year's session. But the potential for this year's session to yield better results for those in support of right-to-work has left many representatives like Cook with high hopes.

"When companies evaluate states for the possibility of relocating or expanding in other states, right-to-work is a factor in their decision whether or not to go to that state," he said. "Without right-to-work New Mexico automatically eliminates itself from further consideration by companies seeking to relocate or expand here. When we are a right-to-work state, we will become more competitive at attracting more business to our state."

Heading into the 2016 session, Cook will enter with an added emphasis on the importance of tourism and education in the state. With financial success and water usage on the minds of those he represents, budget concerns for both education and tourism in his district are also important, he said. ■

**"I'll introduce legislation that will create jobs in the financial services sector and make New Mexico more competitive with other states that are using similar legislation to attract business to their states."**

**— Cook, on jobs**



## ZACHARY COOK, DISTRICT 56

**POLITICAL PARTY:** Republican

**YEARS IN OFFICE:** Eight

**AGE:** 43

**BIRTHPLACE:** Denver, Colorado

**PROFESSION:** Attorney

**OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:** None

### CONTACT INFO

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**PHONE:** 575-937-7644 (Ruidoso), 505-986-4452

**EMAIL:** zachjcook@gmail.com

## NORA ESPINOZA, DISTRICT 59

**POLITICAL PARTY:** Republican

**YEARS IN OFFICE:** Nine

**AGE:** 61

**BIRTHPLACE:** Panama  
Canal Zone

**EDUCATION:** Bachelor's  
degree in religious  
education, New Covenant  
International University

### OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:

Chair, Chaves County  
Republican Party; president,  
Chaves county Federated  
Republican Women

### CONTACT INFO

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Drive, Roswell NM 88201

**PHONE:** Roswell: 575-623-  
5324; Santa Fe: 505-986-4221

**EMAIL:** noraless@  
cableone.net



# NORA Espinoza

## Education likely to be her priority

### BULLETIN REPORT

Education is very important to District 59 Rep. Nora Espinoza, which includes part of Chaves and Lincoln counties.

After all, before she spent nine years in the New Mexico House of Representatives, the Roswell resident had a 23-year career in education as a teacher and an administrator.

"I've always been a strong believer that our children must master in the minors: reading, writing and math," Espinoza, a Republican, said before the 2015 legislative session.

Espinoza's entire career was in private education.

"In the private sector, if we don't put out a good product, we will not exist," she said. "And we don't even have the funds the public schools have."

She currently serves as chair of the education committee, vice chair of the health and human services committee, member of the education study and regulatory & public affairs committees. She also plays an advisory role on the disabilities concerns committee, economic & rural committee, and water and natural resources committee.

She was unavailable to discuss his plans for the upcoming legislative session. ■

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# Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce

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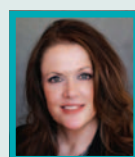
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Vice President of Operations  
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**Rick Jackson**  
Chair Elect  
CEO/Owner  
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**Sabrina Martin**  
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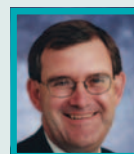
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Government Relations  
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**Savonne Griffin**  
Community & Business Development Rep  
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**Ben Woods**  
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# Catron



## LEGISLATIVE CONCERNS

- \$200,000 for Courthouse HVAC
- State inmate reimbursement increase

## Catron County on road to new opportunities

### Support sought for courthouse upgrade

BY TODD G. DICKSON

Catron County is the largest county in New Mexico, but only a quarter of its nearly 4.5 million acres is privately owned. Catron is a place where cattle, elk and wildlife far outnumber the people.

As the gateway county to the Gila Wilderness, 50 percent of the land is controlled by the U.S. Forest Service, 13 percent by the Bureau of Land Management and 12 percent by the State of New Mexico. As a result, the more than \$600,000 a year Catron County gets in Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) from the federal government amounts to the county's main source of revenue, said Kate Fletcher, Catron County manager.

Catron County must run lean and depends on the state for support. That's why Catron County is only asking the Legislature to fund \$200,000 toward improving the county courthouse's heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system, Fletcher said.

Built in 1967, the county courthouse in Reserve houses the majority of government offices. The county courthouse not only is where a resident goes to find the assessor, treasurer and other county officials; it is also where the County Extension Office and local Motor Vehicle Division offices can be found. And, of course, it is where a resident goes to court.

Improving the Courthouse's HVAC is the first step in what is expected to be \$600,000 to \$700,000 in improvements by the time it's all done, Fletcher said. In addition to improving people's comfort at the courthouse, the HVAC upgrade should also provide energy savings and reduce the county's utility bills, she said.

In addition to limiting local tax revenue options, the lack of privately owned land and the prevalence of protected lands gives Catron County few options for commonplace government services, such as running a landfill. Solid waste is shipped to Arizona. One recent county investment was for a new scale, so a more precise charge is now paid for that service, Fletcher said. The new scale will pay for itself by having solid waste disposal be less of a drain on the county's general fund, she said.

Running lean requires getting a clearer picture of what resources the county actually has, and Fletcher is proud that the county had a clean audit this year.

"I thought it would take us three years to get there, but we had a clean audit this year," she said. "This is the first time in 23 years we have had a clean audit."

Fletcher said she believes the cleaner fiscal picture will open up opportunities for new funding sources, such as grants. She hopes the efforts will broaden county services.

"Our next project is improving our services to the elderly people in our county," she said.

Because so much of the county is made up of wild lands, economic development opportunities are limited. Cattle ranching is an important part of the county's economy, worth an estimated \$18.8 million a year. Elk hunting also is popular in Catron County, but one study found that only \$600,000 of the \$1.6 million spent in the 1988 elk hunt went to the county.

But there may be new opportunities ahead by taking a regional approach. Catron County is joining forces with Valencia, Otero, Socorro and Sierra



counties to forge regional economic development opportunities through a program from the U.S. Department of Agriculture called Stronger Economies Together (SET). Through SET, these counties with similar issues can learn from each other and work together to find solutions to challenges, she said.

A regional approach makes sense. For example, both Sierra and Catron counties have a rich history in mining, resulting in ghost towns in both counties which could draw tourists.

As for this legislative session, Catron County is supporting the state Association of Counties legislative priorities that is calling on the state to improve reimbursement payments for holding state inmates in county jails and for more support to mental health services provided in county jails.

"Instead of asking what can we do, we are asking what can New Mexico do," Fletcher said. ■

## CATRON COUNTY COMMUNITIES

### **APACHE CREEK** Census-designated place Population: 67

Seven miles south of Aragon is the village of Apache Creek, where the creek of the same name joins the Tularosa River. This is also the junction of State Highway 12 and State Highway 32.

### **ARAGON** Census-designated place Population: 94

Aragon is an old Spanish settlement with about 20 ranch and farm homes scattered along the highway which continues along the Tularosa Valley.

### **CRUZVILLE** Census-designated place Population: 72

Visitors may notice a curious thing about the fence posts near Cruzville. Some posts have a piece of wood about an inch thick and six inches square nailed flat on top of the posts. These were used to support luminarias during Christmas or other special celebrations.

### **DATIL** Census-designated place Population: 54

This picturesque little town was named for the yucca seedpods resembling dates

("datil" is the Spanish word for "date"), and was established in 1884. Today life centers on the Eagle Guest Ranch, a café, motel, general store, gas station, and RV park which acts as the general meeting place for the community and surrounding area.

### **GLENWOOD** Census-designated place Population: 143

Glenwood is a quaint little village located in southern Catron County on U.S. Highway 180. Glenwood has motels, restaurants and other services and is the jumping-off place for several Catron County features.

### **LUNA** Census-designated place Population: 158

Luna is a tiny, sleepy, historical village that was settled in the 19th century by a sheep rancher and powerful political force in New Mexico named Solomon Luna. The area was later settled by Mormon ranchers from Utah. However, the Hough Ruin (pronounced HUFF) is just a reminder these early settlers were but newcomers, as the Hough Ruin dates back 700 years.

### **PIE TOWN** Census-designated place Population: 186

In the 1900s a day's ride by horseback west

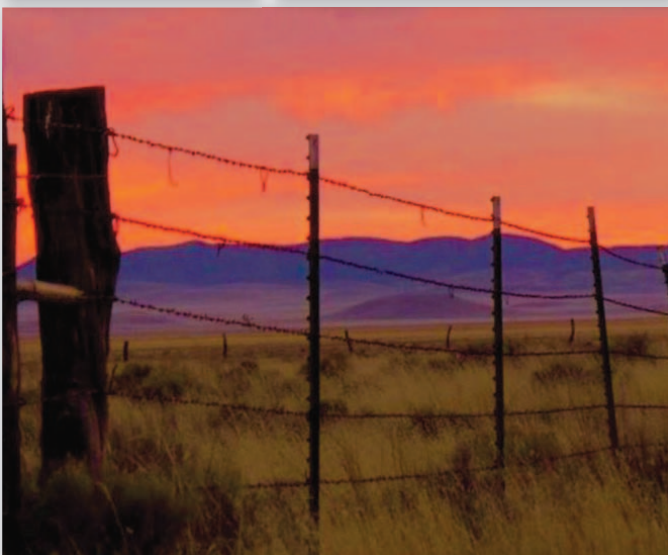
of Datil along what is now known as U.S. 60 sits a small community on the Continental Divide originally known as Norman's Place. This community sits at an altitude of 7,900 feet. Clyde Norman owned the town's only gas station and café. He began selling pies and in the 1920s the town became known as Pie Town. An annual Pie Festival is held the second Saturday of September.

### **QUEMADO** Census-designated place Population: 228

Quemado is the Spanish word for "burned." In 1880 a settler by the name of Jose Antonio Padilla noticed the brush had been burned by the local Indians and named the settlement Rito Quemado.

### **RESERVE** Census-designated place Population: 289

The first settlements around Reserve, which set along the San Francisco River, were called Upper Frisco Plaza, Middle Frisco Plaza and Lower Frisco Plaza. Sometime during the 1870s Milligan's Plaza was established just north of Upper Frisco Plaza. Then, when forest lands were set aside as National Forest Reserves, the name of Milligan's Plaza was changed to Reserve.



# The digital divide along the Continental Divide

## Rural schools' lack of Internet access gets national attention

BY TODD G. DICKSON

As part of a series of stories on the struggles of rural schools, Education Week newspaper traveled to New Mexico to look at the challenge of Internet connectivity for isolated schools and featured public schools in Catron County.

In Education Weekly's Nov. 19, 2015 issue, tiny Datil Elementary School was suddenly in the national spotlight as the article raised the question of the expense for telecommunications companies to run high-speed lines to schools such as Datil that only have 17 students.

"Many larger telecoms won't even try," the article said. "And without generous federal subsidies, serving such schools doesn't make financial sense even for smaller, more community-oriented companies."

Education Weekly also went to the school in Quemado, which has 109 students in grades kindergarten through 12th grade. Between the two schools, they share only 22 megabytes per second bandwidth provided by a carrier called WNM Communications at a cost of \$3,700 a month to the school district. According to the article, less-isolated schools around the U.S. can get similar Internet speeds for only \$550 a month.

The article noted the neighboring 216-student Reserve Independent School District gets charged a similarly high rate for Internet.

"You can get angry all you want, but there's not a whole lot we can do," Tim Angelus, Quemado Independent School District's technology director told Education Weekly. "They just rake us over the coals."

That quote was so strong it became part of the headline for the story, which was looking at schools in the Quemado district in contest of President Barack Obama vowed to bring high-speed Internet to nearly all schools.

While that presidential call led to some new funding and increased bandwidth to many

schools, an advocacy group called EducationSuperHighway found that more than 21 million students nationwide remain disconnected.

While educators and parents like the individualized attention smaller schools give to students, larger telecommunication-Internet companies don't see any financial gain in serving them.

The article cited a study by the Consortium for School Networking that found more than half of rural districts only have access to one service provider, much like the situation for the Quemado school district. That study also found those rural schools pay a rate generally five times higher than the national average.

The apparent price-gouging occurs because it's hard to find comparable customers and federal regulations aren't really enforced, according to Education Week.

Back in Quemado, the current situation is actually a great improvement from when the district had only 1.5 megabytes per second over a T1 copper line in 2003, for which it paid \$4,300 a month.

Six years of requests from Quemado Superintendent Bill Green eventually lead to an upgrade to 22 megabits per second.

According to Angelus, all it took to increase the bandwidth was for WNM to lay a half mile of new cable. WNM told Education Weekly the district never made a formal request for the extra bandwidth and that it absorbed the full \$22,000 cost of construction on the new fiber line. Company officials told Education Weekly they are getting Internet access to remote places the larger companies won't touch, while having to buy bandwidth and tariffs.

Now, high school students can get dual credits by taking online classes, younger students learn more interactively and individually and teachers have more access to online lesson-sharing sites. To get the district more bandwidth would be costly. ■



## ELECTED OFFICIALS

### Catron County Commissioners

#### Glyn Griffin, Chair

District 2  
P.O. Box 786, Reserve, NM 87830  
575-533-6360 Home  
575-956-3716 Cell  
glyn.griffin@catroncountynm.gov

#### Anita A. Hand

District 1  
P.O. Box 546, Datil, NM 87821  
575-519-2502  
anita.hand@catroncountynm.gov

#### Van J. "Bucky" Allred

District 3  
P.O. Box 166, Glenwood, NM 88039  
575-539-2324 (Home)  
575-519-0404 (Cell)  
bucky.allred@catroncountynm.gov

## QUICK FACTS

### PEOPLE

Population: 3,556 (2014)  
Households: 3,280 (2014)  
Median household income: \$39,342  
Persons below poverty level: 21.7 percent

### BUSINESS

Total employer establishments: 58 (2013)  
Total employment: 393 (2013)  
Non-employer establishments: 357 (2013)

### GEOGRAPHY

Land area (square miles): 6,923.69  
Persons per square mile: 0.5 (2010)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

## EDUCATION

### PUBLIC SCHOOLS

#### Quemado Schools

P.O. Box 128, Quemado, NM 87829  
575-773-4700 • 575-773-4645  
www.quemadoschools.org

#### Reserve Independent Schools

24 Mountaineer Road, Reserve, NM 87830  
575-533-6242  
www.reserve.k12.nm.us





# Doña Ana County

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### Doña Ana County Board of Commissioners



Billy G. Garrett  
District 1



Dr. David J. Garcia  
District 2



Benjamin L. Rawson  
District 3



Wayne D. Hancock  
District 4



Leticia D. Benavidez  
District 5

## Brand New 911 Call Center Will Herald in 2016

Utilizing both funds approved by Doña Ana County's taxpayers and Legislative appropriations, Doña Ana County is finishing the final stages of construction of the state's most modern and well-appointed emergency call center.

The new Mesilla Valley Regional Dispatch Authority is located at 911 Reno Dr. in Las Cruces, immediately north of the Doña Ana County Government Center. Total construction costs came to \$9.05 million, of which \$6 million was derived from voter-approved bonds. The elected officials, management and staff of Doña Ana County are exceedingly grateful to the Doña Ana County Legislative Delegation for appropriating the remaining \$3.05 million.

The building was designed by Newby Architects, Inc., of Las Cruces, and the contractor for the project was White Sands Construction, Inc., of Alamogordo.

The new building replaces a location downtown that was located dangerously close to a major traffic arterial, putting it at risk for a large vehicle crashing into it. The old building also had persistent problems with roof leaks, and it had become far too small to comfortably accommodate the staff and dispatch personnel.

The new purpose-built facility has both a dispatch floor and an adjacent training area where trainees have sight access to the actual dispatch area while they train. There also is a quiet room where personnel can nap



when required to work extended shifts or after particularly stressful calls have been handled. Unlike the old facility, there is a drive-up window where law-enforcement personnel can pick up warrants. The building also features a communications tower and secure parking for the staff. The building is monitored by video and audio surveillance 24/7, both inside and out.

Secure server areas have been designed to separate telephone, dispatch and other servers while still allowing for full ventilation and cool temperatures. The dispatch and training floors are elevated for ease of access to electrical components, phone lines and other infrastructure that may need maintenance

while the center remains fully active.

A grand opening will be celebrated in the coming weeks, and members of the public will have a one-time opportunity to view the secure areas of the building.

The new Mesilla Valley Regional Dispatch Authority project is a stellar example of how Doña Ana County and the Legislative Delegation can work together to fund critical infrastructure projects that advance public safety, job creation and quality of life for the residents of Doña Ana County.

As the 2016 New Mexico Legislature gets underway, county officials will work closely with our Legislators to identify other projects that move Doña Ana County forward.

Visit our Award-Winning Website at [www.donaanacounty.org](http://www.donaanacounty.org) or Contact Us at (575) 525-5801

# Doña Ana

## Funds sought to aid economic development through infrastructure projects

BY JESSICA WHITE-CASON

Doña Ana County's Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan, or ICIP list, contains 76 projects. The total dollar amount for these projects is in the neighborhood of \$94 million, with a little more than three percent of that total funded to date. With this kind of workload looming, it's no small feat for county officials to narrow this list down to the most pressing issues.

In 2016, the top five issues on the county's ICIP include a wastewater project for Chaparral, an emergency and hazardous materials response facility, two water control projects and runway upgrades at Doña Ana County International Jetport at Santa Teresa.

The southern part of the county is a big focal point for infrastructure improvements this year. Businesses being drawn to Santa Teresa have the potential to be a boon to the county, and business operations can be severely limited by subpar infrastructure.

For Doña Ana County Commission Chair and District 1 Commissioner Billy Garrett investment in the southern reaches of the county is essential.

"It's really important that we have continued investment in infrastructure, in particular the infrastructure that's needed in the southern part of the county," he said.

Dams are also among the high-priority infrastructure issues in Doña Ana County, but Garrett said that dams are just one of the infrastructure issues for which the county is continually looking for support.

"The big issues here mostly have to do with how you deal with all of the situations that work against people economically," he said. "How do we increase opportunities for economic development? Then, how do we provide the basic services, in terms of roads and utilities?"

Another issue Garrett has his eye on is ensuring counties are well-funded for carrying out state legislative mandates — maintaining detention centers in particular. The issue of funding for detention centers is also one of four legislative priorities proposed by the New

Mexico Association of Counties (NMAC) during a fall 2015 work session.

In a briefing by County Manager Julia Brown, she said detention maintenance represents a significant portion of the budget for most counties, and for Doña Ana it represents one-fifth of the budget.

"One-fifth might not seem like a lot, but when you look at budgets, especially ours in Doña Ana, it's quite a bit," said District 2 County Commissioner David Garcia.

According to Brown and the NMAC, the New Mexico Legislature has been reducing funding for county detention centers in recent years.

"The amount that they have left for fiscal year 2016 funding, the \$2.9 million, is less than half of the funding that the state appropriated for detention affiliates just seven years ago," Brown said.

The fear is that, at its current rate of reduction, the state will provide no funding within a few years if something is not done to stop the reductions, and restore some of the funding that has been lost over the years.

This is on top of the fact that the cost of housing offenders continues to increase.

Another of the four priorities proposed by NMAC to the board of commissioners pertained to gross receipts tax (GRT) reform.

Due in part to some ruminations over potential changes to taxing authority and GRT at the state level, the NMAC asked that counties throughout New Mexico pass a resolution requesting participation by the association in any legislative efforts regarding GRT reform or restructuring.

"The GRT tax revenues are essential to local government and their ability to provide for health, safety and welfare," Brown said. "Any proposed GRT changes at the state legislative level will obviously impact local government's ability to provide those necessary services."

Garrett echoed NMAC's call for cooperation between counties and the state on GRT issues. He expressed a desire to "see that the counties are involved in discussions about any changes in taxation that would affect county budgets."

Garcia said it seemed obvious the commission adopt NMAC priorities, given the political influence he feels they have at the state level, and the collective weight of New Mexico counties coming together with common purpose.

"Sometimes we have to take that message together ... It carries a bigger message than if you just hear from one county," he said. ■



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# Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce focused on education, right-to-work legislation

BY CHRISTOPHE CHINO

Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce board members are concerned with the financial stability of the region and the quality of education, and the issues with both are keeping the state from progressing, chamber officials said.

Bill Allen, the former President and CEO of the Chamber, expressed the organization's concerns that though the subpar quality of education has been on the agenda of policymakers in the state, little has been done. For several consecutive years, New Mexico has ranked in the bottom tier of states in quality of education for K-12 students, Allen said.

"New Mexico has been in the bottom level of education in the U.S. for five plus years," Allen said, "It seems that though Gov. (Susana) Martinez and her staff have been trying to find ideas to fix the broken system; actual changes have not been implemented in past legislative sessions."

Along with the concern for the state's education system, a decrease in federal funding nationwide has also drawn attention from legislators and organizations in the state, including the Chamber, he said. With White Sands Missile Range (WSMR) being a direct component of the region's economy, a lack of funding from the federal government can take a toll on the county. Many of the region's jobs are provided by WSMR, and with federal spending cuts, many of those jobs are being lost, Allen said.

With the financial crisis of 2007-08, many cities in the state are still struggling to get back on their feet, something that Allen and the Chamber have recognized. Allen cites right-to-work legislation as key in allowing for business growth, which would bolster the state's economy. The passing of right-to-work legislation would allow for potential employees

“

**I'm hoping that we can come together to get this passed, ...(right-to-work) will put New Mexico on a list of states for businesses to want to come to. It would open the door to opportunities we haven't had yet.**

**— Former President and CEO of GLCCC Bill Allen**

”

to gain employment without having to pay union dues. Allen said, this type of regulation would entice more businesses to consider New Mexico as a destination.

With right-to-work legislation failing to make it past last year's legislative session, many legislators and constituents are hoping for a different outcome this year, he said.

"I'm hoping that we can come together to get this passed," Allen said. "(right-to-work) will put New Mexico on a list of states for businesses to want to come to. It would open

the door to opportunities we haven't had yet."

Allen also voiced concern about the price of oil and natural gas in context of the capital outlay funding. While lower oil prices may be good for the consumer, they also mean the state brings in less in royalty payments, he said. ■

## Working with Federal, State and Local Government to Provide Quality Senior Services In Las Cruces!

### The Network Volunteer Center

The Network connects individuals age 18 and older to volunteer positions at 20+ sites throughout the City of Las Cruces. For information please call 528-3035.

### Senior Nutrition Program

Congregate meal programs offered at our four Senior Program sites. No income or residency requirements to participate. For registration information please call 528-3000. Home delivered meals offered to qualified homebound seniors. For intake or information please call 541-2451. Offering meals to those 60 years of age or older at no charge. There is a suggested donation to help defray the cost of food and preparation.

### Long-Term Care Services

Assessments for congregate meals and for home based

services including home delivered meals, homemaker services, respite care, case management and resource and referral. Please call 541-2451 for information.

### Recreation & Education

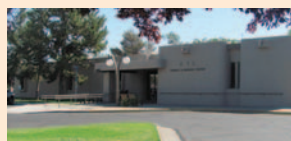
Offering arts and crafts, fitness classes, games, lifelong learning classes, support groups and much more. Activities and programs at the centers are open to individuals 50 or older. For information please call 528-3000.

### Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Program

Open to grandparents 55 years of age or older who are raising their grandchildren. Please call 528-3000.



**City of Las Cruces**  
PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE



**Munson Senior Center**  
975 S. Mesquite Street  
(575) 528-3000



**Benavidez Community Center**  
1045 McClure Rd.  
(575) 541-2005



**Eastside Community Center**  
310 N. Tornillo  
(575) 528-3012



**Frank O'Brien Papen Center**  
304 W. Bell  
(575) 541-2455  
or call (575) 528-3000 for meal registration



**Sage Café**  
6121 Reynolds Dr.  
(575) 528-3151

# Las Cruces Hispanic Chamber of Commerce aims for business growth

BY CHRISTOPHE CHINO

The Las Cruces Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (LCHCC) will focus on business growth and education as a means of bettering an ailing economy in the city and state.

"It is our belief that if we can create an environment reflective of an improved business climate, more businesses will be attracted to the area, bringing with them higher-paid career opportunities," said Richard Aguilar, president of the Board of Directors for the LCHCC.

The LCHCC, created in 1991, was formed in order to support small, Hispanic-owned businesses. Through the years the organization has altered its stance and objectives, focusing on "foreign investment facilitation, small business advocacy and support, government affairs, marketing assistance, small business incubation and education," Aguilar said.

LCHCC also values the power of employees and job creation. The organization works alongside Doña Ana Community College, Mesilla Valley Economic Development Alliance and New Mexico Workforce Connection to produce the Job-to-Career Readiness Bootcamp. The program is designed for those looking for employment, seeking a career change or trying to re-enter the job market. The program consists of workshops helping potential employee prepare for interviews and construct powerful resumes.

LCHCC also strives to encourage and motivate children and adults to



both seek out and excel in gaining an education, Aguilar said.

"In 2015, we awarded \$2,500 in scholarships through our LCHCC Rayo Perez Education Scholarship and Junior Amigo Scholarship programs," he said.

Each year, LCHCC has expectations for the legislative session that center on making the business climate in the state more attractive to prospective or growing businesses. Along with this, the organization values the importance of students receiving a proper education, Aguilar said, and any legislation that makes that a more achievable goal has the support of LCHCC. ■



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[www.bcomNM.org](http://www.bcomNM.org)





## EDUCATION

## PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS

**Gadsden Independent School District**

4950 McNutt Road  
Sunland Park, NM 88063  
575-882-6200  
[www.gisd.k12.nm.us](http://www.gisd.k12.nm.us)

**Hatch Valley Public Schools**

204 Hill Street  
Hatch, NM 87937  
575-267-8230  
[www.hatch.k12.nm.us/Home/tabid/67873/Default.aspx](http://www.hatch.k12.nm.us/Home/tabid/67873/Default.aspx)

**Las Cruces Public Schools**

505 S. Main St. Ste. 249,  
Las Cruces, NM 88001  
575-527-5800  
<http://lcps.k12.nm.us>

## PRIVATE SCHOOLS

**Cornerstone Christian Academy**

5301 Cortez Drive  
Las Cruces, NM 88012  
575-532-0902  
[www.cornerstn.org](http://www.cornerstn.org)

**Las Cruces Academy**

1755 Avenida de Mercado,  
Mesilla, NM 88046  
575-415-4522  
<http://lascrucesacademy.org>

**Las Cruces Catholic Schools (Holy Cross School and St. Mary's High School)**

1331 N. Miranda St.  
Las Cruces, NM 88005  
575-526-2517  
[www.lascrucescatholicschool.com](http://www.lascrucescatholicschool.com)

**Mesilla Valley Christian Schools**

3850 Stern Drive  
Las Cruces, NM 88001  
575-525-8515  
<http://mvcsonline.com>

**Whitley Montessori**

1044 Wiley Ave.  
Las Cruces, NM 8807  
575-523-2295

## CHARTER SCHOOLS

**Alma d'Arte Charter High School**

402 W. Court Ave.  
Las Cruces, NM 88001  
575-541-0145  
[www.almadarte.org](http://www.almadarte.org)

**La Academia Dolores Huerta**

1480 N. Main St.  
Las Cruces, NM 88001  
575-526-2984  
[www.academianm.org](http://www.academianm.org)

**J. Paul Taylor Academy**

3900 Del Rey Blvd.  
Las Cruces, NM 88012  
575-652-4621  
[www.jpaultayloracademy.org](http://www.jpaultayloracademy.org)

**Las Montañas Charter High School**

201 E. Lohman Ave.  
Las Cruces, NM 88001  
575-636-2110  
[www.lasmontanashigh.com](http://www.lasmontanashigh.com)

**New America School**

207 S. Main St.  
Las Cruces, NM 88001  
575-527-9085  
<http://newamericaschool.org>

## COMMUNITY COLLEGES

**Doña Ana Community College – Central Campus**

3400 S. Espina St.  
Las Cruces, NM 88003  
575-527-7500  
<https://dacc.nmsu.edu>

**Doña Ana Community College – East Mesa Campus**

2800 N. Sonoma Ranch Blvd.  
Las Cruces, NM 88011  
575-528-7250  
<https://dacc.nmsu.edu>

**Doña Ana Community College – Gadsden Center**

1700 E. O'Hara Road  
Anthony, NM 88021  
575-882-3939  
<https://dacc.nmsu.edu>

**Doña Ana Community College – Sunland Park Center**

3365 McNutt Road  
Sunland Park, NM 88063  
575-874-7780  
<https://dacc.nmsu.edu>

## UNIVERSITIES

**New Mexico State University**

1780 E. University Ave.  
Las Cruces, NM 88003  
575-646-0111  
<http://nmsu.edu>

# Underfunded schools hope for budget increases

BY JESSICA WHITE-CASON

For the public schools in Doña Ana County, the upcoming legislative session is a time to focus on maintaining their current rate of funding.

“(The district’s) interest is if a legislator sponsors a bill to request additional funding earmarks for public education,” said Jo Galván, chief communications officer for Las Cruces Public Schools. “I don’t know who will carry that legislation this year, but that’s always a top priority for our district.”

This view was echoed by District 37 Sen. William “Bill” Soules, who is also a retired LCPS teacher. Soules is also an advisory member for the legislative education study committee, and he said education funding is always a major topic for the committee.

“We underfund our education in the state of New Mexico,” Soules said. “So, we are always watching the budget to ensure that education is kept as a high priority.”

Soules expressed a desire to increase the percentage of money that goes into education. Any increase to the education fund would not only benefit public schools in Doña Ana County, but school districts statewide.

Galván agreed with Soules, saying that New Mexico’s public education system is indeed underfunded and a general increase is necessary. Beyond seeking adequate public school funding, she said “we need additional support for our programs that support academic achievement.”

These priorities mirror those of last year’s legislative session, when LCPS pushed to reinstate 5.8 percent funding to schools from the state permanent fund, or possibly increase that amount. LCPS also supported legislation to fund dual-credit courses last year. Dual-credit courses would support students as they graduate from high school and move into higher education, giving them a jump start on college courses.

New Mexico State University also has its sights set on budgetary increases and capital outlay projects. The NMSU Board of Regents has approved several priorities for this session, outlined on NMSU’s Office of Government Relations webpage, [govrelations.nmsu.edu](http://govrelations.nmsu.edu).

Among these priorities are increases in last year’s funding for the Water Resources Research Institute, athletics, New Mexico Department of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension service, and the Agricultural Experiment Station. NMSU is also looking for a three-percent compensation increase for faculty and staff.

NMSU plans to make capital outlay requests to support projects at its various campuses throughout the state. Within Doña Ana County, NMSU is focused on general infrastructure and information technology upgrades for both the main campus and Doña Ana Community College. In addition, the main campus is looking for capital outlay dollars to fund renovations and additions to D.W. Williams Hall. ■

# DOÑA ANA COUNTY COMMUNITIES

## ANTHONY City

**Population:** 9,318

Mayor: Arnulfo Castañeda  
Incorporated in July 2010, Anthony straddles the New Mexico-Texas border, approximately 27 miles south of Las Cruces and 24 miles north of El Paso.

## BERINO

**Census Designated Place**

**Population:** 1,441

Established in the early 1900s and comprised of a land area of only .93 square miles, Berino lies 22 miles south of Las Cruces.

## CHAMBERINO

**Census Designated Place**

**Population:** 919

Located 26 miles south of Las Cruces, Chamberino is an unincorporated community which was first established with the installation of a post office in 1880.

## CHAPARRAL

**Census Designated Place**

**Population:** 14,631 (6,965 in Doña Ana)  
Chaparral is uniquely located as it shares its southern border with the Texas state line, and straddles Doña Ana and Otero counties. It is considered a bedroom community for nearby El Paso, Ft. Bliss and White Sands Missile Range.

## DOÑA ANA

**Census Designated Place**

**Population:** 1,211

The first county seat and the oldest permanent settlement in the Mesilla Valley, Doña Ana was founded in 1843. The community lent its name to Doña Ana County upon its establishment in 1852.

## FAIRACRES

**Census Designated Place**

**Population:** 824

Considered a suburb of Las Cruces, Fairacres has a land area of 2.11 square miles and lies on the west bank of the Rio Grande.

## GARFIELD

**Census Designated Place**

**Population:** 137

Likely named for assassinated president James A. Garfield, Garfield lies 50 miles northwest of Las Cruces. Its first post office was established in 1896.

## HATCH

**Village**

**Population:** 1,601

Andy Nuñez  
Originally settled as Santa Barbara in 1851, the Village of Hatch was incorporated in 1928. Hatch is known as the Chile Capital of the World, and holds an annual Chile Festival. It is located 40 miles northeast of Las Cruces on I-25.

## LA MESA

**Census Designated Place**

**Population:** 728

Located approximately 17 miles south of Las Cruces, on state road 28, La Mesa is believed to be named after a nearby lava flow, known as Black Mesa. It is home to local favorites Chope's Town Café and Bar.

## LA UNION

**Census Designated Place**

**Population:** 1,106

Created by and named for the combining of two early settlements, Los Ojitos and Los Amoles, La Union is located 34 miles south of Las Cruces on NM Highway 28. It is home to New Mexico's oldest winery, La Viña.

## LAS CRUCES

**City**

**Population:** 101,408

Mayor: Ken Miyagishima  
The second largest city in the state, and the Doña Ana county seat, Las Cruces is home to New Mexico State University, Virgin Galactic headquarters, and Spaceport America's corporate offices. It sits at the center of the Mesilla Valley, both geographically and economically.

## MESILLA

**Town**

**Population:** 1,880

Mayor: Nora L. Barraza  
With its rich history, Mesilla was once the economic and social center of the Mesilla Valley. It was once an important stop for both the Butterfield Stage and El Camino Real. Mesilla was also the capital of the short lived confederate territory of Arizona, during the Civil War and the site of Billy the Kid's trial in 1881.

## MESQUITE

**Census Designated Place**

**Population:** 1,112

Located 13 miles south of Las Cruces, on State Road 478, Mesquite is a small farming community established in 1882. It was named by railroad executives for the many mesquite bushes that grow there.

## ORGAN

**Census Designated Place**

**Population:** 323

Originally established as a mining camp, Organ is an unincorporated community 14 miles northeast of Las Cruces. It is an active community housing residents who work in Las Cruces and at White Sands Missile Range.

## PLACITAS

**Census Designated Place**

**Population:** 576

Considered a colonia or suburb of Hatch, Placitas has a land area of .14 square miles. It lies 1.5 miles west of Hatch on state road 26.

## RADIUM SPRINGS

**Census Designated Place**

**Population:** 1,699

Once known as Fort Selden Springs, Radium Springs derives its name from free-flowing mineral hot springs which contain enough radium per liter to inspire its current name. It lies 17 miles north of Las Cruces.

## RINCON

**Census Designated Place**

**Population:** 271

Briefly known as Thorn following the establishment of its first post office in 1881, Rincon was a major business and trading center due to the railroad switching station located there. It is now a colonia of Hatch, which lies 5 miles to the east.

## RODEY

**Census Designated Place**

**Population:** 388

Located on the southeast border of Hatch, Rodey has a land area of .56 square miles. It has been credited as the oldest village in the area and was once walled as a defense against Apache raids.

## SALEM

**Census Designated Place**

**Population:** 942

Originally known as Plaza, Salem is a small farming community located 5 miles northwest of Hatch. In 1908 a group of New Englanders from Salem, Massachusetts established a post office, renaming the community after their home.

## SAN MIGUEL

**Census Designated Place**

**Population:** 1,153

Established in 1850, San Miguel lies 10 miles south of Mesilla on NM Highway 28. They host an annual festival in September in honor of St. Michael to raise funds for the town's Catholic Church.

## San Pablo

**Census Designated Place**

**Population:** 806

With 1.22 square miles of land area and just over 800 citizens, the small community of San Pablo ranks in the upper quartile for population density for the state of New Mexico. It lies nearly three miles southeast of Mesilla.

## SAN YSIDRO

**Census Designated Place**

**Population:** 2,090

A popular name in rural New Mexico, San Ysidro shares its name with at least three other communities in the state. It is located four miles northwest of Las Cruces.

## SANTA TERESA

**Census Designated Place**

**Population:** 4,258

Recent growth, brought about by a Union Pacific rail facility and its proximity to the New Mexico Port of Entry has placed Santa Teresa center stage for economic development. The community is currently seeking incorporation.

## SUNLAND PARK

**City**

**Population:** 15,400

Mayor: Javier Perea  
Located on the southernmost end of Doña Ana county, Sunland Park was named for the Sunland Park Racetrack and Casino.

## UNIVERSITY PARK

**Census Designated Place**

**Population:** 4,192

Part of Las Cruces, University Park owes its existence to New Mexico State University. Its land area is 1.55 square miles bounded by University Ave., I-10 and I-25.

## VADO

**Census Designated Place**

**Population:** 3,194

Located 19 miles from Las Cruces, on I-10, Vado was once New Mexico's only predominantly African-American community.

## WHITE SANDS

**Census Designated Place**

**Population:** 1,651

Consisting of the main residential area for the White Sands Missile Range, White Sands is located on the east side of the Organ Mountains.





## Las Cruces' Green Chamber eyes support for local business

BY CHRISTOPHE CHINO

Las Cruces' Green Chamber of Commerce has both the environment and the well-being of local businesses at the forefront of its agenda headed into the 2016 New Mexico legislative session in January.

LCGCC has a business mindset when it comes to remedying the economic stresses of the community, but the organization also ties in environmental responsibility into the equation.

With several legislators lobbying for legislation to help encourage businesses to seek residence in the state, Carrie Hamblen, LCGCC's executive director, said the organization has hopes that the state's legislators will also have their eyes on locally owned businesses.

"National companies and those from other parts of the United States receive tremendous tax incentives to entice them to relocate to New Mexico. We would hope the state Legislature would understand the impact giving local businesses equal incentives would have on our economy," Hamblen said.

She also believes an environmentally attentive Legislature can go hand in hand with economic success in the state.

In 2013, Gov. Susana Martinez vetoed House Bill 40, which would have allowed companies around the state to register as benefit corporations.

By registering as a B-Corp, a company has the ability to legally incorporate a socially responsible

agenda into its bylaws.

Hamblen is hopeful that a similar bill will be passed in the future.

"By having a B-Corp designation, it allows companies to operate with more than just shareholder profits in mind," she said.

"The bill would have allowed firms to consider community and societal factors, such as preserving the local and global environment, in their operations. B-Corp designation is available in at least 12 states. We believe having this opportunity will encourage more businesses to think beyond the profit line and gauge their social impact."

Hamblen also described an environmental improvement for the community that could potentially create jobs for thousands: solar panels.

"We also would like our legislators to recognize the impact that supporting the renewable energy industry can have on our statewide economy," she said. "There is a potential of 6,600 jobs created if the state had supportive legislation that would encourage the installation of solar energy systems both at the residential and commercial level, job creation, manufacturing and the decreased dependence on coal-powered energy. We need legislation that would encourage and support that industry."

Hamblen said the Las Cruces Green Chamber will continue to communicate with legislators and advocate for the environment. ■



### DOÑA ANA QUICK FACTS

#### PEOPLE

Population: 213,676 (2014)  
Households: 84,221 (2014)  
Median Household Income: \$37,933 (2009-13)  
Persons below poverty level: 27 percent (2009-13)

#### BUSINESS

Private, nonfarm establishments: 3,554 (2013)  
Private, nonfarm employment: 49,387 (2013)  
Non-employer establishments: 12,098 (2013)

#### GEOGRAPHY

Land Area (square miles): 3,807 (2010)  
Persons per square mile: 55 (2010)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

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301 Perkins Dr., Suite B, Las Cruces, NM

# Mesilla Valley Economic Development Alliance pushes for facility space, program funding

BY CHRISTOPHE CHINO

The Mesilla Valley Economic Development Alliance (MVEDA) is an organization that prides itself as being the “leading economic development alliance in southwestern New Mexico,” according to its website, and operates with a mission of providing economic growth through the raised availability of job opportunities in the region. By addressing issues centered on business growth and creation, the organization believes economic prosperity will be the product.

MVEDA has found a lack of available facility space to be an impediment to business growth in the city.

“We have a lack of facility space in the city,” MVEDA’s President and CEO Davin Lopez said. “Many businesses that have shown interest in coming to Las Cruces are not looking to spend time waiting for new buildings to be built and are not looking to build their own, but are actually looking to rent. So with that, we lose growth opportunities and the opportunity to have a dialogue with possible businesses.”

Lopez believes even though this is a relatively big issue for the community, it may not find its way to the floor during the legislative session in January. But he also shed light on the fact that MVEDA has many other concerns he believes should receive the legislators’ attention

in Santa Fe.

The organization continues to both support and encourage legislation supporting local businesses and business-friendly taxes. With a growth in business and job opportunities comes the increased welfare of the county, Lopez said.

MVEDA heavily supports the Local Economic Development Act (LEDA), which allows for a community to adopt an ordinance that creates an economic development organization as well as a strategic plan with which the organization can operate. More than 80 communities statewide have passed LEDAs, and MVEDA seeks the continued funding of the act in Las Cruces.

The Job Training Incentive Program (JIIP), which funds classroom and on-the-job training for newly created jobs in a community, has also received a lot of praise from MVEDA. As stated on the New Mexico Economic Development Department’s website, “(Since 1971) JTIP has supported the creation of more than 43,000 jobs for New Mexicans in nearly 1,300 businesses across the state.”

Lopez believes that JTIP has been a productive asset to the Las Cruces community, and said MVEDA is actively seeking out an increase in funding for the program.

For more information about MVEDA, visit [www.mveda.com](http://www.mveda.com). ■

## ELECTED OFFICIALS

### Doña Ana County Commissioners

#### Billy G. Garrett, Chair

##### District 1

Office: 575-525-5808

Cell: 575-915-5755

Fax: 575-525-5948

E-mail: [bgarrett@donaanacounty.org](mailto:bgarrett@donaanacounty.org)

#### David J. Garcia

##### District 2

Office: 575-525-5804

Cell: 575-635-5212

Fax: 575-525-5948

E-mail: [dgarcia@donaanacounty.org](mailto:dgarcia@donaanacounty.org)

#### Benjamin L. Rawson

##### District 3

Office: 575-525-5807

Cell: 575-644-4055

Fax: 575-525-2812

E-mail: [brawson@donaanacounty.org](mailto:brawson@donaanacounty.org)

### Wayne D. Hancock, Vice-chair

##### District 4

Office: 575-525-5810

Cell: 575-520-4560

Fax: 575-525-5948

E-mail: [whancock@donaanacounty.org](mailto:whancock@donaanacounty.org)

### Leticia Duarte-Benavidez

##### District 5

Office: 575-525-5810

Cell: 575-635-5146

E-mail: [lbenavidez@donaanacounty.org](mailto:lbenavidez@donaanacounty.org)

Website: [www.donaanacounty.org](http://www.donaanacounty.org)

### Las Cruces City Council

700 N. Main St.

Las Cruces, NM 88001

Phone: 575-541-2066

Fax: 575-541-2183

### Mayor

Ken Miyagishima

[kmiyagishima@las-cruces.org](mailto:kmiyagishima@las-cruces.org)

### District 1

Kasandra Gandara

[kgandara@las-cruces.org](mailto:kgandara@las-cruces.org)

### District 2

Greg Smith

[gsmith@las-cruces.org](mailto:gsmith@las-cruces.org)

### District 3

Olga Pedroza

[opedroza@las-cruces.org](mailto:opedroza@las-cruces.org)

### District 4

Jack Eakman

[jeakman@las-cruces.org](mailto:jeakman@las-cruces.org)

### District 5

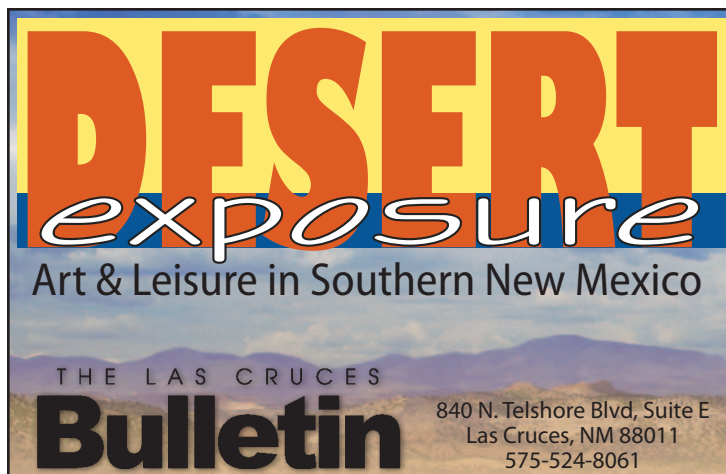
Gill Sorg

[gsorg@las-cruces.org](mailto:gsorg@las-cruces.org)

### District 6

Ceil Levatino

[clevatino@las-cruces.org](mailto:clevatino@las-cruces.org)





# Doña Ana County Legislative Coalition

## Working together to address issues of the community

BY CHRISTOPHE CHINO

The Doña Ana County Legislative Coalition, a partnership between various organizations in the county, comes together each year to fully understand and address the issues of the community, and pass those issues along to lawmakers during the legislative session.

The coalition is made up of representatives from the City of Las Cruces, Doña Ana County, the Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce, New Mexico State University, the Bridge of Southern New Mexico, and the county's various school districts. The coalition aims to be inclusive of other organizations in the county, and hopes to grow stronger structurally in the years to come.

For the upcoming 2016 legislative session, the coalition has finalized its agenda. Bill Connor, one of the coalition's facilitators said there are roughly 15 county issues that need legislators' attention.

"Each year we try to review all the issues of the organizations as a whole in terms of economics, quality of life and education, and we try to represent those needs to the Legislature," he said. "By coming together to do this we can push these issues to a higher priority."

Many of the issues that have come to the table include a faltering infrastructure base in the county.

For Doña Ana County, Santa Teresa has the greatest infrastructure need. The town's airport needs reconstruction to be a more useful asset to the community, Connor said.

The City of Las Cruces infrastructure needs include road and a failing

septic system in the city.

"(Many of the tanks) are old and close to failure," Connor said. "These tanks can leach into the groundwater and cause a lot of issues. The more tanks that we can remove, the better it will be for the city."

Las Cruces is also looking to deal with traffic-signal synchronization, a lack of correlation among traffic signals has been a huge issue for many Las Cruces.

New Mexico State University is looking to secure funding from general obligation bonds to complete renovations to D.W. Williams Hall and projects at Doña Ana Community College.

The Bridge of Southern New Mexico is an organization that combines education, business and government to accomplish community-minded goals.

The Bridge, along with Las Cruces Public Schools, has plans to establish a center that looks into innovative practices in education, in hopes that these identified practices can be applied to the education in the district — but not with only LCPS in mind.

"The goal is to form a center that helps foster educational initiatives," Connor said. "And then this information can be used to help other school districts in the state."

In order for the center to be constructed, state funding would be necessary, and is something that the coalition will actively seek.

Among other issues, the coalition will also seek revisions to PERA (Public Education Retirees Association) of New Mexico rules, in regard to retirees reentering the workforce. ■



### DACLC LEGISLATIVE CONCERNS

- \$250,000 for upgrades and reconstruction at Doña Ana County Jetport
- Repeal NMSA 1978, § 4-59-15 (IRB Protest Provision)
- Interest and fee caps on non-bank lending institutions
- \$250,000 for Doña Ana County Fairground Improvements
- \$675,000 for new-facility equipment at La Clinica De Familia
- \$1.6 million for NMSU-DACC infrastructure upgrades
- \$25 million in general obligations bonds for D.W. Williams Hall renovations
- Revise PERA rules for retirees reentering the workforce
- \$3 million for competitive pool enclosure in Las Cruces
- \$570,000-\$3.5 million for septic tank remediation in Las Cruces
- \$1 million for Las Cruces road improvements
- \$1 million for Las Cruces traffic-signal synchronization plans
- Tax policy overhaul
- \$2.8 million for operational funding, license authorization at Spaceport America
- \$500,000 for Center for Education Innovation Center



# South Doña Ana



## Infrastructure improvements, expansions set up south county for growth

BY JESSICA WHITE-CASON

The potential for change is looming large in south Doña Ana County, and growth is inevitable.

Santa Teresa has already seen many improvements to its industrial park and is gearing up for further expansion. Border Industrial Association President Jerry Pacheco said Santa Teresa received \$8.3 million in capital outlay funds from last year's legislative session to resurface and expand rapidly decaying roads. Santa Teresa also received \$200,000 out of the Doña Ana County local government road fund.

"That money has been allocated. The roads are being redesigned; we hope to have them totally redone by the end of 2016," Pacheco said.

Such updates to Santa Teresa's infrastructure will undoubtedly help

support current businesses and a further influx of industry to the area. And influx seems certain.

During the past year, the Santa Teresa industrial area and intermodal park have seen quite a bit of expansion, and Pacheco rattled off a list of improvements. A new 166-acre industrial park has been launched, the first occupant of which will be MCS Frames, in its newly built 215,000 square-foot building.

A new terminal is being built in the intermodal park for Omega Trucking, a large logistics firm from the area.

"They have a little more than five acres on which they are going to be putting a truck patio," Pacheco said.

The Santa Teresa Southern Railroad, a privately owned short line railroad, is adding 2,500 feet of new rail line. Within the intermodal



## Here's to a great 2016!

As Mayor of Las Cruces, my fellow members of City Council and I look forward to working with Governor Martinez, our southern New Mexico delegation and lawmakers from across the state this legislative session. Las Cruces is a dynamic city and together we can continue to enhance its many great qualities.

*Ken Miyagishima, Mayor of Las Cruces*

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park as a whole, IDI Gazely, the developer who owns most of the land in the park, is adding an additional 2,000 feet of new rail line.

On top of having a sizable portion of rail-served land available at the start of 2016, Pacheco said he hopes to make major announcements in January 2016.

The community of Santa Teresa is well on its way to incorporation. District 2 County Commissioner David Garcia said the next step will be conducting a census.

"Once they have that, they can approach the board of county commissioners again," Garcia said.

Another key step is to include an evaluation of the incorporation proposal by the county, to ensure that it meets legal requirements. The New Mexico Department of Finance and Administration must also sign off on the application before the incorporation is put to a vote.

Beyond the issues in Sunland Park, Garcia is focused on flooding problems in his district. He has put in many hours working with the Office of the Flood Commission to resolve flooding in La Union and Chamberino.

"We've been looking at what options we have and all of the options are very expensive," Garcia said.

He was unsure if these issues would show up on the Doña Ana County Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan, but he believes that is because the Flood Commission is already inundated with projects.

"We have so many dams (in the county), and they all need some kind of improvement, costing millions of dollars," Garcia said. "We're working at it very diligently."

Following the arrests of two city council members in October and myriad other issues outlined in its disincorporation plan, a small group of unhappy Sunland Park residents requested a petition from the Doña Ana County clerk to disincorporate the city. Along with Anapra and Meadow Vista, Sunland Park was incorporated little more than 32 years ago. The effort failed in December 2015. ■

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# Grant



## Grant County looks forward to arts, culture, healthcare improvements

BY ELVA K. ÖSTERREICH

Grant County encompasses 3,968 square miles of mountains and yucca-speckled grasslands with unique cities and towns, nestled alongside 3.3 million acres of the Gila National Forest. The county has historic ties to mining, ranching and agriculture. The population density is about eight people per square mile, with people mainly living in the county seat, Silver City and the nearby towns of Bayard, Hurley and Santa Clara.

The two biggest employers in Grant County are the mining and health services industries, said Grant County Planning Director Anthony Gutierrez. Other major employers include the U.S. Forest Service and Western New Mexico University.

“The large part of our economic vitality is certainly due to tourism,” Gutierrez said. “Our quality of life has always been our greatest value.”

The tourism industry brings a variety of visitors in part by its diverse nature.

Southern New Mexico begins the Continental Divide trail, drawing hikers to the area as they prepare for the 3,100-mile trek across U.S. mountains and deserts.

Grant County also hosts numerous bicycle events and races; the Festival of the Written Word, which draws authors and writers from across the Southwest; the Silver City Clay Festival; and numerous significant arts and music events throughout the year.

Gutierrez said the county is trying to invest in its infrastructure some of the gross receipts tax revenues.

Recently having made a presentation to legislative representatives, Gutierrez said there are three capital outlay requests the county will be making for the upcoming session.

First, the county is asking for \$200,000 to help in the creation of a long-term continuum of care facility for drug and alcohol addiction. The county has allocated \$2 million for the project.

“We are hoping to go to construction by February 2017,” Gutierrez said.

“We have been doing work on this project,” said County Commissioner Ron Hall. “I’m really excited about it. We have a provider on board.”

Second on the capital outlay request list is \$275,000 for a new chip spreader for the roads, Gutierrez said.

The spreader will have about 710 miles of roadway to maintain, he said. The municipalities in the county also will have the opportunity to use the spreader.

Third, the county is requesting \$500,000 to help in renovations for the Veterans Memorial Business Conference Center which is currently under renovation. The Grant County GRT has allocated \$2.2 million for the project which, Gutierrez said, should be done by August 2016.

Of considerable concern to the county in recent years are disputes over Gila River water use.

Arizona residents are claiming downstream water rights in light of a proposal to divert Gila River water for local uses. Environmental groups contend the regional underground aquifer has adequate water to supply the Silver City area for hundreds of years.

According to the Gila Conservation Organization, the aquifer has 15 million acre-feet of water, with an annual recharge of nearly 16,000 acre-feet.

A diversion proposal would siphon 14,000 acre-feet from the river, but would then require New Mexico to pay Arizona millions each year, according to the group.

### LEGISLATIVE CONCERNS

- Fund needs for local government through capital outlay
- Support technology programs and infrastructure in education
- Invest in economic development
- Sustain rural services
- Address delayed governmental agency processing



Downtown revitalization in Silver City continues with the refurbished Silco Theater, events held by the Mimbres Region Arts Council (including the popular annual Silver City Blues Festival) and an active MainStreet Arts and Cultural district spearheaded by MainStreet Director Lucy Whitmarsh.

"It's very significant that the (state) Economic Development Department has funded \$200,000 with part of it to go to rural

communities to create jobs," Whitmarsh said. "It has been, in the past year, beneficial to getting the (Silco Theater) project to move along."

She said the legislature has been able to pass enabling legislation to boost downtown areas.

"At the state level, we are asking the legislators to support the programs that New Mexico MainStreet is asking for funding for," Whitmarsh said. ■

## GRANT COUNTY COMMUNITIES

### BAYARD

#### City

**Population:** 2,328

Mayor: Charles Kelly

Located in the foothills of the Gila and Mogollon mountains, Bayard was incorporated in 1938.

### CLIFF

#### Census designated place

**Population:** 293

Primarily a farming and ranching community, the post office was established in 1894.

### HURLEY

#### Town

**Population:** 1,200

Mayor: Fernando Martinez

As early as 1801, the Chino Mines in Hurley were the principal source of copper for the mint in Mexico.

### PINOS ALTOS

#### Census designated place

**Population:** 250

Spanish for "tall pines," Pinos Altos is located in the Gila National Forest, with several historic places to visit.

### SANTA CLARA

#### Village

**Population:** 1,679

Mayor: Richard Bauch

A part of the central mining district that includes Bayard, Hanover and Hurley, Santa Clara was founded in the early 1860s. In the 1960s, residents from nearby Santa Rita removed their homes from the path of its expanding open pit mining operation of the Kennecott Copper Corp.

### SAN LORENZO

#### Census designated place

**Population:** 97

San Lorenzo is a scenic village located in the Mimbres Valley. The San Lorenzo Canyon Recreation area offers opportunities for hiking and primitive camping.

### SILVER CITY

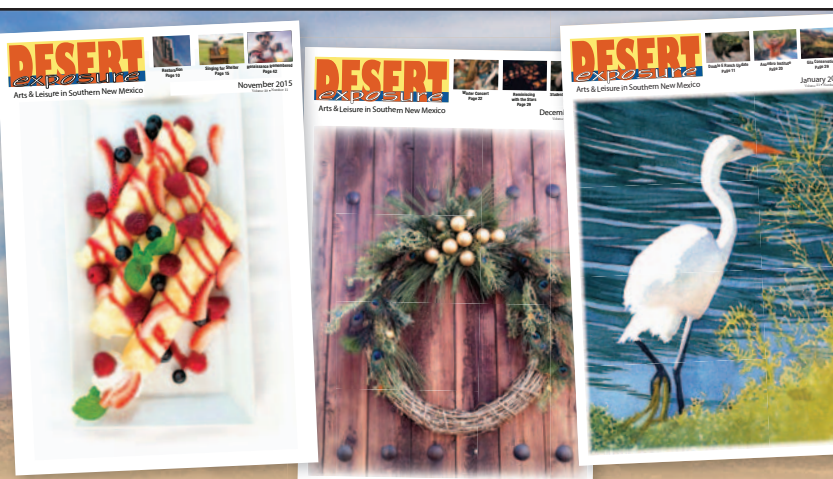
#### County Seat

#### Town

**Population:** 10,315

Mayor: Michael S. Morones

Silver City, the largest city in Grant County, is a hub of activity. It values and preserves its historical, cultural and natural heritage. Home to a four-year university and historic downtown and cultural district, it is surrounded by the Gila National Forest.







# Mining the county

## Kneeling Nun may get more protection from blasts

### BULLETIN REPORT

The Chino copper mine, also known as the Santa Rita mine, is an open-pit copper mine located in the former town of Santa Rita, 15 miles east of Silver City.

The mine was started as the Chino Copper Company in 1909 by mining engineer John Sully and businessman Spencer Penrose, and is currently owned and operated by Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold subsidiaries.

Located at an average elevation of 5,699 feet, the huge open-pit mine was once the largest in the world. The present-day open-pit mining operation was begun in 1910. It is the third oldest open pit copper mine in the world.

A mill to process the low-grade copper ore was established in 1911 in nearby Hurley but was replaced by a new Ivanhoe concentrator facility in 1982. In 2005, the smelter was permanently closed.

Milling operations started up again at the Chino concentrator in 2004 after a three-year hiatus caused by low copper prices.

Santa Rita was once located where the large copper mine pit is now. It is where Harrison Schmitt, geologist and Apollo 17 astronaut, was born. Because the town is now a large hole in the ground, Schmitt made the joke that he was “born in space.” That spawned the Society for People Born in Space, which holds annual reunions for people born in the town that no longer exists.

The Kneeling Nun is a rock

formation overlooking the large open mine pit and daily mining operations.

Mining activity has threatened the existence of the Kneeling Nun, which has long been revered by local residents and seen by some as the protector of mine laborers. Some mine workers would only work within sight of the Kneeling Nun.

The main legend behind the rock formation’s name focuses on a nun who cared for a wounded Spanish soldier, and tells the story of the couple’s forbidden love. The nun was forced to leave her mission and legend has it that she was turned to stone while she kneeled and prayed atop the mountain for forgiveness, creating the rock formation in the shape of a kneeling nun.

The constant blasting in the open mining pit has led to the use of steel cables to hold up the Kneeling Nun. Protests, parades and bumper stickers were part of a campaign in 1997 to “Save our Kneeling Nun” from destruction by the mining industry.

In response, Chino Mines used motion sensors to check how the Kneeling Nun was being affected by mining and agreed to maintain a 400-acre buffer area around the Kneeling Nun. The company announced it was going to protect the Kneeling Nun by minimizing seismic activity from blasting underneath and securing it.

In 1998 a California congressman unsuccessfully tried to establish the Kneeling Nun as a national monument. ■

# Schools focus on energy use, education reform

BY ELVA K. ÖSTERREICH

There are 16 public schools in Grant County, serving 4,418 students. The largest of the districts is Silver Consolidated Schools, which operates three high schools, one middle school and five elementary schools, all serving more than 3,100 students. The district also employs approximately 259 teachers.

SCS Superintendent Lon Streib said the district is asking area legislators to address about \$6 million in deferred maintenance that has been (legislatively) on the back burner for several years now.

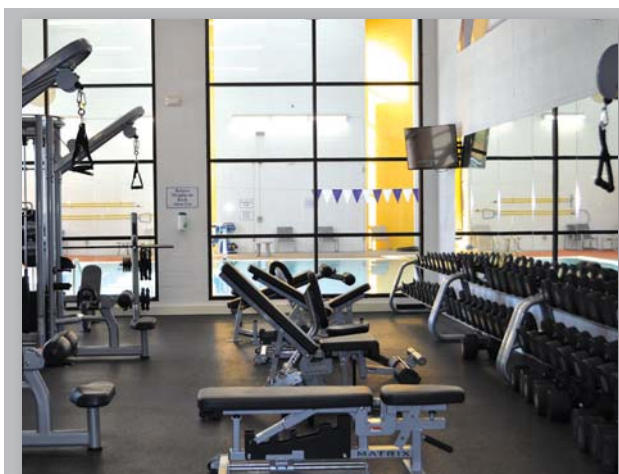
“Of course safety is first,” he said. “But we would like the Legislature to provide money for the schools to update their energy-use consumption. Work on the insulation, windows, doors and HVAC systems would save us money.”

Streib said the schools are also asking legislators to lobby the Public Education Department to reduce mandated testing days and to reconsider the way teacher evaluations are tied to New Mexico student performance, based on standard assessments and the PARCC test.

“If we could have (Hanna) Skandera (New Mexico Secretary of Education) review that with an honest look,” he said, “I don’t think it’s fair to the teachers to be evaluated on things they have no control over.”

Western New Mexico University, situated at the heart of Silver City, is central to Grant County: with a range of associates, bachelor’s and graduate degree programs and non-degree study options, WNMU anchors the community’s commitment to lifelong education.

Recent money from the state in the past few years has provided funds, in conjunction with grants and GRTs, to finish projects such as a recreational/swimming pool center and renovate some of the older parts of the WNMU campus. ■



## LEGISLATIVE CONCERNS

- Update energy-use consumption at schools
- Reduce mandated testing days and reevaluate teacher assessment methods



## ELECTED OFFICIALS

### GRANT COUNTY COMMISSION

Address: P.O. Box 898,  
Silver City, NM 88062

#### **Gabriel Ramos** **District 1**

575-574-0021  
gramos@grantcountynm.com

#### **Brett Kasten** **District 2**

575-574-0022  
bakasten@  
grantcountynm.com,

#### **Ron Hall** **District 3**

575-574-0023  
575-574-2711 (cell)  
rhall@grantcountynm.com

### SILVER CITY CITY COUNCIL

**Mayor Michael S. Morones**  
575-534-6346

mayor@silvercitynm.gov  
**Cynthia Ann Bettison**  
**District 1**  
575-597-7031  
councilordistrict1@  
silvercitynm.gov

#### **Lynda D. Aiman-Smith** **District 2**

575-597-7032  
575-519-1680 (cell)  
councilordistrict2@  
silvercitynm.gov

#### **Jose A. Ray, Jr.** **District 3**

575-313-4944  
councilordistrict3@  
silvercitynm.gov

#### **Guadalupe "Lupe" Cano** **District 4**

575-597-7034  
councilordistrict4@  
silvercitynm.gov

## EDUCATION

### PUBLIC SCHOOLS

#### **Silver Consolidated Schools**

2810 N. Swan St., Silver  
City NM 88061  
575-956-2000  
www.silverschools.org

#### **Cobre Consolidated School District**

PO Box 1000  
Bayard, NM 88023  
575-537-4000  
www.cobre.k12.nm.us

### CHARTER SCHOOLS

#### **Aldo Leopold Charter School**

1422 U.S. Highway 180 East,

Silver City NM 88061  
575-538-2547

### PRIVATE SCHOOLS

#### **Guadalupe Montessori School**

1731 N. Alabama St.  
Silver City, NM 88061  
575-388-3343  
www.guadalupeмонтessori.org

### COLLEGE

#### **Western New Mexico University**

1000 W. College Ave.  
Silver City, NM 88062  
http://wnmu.edu



## QUICK FACTS

### PEOPLE

Population: 29,096 (2014 estimate)  
Households: 12,216 (2009-2013)  
Median household income:  
\$37,899 (2009-2013)  
Persons below poverty level:  
20.4 percent (2009-2013)

### BUSINESS

Private nonfarm establishments:  
619 (2013)  
Private nonfarm employment:  
6,921 (2013)  
Nonemployer establishments:  
1,495 (2013)  
Employer establishments: 619 (2013)

### GEOGRAPHY

Land area (square miles): 3,962  
Persons per square mile: 7.4 (2010)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

# Hidalgo

## ISOLATION NO BARRIER TO INDUSTRY

Hidalgo County gains in energy, pecan businesses

BY ELVA K. ÖSTERREICH

For Hidalgo County Manager Bob Hill, the best part of the county is its rural nature.

“We have a lot of land areas that are beautiful and gorgeous, we have access to federal lands and forestry and the beauty that is there in our communities,” Hill said. “If you ask anyone in the ranching or farming business, which is half of the residents of the county, they would say they have peace and serenity.”

The ranchers typically raise cattle, Hill said. The farmers, many in the area of the towns of Virden and Cotton City, grow corn, watermelon and New Mexico chile.

Once big in cotton, the crop is making a comeback and Cotton City is growing again, although a new group of people have come in and are buying up land and planting pecan trees on a large scale, he said. So far about 60,000 pecan trees have been planted and there are plans to plant a total of 200,000.

Pecan groves have been a concern to other local farmers, who worry about the water table and have told Hill they notice their wells going down when the orchards’ water pumps start.

Also in Hidalgo County, in the Animas Valley, is the first geothermal energy plant in New Mexico, Cyrq Energy Inc. Cyrq uses the natural resource of hot water in the ground, pumping hot water from 1,200 feet to 3,000 feet below ground to spin turbines to generate electricity. The water is then re-injected into the ground.

The geothermal plant has raised its share of controversy in Hidalgo County, too. Bringing money into the economy, there are more concerns surrounding water use in the area. Although Cyrq draws its water from deep wells, it recently obtained permits to inject water back into a shallower water table, and this has raised concerns about the quality of water used by the local population.

Although Hidalgo County has its share of drug trafficking issues because it is one of the sparest counties on the border, it hasn’t been a big problem for county residents, Hill said.

“Every week you can read about large seizures of drugs,” he said. “But (drug traffickers) try to go through areas not settled, the mountainous areas.”

The Border Patrol is very active in the county and mans two substantial

stations on the border, housing its personnel, who take shifts living on the border.

A new state-of-the-art border facility near the Antelope Wells border crossing houses seven or eight employees year-round, he said. The border station is 60 to 70 miles from Lordsburg and includes dorm facilities with a kitchen and dining area, with as many as 12 employees are there at a time.

“Adjacent to that is a border patrol station and they do have agents that go out on 10-day or two-week assignment,” Hill said.

There is also a Border Patrol forward-operating base on the western side of the county, he said.

Another new venture in Hidalgo County has not done as well as anticipated. Four years ago, a detention center — designed as a 148 bed facility — was built with the idea it would house federal inmates.

“It has not materialized the way it was designed,” Hill said. “On average, we have had 20 to 25 inmates in this facility. It has been, since inception, running at a loss.”

In 2015, from April to August, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) used the facility, he said, putting about 75 people in it, and there was some revenue coming in. That population was removed and the county was told it needed to make some changes in order for the facility to qualify for ICE purposes.

Hill said those things have been done, but ICE has not come back.

The detention center is run by the county. All of the employees are county personnel. Food, supplies and some of the medical services are contracted. ■

### LEGISLATIVE CONCERNS

- Funding for road maintenance and infrastructure needs including the purchase of vehicles and equipment
- Courthouse renovations
- Fairgrounds and building improvements
- Water legislation



## HIDALGO COUNTY COMMUNITIES

### LORDSBURG

#### City, County Seat

**Mayor:** Clark Smith

**Population:** 3,039

Lordsburg is the county seat and most-populous town in Hidalgo County. The area dates back to the 1880s, when the arrival of the Southern Pacific Railroad brought with it railroad workers, farmers, ranchers, miners and merchants.

### VIRDEN

#### Village

**Mayor:** Rulene Jensen

**Population:** 145

Established by the New Mexico Mining Co. as Richmond in 1916, this site along the Gila River was chosen to build a stamp mill.

### GLEN ACRES

#### Census designated place

**Population:** 337

Glen Acres is a subdivision next to Lordsburg. The city of Lordsburg is working to incorporate the area to be able to include it in water and sewage services.

### COTTON CITY

#### Census designated place

**Population:** 249

The Cotton City area was centered around a cotton gin for many years. The area has had a strong farming base, growing chile, cotton, beans, and corn.

### ANIMAS

#### Census designated place

**Population:** 159

Founded around 1753 by the Spanish, Animas became part of the newly independent country of Mexico in 1821, it is located in the area sold to the United States with the Gadsden Purchase of 1853.

### RODEO

#### Census designated place

**Population:** 130

One mile from the Arizona border on state Highway 80, Rodeo is New Mexico's westernmost town. Once an important shipping point for livestock, the town today is home to the Chiricahua Art Museum and the Chiricahua Desert Museum.



# County seeks funding for a new high school

BY ELVA K. ÖSTERREICH

There are two school districts in Hidalgo County: Lordsburg Municipal Schools and Animas Independent Schools.

Lordsburg Municipal School District covers 1,139 square miles and has three elementary schools serving pre-kindergarten to sixth grade, a middle school that serves seventh and eighth grade and a high school that serves ninth to 12th grade.

The Animas district houses the entire student body in one school facility serving approximately 2,315 square miles.

County Manager Bob Hill, born and raised in Hidalgo County, remembers when there were 250 to 300 students at the high school.

"Our family has long history that goes back 100 years," Hill said. "My dad was a Lordsburg Maverick, my grandfather was a Lordsburg Maverick and my son is a Maverick too."

Today there are 120 students at Lordsburg High School, graduating classes are made up of about 30 people each. The Animas district, Hill said, has 50 to 75 students total.

Lordsburg also has a learning center through a Western New Mexico University satellite campus for those who want to continue their educations beyond high school.

Hill said legislative concerns in Lordsburg Municipal Schools include funding to building a new high school of a more appropriate size for the current needs of the community. ■

## EDUCATION

### PUBLIC SCHOOLS

#### Lordsburg Municipal Schools

P.O. Box 430, Lordsburg,  
NM 88045  
575-542-9361  
[www.lmsed.org](http://www.lmsed.org)

#### Animas Independent Schools

#1 Panther Blvd.  
Animas, NM 88020  
575-548-2299  
[www.animask12.net](http://www.animask12.net)

### UNIVERSITIES/COLLEGES

#### Hidalgo Learning Center

**Western New Mexico University**  
520 West Second Street,  
Lordsburg, NM 88045  
575-542-3315  
[http://wnmu.edu/ExtUniv/Hidalgo\\_Learning\\_Center.shtml](http://wnmu.edu/ExtUniv/Hidalgo_Learning_Center.shtml)



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- Outreach and education

- Parenting education program
- Civil legal services
- Educational services

## STAND UP AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



# Transportation infrastructure needs are priority for county

BY ELVA K. ÖSTERREICH

The top priority for Hidalgo County is roads.

"We maintain just under 500 miles of roads," County Manager Bob Hill said. "A hundred of those are heavily used by Border Patrol of which about 25 miles is chip sealed."

Items on the county's capital outlay wish list include equipment and infrastructure needed for taking care of those roads like the purchase of a grader and a tractor/mower, maintenance building improvements and co-op funds for road improvements.

"To maintain the roads like we would like, we would have to work those roads every two weeks to 30 days, but normally it happens once or twice a year," Hill said. "This puts additional burden on employees and graders. Our graders are aging and breaking down."

Hill said he had an opportunity, in late 2015, to do a presentation before a transportation committee in Santa Fe about the impact of Border Patrol useage on the roads of rural communities.

"We have very good working relationship with Border Patrol," he said. "They recognize that they use our roads and we recognize that it is our responsibility to take care of them."

Hill said there are also Colonia and Community Development Block Grant opportunity hearings coming up that could, hopefully, entail restructuring some of the roads in the towns.

Three or four years ago, the City of Lordsburg got a Colonias grant to do restructuring on a stretch of Animas Street which is badly in need of repair, Hill said. The grant was enough to complete a lot of the needed infrastructure, including utilities, but that work tore the road up even more. Now, the city has partnered with the county and they have been awarded \$587,281, which will be used for resurfacing Animas Street, and next year's application is in place to finish the project. ■

## ELECTED OFFICIALS

### HIDALGO COUNTY COMMISSION

#### Richard Chaires

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#### Darr Shannon

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Lordsburg, N.M., 88045  
575-313-0554  
shortcom@hotmail.com

#### Mimi Stewart

305 Pyramid St.  
Lordsburg, N.M., 88045  
575-313-3818  
stewartjm@aznexus.net

### LORDSBURG CITY COUNCIL

409 W. Walbash St.  
Lordsburg, NM 88045

#### Arthur Clark Smith, Mayor

575-654-5865

#### Alex V. De La Garza

575-542-3788

#### Ernest Gallegos

575-542-9710

#### Irene Galvan

575-202-7110

#### Glenda Greene

575-639-2484

#### Alfredo Morelos, Mayor Pro-tem

575-538-1128

#### Manuel Saucedo

575-542-8076

## QUICK FACTS

### PEOPLE

Population: 4,560 (2014 estimate)  
Households: 1,858 (2010-2014)  
Median household income: \$35,048  
(in 2014 dollars, 2010-2014)  
Persons below poverty level, percent:  
25.7 percent (2014 estimate)

### BUSINESS

Private nonfarm establishments: 91 (2012)  
Private nonfarm employment: 805 (2012)  
Non-employer establishments: 223 (2013)  
Median home value: \$86,500

### GEOGRAPHY

Land area (square miles, 2010): 3,436.86  
Persons per square mile: 1.4 (2010)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)







## COUNTY COMMISSION BACKS NMAC GOALS

BY TODD G. DICKSON

Going into the 2016 30-day session of the state Legislature, the Lincoln County Commission is keeping it simple by supporting a unified front behind the New Mexico Association of Counties' (NMAC) legislative priorities.

The top NMAC priority is for lawmakers to restore detention center funding.

County detention centers frequently house state inmates and get reimbursement from the state. The problem is the rate paid for housing them doesn't come close to covering the actual costs of housing them. In most cases, they are escaped inmates or parole violators, making them a greater security concern than most detainees.

The NMAC is calling for an increase in the 2016 General Appropriations Act that would fund the County Detention Facilities Reimbursement Act at a level sufficient to reimburse counties for the actual cost of holding the prisoners.

Another NMAC goal is funding for a statewide Emergency Medical Services assessment. The assessment would be conducted through the New Mexico Department of Health EMS Bureau, in coordination with the state fire marshal. The proposal also seeks to reconvene the NMAC EMS Task Force to develop additional policy recommendations regarding appropriate funding levels and mechanisms for recurring EMS services funding.

Water and resource management is a statewide issue, so the NMAC is asking lawmakers to fund the New Mexico 3D Elevation Program (3DEP) to develop Light Detection and Ranging Technology (LiDAR).

A state appropriation would be boosted by matching local and tribal funds with federal funding from the National 3DEP. LiDAR applications include watershed and water-resource management, infrastructure planning and development, precision agriculture and forestry management.

These applications are a good fit for Lincoln County, which has national and tribal forest lands, as well as limited water sources because of drought.

Finally, the NMAC is telling lawmakers county officials would be partners with state policymakers on efforts to restructure or reform gross receipts taxes (GRT). Efforts to phase out state hold-harmless payments by giving local governments the option to raise GRT have not sat well with conservatives who believe higher tax rates will inhibit economic growth. ■

### LEGISLATIVE CONCERNS

- Adequately fund the County Detention Facilities Reimbursement Act
- Consult with counties before changing GRT
- Create a statewide EMS support system
- Match federal funding for water-related projects

# LINCOLN COUNTY COMMUNITIES

## ALTO CENSUS-DESIGNATED PLACE

**POPULATION:** 1,213

Located in the Lincoln National Forest, five miles north of the village of Ruidoso, Alto is at 7,300 feet and received its name from the Spanish word "high" because of its elevation.

## CAPITAN VILLAGE

**POPULATION:** 1,439

Located north of the Lincoln National Forest, Capitan was founded in the 1890s and incorporated in 1941. It is both the birthplace and final resting place of U.S. Forest Service mascot Smokey Bear.

## CARRIZOZO CITY

**POPULATION:** 973

Carrizozo is the county seat with a population of 970, according to the 2013 census estimate. Founded in 1899, the town provided the main railroad access for Lincoln County, and the town experienced significant population growth in the early decades of the 1900s. As significance of railroad transport diminished, the population gradually declined. Carrizozo is known statewide for a cherry cider drink, often found in rural convenience stores.

## CORONA VILLAGE

**POPULATION:** 172

Corona was first established as a stagecoach stop in the 1850s, then a railroad town in 1903. Located on U.S. Highway 54, Corona is where the famous 1947 UFO crash was first reported and is actually closer to the crash site than Roswell, which was made famous by the incident.

## FORT STANTON STATE HISTORICAL SITE

**POPULATION:** 41

Built in 1855 by the U.S. government to protect settlements along the Rio Bonito from marauding Apaches, Fort Stanton was occupied by Confederate forces during the Civil War. It became the country's first tuberculosis internment camp during World War II. It was established as a living history venue in 2008.

## HONDO CENSUS-DESIGNATED PLACE

**POPULATION:** 225

Spanish settlers in the 1880s founded Hondo, where the Rio Bonito and Rio Ruidoso converge to form the Rio Hondo.

## LINCOLN STATE HISTORICAL SITE

**POPULATION:** 51

Originally called Las Placitas del Rio Bonito when it was first settled in the 1850s, the town was renamed after Lincoln County was created in 1869. It is the most visited state monument in New Mexico because Billy the Kid made an infamous escape from its courthouse during the Lincoln County War.

## RUIDOSO VILLAGE

**POPULATION:** 8,029

Mayor: Tom Battin

The mountain resort town is a destination for both New Mexicans and Texans seeking more moderate temperatures and greener scenery. Located in the Sierra Blanca mountain range, the village takes its name from the Rio Ruidoso, which translates to Noisy River. Alto, Mescalero and Ruidoso Downs are considered suburbs of Ruidoso statistically, though Ruidoso Downs has its own city government.

## RUIDOSO DOWNS CENSUS-DESIGNATED PLACE

**POPULATION:** 2,815

Mayor: Gary Williams

The Ruidoso Downs Race Track, Billy the Kid Casino and the Hubbard Museum of the American West consistently attract visitors to this city within the Lincoln National Forest.

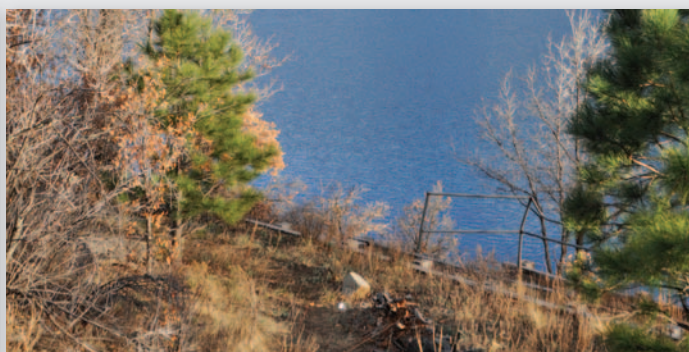
## SAN PATRICIO TOWN

**POPULATION:** 564

This community is home to a Benedictine spirituality center and sits at 5,400 feet. The historic town was part of the Lincoln County War and is located on the Rio Ruidoso between Hondo and Glencoe.

## WHITE OAKS GHOST TOWN

Located on the outskirts of the Lincoln National Forest, White Oaks began as a gold boomtown in 1879. By the early 1900s, the mines had dried up and the town was almost completely abandoned. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, one of the town's saloons remains open – the No Scum Allowed Saloon.



## EDUCATION

### PUBLIC SCHOOLS

#### Capitan Municipal Schools

150 South Forest Ave.

Capitan, NM 88316

505-354-2239

[www.capitantigers.org](http://www.capitantigers.org)

#### Carrizozo Municipal Schools

800 D Ave.

Carrizozo, NM 88301

575-648-2346

[www.carrizozoschools.org](http://www.carrizozoschools.org)

#### Hondo Valley Public Schools

286 Highway 7380

Hondo, NM 88336

575-653-4411

[www.hondoschools.org](http://www.hondoschools.org)

#### Ruidoso Municipal Schools

200 Horton Circle

Ruidoso, NM 88345

575-257-4051

[www.ruidososchools.org](http://www.ruidososchools.org)

### COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES

#### Eastern New Mexico University-Ruidoso

709 Mechem Drive

Ruidoso, NM 88345

575-257-2120

[www.ruidoso.enmu.edu](http://www.ruidoso.enmu.edu)



# Water project begins, first phase complete

BY TODD G. DICKSON

Ruidoso saw progress in 2015 on a long-awaited effort to simplify and unify its water and sewer system.

Declared by Village of Ruidoso Manger Debi Lee as “the most complex water system in the state,” the village and its suburbs — including the City of Ruidoso Downs — are served by three independent systems.

The issues created by the water systems came into focus following flooding in 2008 and the Little Bear Fire in 2012, the latter of which significantly reduced the supply of suitable surface water.

At the time, the Village of Ruidoso estimated it would deplete the Grindstone Reservoir within a year because it supplied nearly a third of its water.

Prolonged drought also didn't help as the reservoir became so shallow that contaminants made it increasingly difficult to treat.

A combination of federal, state and local funding was committed to the process of protecting the water supply.

First, studies helped officials to get their arms around the task at hand, and there was a lot to sort out, starting with 41 different water pressure zones weaving through mountainous terrain, corrosive soils

and an aging infrastructure, according to a 2014 presentation to the New Mexico Finance Authority. In terms of groundwater sources, there are 13 wells with water rights, as well as an assortment of above-ground water tanks.

Altogether, the water system produced up to 2.6 million gallons of water a day to residents, but with an estimated 30 percent loss along the way, due to the aged condition of the water-delivery systems.

One of the first tasks undertaken was to take advantage of the Grindstone Reservoir's low level to install a liner that would reduce seepage, improve water quality and stabilize the dam's effectiveness.

Future steps include increasing the flow of the Rio Ruidoso and expanding resources, while the state oversees the long and expensive process of unifying the three-headed water system.

Meanwhile, strict water conservation measures put in place in 2012 remain the status quo until further notice.

Local officials have been working with the State Engineer's Office to investigate steps needed to create a regional water utility, including educational efforts to ease concerns and distrust, which, at some turns in the past, has created the complicated water system that needs to be unraveled and simplified. ■

## ELECTED OFFICIALS

### LINCOLN COUNTY COMMISSION

#### Preston Stone, Chair

District 1  
P.O. Box 484, Capitan, NM 8836  
575-808-0729  
pstone@lincolncountynm.gov

#### Lynn Willard

District 2  
109 Nogal Place, Ruidoso, NM 88345  
575-404-1794  
lynnwillardlincolncounty@gmail.com

#### Dallas Draper, Vice Chair

District 3  
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Ruidoso, NM 88345  
575-937-4790  
ddraper@lincolncountynm.gov

#### Tom Stewart

District 4  
P.O. Box 515, Alto, NM 88312

575-973-7363  
tstewart@lincolncountynm.gov

#### Elaine Allen

District 5  
P.O. Box 74, Lincoln, NM 88338  
575-653-4251  
eallen@lincolncountynm.gov

### VILLAGE OF RUIDOSO COUNCIL

#### Tom Battin, Mayor

313 Cree Meadows Dr.,  
Ruidoso, NM 88345  
575-258-4343

#### Councilor Rafael “Rifle”

Salas, Mayor Pro Tem  
P.O. Box 1122, Ruidoso, NM 88355  
575-808-0430  
riflesalas@ruidoso-nm.gov

#### Lynn D. Crawford

2629 Sudderth Drive,  
Ruidoso, NM 88345

575-802-2222 (home)  
575-937-9771 (cell)  
ruidosolynn@gmail.com

#### Joseph W. Eby

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692, Ruidoso, NM 88355  
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575-808-0114 (cell)  
joeby@ruidoso-nm.gov

#### Councilor Timothy Coughlin

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575-973-5469 (cell)  
timothycoughlin@ruidoso-nm.gov

#### Joe Gomez

575-937-2801  
joe@sierrablancamotors.com

#### John Cornelius

575-937-0918  
johncornelisu@ruidoso-nm.gov

## QUICK FACTS

### PEOPLE

Population: 11,325 (2014)  
Households: 8,284 (2014)  
Median household  
income: \$27,430  
Persons below poverty  
level: 22.6 percent

### BUSINESS

Total employer  
establishments: 216 (2013)  
Total employment:  
2,068 (2013)  
Non-employer  
establishments: 694 (2013)

### GEOGRAPHY

Land area (square  
miles): 4,831.09  
Persons per square  
mile: 4.2 (2010)

Source: U.S. Census



# Luna

## GEARING UP FOR CHANGE

Luna County expands, preps for Columbus raid anniversary

BY RICHARD COLTHARP

The trains will still roll back and forth through town and the traffic will still course east and west along Interstate 10, but there are several things brewing that could bring significant change to Deming and Luna County in the near future.

Some concrete additions will be a new Deming High School, a new Deming Intermediate School and a new port of entry at the U.S.-Mexico border in Columbus.

Mizkan (formerly Border Foods) continues to expand operations, which could bring more jobs and more support businesses to the county — complete with a building expansion and physical plant improvements.

Billy the Kid Produce has grown its operations as well, acquiring onion fields in Animas, which has enabled the company to expand the growing season. The company may add additional farms, too.

Another potential boon is a fertilizer plant proposed for the Northside Industrial Park.

Less concrete is the potential for developing manganese resources in the Florida Mountains.

The demand for manganese is on the rise, driven in large part by General Motors' use of manganese in its truck frames. Manganese is lighter and stronger than aluminum.

The big question mark is the lack of a processing plant in the area. Should someone invest in such a plant, it would be a game-changer for the economy, locals believe.

"That would be the key to job development," Deming Mayor Benny Jasso said.

### School improvements

New Deming Public School Superintendent Dan Lere said there are other changes on the educational front in addition to the new buildings.

The schools have begun a laptop initiative, providing students with their own laptop computers. Lere said this move benefits both the teachers and the students.

## QUICK FACTS

### PEOPLE

Population: 24,673 (2014)  
Households: 9,120 (2010-2014)  
Median household income: \$28,489 (2010-2014)  
Persons below poverty level: 31.2 percent

### BUSINESS

Total employer establishments: 387 (2013)  
Total employment: 4,194 (2013)  
Total nonemployer establishments: 1,006 (2013)

### GEOGRAPHY

Land area (square miles): 2,965.10 (2010)  
Population per square mile: 8.5 (2010)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau





"It gives them control over what they're learning and how they're learning it," Lere said.

Other technology will be added, including large, touch-screen TVs in the new high school, which will go up next to the existing high school and is expected to open its doors in August 2017.

Another change could come that has nothing to do with technology, and that's a balanced school schedule. Shifting more toward a year-round schedule, and possibly even a four-day-a-week schedule, would provide a variety of benefits, Lere said.

#### Hold harmless

Ever since the grocery tax was lifted in New Mexico, municipalities have struggled with making up the lost revenues, despite promises from the state they would be "held harmless" or "made whole" in the wake of

the vanished gross receipts.

"We've been given the ability to raise taxes (to make up the deficit)," Jasso said. "But it's something we're trying to avoid as long as possible."

"It's going to cost us \$75,000 in revenue, and we're looking at how we can make that up. We're trying to be creative, even looking at properties we can sell. And we're doing a full audit of everything we have."

#### Centennial of the raid

March 2016 will mark the 100th anniversary of the Pancho Villa's raid on Columbus. Expect lots of commemorative events.

Part of the U.S. war response to the raid was the establishment of the military's first ever air corps, the First Aero Squadron. Organizers of the First Aero Squadron Foundation would love to use the momentum of the commemoration to build on their goal of creating a museum. ■

## COMMUNITIES

#### DEMING

##### City

**Population:** 14,793

Mayor: Benny L. Jasso

The Luna County Seat, Deming is the largest city town in the county and holds nearly 60 percent of its population.

#### COLUMBUS

##### Village

**Population:** 1,664

Mayor: Philip Skinner

Thirty miles south of Deming and three miles north of the U.S.-Mexico border, opposite the Mexican village of Puerto Palomas, Chihuahua, stands Columbus, N.M., the second most-populous town in Luna County with a population of just 1,664. In 1919, the town was attacked by Mexican revolutionary Francisco "Pancho" Villa, killing eight soldiers and 10 residents, known as the Battle of Columbus.



## EDUCATION

### PUBLIC SCHOOLS

#### Deming Public Schools

1001 S. Diamond Ave., Deming, NM 88030  
www.demingps.org

### COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES

#### Mimbres Valley Learning Center (WNMU)

2300 E Pine St, Deming, NM 88030  
575-546-6556  
http://wnmu.edu/ExtUniv/deming

## ELECTED OFFICIALS

### LUNA COUNTY COMMISSION

#### Joe L. "Oleo" Milo

##### District 1

575-546-0494

Joe\_milo@lunacountynm.us

#### Linda Smrkovsky

##### District 2

575-494-0512

linda\_smrkovsky@lunacountynm.us

#### R. Javier Diaz

##### District 3

575-936-6446

Rjavier\_diaz@lunacountynm.us

### DEMING CITY COUNCIL

#### Benny L. Jasso

##### Mayor

575-546-8848

bjasso@cityofdeming.org

#### David L. Sanchez

##### District 1

575-546-3155

Dsanchez505@q.com

#### Roxana Rincon

##### District 2

575-546-8848

deming@cityofdeming.org

#### Joe Milo

##### District 3

575-546-7385

deming@cityofdeming.org

#### Victor Cruz

##### District 4

575-546-8848

valuemedicalcare@gmail.com



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840 N. Telshore Blvd, Suite E  
Las Cruces, NM 88011  
575-524-8061



# Otero



## COUNTY AIMS TO SOAR

BY ALTA LECOMPTE

Neptune Aviation Services Inc. and Emerging Technology Ventures Inc. have hung out help wanted signs in Alamogordo, and community leaders are banking on recruiting more aerospace-related businesses to grow the local economy.

Since Otero County is home to Holloman Air Force Base and White Sands Missile Range, its two largest employers, it makes sense to capitalize on those existing assets, said Mike Espiritu, executive director of Otero County Economic Development Council (OCEDC) and the Alamogordo Chamber of Commerce.

“We are targeting aerospace and light manufacturing,” he said. “Our assets create a synergy with Holloman and White Sands. There is a large unmanned aircraft and aerospace presence, and we have the workforce to support those industries.”

While OCEDC reaches out to target other businesses in the aerospace industry, the City of Alamogordo focuses on infrastructure improvements that benefit aerospace businesses and contribute to the quality of life for current residents and new families that will follow as the economy expands.

Much of the action takes place at and near the airport.

Neptune, for example, occupies a 29,150 square foot facility located at Alamogordo Municipal Airport.

The 14,800-square-foot hangar bay is the single largest privately owned facility of its kind in south central New Mexico. Solely dedicated to supporting the air tanker fleet, the Alamogordo facility affords Neptune additional winter maintenance capacity for annual inspections and heavy checks.

Neptune has contracts to supply firefighting aircraft to the U.S. Forest Service and currently operates a fleet of 10 firefighting airtankers while planning to phase in its new REV3.

“Neptune expanded from Montana to Alamogordo,” Espiritu said. “They already had a dispatch center here. Also, because of the warm environment, they conduct pilot training in the spring.”

The City of Alamogordo is lengthening the runway so Neptune’s new, larger planes will be able to fly in and out, said George “Ross” Straface, interim city manager.

“We are expanding the runway and shoring up the ramp in front of their overhauling facility,” Espiritu said. “The work will allow big planes to come in in the future, including Neptune’s new planes. The runway — over 9,000-feet long — is in progress as we speak.”

He said the work is being done in cooperation with the New Mexico Department of Transportation.

“The FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) funded 90 percent of the project, the state 5 percent and the city 5 percent,” he said.

Alamogordo’s other new aerospace company, Emerging Technology Ventures Inc., received a \$500,000 award in 2014 by the State of New Mexico and the City of Alamogordo to support the acquisition and renovation of its La Velle Road facility.

In consideration for the funding, ETV pledged to create 24 jobs in Alamogordo to support the design, development and manufacture of unmanned ground vehicles for national security and commercial applications.

ETV’s La Velle Road facility provides more than 47 acres and 85,000 square feet of design and manufacturing space to be utilized by ETV and its small-business partners in the development of collaborative, cross-domain unmanned system solutions.

“The company arrived three years ago and is pretty active in both unmanned vehicles and robotics, and they’re growing,” Espiritu said. “ETV works with a robotics company that has the potential to expand and grow here.”

The influence of STEM (science, technology, engineering and math)

## LEGISLATIVE CONCERNS

- Provide capital for police car radios, a dispatch center and a training facility for firefighters
- Reconsider hold harmless
- Increase funding for local economic development offices
- Reduce (and then eliminate) personal income tax on New Mexico military veterans
- Restore funding for universal broadband to enable local providers to continue to develop infrastructure in rural communities
- Make LEDA and JTIP funding part of the regular state budget



and robotics is pervasive throughout the community.

“Robotics is everywhere, and we want a workforce that can support that with certifications and qualifications,” Espiritu said.

Espiritu said the subjects are taught in the local high schools to engage young people in robotics and unmanned aircraft.

Local schools collaborate with Otero STEM, a nonprofit that works with students, especially the very young, Espiritu said.

He said pre-engineering programs at New Mexico State University-Alamogordo help provide the kind of workforce the new industries need.

A task force unites the strengths of the Alamogordo High schools, NMSU, the economic development office and the mayor’s office to identify the skill sets needed by the future workforce of Otero County, Espiritu said.

“The Legislature did a wonderful job boosting LEDA (Local Economic Development Act) and JTIP (Job Training Incentive Program),” he said. “Companies in the pipeline will be using some of those funds.”

Among the infrastructure projects the city is working on are a desalination plant, to be built on an old landfill, which will provide potable water to the parched city.

Permitting has been completed for discharge at the proposed plant, Straface said. The plant has received preliminary approval from the state and the project is the final design.

“It will be online and pumping by May 2017 if everything goes as planned,” he said.

Pipeline construction is underway to bring in for treatment brackish water from the Snake Tank region 15 miles north of the city.

Meanwhile, the city is preparing to begin construction in early 2016 for a family center with bowling alley, arcade and café.

In late 2015, reconstruction of the water system at the municipal golf course was nearing completion. With completion of the project, storage ponds will be reused for irrigation, Straface said. ■

## ELECTED OFFICIALS

### OTERO COUNTY COMMISSION

#### Susan Flores

1101 New York Ave.,  
Alamogordo, NM 88310  
575-437-7427  
sflores@co.otero.nm.us

#### Ronny Rardin

1101 New York Ave., Alamogordo,  
NM 88310  
r.rardin@co.otero.nm.us  
575-0415-7062

#### Janet White

1101 New York Ave.  
Alamogordo, NM 88310  
575-415-7774  
jwhite@co.otero.nm.us

### ALAMORDO CITY COMMISSIONERS

#### Susie Galea, Mayor-at-large

**District 1 (until March 1)**  
P.O. Box 1703  
Alamogordo, NM 88310

575-518-9308

sgalea@ci.alamogordo.nm.us

#### Jason Baldwin

##### District 1

3028 Del Cerro  
Alamogordo, NM 88310  
575-921-1093  
jbaldwin@ci.alamogordo.nm.us

#### Nadia Sikes

##### District 2

400 Cottonwood Drive  
Alamogordo, NM 88310  
575-491-7910  
nsikes@ci.alamogordo.nm.us

#### Robert Rentschler, Mayor pro-tem

##### District 3

1418 Juniper Drive  
Alamogordo, NM 88310  
575-446-9140  
rrentschler@ci.alamogordo.nm.us

#### Jenny Turnbull

##### District 4

1801 Oregon St.,  
Alamogordo, NM 88310  
575-434-5544  
jturnbull@ci.alamogordo.nm.us

#### Alfonso “Al” Hernandez

##### District 5

509 Virginia Ave.,  
Alamogordo, NM 88310  
575-921-3632  
ahernandez@ci.alamogordo.nm.us

#### Cliff Hudson

##### District 6

302 Desert Sun Court,  
Alamogordo, NM 88310  
575-446-9337  
chudson@ci.alamogordo.nm.us

## QUICK FACTS

### PEOPLE

Population: 65,082 (2014)  
Households: 23,907 (2010-14)  
Median household income: \$40,614  
Persons below poverty level: 21.3 percent

### BUSINESS

Total employer establishments: 960 (2013)  
Total employment: 11,709 (2013)

### GEOGRAPHY

Land area (square miles): 6,613.21 (2010)  
Persons per square mile: 9.6 (2010)

Source U.S. Census Bureau, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)



# OTERO COUNTY COMMUNITIES

## ALAMOGORDO

### City

**Population:** 30,403

Mayor: Susie Galea (until March 1, 2016)

The county seat for Otero County, Alamogordo is home to the oldest zoo in the Southwest, Alameda Park Zoo, as well as the New Mexico Museum of Space History and the Clyde W. Tombaugh Planetarium.

## BENT

### Unincorporated community

**Population:** 119

A cross at the top of Round Mountain commemorates an 1868 battle in which soldiers and Tularosa villagers defeated Apache warriors.

## BOLES ACRES

### Census-designated place

**Population:** 2,357

Listed in Sperling's best places to live, Boles Acres has an unemployment rate of 5 percent. The median home price is \$118,700.

## CHAPARRAL

### Unincorporated community

**Population:** 14,631

The population of Chaparral has grown rapidly in recent years. In 2013, the population was 88.3 percent Hispanic.

## CLOUDCROFT

### Village

**Population:** 697

Mayor: Dave Venable

Despite being located in an otherwise arid region, its extremely high elevation (8,600 feet, one of the highest communities in the U.S.) allows for a relatively mild summer that makes Cloudcroft a popular summer as well as winter tourist attraction.

## HIGH ROLLS — MOUNTAIN PARK

### Unincorporated community

**Population:** 834

High Rolls includes a general store, a post office, an elementary school, two churches, and sometimes a bar. It has many local attractions and festivities, as well as a cherry festival and an apple festival.

## HOLLOMAN AIR FORCE BASE

### Census-designated place

**Population:** 3,585

The base was named in honor of Col. George V. Holloman, a pioneer in guided missile research. Its total economic impact is more than \$480 million per year.

## LA LUZ

### Census-designated place

**Population:** 1,697

Founded in 1719, La Luz is the oldest settlement in the Tularosa Basin. It lies in the eastern edge of the Tularosa Basin and on the western flank of the Sacramento Mountains.

## MAYHILL

### Unincorporated community

**Population:** 727

Mayhill is almost entirely residential, with a number of vacation homes as well as farms and ranches. The population density is two people per square mile.

## TOWN OF MESCALERO

### Census-designated place

**Population:** 1,338

Mescalero was originally called Blazer's Mill and was the location of a famous gunfight during the Lincoln County War. The Mescalero Apache Tribe operates tribal enterprises here, including Inn of the Mountain Gods Resort & Casino, Ski Apache, Casino Apache Travel Center, Mescalero Forest Products and Mescalero Cattle Growers.

## NEWMAN

### Unincorporated community

**Population:** Unavailable

Newman was a small railroad town and yard. It was named after Texas real estate developer Henry L.E. Newman.

## OROGRANDE

### Unincorporated community

**Population:** 52

Originally a mining town named Jarilla Junction due to its proximity to the Jarilla Mountains, established in 1905, the town was renamed Orogrande (Spanish for big gold) in 1906. It is a semi-ghost town.

## PIÑON

### Unincorporated community

**Population:** 25

The town is in the piñon-juniper shrublands habitat with an altitude of 6,060 feet. The population remained stable between 2000 and 2010.

## SUNSPOT

### Unincorporated

**Population:** 674

Sunspot is named after the nearby National Solar Observatory on Sacramento Peak, which is open most days from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunspot has no gas station, grocery store or restaurant.

## THREE RIVERS

### Unincorporated community

**Population:** 119

The community is the site of the 50-acre Three Rivers Petroglyph Site, which contains more than 21,000 glyphs dating from 900 to 1400 AD.

## TIMBERON

### Census-designated place

**Population:** 348

Timberon's median household income of \$56,458 in 2008-2012 grew by 130.26 percent since 2000 and is much higher than the state average. Considered a resort and retirement community, it has a golf course, lodge and airstrip.

## TULAROSA

### Village

**Population:** 3,031

Mayor Ray Cordova

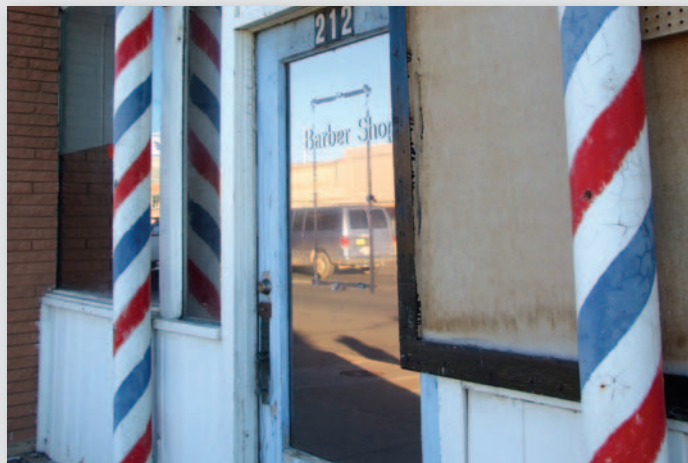
Tularosa, a bedroom community, received its name from the Spanish description of red reeds that line the Rio Tularosa. It is well known for its display of luminarias on Christmas Eve.

## WEED

### Unincorporated community

**Population:** 173

Weed was founded in 1884 by George and Elizabeth Lewis. It was named after William H. Weed, who opened a branch store there.





## EDUCATION

### PUBLIC SCHOOLS

#### Alamogordo Public Schools

1211 Hawaii Ave.  
Alamogordo, NM 88310  
575-812-6000  
[www.aps4kids.org](http://www.aps4kids.org)

#### Cloudcroft Municipal Schools

10 Swallow Place  
Cloudcroft, NM 88317  
P.O. BOX 198  
575-601-4416  
[www.cmsbears.org](http://www.cmsbears.org)

#### Tularosa Public Schools

504 First St.  
Tularosa, NM 88352  
575-585-8800  
[www.tularosa.k12.nm.us](http://www.tularosa.k12.nm.us)

#### NM School for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Address: 1900 North White Sands  
Alamogordo, NM 88310  
Phone: 575-437-3505  
Website: [www.nmsbvi.k12.nm.us](http://www.nmsbvi.k12.nm.us)

### PRIVATE SCHOOLS

#### Father James B. Hay Catholic School

Type: Roman Catholic  
Grades PK-5  
1000 E. Eighth St.  
Alamogordo, NM 88310  
Phone: 575-437-7821  
Website: <http://fjbhcatholic.org>

#### Imago Dei Academy

Type: Classical Christian School  
1100 Michigan Ave.  
Alamogordo, NM 88310  
575-404-1219  
[www.ida-alamo.org](http://www.ida-alamo.org)

#### Legacy Christian Academy

Type: Private, Catholic  
Grades PK-12  
3001 Thunder Road  
Alamogordo, NM 88310  
575-434-0352  
<http://legacychristianacademy-edu.com>

### COMMUNITY COLLEGES

#### New Mexico State University-Alamogordo

NMSU-A, accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, offers freshman- and sophomore-level classes and consists of three divisions: Humanities, Social Sciences & Education; Math, Engineering Science & Health; and Professional Occupations, Technology & Fine Arts.  
2400 North Scenic Drive,  
Alamogordo, NM 88310  
575-439-3600  
[www.nmsua.edu](http://www.nmsua.edu)

#### Park University

Fourth Street, Suite 203  
Holloman AFB  
575-479-2337  
[www.park.edu/campus-centers/new-mexico/nm-alamogordo.html](http://www.park.edu/campus-centers/new-mexico/nm-alamogordo.html)

#### NM State University At Hollman AFB

596 4th St. Suite 249  
Holloman AFB  
575-479-4318  
<http://nmsua.edu/student-services/holloman-afb>

#### Coastline Community College

596 4th St.  
Holloman AFB  
575-479-1045  
<http://military.coastline.edu>

#### Central Texas College

596 4th St. Suite 224  
Holloman AFB  
575-479-4188  
[www.ctcd.edu/locations/other-us-locations/holloma](http://www.ctcd.edu/locations/other-us-locations/holloma)

# NMSU-A opens doors to high school students

BY ALTA LECOMPTE

Whether they live in a remote, rural location or in downtown Alamogordo, Otero County high school students can jump-start their college education taking classes at New Mexico State University-Alamogordo.

In fall 2015, almost 200 students took advantage of the dual enrollment program, said Brenda Campbell, marketing director for NMSU-A.

"Some are working toward an associate degree, while some just want to gain knowledge of what college classes are like and get some credits," she said.

"In spring 2016, we hope to graduate three high school students, two with associate degrees in science and one in paralegal studies."

Students interested in taking college classes meet with an academic adviser at NMSU-A and with dual-credit adviser Elma Hernandez, she said.

Those who enroll have access to NMSU-A tutoring and career center services, Campbell said.

The program can be a huge help to budget-conscious families whose students are preparing for a career, as well as for those who plan to go to a four-year college, taking with them credits they have earned at no cost to the families.

"Some very much want to get an associate's degree and realize it's a lot of work," she said. "They get to do it for free. We pay for tuition and their high schools pay for their books."

Currently participating are students from Alamogordo High School, Academy Del Sol, Tularosa High School, Cloudcroft High School and Mescalero High School.

Campbell said associate of science degrees are most popular among students from Cloudcroft, while most Alamogordo students take general courses such as English, math, psychology and sociology because they want to attend Doña Ana Community College or NMSU upon graduation from high school.

Students interested in preparing for a career right after college can study bio-medical technology, EMS, electronics technology, auto and hybrid technology, graphic design, information technology, occupational business, paralegal or renewable energy systems technology.

Another option for dual-credit students is to take College 101 at their high schools. Topics covered include career exploration, time management, study habits and research. The course is designed to build an understanding of what to expect when students enroll in college.

Hernandez said the course helps younger students make the transition into college, while it also can benefit older students who are returning to the classroom after a period of time away from school.

Campbell said the dual credit program has grown in the past few years, in part because the college has had direct interaction with the high schools.

"Elma is in the schools every month," she said, "and dual-credit nights are held for families. We sit down and help them with their applications."

"It can be daunting when the first child becomes a prospective college student."

As the word gets out that dual credit is an option, inquiries are even coming in from freshmen. If recommended by their high school, they can enroll, she said.

The dual credit program, which began in spring 1997, now offers a number of online classes, which makes earning college credits easier for high schoolers who live in more remote, rural areas of Otero County, Hernandez said.

She said the online curriculum is especially popular with Cloudcroft residents. More than 90 percent take their NMSU-A classes online.

Online classes are \$25 per credit to cover the cost of delivery. ■



# NMSBVI LOOKS TO EXPAND STATEWIDE SERVICES

BY ALTA LECOMPTÉ

The New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, founded in Alamogordo in 1903, is expanding its reach to provide additional services throughout the state.

Since its founding, the school has been addressing the needs of blind and visually impaired New Mexicans.

How it addresses that mission, however, has changed dramatically, especially in the past 10 years.

“One of the things we learned is families don’t like to send their child away when they’re 6 (years old) and leave them until their high school graduation. You don’t get to raise your child that way, and the child doesn’t become a part of the community,” said NMSBVI Superintendent Linda Lyle, who oversees both the Alamogordo and Albuquerque campuses of the publicly funded school.

Students now stay on campus for as little as a week, or as long as two or three years, Lyle said. Those who live on campus for an extended period attend Alamogordo Public Schools.

Many students are on campus for brief stays to learn specific life skills. Their academic work is done in their own communities.

“What we say to the community and the school district is, ‘Let’s develop a plan so the child can become a success in the community,’” Lyle said.

Today, the residential campus is still located on the original site in Alamogordo. A second campus in Albuquerque houses an Early Childhood Program and the school’s statewide services.

NMSBVI’s outreach also includes mentors who work throughout the state and mobile clinics staffed by a doctor who is low-vision specialist.

Among the high points of 2015 for NMSBVI; the school was named the state’s 2015 Top Midsized Workplace.

The Albuquerque Journal selected the state’s top employers based on

the results of employee surveys conducted by the Philadelphia-based WorkplaceDynamics in more than 800 New Mexico companies that were nominated to participate.

In addition to the distinction of being New Mexico’s top mid-sized employer, NMSBVI has much to celebrate in terms of both facilities and programs.

The school’s new Watkins Education Center brings together for the first time under one roof all its education facilities. Within the center is a life skills center, an intensive support center and preschool, elementary and secondary classrooms. Educational facilities in the center include kitchens and laundries, a woodshop and a tech lab. ■

## LEGISLATIVE CONCERNS

- \$900,000 increase in the instructional and general fund appropriation so NMSBVI can offer more low-vision clinics throughout the state in partnership with the medical community
- Add four mentors to work with school districts to develop programs for educating blind and visually impaired students locally and add a low-vision specialist to work with families so students can work efficiently with devices such as computers
- \$150,000 for fuel to fly NMSBVI residential students whose families live in northwest New Mexico home for weekends

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## POISED FOR THE FUTURE

New jail still top priority

BY TODD G. DICKSON

With the potential of new commercial space activity and the reopening of an old mine, Sierra County is looking ahead to better times, but with some basic needs still requiring attention.

In the last 60-day legislative session, county officials had hopes to land funding for a new jail and landfill, among other standard requests for funding of utility upgrades and road improvements.

Sierra County Manager Bruce Swingle said he hopes to see more progress this session, especially on the jail situation. More than a year ago, Swingle and the County Commission made the hard decision to close the county's detention center when its antiquated setup created too many liabilities.

The two-story detention center is now only used for the temporary holding of detainees when they are first booked or awaiting court hearings. Detainees have since been held in Luna County, requiring transport for court proceedings.

Cost of the current situation is about the same as operating a jail, but Swingle said it is inconvenient for detainees to interact with their legal counsels and family. It is not good for the local economy, he believes.

"We don't like the fact of having to lay off our detention employees," he said. "We don't like the fact of tax revenue going out of the county."

The old jail's ill-conceived layout created too many problems, such as detainees getting into conflicts with each other during transfers, to contraband being easily smuggled in since the jail was close to the street, and being able to get into the wiring that opened and closed doors.

The county is asking for \$7.6 million to build a new jail to house the 60 to 70 detainees the county has at any given time.

Swingle said it was difficult to get lawmakers to fund the project and the capital outlay distributed to local legislators isn't enough to pool together for it.

"I just don't know if the political will is there to fund it," Swingle said.

Other major projects Sierra County would like to see funded are \$1.2 million for a new landfill to handle construction debris, \$800,000 for an animal shelter, \$230,000 for new road construction equipment and \$25,000 for a new heating and air conditioning system at the Geronimo Springs Museum.

The City of Truth or Consequences is taking the lead on the animal shelter project. For years, a local veterinarian has taken care of animals that normally would have been handled by an animal shelter.

Because the county can't depend on the state to support all its needs, Swingle said he has been focused on economic development efforts.

Spaceport America opening up its tourism experience has helped, Swingle said. The county is looking at revising its Local Economic Development Act ordinance, he said, to support more of the kind of businesses the spaceport will attract.

With both Elephant Butte Reservoir and the Black Range Mountains attracting outdoor enthusiasts, tourism remains a strong base for the county.

Swingle said a federal grant is helping Sierra, Socorro, Catron and Valencia counties to join forces on economic development efforts.

"Rural areas can't compete with what the big cities can offer, so it's important we work together," he said.

In addition to having similar tourism draws, all of the counties are also trying to maintain their traditional farming and ranching industries, he said. ■



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# SIERRA COUNTY COMMUNITIES

## ARREY

### Census-designated place

**Population:** 232

The community just south of the Caballo Reservoir, Arrey is where farming begins in the Mesilla Valley, producing chile, pecans, onions and other crops. The name Arrey is believed to refer to French settlers in the 1800s.

## CHLORIDE

### Ghost town

**Population:** 11

A mining town known by a couple different names in its early days, the name Chloride — based on the high-grade silver ore found there — stuck and became official in 1881 when a post office was established and remained open until 1956.

## CUCHILLO

### Census-designated place

**Population:** Unavailable

Named for a nearby creek and a local Apache chief, Cuchillo Negro (Black Knife), the Hispanic farming and ranching community flourished from 1880 to 1930 because of its location between silver mines and the railroad in Engle.

## CUTTER

### Census-designated place

**Population:** Unavailable

A railroad station 11 miles south of Engle, Cutter once had more than 3,000 people living there during the mining boom, but now only a railroad sign remains.

## DERRY

### Census-designated place

**Population:** 49

A companion farming community to Arrey, it is the southernmost community in Sierra County with much of its corn and alfalfa grown for dairies.

## ELEPHANT BUTTE

### City

**Population:** 1,390

Supported by the water sports that its namesake reservoir attracts, the City of Elephant Butte's fortune rises and falls with the waters, but "New Mexico's

Diamond in the Desert" has seen its population balloon to 3,000 in summer.

## ENGLE

### Census-designated place

**Population:** Unavailable

Once a cattle town that formed around a rail station, Engle saw its greatest growth during the construction of the Elephant Butte Dam. Today, it serves as a gateway to Ted Turner's Armendaris Ranch and Spaceport America.

## HILLSBORO

### Census-designated place

**Population:** Less than 100

Now a quaint small town, gold and silver mines once made Hillsboro the county seat in 1884 and reached a population of 1,200 by 1907. Glimpses of its colorful past can still be seen, including the former courthouse and jail where a controversial trial was held for the accused killers of Col. Albert Fountain and his 8-year-old son, Henry.

## KINGSTON

### Census-designated place

**Population:** 32

Another town that rose and fell with a nearby silver mine, Kingston was touted as one of the largest and most developed towns in the territory, with Mark Twain among its notable visitors, which also included Butch Cassidy and The Sundance Kid.

## LAKE VALLEY

### Census-designated place

**Population:** 64

The mining town of Lake Valley was founded in 1878 after silver was discovered. Almost overnight, the small frontier town blossomed into a major settlement with a population of 4,000 people. Today, all that remains is a ghost town.

## LAS PLACITAS

### Census-designated place

**Population:** 576

Also called Placitas or Placita, the town reportedly was founded by the Sedillo family in the 1840s, with a schoolhouse, dance hall and the San Lorenzo Catholic Church built in 1916 as its main features.

## MONTICELLO

### Census-designated place

**Population:** 135

At its peak, Monticello had more than 5,000 people living along the banks of the shallow Alamosa River. Founded by ranchers and farmers, it is best known today for its organic farms, including an award-winning balsamic vinegar made here.

## TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES

### City

**Population:** 6,103

Mayor: Sandra Whitehead

The county seat and commercial hub, Truth or Consequences is a city that is constantly trying to reinvent itself. Originally named Hot Springs, the city agreed to change its name in 1950 to that of a popular national radio show that went on to become a popular early television show. An attraction always has been its access to hot springs that are featured in bathhouses and hotels. It is the closest fully developed area to Spaceport America.

## UPHAM

### Unincorporated community

**Population:** Unavailable

More of a cattle unloading stop along the railroad, Upham is best known today as leading visitors to nearby Spaceport America along its unpaved southern route off Interstate 25.

## WILLIAMSBURG

### Village

**Population:** 437

Mayor: Deb Stubblefield

When Hot Springs changed its name in 1950 to Truth or Consequences, a group of residents moved down the road in protest, naming their town after the first mayor, Dr. Thomas Williams. Today, the relationship to T or C is friendlier, with T or C contracted to provide utility service to the village.

## WINSTON

### Census-designated place

**Population:** 59

Some miners found Chloride to be too rowdy, so they moved a couple miles south, forming Winston, named after Frank Winston, a local miner, businessman and legislator.



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## LEGISLATIVE CONCERNS

- \$7.6 million for a new detention center
- \$1.2 million for a new landfill
- \$800,000 for an animal shelter
- \$230,000 for new road construction equipment
- \$25,000 for a new heating and air conditioning system at the Geronimo Springs Museum
- Water and sewer infrastructure
- Storm and surface water control
- Street and road improvements



# Copper Flat Mine one step closer to opening

## EIS process underway

BY TODD G. DICKSON

The reopening of the long-dormant Copper Flat Mine in Sierra County is closer to happening with comments taken this fall on its draft environmental impact statement.

THEMAC Resources Group is confident it has mitigation plans to respond to any concerns raised about bringing the site back into production.

That it was once an operating mine helps, as well as it being located away from populated areas. New Mexico Copper Corp., a subsidiary of Themac, is heading up the company's permitting process and environmental review with state and federal agencies.

The open pit mine could yield up to a billion pounds of copper, 30 million pounds of molybdenum, 430,000 ounces of gold and 9 million ounces of silver during an estimated mine life of 15 to 20 years, according to studies.

THEMAC Resources Group estimates the project will create several

hundred construction jobs and 150 to 200 high-paying permanent positions. Copper Flat is expected to generate annual revenues of \$93 million and company officials have said they will seek to fill at least 85 percent of the permanent jobs with local people.

The Sierra County Commission has passed a resolution in support of Copper Flat.

Copper Flat is found at a 2,200-acre site 20 miles southwest of Truth or Consequences. Built by Quintana Minerals in 1982, the mine was in full production for only about three months before closing when the market price of copper nose-dived.

Demand and prices are better now for copper, as well as gold and silver. Themac Resources Group acquired Copper Flat after Alta Gold went bankrupt in 1999 as it was trying to reopen the mine.

"Alta's exploration, engineering and environmental studies contributed significantly toward the development of the project," THEMAC states on its webpage tracking Copper Flat's progress. "Resource and environmental data were progressed to standards consistent with current regulations. The work carried out in the 1990s further underpins the economic and operational viability of the Copper Flat Project." ■

### QUICK FACTS

#### PEOPLE

Population: 11,325 (2014)  
Households: 8,284 (2014)  
Median household income: \$27,430  
Persons below poverty level: 22.6 percent

#### BUSINESS

Private, nonfarm establishments: 216 (2013)  
Private, nonfarm employment: 2,068 (2013)  
Non-employer establishments: 694 (2013)  
Total number of firms: 832 (2007)

#### GEOGRAPHY

Land area (square miles): 4,178  
Persons per square mile: 2.9 (2010)

Source U.S. Census Bureau, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)



### EDUCATION

#### PUBLIC SCHOOLS

##### Truth or Consequences Municipal Schools

180 N. Date St.  
Truth or Consequences, NM 87901  
575-894-7532  
Superintendent Craig Cummins  
575-894-8166  
[ccummins@torcschools.net](mailto:ccummins@torcschools.net)  
[www.torcschools.net](http://www.torcschools.net)

#### COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES

##### Western New Mexico University Gardner Learning Center

601 Sunset St.  
Truth or Consequences, NM 87901  
575-894-9050

## ELECTED OFFICIALS

#### SIERRA COUNTY COMMISSION

##### Kenneth Lyon, Chair

575-894-6215  
[klyon@sierraco.org](mailto:klyon@sierraco.org)

##### Frances Luna, Vice Chair

575-894-6215  
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##### Sherry Fletcher

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#### TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES CITY COMMISSION

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**Mayor**  
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**Steve Green**  
**Mayor Pro Tem**  
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# Socorro



## SOCORRO CONTINUES TO MAKE STRIDES

Long-running projects coming to completion

BY TODD G. DICKSON AND RICHARD COLTHARP

By the time the 30-day session ends Feb. 18, Socorro County's new \$8.5 million detention center should be taking its first detainees and inmates.

The two aren't directly related, but the county's most critical capital outlay request will be road improvements leading to the new detention facility. Socorro County Manager Delilah Walsh said the county's top legislative priority this session is to secure \$400,000 to make improvements to Grefco and Enterprise roads leading to the new jail.

In addition to improving access to the new detention center, road improvements would also help users and visitors get to the City of Socorro's soccer and rodeo complex, which Mayor Ravi Bhasker said is an ongoing effort. Last session, \$400,000 was approved for development of the rodeo grounds part of the complex, he said, but the state has yet to send the city the paperwork needed to get those funds even as it goes back to the Legislature to ask for another \$400,000.

"With smaller communities such as ours the state seems very slow at getting those monies rolled out," Bhasker said.

The effort to build a new detention facility also has been in the works for several years, Walsh said, and the county takes great pride in finding the funds to build it without raising property or gross receipts taxes (GRT). The county detention center holds about 70 detainees and inmates on average, she said, and operating the detention center eats up a quarter of the county's general fund.

The county's second top legislative priority also is related to the new detention facility. It is asking for \$75,000 to pay for a feasibility and engineering study to determine the best county government uses for the old jail, such as records storage.

Detention facility costs also are key to Socorro County's support of the state Association of Counties priorities, especially to increase

funding in the Detainee Reimbursement Act, Walsh said. In addition to holding people under arrest for new crimes, county detention facilities also often house qualified state inmates such as escaped inmates and parole violators, she said.

"What we are paid for them is grossly underfunded," Walsh said. "It doesn't come close to covering our actual costs."

Jails are a big concern for counties, she said, because they also are on the forefront in dealing with people who get into trouble with the law as a result of an untreated mental condition or illness.

"Jails have become de facto mental health facilities," she said. "This is definitely a statewide problem and we're seeing it in our little jail and that's not right."

Walsh said she is seeing a lot of media attention for lawmakers wanting to stiffen penalties on crimes such as DWI, but she worries there will be far less attention to rehabilitation and prevention. Many of the crime problems in the county are related to substance abuse, she said, and harsher penalties will only serve to put more people in jail.

### LEGISLATIVE CONCERNS

#### County

- \$400,000 for road improvements to new jail
- \$75,000 to study uses for old jail

#### City

- \$400,000 for Rodeo facility
- \$250,000 for sewer system study



“We have found that punishment and incarceration is not working,” Walsh said “We’re not facing the underlying issue of substance abuse.”

Along with crime rates, substance abuse also stresses the health system, especially for children born to addicted parents, she said. This affects everything from the need for more prenatal and neonatal service to services in schools, she said.

Similarly, the city’s second top legislative request will be for \$250,000 to fund a study of the city’s aging sewer system. Bhasker said the city is increasingly finding itself responding to sewer line failures, and a study would give the city guidance to proactively upgrade lines before they break.

Even without increasing the county or city GRT rates, revenues are up slightly. Bhasker said the city has seen a consistent GRT of between 2 and 3 percent, but is concerned about a rise in unemployment.

Through increased government efficiency efforts, Walsh said she was able to improve employee compensation this year, despite working with an essentially flat budget the past five years.

While Socorro has been able to attract some new businesses, it also has seen some closures – most significantly the announced departure of Smith’s Super Market – as well as some layoffs, Bhasker said. On the positive side, he said, the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology has opened its new mineral museum, which offers another

attraction to get people to spend more time in Socorro than just for a food and gas stop off Interstate 25.

Socorro and the county’s higher education institution, New Mexico Institute of Mining (NMT) and Technology, continue to get an economic lift from the university’s first responder training.

“Funded by Homeland Security, thousands of police, fire and emergency managers from all over the country come to Socorro and Playas every year,” said Tom Guengerich, NMT’s public information officer. “They come for weeklong courses, which can be for college credit if they choose. They don’t come every week, but they are here throughout the year.”

The Discovery Channel’s “Mythbusters” TV series returned to NMT to do some more testing for its show.

“They were here this fall,” Guengerich said. “They filmed scenes for their final season, and it’s going to be dramatic.”

New construction at NMT also illustrates a concern Bhasker said the city has been working on for at least five years. The state lacks transparency on what contractors for state-funded projects are actually paying in GRT and whether GRT paid by those contractors are returning to the communities where the work is done.

“We can never get a good answer to that question,” he said. ■

## ELECTED OFFICIALS

### SOCORRO COUNTY COMMISSION

**Pauline Jaramillo, Chair  
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msalas@co.socorro.nm.us

**Manuel Anaya  
District 3**

575-835-0589 x1113  
manaya@co.socorro.nm.us

**Danny Monette  
District 4**

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575-835-1190 (home)  
dannym@co.socorro.nm.us

**Juan Gutierrez  
District 5**

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575-854-2327 (home)

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# NMT seeks funds for tech projects

BY RICHARD COLTHARP

This will be Daniel Lopez's last legislative session as president of New Mexico Tech (NMT).

After 23 years leading the organization, Lopez announced his retirement last year and finalists generated by the national search were expected to be named in January 2016.

There is no slowing down in the homestretch, however, and Lopez has worked with NMT staff in seeking specific funding for the university.

Enrollment at NMT is slightly up over last year. Of the 2,150 students, 1,617 are undergraduate and 533 are grad students.

Legislative requests break down along three primary lines: technology, salaries and capital.

When a university has the word technology in its name, it follows there will be technological needs.

A key request will be for support for the interferometer — essentially a super-telescope — at NMT's Magdalena Ridge Observatory. The facility will be greatly expanded with telescopes thanks to an agreement with the U.S. Air Force. Federal funding has also helped with bricks and mortar. When completed, it will be a research facility unparalleled elsewhere in the world.

In addition, Public Information Officer Tom Guengerich said, the university will seek one-time funding to deal with emerging tech needs. This would include training employees on software, plus procuring software that would enable employees to be more effective in their areas of expertise. There will also be special requests for the Energetic Materials Research and Testing Center, the Petroleum Recovery

Research Center and the Geophysical Research Center.

"It's safe to say salaries for educators in New Mexico are lower than all of the surrounding states," Guengerich said.

There have been no meaningful salary increases the last five years for university employees. In light of insurance increases and other factors, it has really cut into take-home pay, he said, which has created morale problems and made it "more and more difficult to recruit and retain new young faculty members."

"We certainly recognize the limited resources available in the state budget," Guengerich said. "But the state must look at improving compensation for faculty and staff for it to continue to be possible for us to do great research and provide a first-rate education."

It's a common occurrence, Guengerich said, for a talented researcher or educator to interview for a job at NMT, and really want to come, but have to face offers significantly lower than at other institutions. Many who do come leave after two to three years, he said.

The mechanical engineering department at NMT has exploded in the last decade, with a quarter of the school's students working toward that degree. That means Jones Hall, nearly 50 years old, is bursting at the seams. The school will be requesting \$5 million for renovations to bring the building to functionality.

Lopez is long known for his work not only on behalf of NMT, but also on behalf of higher education in general.

"Dr. Lopez is always keeping track of bills that could potentially be harmful to higher education in the state," Guengerich said. "It could be bills that have unfunded mandates or require duplicate reporting, things like that. He'll fight those and support ones beneficial to education." ■

## EDUCATION

### PUBLIC SCHOOLS

#### Socorro Consolidated Schools

700 Franklin St.  
Socorro, NM 87801  
575-835-0300  
[www.socorro.k12.nm.us](http://www.socorro.k12.nm.us)

#### Magdalena Municipal Schools

201 Duggins  
Magdalena, NM 87825  
575-854-2241  
[www.magdalena.k12.nm.us](http://www.magdalena.k12.nm.us)

### PRIVATE SCHOOLS

#### Alamo Navajo Community School

P.O. Box 5907  
Alamo, NM 87225  
575-854-2635  
[www.ansbi.org](http://www.ansbi.org)

### CHARTER SCHOOLS

#### Cottonwood Valley Charter School

201 Neel St.  
Socorro, NM 87825  
575-838-2026  
[www.cottonvalley.org](http://www.cottonvalley.org)

### UNIVERSITIES/COLLEGES

#### New Mexico Tech Institute of Mining and Technology

801 Leroy Place, Socorro, NM 87801  
575-835-5434



## QUICK FACTS

### PEOPLE

Population: 17,310 (2014)  
Households: 7,998 (2014)  
Median household income: \$33,570  
Persons below poverty level: 27.9 percent

### BUSINESS

Total employer establishments: 228 (2013)  
Total employment: 2,940 (2013)

Non-employer establishments: 796 (2013)

### GEOGRAPHY

Land area (square miles): 6,646.68  
Persons per square mile: 2.7 (2010)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau



# Interferometer puts eyes in the mountain

BY RICHARD COLTHARP

Science costs money — especially if you want to be the best in the world.

New Mexico Tech (NMT) recently signed a five-year, \$25 million cooperative agreement with the U.S. Air Force Research Laboratory to support continued development of the interferometer at the Magdalena Ridge Observatory.

“This isn’t the largest award I’ve been associated with at NMT, but it’s the most significant because this will get us to the point where we can do science,” said Van Romero, vice president of research at Tech.

“Telescopes can either make dim things brighter or small things big. This interferometer will be the best in the world at making little things big.”

The interferometer will consist of four separate telescopes. One is already on the grounds in Socorro, and should be installed on the mountain in 2016. The Air Force agreement will enable NMT to acquire the second and the third telescopes.

Romero said the Air Force is interested in developing expertise in ground-based interferometry so that it can later deploy a space-based interferometer for observing satellites and asteroids.

“We will be able to see fine details on far-away objects,” he said.

Romero said that with one telescope, light can be gathered. With two telescopes, scientists can create interference fringes which contain spatial information. Three telescopes add information about orientation. With four telescopes, astronomers will be able to create images and perform leading-edge scientific investigations. The ultimate goal is to have 10 telescopes in the array.

New Mexico Tech has already received \$70 million to develop the interferometer facility, including buildings, piers, delay lines and the fringe tracker. NMT will pursue other funding to further develop the facility.

Magdalena Ridge Observatory program director Ifan Payne said the new round of funding will allow the facility’s interferometer to make significant steps forward. ■



The Magdalena Ridge Optical Interferometer (MROI) is an optical and near infrared interferometer under construction at MRO. This is an artist’s conception of the completed project. When the MROI is completed, it will have ten 1.4 m (55 in) telescopes located on three 340 m (1,120 ft) arms. (Courtesy Image)”

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# SOCORRO COUNTY COMMUNITIES

## ABEYTAS

### Census-designated place

**Population:** 56

This agricultural community is on the western bank of the Rio Grande at the northern end of Socorro County.

## ALAMO

### Census-designated place

**Population:** 1,085

Alamo is the largest community on the Alamo Navajo Indian Reservation.

## BINGHAM

### Census-designated place

**Population:** Unavailable

Halfway between Carrizozo and San Antonio on U.S. Highway 380, Bingham is known for its rock and mineral shop, where visitors can still buy Trinitite, the glass formed at nearby Trinity Site, the location of the first atomic bomb blast.

## CHAMIZAL

### Census-designated place

**Population:** 101

Ten miles north of Socorro lies Chamizal.

## CLAUNCH

### Census-designated place

**Population:** Unavailable

This community, named for the Claunch Cattle Co., in northeast Socorro County, along N.M. Highway 55, sits almost directly in the center of New Mexico.

## ESCONDIDA

### Census-designated place

**Population:** 47

Just south of Escondida, Lake Escondida has fishing, camping and picnic areas, and is an increasingly popular recreation spot.

## LEMITAR

### Census-designated place

**Population:** 330

About seven miles north of Socorro sits this agricultural community. While Hatch remains the Chile Capital of the World, the reputation of Lemitar's chile is green and growing.

## LUIS LOPEZ

### Census-designated place

**Population:** Unavailable

This community, a few miles south of Socorro, is named for Capt. Luis Lopez, who in 1667 was mayor of the Piro Pueblo along the Rio Grande.

## MAGDALENA

### Village

**Population:** 926

Mayor: Diego Montoya  
More accustomed to attention for being the closest community to the Very Large Array, Magdalena made national headlines after the state's severe drought – especially the lack of rain during the spring and summer – which resulted in the town's well running dry. The village re-drilled the well, which did get the water flowing again, but it was pumping only about a quarter of what it previously produced. Mining and a railroad spur brought the village a period of prosperity. The mine was a big producer of silver and zinc. The spur's strategic location made it a destination for cattle drives. Cowboys from all over the Southwest drove cattle to Magdalena to load on the trains, earning Magdalena the nickname "The Trail's End."

## POLVADERA

### Census-designated place

**Population:** Unavailable

A farming community north of Socorro, Polvadera was founded in the 1620s, but abandoned in 1680 after the Pueblo Revolt, when the native people rose up against the Spanish colonists.

## SAN ACACIA

### Census-designated place

**Population:** 44

Fifteen miles north of Socorro, east of Interstate 25 and just west of the Rio Grande lies San Acacia. The San Acacia Butte was a guidepost for traders along El Camino Real.

## SAN ANTONIO

### Census-designated place

**Population:** 165

For a small place, there's a lot going on in San Antonio, which sits just east of Interstate 25

on U.S. Highway 380. In a state that boasts about its green chile cheeseburgers, this tiny burg has a great one. The legendary Owl Bar & Café is on the north side of Highway 380 and the Buckhorn Tavern is on the south. Devotees of each restaurant's burgers will debate the qualities with gusto. To argue one or the other is New Mexico's best is a valid claim. Just don't go on Sunday – both havens are closed.

## SAN ANTONITO

### Census-designated place

**Population:** 94

San Antonito is an agricultural community along state Highway 1.

## SOCORRO

### City

**Population:** 8,906

Mayor: Ravi Bhasker

The county seat of Socorro County is home to the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, better known as New Mexico Tech. The school, with about 2,000 students, has a reputation as one of the best technological schools in the nation, and as an important research center, especially for astronomy. Socorro's location along Interstate 25 echoes back to the 1600s, when the main north-south route was El Camino Real, and Socorro was an important stop along the way. The Piro Indians, who inhabited the area as far back as the 1200s, provided support and sustenance for the colonists of Juan de Oñate, who named the area Socorro, meaning "help" in Spanish. In New Mexico's territorial days, Fort Craig, south of Socorro, became a Civil War outpost and saw the 1862 Battle of Valverde. History remains an attractive part of Socorro's present-day culture, including the San Miguel Mission Church, Socorro's historic plaza and even the Capitol Bar, which was established in 1896.

## VEGUITA

### Census-designated place

**Population:** 232

At the northern tip of Socorro County.



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# STATE CAMPAIGN, ATTRACTIONS GROW TOURISM IN NEW MEXICO



BY MIKE COOK

Las Cruces and southern New Mexico have a lot to offer tourists, and the area is growing as a tourist destination, said New Mexico Department of Tourism (NMDOT) Secretary Rebecca Latham.

"I see the spaceport having visitor potential that impacts the state as a whole," Latham said. "What the spaceport is and what it will be once there is commercial spaceflight really has international appeal and will have a direct impact on the surrounding area and will also bring attention to New Mexico as a whole that no amount of advertising can do."

That's a sentiment echoed by Las Cruces Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) Executive Director Philip San Filippo, who came to Las Cruces three years ago. He accepted the job because of the impact Spaceport America will have on local tourism.

"That, to me, is the new wave," San Filippo said. "And the fact that it's happening here is something that I want to be a part of." It could make Las Cruces "the Silicon Valley of aerospace," San Filippo said.

The spaceport, located 45 miles north of Las Cruces, is the first-ever commercial space launch facility.

"The team at the Las Cruces CVB is really strong," Latham said. "We work so well with Phil and his crew."

The state's newest Tourism Commission member, Belia Alvarez, is from Las Cruces, helping to "keep that connection strong between Santa Fe and the southern region," Latham said. Alvarez is the regional general manager of Hotel Encanto de Las Cruces and Hilton Garden Inn.

Southern New Mexico also has "our cultural heritage that's so very important to the New Mexican tourism product," Latham said, from "hot springs in T or C to dining in Old Mesilla (and being) able to visit little old Hatch, the Napa Valley of Chile — the Chile capital of the world."

She also said area ghost towns are tourist destinations.

"Visitors crave those experiences; the Wild West, what New Mexico used to be," Latham said.

Latham said NMDOT's grant program, including co-op advertising and event sponsorship, has been successful in building tourism in southern New Mexico.

"We've seen some really great results come out of the southern part of the state through our grant programs," she said.

Statewide, Latham said, tourism is booming.

"We're in terrific shape," she said. "Overall, I'm incredibly excited. I feel like this is such a great time to be in tourism. We

see some really exciting private-sector investments in tourism that show a lot of confidence in our industry right now, in Taos, Las Vegas, Old Town (Albuquerque) and investments happening down in the southern part of the state as well. That means the forecast is good."

New Mexico True, the advertising and branding campaign begun by NMDOT in early 2012, is proving extremely successful around the country, Latham said, providing a seven-to-one return on investment.

"People who have an awareness of our advertising or who have been here on vacation have a much higher perception of the state to open a business, go to school, retire," she said.

NMDOT's current budget is \$18.4 million, Latham said. The department has 68.5 full-time employees and generates about \$6.1 billion in visitor spending annually — up from \$5.5 billion in 2011.

"Tourism continues to be a leader in job growth as well, with another 2,200 jobs added in 2014 — an 8.4 percent increase since 2010," according to a July 2015 NMDOT news release.

"We've definitely seen strong increases," Latham said.

About 70 percent of New Mexico tourists — and about 84 percent of tourism spending in New Mexico — come from outside the state, and about 30 percent are New Mexicans visiting and spending in state but away from home.

"More New Mexicans are keeping their vacation dollars here and being inspired to travel in New Mexico," Latham said.

Latham said NMDOT's marketing in Dallas and Houston is producing "huge growth" in tourist visits from Texans.

"We also have regional marketing efforts in Amarillo, Lubbock and the west Texas area," she said. New Mexico is also seeing an increase in visitors from Chicago, Phoenix and Denver.

"We've recently added San Diego as a market," Latham said, adding that the state also has "a great draw from California," especially to Santa Fe and Taos.

In 2015, NMDOT spent \$9.35 million on advertising, a 274 percent increase over 2011's \$2.5 million, she said. Today, advertising accounts for 69 percent of NMDOT's total budget, compared to 27 percent prior to 2010.

"We've been able to put every last penny toward advertising," Latham said.

Gov. Susana Martinez has recommended a budget increase of \$2.3 million for NMDOT in the 2016 legislative session, to increase advertising for the New Mexico True Campaign.

For more information, visit [www.newmexico.org](http://www.newmexico.org). ■



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# NEW MEXICO MAINSTREET PROGRAM IS ALIVE AND GROWING

BY ELVA K. ÖSTERREICH

Since 1985, the New Mexico MainStreet program has been in the business of revitalizing communities through the auspices of the state's Economic Development Department.

The program is a grassroots downtown revitalization project beginning at the national level, said Truth of Consequences MainStreet Executive Director Linda DeMarino. She said it begins with the National Trust for Historic Preservation Main Street America, the New Mexico MainStreet program falls under the state's Department of Economic Development.

Basically, the MainStreet program does not provide funds to communities unless there is capital outlay money available, DeMarino said, but provides technical services in a variety of different areas. The state is able to provide professionals to teach workshops and provide training in the communities as needed.

MainStreet communities are aligned with a four-point approach, she said: design, organization, economic vitality and promotions.

"As a MainStreet program, we develop work plans," DeMarino said. "It's not just painting buildings or just having events, it's more comprehensive than that. We want to be sure that our programs are well rounded and tackling the four points."

The program has quarterly conferences on topics like economic development, promotions, urban planning, design and organization, she said.

New Mexico's MainStreet Executive Director Rich Williams said there are three programs under the state MainStreet umbrella covered by legislative funding.

The operating budget of \$1,415,000 goes to support training, workshops, accreditation with the National Main Street center and the needs of the three programs, he said.

The three provisions are the Arts and Cultural District program, the Frontier Communities Initiative for communities under 7,500 people and the Historic Theaters Initiative, Williams said.

MainStreet is also asking legislators for \$5 million in capital outlay dollars which would be dedicated to public infrastructure.

"Currently there is a backlog of \$45 million just in public infrastructure needs," Williams said. "That includes crumbling streets, sidewalks, lighting, storm drainage and water and gas lines."

Williams said the state's Historic Cultural Act, which provides tax credits to eligible properties for renovation and restoration, hasn't been updated in 30 years.

"Its current threshold of \$25,000 is dramatically ineffective," Williams said. "We are requesting a \$1 million cap."

The updated act would also contain a refundability option for property owners who complete renovation of a cultural property; they can receive check reimbursements rather than tax credits when many small property owners don't have tax burdens, he said.

"If you offer them refundability, then they get refunded for the eligible portion of the cost," Williams said. "The tax credit program has been very underutilized. We have a huge backlog of commercial properties where folks would like to renovate but don't have the means."

Southwestern New Mexico is busy with a number of new MainStreet-affiliated projects, he said. Statewide there are 54 different communities.

Williams said MainStreet is back in Santa Clara; Lordsburg is working on historic district designation; Tularosa, Carrizozo and Alamogordo are working on emerging MainStreet programs; Cloudcroft is becoming a Frontier Community; and Ruidoso is applying as a MainStreet Arts and Cultural District.

Deming, Silver City and Las Cruces have had active MainStreet programs for years.

"The Downtown Las Cruces Partnership is one of the most incredible transformations," Williams said. "That kind of collaboration is critical for doing downtown revitalization."

The MainStreet Historic Theater Initiative provides an investment in rural downtown theaters to help upgrade movie equipment and make infrastructure improvements. As part of this initiative, the Silco Theater in Silver City is reopening. After receiving \$100,000 in support through the MainStreet program, the theater was able to complete renovations started in 2013.

"This project is a way to increase the vitality of downtown," said Silver City MainStreet Director Lucy Whitmarsh. "And it's not just for people to go to the movies. It's a way to get people into the restaurants, galleries and businesses of downtown Silver City."

Through New Mexico MainStreet, technical assistance is offered to affiliated community programs to assess their theaters, develop architectural plans and cost estimates for rehabilitation projects, and advise on operations, business plans, programming and industry contacts.

In addition to the Silco, restoration investments have been made in Clayton's Luna Theater, Clovis' Lyceum Theater, Lovington's Lea Theater and Raton's Shuler Theater through the initiative. ■



## LEGISLATIVE CONCERNS

- Maintain New Mexico MainStreet program support by approving the operating budget of \$1,415,000.
- Capital outlay funding for essential projects is behind by \$45 million. MainStreet is asking for \$5 million in to begin catching up on infrastructure needs.
- The state's Historic Cultural Properties Act is more than 30 years old and needs to be legislatively updated to become a real help (providing tax credits and reimbursements) for the restoration of state cultural properties.

# NEW MEXICO MAINSTREET PROGRAM

### Websites

[www.nmmainstreet.org](http://www.nmmainstreet.org)  
[www.goNM.biz/MainStreet](http://www.goNM.biz/MainStreet)  
[www.offtheroadnm.org](http://www.offtheroadnm.org)

### Economic Development Department

Joseph M. Montoya Building  
 1100 St. Francis Drive  
 Santa Fe, NM 87505-4147  
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 505-827-0300  
 Toll Free: 800-374-3061

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 and Arts & Cultural  
 Districts Coordinator  
 Rich Williams  
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 E-Mail: [rich.williams@state.nm.us](mailto:rich.williams@state.nm.us)

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[wolferdw@yahoo.com](mailto:wolferdw@yahoo.com)

### Downtown Las Cruces Partnership - A MainStreet Project

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### Silver City MainStreet Project

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### MainStreet Truth or Consequences

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Sid Bryan, Board President  
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### Emerging community: Alamogordo MainStreet

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 Cell: 575-430-7896  
[drterrymarquardt@gmail.com](mailto:drterrymarquardt@gmail.com)

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### Silver City Arts and Cultural District

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# SPACEPORT AIMS TO DIVERSIFY, RAMP UP EDUCATIONAL EFFORTS



BY ELVA K. ÖSTERREICH

Exploration. Space. The final frontier.

These words conjure memories and hopes that rouse excitement in many in Sierra and Doña Ana, counties that voted to help fund Spaceport America with gross receipt taxes. Although there have been several setbacks, including the crash of a Virgin Galactic test flight in the Mojave Desert in October 2014 and the SpaceX explosion of its Falcon 9 in June 2015, the New Mexico Spaceport Authority is plowing ahead with a variety of ideas and several new participants.

Spaceport America CEO Christine Anderson said the facility is kicking up its emphasis on STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education. They are targeting all sixth graders in the two counties with the intent to get them involved with some of the activities now available.

“On the STEM front, our goal is to reach every sixth grader in Doña Ana and Sierra Counties through our virtual classroom program,” she said. “We are also reaching out to other school districts in Albuquerque and Gallup and hope one day to go statewide.”

She said that Virgin Unite, a foundation affiliated with Virgin Galactic, is raising money that will help pay for bussing school children out to the spaceport for STEM programs.

Anderson also said there have been a number of events held at the spaceport, and the facility is available for special occasions including weddings and corporate meetings.

Aaron Prescott, director of business development for Spaceport America, spoke at an October 2015 open house event. He said in the past fiscal year, Spaceport America had \$10 million in economic impact just in taxes generated through tourism. In addition spaceport tenants SpaceX and Virgin Galactic bring direct spending in New Mexico.

“We anticipate Spaceport (America) will only continue to have a bigger and bigger impact,” he said. “We are not resting on our laurels. We are trying to branch out, diversifying. In addition to space launches and space launch testing, we are looking at rocket-motor testing.”

Spaceport has brought New Mexico more than \$40 million in earned media, Prescott said. Earned media is a mention in different media like news reports and magazines.

“Because of Spaceport America, a lot more people know we are not part of Mexico,” he said.

Anderson said in June 2015, a grand opening event generated stories in major media outlets like the New York Times travel section, Washington Times, the Huffington Post Travel blog, New York City’s top independent television station, NBCNEWS.com and Channel 1 News.

“We have had many commercial photo shoots, from automotive companies like Land Rover, Ford, General Motors, and Aston Martin to fashion photo shoots with J. Crew and Nike,” Anderson said. “We also have had a motorcycle photo shoot with Kawasaki.”

She said there has been interest from the film industry, and the spaceport had its first movie filming a few weeks ago with more than 400 people on site. Sony Pictures has paid to hold a promotional event at the spaceport for one of their films that was attended by Hollywood and world press.

“These activities not only bring in revenue, but also serve as a tremendous economic stimulus to the surrounding communities in terms of hotels, catering, rental equipment etc. In addition, they provide great media exposure for the spaceport,” she said.

Virgin Galactic is paying \$1.6 million per year for its tenancy in the Gateway to Space building and that amount will dramatically increase once they start full-scale operations at the spaceport, Anderson said.

“We are expecting about \$3 million in overall revenue this year,” she said. “We are expecting about \$200,000 from other aerospace customers (such as the vertical launch companies) this year besides Virgin.”

Several new acquisitions have taken place with X2nSat planning to expand its satellite ground station operations to Spaceport America by 2016. ARCA Aerospace Corp., with new headquarters in Las Cruces has recently announced plans to test both commercial UAV drones and rockets at Spaceport America in 2016. NASA has contracted with UP Aerospace for additional suborbital payload launches which could double the number of NASA launches in 2016.

Spaceport America has also announced the Spaceport America Drone Summit 2016 taking place in March. ■





## SPACEPORT AMERICA QUICK FACTS

- Project budget to date: \$218.5 million
- Jobs created to date: More than 2,000
- Campus size: 18,000 acres
- Spaceway: 12,000 feet long by 200 feet wide
- Tenants: Virgin Galactic, SpaceX
- Other launch customers: UP Aerospace
- Other assets: Spaceport Operation Center, Gateway to Space Terminal Hangar Facility, Spaceport America Experience Gateway Gallery, Gateway to Space Apron and Taxiway, Vertical Launch Facility

Source: New Mexico Spaceport Authority

## LEGISLATIVE CONCERNS

- Spaceport America will be asking for \$2.8 million from the general fund due to Virgin Galactic's continued delays, according to Spaceport Authority Executive Director Christine Anderson.
- Two bills that failed to advance from the Senate Finance Committee in 2015 could be reintroduced. One of them called for Spaceport America to be put up for sale. The other would prohibit the Spaceport Authority from using revenue from the local gross receipts tax left over after making bond payments for operations at the spaceport and prevent the Spaceport Authority from issuing bonds or taking out loans.

## LEARN MORE

**New Mexico Spaceport Authority**  
 Chief Executive Officer, Christine Anderson  
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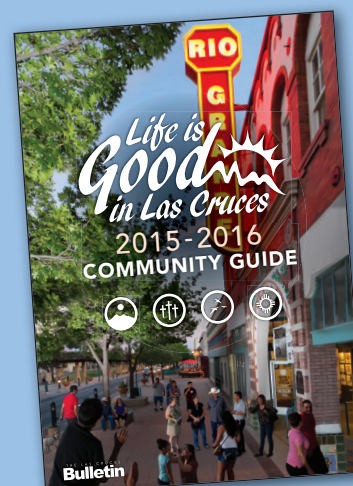
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# LONG-TERM REVENUE QUESTIONS TROUBLE STATE BUDGET WRITERS

BY ALTA LECOMPTE

Amid unusually low wholesale prices for oil, New Mexico legislators are confident the state will have new money to support the anticipated \$6.3 billion fiscal year 2017 budget.

Some, however, express concern about the long-term state revenue picture.

State Sen. John Arthur Smith, chair of the Senate Finance Committee, said December 2015 figures indicated the coffers will get an infusion of \$232 million — a drop from estimates made in August that there would be \$293 million in new dollars.

“I expressed concerns at the time the number would be sustainable,” he said.

Oil prices matter — because about a third of the state’s revenue comes from tax dollars flowing from the petroleum industry.

Smith said a downward trend in oil prices has flattened while production has increased.

“We anticipate as the surplus snowballs, there will be a decline in production,” he said.

The prospect of oil revenue further declining if production wanes could mean less new money for budget writers to work with. The \$232 million forecast gives the House Appropriations Committee a starting point as they begin putting the budget together.

“Last-minute adjustments will be made,” Smith said, adding he would not be surprised to see the new money figure drop to \$150 million.

Jason Harper, chair of the House Ways & Means Committee, also said \$150 million is not out of the question.

Smith said declining oil prices create a whiplash effect. Layoffs occur in the oil fields of southeastern New Mexico, leading to gross receipts tax revenue and income tax revenue getting “softer.”

“We don’t know how to quantify that effect,” he said.

Another factor that is impacting the state’s fuel tax revenue is an increase in the fuel efficiency of vehicles driving New Mexico’s highways and byways.

While the trend toward fuel efficiency may benefit the environment, it also contributes to the state’s revenue challenge.

## WHERE THE MONEY GOES

Smith said public schools get 45 percent of the state’s revenue and higher education gets 15 percent.

“We’re going to hold that line,” he said.

Harper agreed education would continue to be funded at the current percentage.

Another area of concern for legislators is the state’s

CONTINUED ON PAGE 106 >



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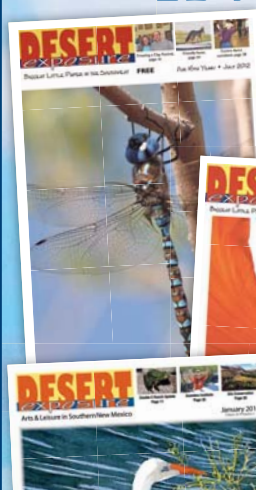
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infrastructure, Smith said.

Noting New Mexico has the nation's highest unemployment rate, he said: "If we want to put people to work quickest, we should have a huge, sustainable infrastructure program."

He said the state instead is paying \$140 to \$150 million a year in debt service — money that needs to be put into road and bridges instead.

"The gas tax in Utah, one of the best managed states, at least in the West, is going up to 29 cents a gallon Jan. 1," he said. "We choose to borrow ... to fund our roads."

The New Mexico gas tax — 17 cents per gallon — has not increased since 1993, Smith said. Meanwhile, inflation has eaten away at every dollar the tax brings in.

"The Legislature is not willing to fess up to that," he said of raising the gas tax.

Smith said, however, there will be some attempts to create new revenue this year for highway maintenance.

Harper said he is empathetic to a gasoline user fee, but in the present political climate there is little chance of that happening.

"I won't support an increase in the gas tax until New Mexico pulls out of recession," he said.

He said he's seeing a lot of support for generating revenue by discontinuing Hold Harmless reimbursements to cities and counties that have enacted GRT increases in preparation for reimbursements going away in future.

"I believe that's double dipping," he said.

Harper said if the Hold Harmless savings were directed into the general fund, receipts from the motor vehicle excise tax could be redirected from the general fund to the road fund, which would give the road fund a \$37 million boost.

Smith had a different suggestion.

"In the long range we have to look at gas tax transactions and taxes on the sale of new vehicles," he said.

He said the longer the issue of revenue is neglected and road maintenance postponed, the less likely there will be any money available for new highway construction.

Meanwhile, Harper said he is working in the House on a proposal to fund several studies to identify a way to reform or replace the state's GRT, which he called a disaster.

He said researchers from New Mexico universities as well as those from an outside firm such as Moody's would contribute to the research.

"If we have three or four good studies, I'm confident we can reset GRT without blowing up the state budget," Harper said. "We want to be careful with taxpayer dollars (spent on the studies), but we want to be sure we do it right," he said.

## WHAT TO EXPECT

Harper said he's hopeful the House and Senate will agree on a bipartisan budget.

The House drafts the first version.

"Usually they do a good enough job; they only have to tweak it," he said.

Meanwhile, the administration puts together its executive requests, which the House and Senate receive around the time the Legislature convenes.

The budget agreed upon by the House and Senate will go to the governor, who can exercise line item veto authority.

Smith said the Legislature is the ultimate appropriations body.

"We propose and she disposes by the last day of the session," he said.

"If (Gov. Susana Martinez) really doesn't like it, she can bring us back for a special session," Harper said, adding that's not likely to happen during a year when all House and Senate seats will be up for election. ■



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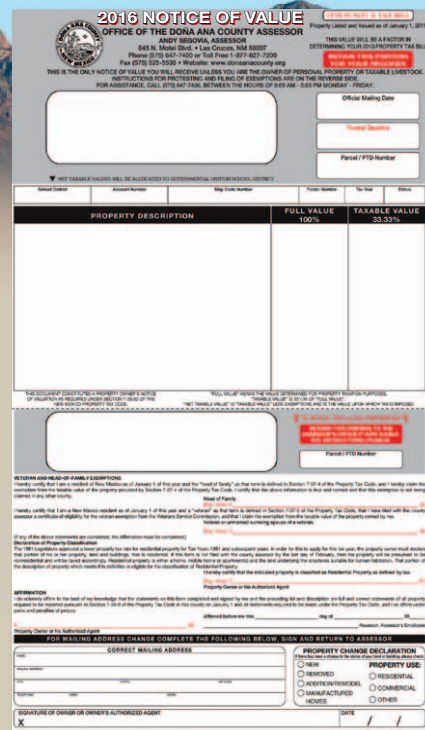
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## 2 TAXPAYER BENEFITS & EXEMPTIONS

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# WATER ISSUES PERSIST IN THE HIGH DESERT

BY MARISSA BOND

Living in the desert not only brings a sharp awareness to how limited a resource water is, but also how vitally necessary for agriculture, industry and residential life.

In 2010, the date of the last available Water Use by Categories Technical Report from the New Mexico State Engineer's Office, the water withdrawals from both groundwater and surface water equaled 3,815,945 acre-feet. Irrigated agriculture accounted for more than 78 percent of the withdrawn acre-feet.

While public water supply and self-supplied domestic wells combined accounted for less than 10 percent of the water withdrawals, a growing population – increasing by 90,826 between 2005 and 2010, almost five percent of the total population – means increasing demands on both drinking water and agricultural needs.

As is always the case between growing need and limited supply, the access to and use of the resource is hotly contested.

## NEIGHBORING CONCERNS

In 2013, Texas first filed a motion to file a complaint, ultimately seeking restitution for what it argues is a violation of the Rio Grande Compact and the Rio Grande Project Act, which apportions water to Rio Grande Project beneficiaries. The petition is still pending in the Supreme Court.

"We compete with all the states around us contentiously, and in the courts, for water resources," District 37 Rep. Terry McMillan said.

McMillan said the likelihood of cooperation or agreement for major projects between states is very small. For that reason, he emphasizes the importance of the work the Water Research Institute produces, particularly in regard to its work developing a more appropriate emergency plan for that circumstance in which Texas calls for more water from New Mexico.

"The current plan would simply go to the bottom of the list and start cutting people off until we have enough water to send down," McMillan said. "We need a better plan ... that shares to a degree or by some means shares the pain with the water users if that situation should arise. That has nothing to do with a long-term solution to our water shortage issues, but it's what could devastate us economically if it's not addressed."

## DIVERTING THE GILA

On Nov. 24, 2014, New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission voted to proceed with a diversion on the Gila River, the last free-flowing river in New Mexico and one of the few remaining undammed rivers in the Southwest.

While some people believe water collected through the diversion would attract businesses to the area, others argue it would not produce enough water to make an appreciable difference, while costing an extravagant amount of money — some estimates are as high as \$1 billion, though some are as low as \$62 million — and damaging the ecosystem in the process.

"We are looking to the future," District 38 Rep. Dianne Hamilton said. "This one big project that Fish and Game has said they are behind to dam some of the water in the area, but you know, environmentalists do not like it. So it's not an easy thing."

The controversy continues. Hamilton said she has lost constituents because she supports the program and many do not.

## WET YEAR

2015 was the fifth wettest year on record — the wettest since 1986, but that doesn't necessarily mean we're out of the drought.

"(The rain is) going to help. The rainfall has been good this year across the state, but what will really help is a good snowpack in the wintertime," said NM Secretary of Agriculture Jeff Witte. "We've got an opportunity because the Earth is not a sponge and if the atmosphere continues to have moisture, you're not going to have the snow packs evaporate as much or soak into the Earth and we'll get some good runoff."

He said watershed and water-utility infrastructure, however, is in need of attention, to ensure that we maximize resources moving forward.

Joseph Cervantes (D-Doña Ana) warns legislators against leaning too much on the wet weather.

"(Taking) the recent wet year as an opportunity to ignore important issues is a big mistake," he said.

For the fifth year in a row, the spring 2015 snowmelt started early and was well below normal, according to the National Weather Service. If global temperatures continue to rise, heavy rains will not be able to compete with the high-evaporation rates in New Mexico. In 2010, evaporation from reservoirs accounted for more than six percent of all water withdrawals — approximately two-thirds as much water as was withdrawn from domestic and public water sources.

## DESALINATION PLANT

Not all news about water is parched lips and territorial grasping at streams in sand.

In 2014, the New Mexico Legislature approved \$4 million in capital outlay funds in order to construct a desalinization plant in Alamogordo, which will use brackish groundwater and treat it to become potable for human consumption. It is expected to be online and pumping by May 2017, according to Alamogordo Interim City Manager George "Ross" Straface.

"What that will do for New Mexico when it is completed is show the viability of being able to treat brackish water and dispose of the byproduct in a cost-efficient manner," District 34 Sen. Ron Griggs said.

"When you look at the drought New Mexico has suffered — if you can supplement fresh water sources with desalinated brackish water you have options that you didn't have before," Griggs said. ■



# INNOVATION IN EDUCATION GETS AHEAD OF POTENTIAL STATEWIDE REFORM

BY JESSICA WHITE-CASON

Although graduation rates dipped for the class of 2014, education in New Mexico has made some gains in a short period of time.

According to one report based on a survey from the National Center for Education Statistics, in 2007 a mere 59 percent of the state's graduating class received a high school diploma in four years. By 2012, just five years later, that rate jumped by 15 points to 74 percent.

Looking to data collected on individual students by the NM Public Education Department, which began its cohort graduation rate method in 2008, New Mexico has still made significant improvements in the four-year graduation rate from 54 percent in 2008 to 69.3 percent in 2014.

Though graduation rates saw a small dip the year following the implementation of New Mexico Common Core Standards, from 67.3 percent in 2010 to 63 percent in 2011, the class of 2012 saw a 70.4 percent graduation rate.

Despite these promising graduation rate successes, New Mexico continually ranks low in national educational achievement reports. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, New Mexico ranked last for fourth-grade reading proficiency in 2015. The state shared the bottom of the list for eighth-grade reading proficiency with two other states, only coming in ahead of the District of Columbia; scores in mathematics weren't much better.

Those kinds of numbers are difficult to ignore, and neither state officials nor New Mexico's school districts are taking the issue lightly.

Gov. Susana Martinez and Secretary of Education Hanna Skandera have long been proponents of ending the practice of social promotion for third-grade students who cannot read at grade level. Last year's House Bill 41 proposed to do just that, but was tabled by the Senate Public Affairs Committee. Sen. Bill Soules, District 37, said he and others believe that the governor is likely to revisit the issue this year.

However, New Mexico's schools aren't waiting for a bill to pass before they take initiative. Michelle Perry, director of elementary schools for the Alamogordo Public Schools, emphasized a need for early intervention and preparation, as early as pre-K.

"We have to do a better job in early intervention," Perry said. "I think that that's echoed across the state, from many leaders."

Las Cruces Public Schools seems to be trying to eliminate the issue altogether with innovative educational programs.

"We began grappling with the question about third-grade retention early on, when that whole discussion came up," said Stan Rounds, LCPS superintendent.

"We wondered, 'what if you could change the discussion from retention because of poor performance to changing your whole education delivery around student development?'" Rounds said.

In fall 2012, LCPS initiated the JUMP (Joint Ungraded Multi-Age Primary) Program. The program was implemented in the seven lowest performing elementary schools in Las Cruces. Within each school, the 40 lowest performing students, predominantly non-readers from kindergarten to second grade were selected for the program.

The idea behind JUMP was to progress students with low reading scores using a non-traditional educational method. Students, ranging from 5 to 8 years old, were put together in the same classroom for grades K-2, effectively giving them the same teacher and classmates for three years.

LCPS is also working to retain students later in their educational careers, with programs for sixth graders through the new Challenger Learning Center of Las Cruces. Students spend half a day fully engaged in various space missions which require communication, teamwork, and science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) skills to complete.

At the high-school level, students are becoming better prepared for graduation as well. LCPS has introduced early-college high schools, where students are earning their high school diploma as well as associate level degrees and certifications.

Silver Consolidated Schools in Silver City is also actively working to maintain students through graduation, offering them alternative programs, finding a place for them.

"We work hard to not expel our kids," Associate Superintendent Tricia Martinez said.

Overall, it seems to be paying off for our education system to practice malleability, Rounds said, "but being planned in that malleability. That is probably the most successful way to go." ■



## GRADUATION RATES BY COUNTY, 2014 FOUR-YEAR COHORT

Catron: 69.9 percent

Doña Ana: 72.37 percent

Grant: 80.64 percent

Hidalgo: 76 percent

Lincoln: 90.62 percent

Luna: 40.45 percent

Otero: 64.24 percent

Sierra: 75.1 percent

Socorro: 71.45 percent

Source: New Mexico Department of Health, Indicator-Based Information System

# PUSH FOR RIGHT-TO-WORK LEGISLATION COULD HAPPEN IN 2016 SESSION

BY MIKE COOK

With one seat in the New Mexico State Senate changing from a Democrat to a Republican after the 2015 session of the New Mexico Legislature, right-to-work supporters may have moved a step closer to passing a bill in the 2016 session.

Right-to-work legislation was introduced in the 2014 New Mexico Legislature for the first time since 1987. It passed the House with all Republicans and one Democrat (State Rep. Dona Irwin, D-Grant, Hidalgo and Luna) supporting it, and all other Democrats voting against it. The bill was tabled in the Senate Public Affairs Committee and never reached the Senate floor.

If Martinez introduces a right-to-work bill in 2016 (the 30-day session is limited to budget matters and bills on the governor's call), and if right-to-work supporters can hold on to their support in the House and pressure a handful of conservative Senate Democrats to support them, they could succeed in making New Mexico the 26th state to adopt right-to-work legislation.

"Obviously, we think it should be on the agenda," said Rio Grande Foundation President Paul Gessing. "Right to work is something we believe can lead to more job creation. New Mexico arguably has the worst economic situation in the country; it is job-challenged. Right-to-work states attract jobs at a higher rate than non-right-to-work states," he said. "We think the economy should be issue 1A" on the governor's call for the 2016 session, he said.

"It's worth having that vote, having that discussion again," Gessing said. "My hunch is the House will pass it again. If that happens, (State Sen.) John Arthur Smith, (D-Doña Ana, Luna, Hidalgo and Sierra) "is going to be under some pressure" to support a right-to-work bill, along with "a handful of other Democrats," he said.

"You look at the polling data ... right-to-work is very popular," Gessing said.

If Martinez makes it a marquee issue in the 2016 session, it could turn the tide, he said.

New Mexico Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO President Jon Hendry also said he expects right-to-work legislation to be introduced in the 2016 session, but he doesn't expect it to fare any better than it did in 2015. Hendry said right to work is "a red herring when it comes to job creation."

There are very few closed shops in New Mexico, he said, so passing a right-to-work law would have little impact in the state. Supporters in New Mexico, he said, are backed by out-of-state interests that want the same law in every state. Such "cookie cutter bills (are) not good for New Mexico," he said. Right-to-work supporters say the issue is about "checking boxes," that corporate recruiters won't bring new businesses to a state that doesn't have right to work, Hendry said.

"They actually look at other incentives," he said.

"I do think it will be introduced again because it is a wedge issue that the governor wants to use because the messages that are used, while factually incorrect and misleading, play well with the public," said Sen. Bill Soules,

D-Doña Ana. "I don't believe it will fare any better. The actual data published in peer-reviewed studies does not support it. It is 'union busting' only and tries to divide legislators. States that have enacted it have not seen gains or economic improvement as the supporters claim. I do not support it," he said.

"In the upcoming 30-day session, the primary job of the Legislature is to pass the state budget," said State Rep. John Zimmerman, R-Doña Ana, Grant and Sierra, a member of the House Appropriations Committee. In addition to "bills related to appropriations and revenue," Zimmerman said he is hopeful the governor "will again include right-to-work legislation" on her call.

"I wholeheartedly supported the legislation last legislative session. I believe that workers should have the freedom to choose whether or not they would like to financially contribute to an organization. Unfortunately, we passed right-to-work legislation out of the House last session on a bipartisan vote, but (it) was tabled in its first Senate committee. At the conclusion of our 60-day session, I sent a survey to the people of House District 39 (which Zimmerman represents) and an overwhelming majority favored right-to-work legislation," he said.

State Rep. Terry McMillan (R-Doña Ana), said right-to-work legislation likely will be introduced again in 2016, and said he "would expect it to fare the same as it did last year. I will support the legislation because I feel it is wrong to require a worker, in the form of mandatory union dues, to make campaign contributions to candidates that he/she may not in fact support," McMillan said. "While it is true that union dues provide financial support for the operations of unions, they also are the source of large campaign contributions to candidates (Democrats) supported by the union."

"I am not sure if the governor will put it (on her call), but I don't think it will do much better in this short session," said State Rep. Andy Nuñez, R-Doña Ana. "If it is (on the agenda), I will support it."

"Yes, unfortunately I believe that right-to-work legislation will again be introduced in the 2016 session," said State Rep. Doreen Gallegos (D-Doña Ana). "It is a wedge issue. We will be in a 30-day session which is meant to deal with budget issues, which are significant for our state. I believe we need to utilize our time looking for solutions that will help New Mexicans, not rehashing legislation that attacks hard-working people."

"Last session, hours and hours were spent listening to very emotional testimony. Hundreds of working-class New Mexicans came to testify on how this legislation would take away their voice and leave them unprotected. I believe that Democrats will stand firm in protecting these fundamental rights. I will be consistent in my voting and I will oppose this legislation. This legislation is an attack on the working men and women of New Mexico. It would hinder workers' rights to band together to advocate for better working conditions. This legislation takes us backwards and I am committed to moving New Mexico forward," she said. ■

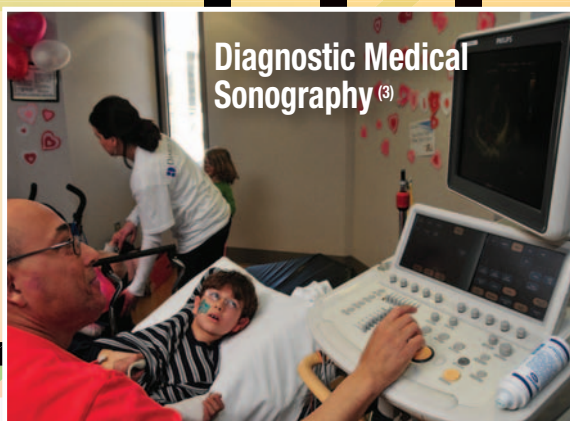
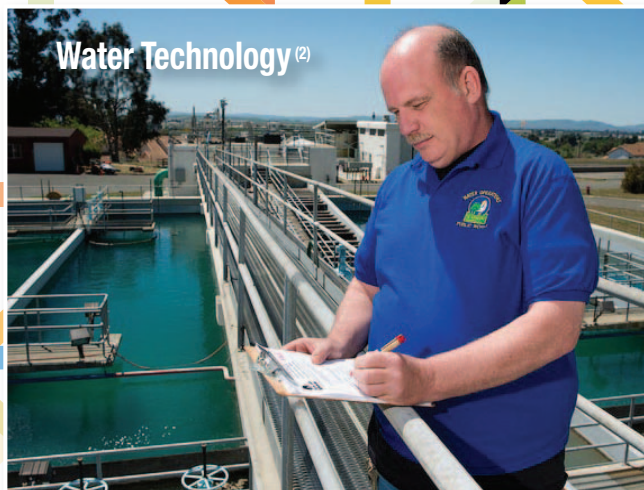




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# COMMUNITY RELATIONS AID AREA MILITARY OPERATIONS

BY JESSICA WHITE-CASON

New Mexico is unique in many ways, but one thing that sets it apart from its neighbors is the distinctive relationship its citizens have with area military bases.

Fort Bliss, located in Texas, includes range space within New Mexico. Two New Mexico bases, Holloman Air Force Base and White Sands Missile Range, along with the Fort Bliss facilities, are located in the southern part of the state.

The ups and downs of each of these installations have a direct economic impact on the surrounding communities. Likewise, the support and involvement of the communities that host these installations has a significant impact on their ability to carry out their respective missions.

During the Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce Military Update Luncheon, held December 2015, representatives from each of the three installations took the time to discuss issues such as budget, base operations, growth, and impact on local communities and their economies.

Most military installations are feeling the pressure of budget constraints brought about by sequestration, and those in southern New Mexico are no exception. When asked how WSMR was faring under these limitations, Brigadier General Timothy R. Coffin, Commanding General of WSMR said that infrastructure has unfortunately fallen to the bottom of the pile in recent years, but that it wasn't without reason.

"We're not in a good situation, or good shape, but we're coming off a decade of war," Coffin said. "We mortgaged the things that we would normally need for the future, in order to engage in those combat operations."

Funds that would normally go to infrastructure, Coffin explained, were redirected to provide military personnel fighting overseas with the most up-to-date technology for engaging in combat. He calls the money spent an investment to provide for the safety and well-being of our women and men on the front lines, an investment to help bring them home.

The deficit with which they are left is not so easily replaced. Coffin said New Mexico's representatives are taking notice, and they are working on these issues. In the meantime, individual installations are continuing to make

their choices and the issues clear while pursuing their missions.

For HAFB, that mission has seen some changes in the past few years. In spring 2014, the F-22 Raptors were transferred to Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida, and Holloman acquired the 54th Fighter Group, which trains F-16 Falcon pilots and aircrew. Commander of the 49th Mission Support Group Colonel R. Greg Brown said there's more flying and more activity with the F-16 than there was with the more labor-intensive F-22. He also confirmed suspicions that more F-16 Falcons would be coming to Holloman in support of its training mission.

"Holloman has lots of opportunity for growth," Brown said. "We've got nothing but space; we've got ramp space, lots of capacity. We don't want to lose student production." He said it would only be logical to bring the F-16s to Holloman and political to take them anywhere else.

Along with Holloman's F-16 pilot and aircrew training mission, the installation's central focus is training pilots for the MQ-1 Predator and the MQ-9 Reaper Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV). Its goal is to increase aircrews by 60 percent in 2016, equating to 900 students per year. It also plans to bring in 100 more pilots and approximately 75 contractors to take over maintenance on the MQ-1, in order to shift their focus to training crews for the MQ-9. Brown called the UAV mission a growth area, and growth for Holloman invariably means growth for nearby communities.

Speakers at the luncheon also took the time to give their thanks for the support of the surrounding communities.

"People around here have an attitude toward the military not all bases enjoy," Coffin said.

The thoughts, support and partnerships of a military installation's nearby civilian communities are often taken into consideration when the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission is considering closing an installation, he said.

Brigadier General Jeffery Broadwater, deputy commanding general support 1st Armored Division at Fort Bliss, said area military installations are fortunate for the great support from surrounding communities. To continue that great support going forward, Broadwater reminded area businesses not to "overlook the unique capability that our men and women, who have served our country, can provide." ■



## Growing the next generation of New Mexico's farmers and ranchers

That's the purpose of the **AgriFuture Educational Institute** hosted **this May** by New Mexico Department of Agriculture and the state's agricultural community.

Stay tuned for event updates and sponsorship opportunities at [www.nmda.nmsu.edu](http://www.nmda.nmsu.edu).





## MILITARY BASES AT A GLANCE

### HOLLOMAN AFB

**Branch:** Air Force

Established in 1942 as Alamogordo Army Airfield

**Land Area:** 59,639 acres

**Commander:** Colonel Robert E. Kiebler,  
Commander of the 49th Wing

**Website:** [www.holloman.af.mil](http://www.holloman.af.mil)

**Mission/Vision:** The 49th Wing — host wing at Holloman Air Force Base — supports national security objectives by deploying worldwide to support peacetime and wartime contingencies. The wing provides combat-ready airmen and trains MQ-1 Predator and MQ-9 Reaper pilots and sensor operators. Additionally, the wing delivers Air Transportable Clinics and Basic Expeditionary Airfield Resources while providing support to more than 17,000 military and civilian personnel to include German Air Force Flying Training Center operations. The wing has a proud history of service in World War II, Korea, Southeast Asia, Southwest Asia and NATO-led Operation Allied Forces.

### WHITE SANDS MISSILE RANGE

**Branch:** Army

Established in 1945

**Land Area:** 3,200 sq miles, spanning five counties.  
Largest military installation in the U.S.

**Commander:** Brigadier General, Timothy  
R. Coffin, Commanding General

**Website:** [www.wsmr.army.mil](http://www.wsmr.army.mil)

**Mission:** White Sands Missile Range provides Army, Navy, Air Force, Department of Defense and other customers with high quality services for experimentation,

test, research, assessment, development, and training in support of the nation at war.

**Vision:** Be the premier open air test range, for U.S. and allied customers, delivering superior testing, evaluation, research, exercises, training, innovative products and venues through a highly skilled and adaptive workforce. Always the best value; focusing on affordability and stewardship of resources, providing results that consistently exceed customer expectations while providing a high quality of life for our service members, civilians, and families.

### FORT BLISS

**Branch:** Army

Established as Military Post of El Paso in 1848. The post's first troops arrived in 1849. In 1853 the installation relocated and it was officially renamed Fort Bliss in 1854.

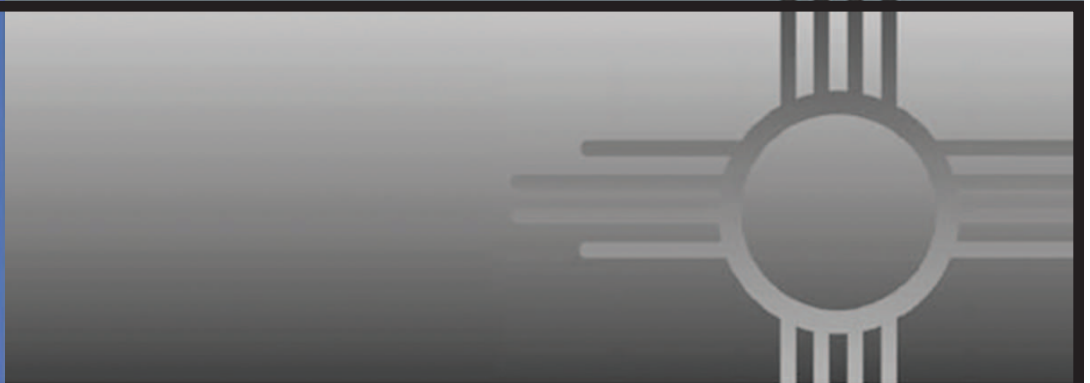
**Land Area:** 1,700 sq miles. The Army's second largest installation.

**Commander:** Major General Stephen M.  
Twitty, Commanding General

**Website:** [www.bliss.army.mil](http://www.bliss.army.mil)

**Mission:** To fulfill the Army's obligation to keep the American people and the Army informed, and help to establish the conditions that lead to confidence in America's Army and its readiness to conduct operations in peacetime, conflict, and war.

**Vision:** An innovative leader in communicating to all audiences, the installation and the senior leadership's strong commitment to soldiers and families; to refocus on transformation, warrior ethos and in all tasks reflect the seriousness and sense of urgency of an Army at war.



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# TAXES INCREASE AHEAD OF HOLD HARMLESS REPEAL

BY JESSICA WHITE-CASON

Has your wallet been feeling a little bit lighter since July 2015? Maybe your friend from the county or city next door has been feeling that lightening a bit longer? Over the past two years, cities and counties throughout New Mexico have been increasing their taxes, and many residents don't know why.

In 2004, under the administration of former Gov. Bill Richardson, the New Mexico Legislature exempted food and some medical services from gross receipts tax, known as GRT or sales tax. The repeal took effect Jan. 1, 2005, and simultaneously reduced the cost of groceries, allowed low-income consumers to retain some of their limited earnings and reduced GRT income for local governments.

A "hold harmless" provision was put in place, reimbursing counties and municipalities and holding them "harmless" for the lost GRT revenue. Since 2005, the state has paid out reimbursements from the General Fund to support local budgets.

During the final hours of the 2013 legislative session, the state senate passed House Bill 641, which included an item to phase out the hold harmless compensations over a 15-year period. The phase out began on July 1, 2015, and is set to reduce by 1/15th each year through 2030 when the state will no longer provide any reimbursement to local governments for the loss of GRT on food and medicine.

To balance the loss of hold harmless provisions, the state legislature allowed counties and municipalities to enact upwards of 3/8th of one percent GRT increase, and the decision to do so could be determined by ordinance, rather than by a vote.

In the months following the senate decision, many local governments throughout the state expected the loss of hold harmless to be overwhelming, and some set about advocating for the full to partial reinstatement of the food and medicine GRT. Many others went to work implementing part or all of their allowed 3/8th of one percent GRT increase.

Before the 2014 legislative session, both Las Cruces and

Otero County had passed tax increases under the authority of the 2013 hold harmless decision. Prior to July 1, 2015, which marked the start of the hold harmless phase out, many other counties in southern New Mexico followed suit, including Grant County in July 2014, Sierra County in December 2014, Luna County in February 2015, and Doña Ana County in March 2015.

This could be interpreted as a natural reaction to concern over being left with a severe deficit in local government coffers, but according to Russell Allen, chair for the Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, these governments are now double dipping, and even without any hold harmless compensations, they probably aren't in as bad a position as you might think.

Because local governments are still receiving a portion of hold harmless compensations for the next 15 years, and have also increased the GRT, places like Las Cruces and Doña Ana County are getting double revenues, Allen said.

Allen also pointed out the "county was only receiving \$2 million per year from hold harmless, and now they're generating \$12 million from tax revenue per year," he said.

He believes a big part of the problem was the state didn't set a firm timetable for how much and when local governments could implement their increases.

Some counties have even enacted the full 3/8th of a percent GRT increase, though they were not necessarily subject to the hold harmless repeal because of their size.

"Based on our size, we were not subject to the repeal; however, we implemented the hold harmless tax, the full 3/8th," Luna County Manager Charles Jackson said.

Jackson explained in his reading of the law, the county's choice to enact the hold harmless GRT increases now makes them subject to the repeal.

"I've been told that that was not what the act was intended to do, and that's not what it will do, but we are subject to that repeal, the way I read the act," Jackson said. "I'm not sure if anyone fully understands what that law means and what it doesn't mean." ■

## HOLD HARMLESS TIMELINE

**2004:** New Mexico State Legislature passes law to repeal Gross Receipts Tax on food, medicine, and some medical services.

**Jan. 1, 2005:** Food is officially exempt from taxation in the state of New Mexico. State provides hold-harmless subsidies to local governments to replace lost revenue.

**2013:** State senate passes House Bill 641, with provision to phase out hold harmless compensation over 15-year period. Local governments given authority to increase GRT to counteract revenue losses.

**January 2015:** Senate Bill 274 introduced to impose the food tax again. Bill stopped before it reaches senate floor.

**July 2015:** Hold harmless phase out takes effect.





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# ALTERNATIVE ENERGY FACES HURDLES IN NEW MEXICO

BY ZAK HANSEN

With plenty of wide-open space, nearly 300 days of sunshine per year and, in the spring and fall months, more than enough wind, New Mexico has the resources, the technology, the drive and the potential to make the leap into the 21st century when it comes to alternative, clean energy.

But the growth of these industries has a few major hurdles to overcome.

In 2004, then-Gov. Bill Richardson signed into law the Renewable Energy Act, which created a renewable portfolio standard for New Mexico — the law required a certain percentage of the state's energy come from clean energy sources, increasing incrementally over time to 20 percent by 2020.

These clean energy sources, most of which are already up and running in some capacity in-state, include solar and solar PV, biomass and biodiesel facilities, wind, hydroelectric, geothermal and even algae, yes, algae, ready to tap to help power the Land of Enchantment.

First, though, came the question of what to do with all that would-be energy, with many comparing New Mexico's alternative-energy market to a bountiful farm without a road to market. Then came the lengthy fight over the controversial "farm-to-market road" of the SunZia Transmission Project: a 515-mile, extra-high-voltage transmission line to transmit 3,000-megawatts of renewable energy from Arizona and New Mexico to markets across the Southwest.

Much of the fight came over the line's placement, cutting across White Sands Missile Range and sparking concerns about the long-term effects on the range's airspace and testing abilities. Bypass routes were suggested and studied and reviews were requested; as the dust settles, it seems SunZia will go forward as planned, with an estimated construction start-date of 2018, to be completed by 2020, though permitting and land-use agreements still stand in the way.

Of all alternative energy sources, solar has enjoyed the most success in southern New Mexico. Its abundant, year-round sunshine was augmented by a series of tax incentives offered by the state, beginning with the 2009 Renewable Energy Certificate Program, which pays solar owners a now-shrinking dividend for every kilowatt hour produced by installed solar and solar photovoltaic systems, and the New Mexico Market Development Solar Tax Credit, or STC, which pays 10 percent up to \$9,000 of solar PV systems operational after January 2009.

In Luna County sits Macho Springs Solar facility, a 50-megawatt PV system and the largest solar project in New Mexico. Operational since 2014, the facility will generate enough clean energy to power more than 19,500 average homes.

The project will displace more than 40,000 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>, the equivalent of taking 7,500 cars off the road,

and will displace more than 340,000 metric tons of water consumption annually in southern New Mexico and west Texas.

Meanwhile, White Sands Missile Range three years ago dedicated a 4-megawatt system to generate 10 million kilowatt hours of clean energy each year, saving WSMR an annual \$930,000.

In 2013, the Alamogordo City Commission supported the construction of the 20-mw Black Bear Biomass facility, which will be located on roughly 80 acres of Holloman Air Force Base and feed power to the El Paso Electric Co. grid. The facility is to convert forest trimmings and other green waste from the Lincoln National Forest and surrounding area into clean energy.

One of southern New Mexico's most exciting alternative energy industries is blooming in Columbus, just miles north of the national border, where Sapphire Energy, an algae-based green crude producer, has constructed a large-scale 100-acre "farm" of cultivation and harvesting systems and the first commercial, demonstration-scale algae conversion farm. However, demand for algae oil has decreased due to low oil prices.

Created with private investment along with a \$50 million grant from the Department of Energy and a \$54.4 million loan guarantee from the Department of Agriculture, the facility uses a feedstock of CO<sub>2</sub>, algae, sunlight and non-potable water to create crude oil.

In 2013, largely spurred by Sapphire's successes, it was announced by the Department of Agriculture \$181 million would be made available for the development of commercial-scale biorefineries in the state to move the industry forward.

With all this potential, what's holding New Mexico back? One issue is availability.

Subsidies and tax incentives are great for those who can afford the up-front cost of installing a personal solar PV system, but what about those who simply don't have the means? Many in the legislature, often on the right side of the aisle, say too that these subsidies are not helping, but hurting, New Mexico industries, claiming producers need to do without government aid to become viable.

Others, though, have pointed to the legislature and government itself as clean energy's biggest obstacle, especially a controversial 2013 ruling by the state Public Regulation Committee that allows utilities to use less solar energy in their overall portfolios, especially given New Mexico's budgetary reliance — around 30 percent — on gas and oil monies.

A rule was passed establishing how much clean energy — wind, solar and beyond — can be added to keep companies in compliance with the state portfolio standard.

Certificates are provided to utilities, which in turn use these certificates to prove to regulators they're meeting requirements. ■





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- Dustin Chavez, ASNMSU President and Albuquerque native  
Double major in Accounting and Finance  
Class of 2016



# Committed: MountainView Regional plans growth, improved access to care in Las Cruces



Denten Park, CEO  
MountainView  
Regional Medical Center

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In 2015, we:

- **Expanded local access to specialty care by recruiting new physicians**, including a neurosurgeon, orthopedic surgeon, OB/GYN, sleep medicine specialist/pulmonologist, family practice physician, two pediatricians and two gastroenterologists.

- **Began work on a significant emergency department (ER) expansion** to double its size. Over the past five years, our talented physicians, nurses and staff have earned a reputation for quality emergency care that has led to more than 40% growth in the number of patients who choose our ER.
- **Announced the 2016 development of New Mexico's first freestanding emergency department** that will expand access to emergency care beyond the hospital. Located on Main Street, this facility will function just like the ER here at MountainView.
- **Expanded access to primary care with a second urgent care location.** MountainView Urgent Care at Northrise is now open across the street from the new Walmart on Northrise Drive. With on-site X-rays and lab work, our urgent care site handles treatment for everything from the flu to stitches to broken bones.

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Best regards,  
Denten Park, Chief Executive Officer



Artist's conception of a planned, freestanding emergency room, which MountainView Regional Medical Center plans to open on Main Street in Las Cruces