



SOUTHWEST NEW MEXICO

2019 LEGISLATIVE GUIDE

CATRON | DOÑA ANA | GRANT
HIDALGO | LINCOLN | LUNA
OTERO | SIERRA | SOCORRO

SENATE ROSTER
PAGE 21

**REPRESENTATIVE
ROSTER**
PAGE 35

**COUNTY
PROFILES**
PAGE 53



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mmclc.org

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Díí baa akó nínizin: Díí saad bee yánilti'go Diné Bizaad, saad bee áká'anída'áwo'déé', t'áá jilk'eh, éi ná hóló, kojí' hódílnih áqéíqéaaqíqéá.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Publisher's Note	5
About the Legislature.....	6
Hints for your visit	6
How to pass a bill	8
State cabinets and departments	10-11
U.S. Senators and Representatives	14
Education likely to top 2019 legislative session.....	15

IN THE STATE

Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham	17
Lt. Gov. Howie Morales	18
Secretary of State Maggie Toulouse Oliver.....	19
Attorney General Hector Balderas.....	20
Secretary of Agriculture Jeff Witte.....	95

IN THE SENATE

State senators	21-22
Senator numerical list.....	23
Southwest New Mexico Senate district map.....	23
Sen. Clemente Sanchez, District 30	25
Sen. Joseph Cervantes, District 31.....	26
Sen. Cliff Pirtle, District 32.....	27
Sen. William Burt, District 33	28
Sen. Ron Griggs, District 34.....	29
Sen. John Arthur Smith, District 35	30
Sen. Jeff Steinborn, District 36	31
Sen. Bill Soules, District 37.....	32
Sen. Mary Kay Papen, District 38.....	33
Sen. Elizabeth Stefanics, District 39	34

IN THE HOUSE

State representatives.....	35-36
Representative numerical list.....	37
Southwest New Mexico House district map	37
Rep. Candie Sweetser, District 32	38

Rep. Micaela Lara Cadena, District 33	39
Rep. Raymundo Lara, District 34	40
Rep. Angelica Rubio, District 35.....	41
Rep. Nathan Small, District 36.....	42
Rep. Joanne Ferrary, District 37.....	43
Rep. Rebecca Dow, District 38.....	44
Rep. Rodolpho "Rudy" Martinez, District 39	45
Rep. Gail Armstrong, District 49.....	46
Rep. Rachel Black, District 51	47
Rep. Doreen Gallegos, District 52.....	48
Rep. Willie Madrid, District 53.....	49
Rep. James Townsend, District 54.....	50
Rep. Zachary Cook, District 56	51
Rep. Gregory Nibert, District 59.....	52

IN THE COUNTIES

Catron County.....	53
Doña Ana County	56
South Doña Ana County	69
Grant County.....	73
Hidalgo County.....	75
Lincoln County	77
Luna County	80
Otero County	82
Sierra County	85
Socorro County.....	88

A CLOSER LOOK

WSMR testing essential for new technologies.....	92
Space exploration is a joint effort	93
National Monument improvements.....	94
Hemp touted as lucrative industry	96
Education and the budget.....	97
Advertiser index.....	98

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Las Cruces Bulletin

Cautious optimism surrounds session



I grew up in Oklahoma.

In the early 1980s, the bottom fell out of the state's oil market, recession hit and oil-field workers fell on hard times. On pickup trucks, you often saw this bumper sticker: "Dear God, please let there be another oil boom, and I promise not to piss it all away this time."

Well, New Mexico finds itself in the midst of a vibrant oil boom, which will lead to an extra-vibrant state revenue increase for 2019, some say as much as \$2 billion extra.

Many state legislators, though, understand the boom-and-bust nature of the oil and gas industry, and are advising caution regarding the extra funds.

Besides, many legislators say, we're behind on important infrastructure efforts after revenues were soft most of the last several years. In addition, we've actually pulled money out of other important efforts just to keep the state going.

In addition to infrastructure, the biggest issue we're hearing about from legislators is education. Our schools have seen budgets cut and programs decimated as dollars have been stretched to the breaking point.

Everyone wants to fix our roads, build new bridges, pay teachers more, improve schools and pay back those entities we've pulled funds from.

There might even be enough extra money to do much of that.

Everyone wants to do a bunch of new stuff, too. Every one of our 112 citizen legislators would love to be able to come home to constituents and say, "Look what I was able to do for you."

For the first time since the Bill Richardson administration ended eight years ago, our governor and both houses of the legislature are led by the same party. That means if they want something to happen, it can readily pass.

There are many moving parts. And the directions in which those parts move can be very unpredictable.

It's a recipe for, potentially, one of the most interesting sessions we've seen in a long time. A lot can happen in 60 days.

If the results are bumper-sticker-worthy, here's hoping it's a happy message.

RICHARD COLTHARP

Publisher, Las Cruces Bulletin



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About the New Mexico Legislature

The New Mexico Legislature is the legislative branch of the state government and consists of the New Mexico House of Representatives and the New Mexico Senate.

The House of Representatives has 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, unlike every state. 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, by a legislative committee assigned by the governor.

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 for regular sessions the third Tuesday in January. During even-numbered years the legislature meets for 30 days and primarily focuses on the state's budget, while during odd-numbered years, it meets for 60 days.

The lieutenant governor presides over the Senate, and the speaker of the House is elected from the House of Representatives to oversee the House.

Only the governor may call special sessions, unlike other states where the legislature may call itself into session.

Between regular sessions, legislators serve

on interim committees that study a variety of issues.

For information on the New Mexico Legislature, visit nmlegis.gov/lcs.



Helpful hints for your visit to New Mexico's state capitol

HISTORY

The New Mexico State Capitol, known as the Roundhouse, 490 Old Santa Fe Trail, Santa Fe, opened in 1966, equivalent to about \$30.2 million in today's dollars. The building occupies 232,346 square feet and was built at a cost of more than \$4 million. Its unique shape was designed to resemble the traditional Zia symbol when viewed from above.

There are four levels, each of which can be accessed by the elevators in the east and west lobbies or by the adjacent stairways.

The first floor is below ground. This is where the Senate and House chambers are located, as well as leadership and staff offices, including the mailroom.

The second floor is at ground level and is accessed through the main entrances and includes the public access to the House and Senate galleries, and some legislative offices.

The third floor contains more legislative offices as well as committee offices and meeting rooms.

The fourth floor is where the offices of the governor and lieutenant governor are located, both of which are accessible to the public.

The North Capitol Annex has additional legislator offices and the offices for the secretary of state.

The rotunda is in the center of the main Capitol building, rising three stories from the New Mexico travertine marble floor, embedded with

a turquoise and brass state seal, up to a ceiling skylight of stained glass that is patterned after an American Indian basket weave that symbolizes sky and earth.

CAPITOL ART FOUNDATION

Established in 1991, the Capitol Art Foundation features contemporary pieces by a variety of artists who live and work in New Mexico. Artworks from up to 600 artists can be found among the four floors and along the walkway connecting the main Capitol building with the North Annex.

PARKING

An open visitors lot is available for early arrivals across the street (Old Santa Fe Trail) east of the capitol. This lot is usually filled by 9 a.m. when the legislature is in session. There is also a parking garage just west of the capitol building. Approximately 300 free parking spaces are available to the public on a first-come, first-served basis. Free parking is available Monday through Friday at 420 Galisteo St.

BUS SERVICE

For visitors who want to avoid the challenge of parking near the capitol, the state Department of Transportation runs free shuttle buses to and from the capitol along three routes throughout Santa Fe.

VISITOR GUIDELINES

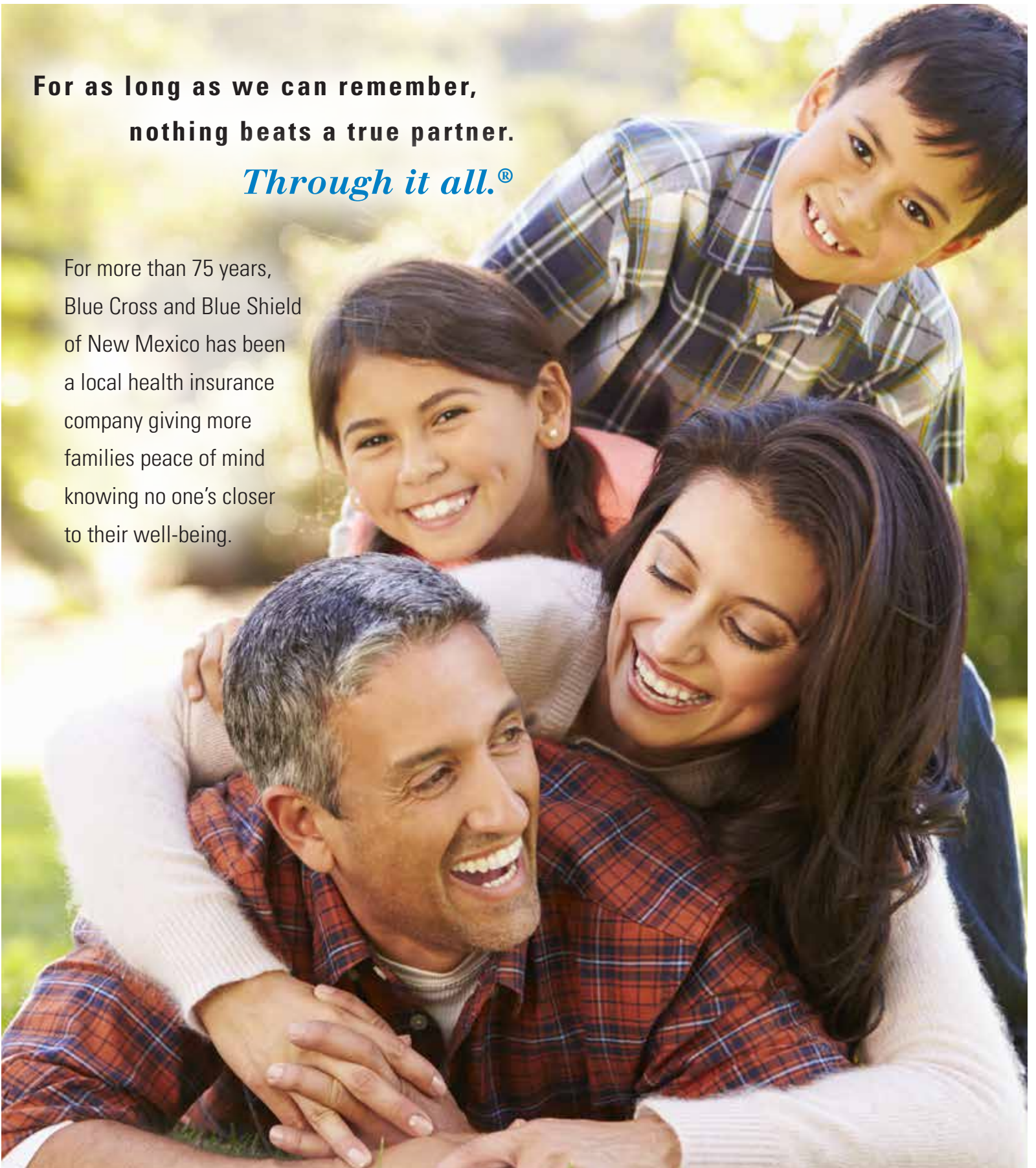
1. Observe decorum. Visitors are advised not to applaud or jeer during the proceedings.
2. Daily agenda and office locations can be found on tables in the east lobby at the ground level.
3. Be patient. Expect meetings to begin later than scheduled times.
4. Schedule an appointment with your legislator ahead of time by either calling or visiting the legislator's office to set up a time through administrative staff. Legislative switchboard: 505-986-4300.



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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 a 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?

The bill is sent to the other house and repeats much of the procedure outlined above. 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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OFFICE OF AFRICAN AMERICAN AFFAIRS

Executive Director: William Scott Carreathers
 505-222-9405, www.oaaa.state.nm.us
 310 San Pedro, Suite 230, Albuquerque, NM 87108
 Sets out to positively affect the perception, education, health and development of African-Americans in New Mexico.

AGING AND LONG-TERM SERVICES

Secretary: Alice Liu McCoy
 505-476-4799, www.nmaging.state.nm.us
 2550 Cerrillos Road, Santa Fe, NM 87505
 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, www.nmda.nmsu.edu
 3190 S. Espina St., Las Cruces, NM 88003
 Ensures a safe and secure food supply and a uniform and fair marketplace, protects natural resources and the environment and supports trade.

CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES DEPARTMENT

Secretary: Waiting for appointment
 505-827-7606, www.cyfd.org
 Provides an array of prevention, intervention, rehabilitative and after-care services to New Mexico children and their families.

CORRECTIONS DEPARTMENT

Secretary: Waiting for appointment
 505-827-8645, www.cd.nm.gov
 4337 NM 14, Santa Fe, NM 87508
 Oversees the incarceration of inmates in six state-owned and operated prisons and five private facilities. It also monitors parole and probation, and assists in an offender's release into society.

CULTURAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

Secretary: Debra Garcia y Griego
 505-827-6364, newmexicoculture.org
 Bataan Memorial Building, 407 Galisteo St., Suite 260, Santa Fe, NM 87501
 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: Alicia Keyes
 505-827-0300, www.gonm.biz
 Joseph M. Montoya Building, 1100 S. St. Francis Drive, Santa Fe, NM 87505
 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: Sarah Cottrell Propst
 505-476-3200, www.emnrd.state.nm.us
 1220 S. St. Francis Drive, Santa Fe, NM 87505
 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: Waiting for appointment
 505-827-6091, www.ose.state.nm.us
 Concha Ortiz y Pino Building, 130 S. Capitol St., Santa Fe, NM 87504
 Department in charge of administering the state's water resources. The state engineer has power over the supervision, measurement, appropriation and distribution of all surface and groundwater in New Mexico, including streams and rivers that cross state boundaries. The state engineer is also secretary of the Interstate Stream Commission.

ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

Secretary: Waiting for appointment
 800-219-6157, www.nmenv.state.nm.us
 Harold L. Runnels Building, 1190 St. Francis Drive, Suite N4050, Santa Fe, NM 87505
 Tasked with the responsibility of safeguarding the state's air and other natural resources and oversees food, medical and workplace safety through inspections and enforcement. Monitors groundwater quality and waste disposal, including hazardous and nuclear waste.

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Secretary: Olivia Padilla-Jackson
 505-827-4985, www.nmdfa.state.nm.us
 407 Galisteo St., Room 180, Santa Fe, NM 87501
 Provides sound fiscal advice and problem-solving support to the governor and budget direction and fiscal oversight to state agencies and local governments. Ensures tax dollars are spent wisely.

GENERAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Secretary: Ken Ortiz
 505-827-2000, generalservices.state.nm.us
 Joseph Montoya Building, P.O. Box 6850, Santa Fe, NM 87502
 Furnishes essential resources and services that support 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: Waiting for appointment
 505-827-2613, www.health.state.nm.us
 Harold Runnels Building, 1190 S. St. Francis Drive, Santa Fe, NM 87505
 Promotes health and sound health policy, prevent disease and disability, improve health services systems and ensure that essential public health functions and safety net services are available to New Mexicans.

HIGHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Secretary: Kate O'Neill
 505-476-8400, www.hed.state.nm.us
 2044 Galisteo St., Suite 4, Santa Fe, NM 87505
 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: Jackie White
 505-476-9600, www.nmdhsem.org
 3 Bataan Blvd., Santa Fe, NM 87508
 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: David Scrase

505-827-7750, www.hsd.state.nm.us

Administers 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: Waiting for appointment

505-476-1600, www.iad.state.nm.us

Wendell Chino Building, 1220 S. St. Francis Drive, Santa Fe, NM 87505

Implements policies by working with communities to assist American Indians in improving health care, economic development, infrastructure and quality of life.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT

Secretary: Vincent Martinez

505-827-0000, www.doit.state.nm.us

715 Alta Vista St., Santa Fe, NM 87505

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.

MILITARY AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT / NEW MEXICO NATIONAL GUARD

Adjutant general: Waiting for appointment

505-474-1210, nm.ng.mil

Joint Forces Headquarters, 47 Bataan Blvd., Santa Fe, NM 87508

LAW OFFICES OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER, STATE OF NEW MEXICO

Chief Public Defender: Waiting for appointment

505-395-2888, www.lpdnm.us

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

Provides defense counsel for those who cannot otherwise afford a private lawyer. The Chief Public Defender is charged with carrying out general administration of the entire department, which employs approximately 375 people statewide.

PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Secretary: Waiting for appointment

505-827-5800, www.ped.state.nm.us

Address: Jerry Apodaca Education Building, 300 Don Gaspar Ave., Santa Fe, NM 87501

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

PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENT

Secretary Designate: Waiting for appointment

505-827-9000, www.dps.state.nm.us

4491 Cerrillos Road, Santa Fe, NM 87507

Protects human life and property through the detection and prevention of criminal activity and enforcement of state laws and regulations. Provides vital leadership, scientific, training, technical and operational support to the criminal justice community and public at large.

REGULATION AND LICENSING DEPARTMENT

Superintendent: Marguerite Salazar

505-476-4511, www.rld.state.nm.us

Toney Anaya Building, 2550 Cerrillos Road, Santa Fe, NM 87505
Licenses and regulates individuals and businesses in 35 separate industries and professions. Examines and licenses qualified applicants in professional and industry occupations; issuing permits, charters and licenses; performing code inspections; and resolving claims in the construction industries. It also enforces the provisions of the Liquor Control Act.

STATE PERSONNEL OFFICE

Director: Waiting for appointment

505-476-7759, www.spo.state.nm.us

2600 Cerrillos Road, Santa Fe, NM 87505

Provides to human resource leadership, direction, guidance and services to maximize state government's ability to better serve the citizens of New Mexico.

TAXATION AND REVENUE DEPARTMENT

Acting Secretary: Waiting for appointment

505-827-0700, www.tax.newmexico.gov

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

Collects tax dollars and distributes them according to state law, answers to the governor as part of the executive branch of state government. It also administers drivers licensing and motor vehicle registration laws.

TOURISM DEPARTMENT

Secretary: Jen Schroer

505-827-7400, www.newmexico.org

491 Old Santa Fe Trail, Santa Fe, NM 87501

Promotes New Mexico as a tourist attraction by working with communities, travel agencies and individual businesses.

TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

Secretary: Michael Sandoval

505-827-5100, www.dot.state.nm.us

1120 Cerrillos Road, Santa Fe, NM 87504-1149

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

VETERAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Secretary: Judy Griego

866-433-8387, www.dvs.state.nm.us

407 Galisteo St., Room 132, Santa Fe, NM 87504

Assists veterans, their widows and children to establish the privileges to which they are legally entitled.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION ADMINISTRATION

Director: Waiting for appointment

Phone: 505-841-6000

Address: 2410 Centre Ave. SE, Albuquerque, NM 87125-7198

Website: 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: Bill McCamley

505-841-8405, www.dws.state.nm.us

401 Broadway NE, Albuquerque, NM 87102

Provides services to help people find jobs and achieve their career goals. The statewide workforce system also connects businesses with skilled job seekers.



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Conscious Fathering Program is a hands-on class that prepares fathers for taking care of their newborn baby. This class is for fathers with newborns and expecting fathers in their second or third trimester. This is a free, three-hour class that covers topics such as how to hold your baby, feeding, cleaning, comforting and how to identify baby's basic needs. This is a class **FOR** fathers (and in some cases, grandfathers), taught **BY** fathers.

- Learn the basics
- Establish what being a father means to you
- Identify and anticipate your baby's needs
- Create lasting relationships

Free classes available in Doña Ana County.
Coming soon to Luna, Otero, Sierra & Grant counties.

Call Josh Stoller to register for a class. For more information, call 575-526-6682 or email jstoller@aitkids.com

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U.S. SENATORS



Sen. Tom Udall

Democrat

Address: 201 N. Church St., Suite 201B
Las Cruces, NM 88001

Phone: 575-526-5475

Website: www.tomudall.senate.gov



Sen. Martin Heinrich

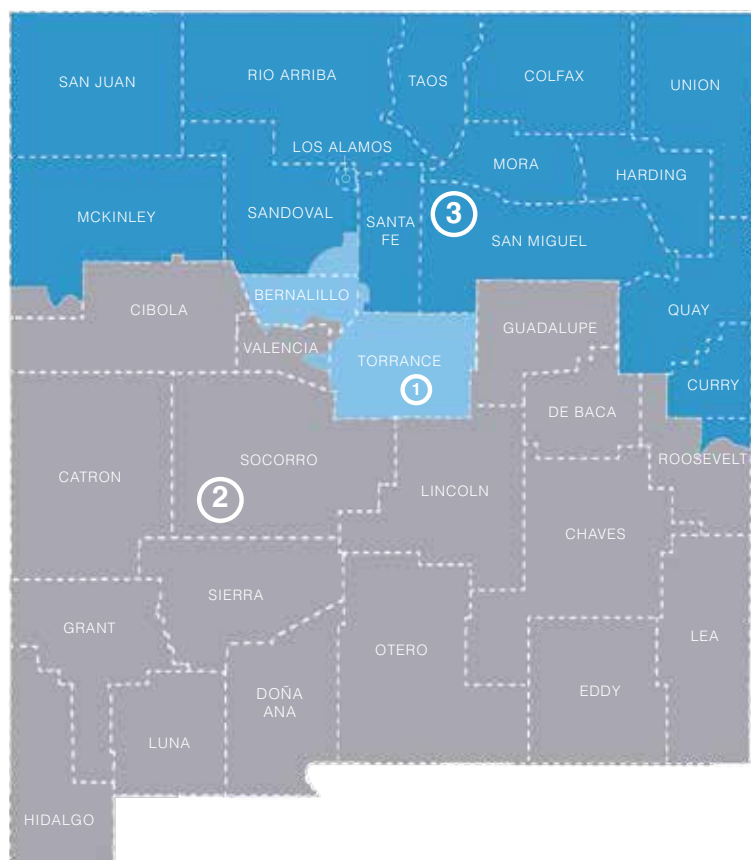
Democrat

Address: Loretto Towne Center, 505 S. Main
St., Suite 148, Las Cruces, NM 88001

Phone: 575-523-6561

Website: www.heinrich.senate.gov

U.S. REPRESENTATIVES



Debra Haaland

Democrat, District 1

Address: 3104 Monte Vista Blvd NE
Albuquerque, NM 87106

Phone: 505-934-5681

Website: debforcongress.com



Xochitl Torres Small

Democrat, District 2

Address: P.O. Box 2250
Las Cruces, NM 88004

Phone: 575-652-4672

Website: xochforcongress.com



Ben Ray Lujan

Democrat, District 3

Address: 1611 Calle Lorca, Suite A,
Santa Fe, NM 87505

Phone: 505-984-8950

Website: lujan.house.gov



LCPS Board of Education: (L-R) Ed Frank,
Maria Flores, Maury Castro, Terrie Dallman
and Ray Jaramillo.

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LCPS LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

1. Increased funding for all public schools
2. Greater local control for elected school boards.
3. End forcible separation of migrant families.
4. Reduce 12-month wait-out period for return-to-work teachers.
5. Define and expand ethnic studies curriculum.



Education likely to top 2019 legislative agenda

BY MIKE COOK

There are only 29 words in Article XII, Section 1 of the New Mexico Constitution regarding free public schools: “A uniform system of free public schools sufficient for the education of, and open to, all the children of school age in the state shall be established and maintained.”

More than 107 years after the constitution was adopted, a state district court judge in Santa Fe ruled that the state is violating the law by not providing educational sufficiency.

As a result of this ruling in the Yazzie/Martinez v. State of New Mexico lawsuit, “the state has until April 15, 2019, to take immediate steps to ensure that New Mexico schools have the resources necessary, including sufficient funding, to provide all students with a uniform and sufficient education that prepares them for college and careers,” according to the New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty (NMCLP).

“Judge Sarah Singleton ruled that all New Mexico students have a right to be college- and career-ready and that the state is failing to meet this obligation,” NMCLP said. “As evidence, the judge pointed to New Mexico’s low graduation rate (70 percent – the lowest in the nation), low

proficiency rates in reading and math (70 percent of New Mexico students cannot read or do math at grade level) and high rates of college remediation (almost 50 percent who do attend college need remedial courses).”

As a result of that ruling, and because the state has a new governor who focused the issue in her campaign and a possible \$2 billion in new revenue in 2019, many state legislators say they expect education to be a priority.

“Education is going to be front and center in the 2019 legislative session,” said Las Cruces Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Greg Ewing. “I suspect that meeting the needs of students — and particularly at-risk students — will be the subject of many courageous conversations, finally receiving the attention it deserves. I am also hopeful that our legislators will address teacher pay, so that we are able to attract and retain highly-qualified, experienced educators who are passionate about what they do. The table has been set for our elected leaders to take bold steps. And I trust that they will help us meet the needs of the children and families of New Mexico.”

State Rep. Willie Madrid, D-Doña Ana And

Otero, is an instructional assistant at Gadsden Independent School District (GISD), teaching alternative skills classes. He hopes to be appointed to the House Education Committee.

Addressing education and teacher raises during the 2019 legislative session will be essential, Madrid said.

“We’ve done nothing but take away,” Madrid said. “Something has to give. We’ve got make things right. We’re 50th in the nation. We’re just working very inadequately. We’re in desperate need of teachers throughout the entire state. We need to get back to focusing on our kids.”

Doña Ana County’s other new state representative, Ray Lara, said he wants to see higher salaries for teachers to help make school districts more competitive.

Lara is coordinator of Education for GISD and said he also will seek a seat on the House Education Committee.

Senate President Pro Tem Mary Kay Papen, another Las Cruces Democrat, said she expects the legislature to increase teacher salaries in the 2019 session, lengthen the school year for pre-kindergarten students and “do the things it’s going to take to get us off the bottom.”

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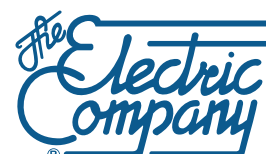
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MICHELLE LUJAN Grisham

New governor takes the helm

BY MIKE COOK

She's been a county commissioner, a cabinet secretary and a member of Congress, and now Democrat Michelle Lujan Grisham is New Mexico's 32nd governor.

With a public mandate (she was elected governor with more than 57 percent of the vote), a 10-seat majority in the state Senate, a projected margin of 46-24 in the state House of Representatives, a lieutenant governor by her side with more than a decade of legislative experience, and an estimated possible \$2 billion in new money, Lujan Grisham has a unique opportunity to shape New Mexico's future.

"Governor-elect Michelle Lujan Grisham comes to the job with one of the best resumes for a governor – cabinet membership with Gov. Richardson, county commissioner and member of Congress," said former New Mexico Gov. and NMSU Chancellor Emeritus Garrey Carruthers. "She knows public life. I would advise her to work closely and collaboratively with the Legislature – something that has been missing for some years."

New Mexicans "want a real vision for the state," Lujan Grisham said shortly before last November's general election. "People love this state; they're proud of it. But they're frustrated."

During her campaign for governor, Lujan Grisham said, voters made it clear they want a governor who will not forget about them. Many communities around the state feel isolated, she said, because they see state leaders during campaigns, but then may never see them again.

As director and secretary of the New Mexico Department of Aging, I was on the road almost every week, Lujan Grisham said.

"I'm going to be that very same governor."

Voters were also "very angry and disappointed about the president's work," she said. New Mexicans are multi-cultural, Lujan Grisham said.

"We're respectful; we have strong families.

We don't like being given information that is discriminatory or negative."

State residents want border issues addressed, she said, but they don't like Trump "describing Las Cruces as a war zone." Lujan Grisham said she rejects Trump's border wall and his disrespect for women and people living in poverty.

"I grew up in a household with a very critically ill sibling," she said. "My father worked until he was 83 to pay for health care. I get it. You fight for everyone in the health care environment, every single one."

Lujan Grisham said she supports a state-wide minimum wage.

"We're going to propose \$10 and we want to get to \$12 in our first year, so it keeps up with inflation," she said. People should "not have to choose between paying rent and food or between food and childcare."

Lujan Grisham said she also supports raises for New Mexico teachers. The state doesn't have the lowest-paid educators in the country, she said, "but we're close. The most important investment we can make is in our children's education."

Lujan Grisham said one of her first acts as governor will be to withdraw the state's appeal of the ruling in the Yazzie lawsuit which found that New Mexico is not providing its students with the educational sufficiency mandated by the state constitution.

"I see nothing but the power of incredible potential in places like Doña Ana County," Lujan Grisham said.

The state needs to invest more in infrastructure, job training, entrepreneurship and broadband access to boost economic development in the county, she said, and keep the port of entry open 24 hours a day, expand trade opportunities and continue to develop NMSU as a center of excellence.

Lujan Grisham has two daughters, two grandchildren and a dog named Kiwi, and is the caretaker for her mother, according to www.newmexicansformichelle.com.



GOVERNOR

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: First

AGE: 59

BIRTHPLACE: Santa Fe, New Mexico (grew up in Los Alamos)

PROFESSION: Attorney, public administrator, member of Congress

EDUCATION: University of New Mexico, law degree from the UNM School of Law

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:

Bernalillo County Commission, 2011-12; U.S. House of Representatives, New Mexico District 1, 2013-18; secretary of the state departments of Aging and Long-Term Services and Health under three governors

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LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: First

AGE: 46

BIRTHPLACE: Silver City, New Mexico

PROFESSION: Educator

EDUCATION: Bachelor of Science degree in education/biology and a Master of Arts in bilingual special education from Western New Mexico University; PhD in curriculum and instruction from New Mexico State University

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:

New Mexico state senator 2008-18, Grant County clerk 2005-08

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HOWIE C. Morales

Silver City senator, educator is new lieutenant governor

BY MIKE COOK

A native of Silver City, Howie Morales worked as a special education teacher in the Silver City and Cobre (Bayard, New Mexico) school districts before being elected Grant County clerk in 2004. Morales held that position until his appointment to the New Mexico State Senate representing District 28 in January 2008, following the death of longtime state senator, Ben Altamirano.

Morales was elected to a full four-year term representing District 28 in 2008, winning almost two-thirds of the vote. He was unopposed for reelection in 2012 and again in 2016. Morales lost in the Democratic primary for governor in 2014. He defeated two opponents in the 2018 Democratic primary, earning more than 47 percent of the vote, to win nomination for lieutenant governor.

Morales' father was a Vietnam Veteran who worked in local copper mines and his mother worked multiple hourly-wage jobs, according to www.newmexicansformichelle.com. Morales "went to work as a teenager to help provide for the family and later worked as a shoe salesman and maintenance worker to put himself through Western New Mexico University," the website said. He was the first

in his family to go to college and earned a PhD in education from New Mexico State University.

Morales coached local high school baseball teams to state championships, according to the website, and volunteered with Big Brothers/Big Sisters of New Mexico.

Morales has two children.

As lieutenant governor, Morales said he

will "use all my energy and experience as a state senator to fight for all New Mexicans," according to morales4nm2018.com. "I will fight to turn our economy around by creating jobs in 21st century industries like solar, wind and renewables."

Morales said he also will work for small businesses and to protect the state's water, land and air.

On his campaign website, Morales said he "will fight to put the pieces of our state's behavioral health system – which serves the most vulnerable New Mexicans, and especially children who need help – back together once and for all" and will "fight to protect the rights of all New Mexicans, because nobody gets to discriminate against gay and lesbian residents as a

matter of right, and under New Mexico law."

"I will fight to turn our economy around by creating jobs in 21st century industries like solar, wind and renewable."

MAGGIE TOULOUSE Oliver

Secretary of state updates campaign finance rules

BY MIKE COOK

Democrat Maggie Toulouse Oliver was elected New Mexico secretary of state in 2016 to fill the unexpired term of former Secretary of State Dianna Duran, a Republican, who resigned in 2015 after being convicted of the misuse of campaign funds. Gov. Susana Martinez appointed Brad Winter as interim secretary of state after Duran's resignation. Winter served for almost one year, until Dec. 9, 2016, when Toulouse Oliver was sworn in. She won the November 2016 general election with 56.4 percent of the vote, defeating Republican Nora Espinoza. In the 2018 general election, Toulouse Oliver received 57.7 percent of the vote to defeat Republican Gavin Clarkson of Las Cruces (37.3 percent) and Libertarian Ginger Grider of Portales (5 percent).

The secretary of state performs the functions of the governor when both the governor and lieutenant governor are out of state. This position also is the keeper of the great seal of the state and, at the start of each new legislative session, calls the New Mexico House of Representatives to order and presides until a new speaker is elected. The primary role of the secretary of state is to serve as the state's chief election officer, overseeing the entire election process for statewide, district and local elections. With the passage of the 1993 Governmental Conduct Act, the secretary of state became the state government ethics regulator, including regulating lobbyist activity, the reporting of campaign finances by candidates for public office and political action committees, the required filing of financial disclosures by candidates and state officials and the filing of a general code of conduct for some state employees. It also maintains records vital to commerce and industry in New Mexico.

Toulouse Oliver was named treasurer of the National Association of Secretaries of State last summer.

In July, Toulouse Oliver has provided testimony on election cybersecurity to the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Oversight and Government Reform in Washington, D.C.

During her testimony Toulouse Oliver highlighted some of the election security best practices used in New Mexico, including the use of paper ballots and its "robust post-election audit process," according to an SOS news release. "New Mexico is a national leader in its use of these practices, which are now being adopted by states throughout the country."

Toulouse Oliver said she plans to use \$3.6 million in Help America Vote Act funds provided to the state by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission to "launch a new election security program in the SOS's Bureau of Elections," the news release said.

The secretary of state said 29,136 New Mexicans registered to vote or updated their registrations during National Voter Registration Month in September. As of Sept. 28, she said there are more than 1.25 million New Mexicans registered to vote. Almost 12,000 of the new and updated registrations were completed online.

In October, she participated in a panel discussion in the nation's capital on how election officials at all levels of government are addressing cybersecurity for the 2018 general election. The panel, "Are We Ready to Run Our Elections?" was organized by the Bipartisan Policy Center, a national think tank.

In October 2018, Toulouse Oliver announced that 5,463 businesses were formed in the state July-September (the third quarter of) 2018. That is a 22 percent increase over the number of businesses formed during the same period in 2017, according to a news release. It is a 4.6 percent increase from the second quarter of 2018.



SECRETARY OF STATE

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: Two

AGE: 42

BIRTHPLACE: Albuquerque, New Mexico

EDUCATION: Bachelor's degree in political science and Spanish, master's degree in political science, University of New Mexico

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE: Bernalillo County clerk, 2007-16

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ATTORNEY GENERAL

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: Four

AGE: 45

BIRTHPLACE: Denver, Colorado

EDUCATION: New Mexico Highlands University, University of New Mexico School of Law

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE: State auditor for eight years (2006-2014), New Mexico House of Representatives

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HECTOR Balderas

Attorney general continues serving New Mexico

BY MIKE COOK

Hector Balderas, 45 was elected New Mexico attorney general in 2014, defeating Republican Susan Riedel of Las Cruces 58.3 to 41.7 percent. Balderas was reelected in 2018, receiving 61.8 percent of the vote and winning 21 of the state's 33 counties as he defeated Republican Michael Hendricks (33.5 percent of the vote) and Libertarian A. Blair Dunn (4.8 percent).

A native of Wagon Mound, New Mexico, Balderas began his political career by winning the race for New Mexico House of Representatives District 68 in 2004. Balderas was elected state auditor in 2006 and reelected in 2010, each time earning about 55 percent of the vote. He ran unsuccessfully in the 2012 Democratic primary for U.S. Senate, losing to incumbent Martin Heinrich.

Before returning to Wagon Mound to run for the state legislature, Balderas was an assistant district attorney in Bernalillo County.

Balderas has a bachelor's degree from New Mexico Highlands University and a juris doctorate from the University of New Mexico Law School. He became the first person from Wagon Mound to graduate from law school and become an attorney, according to his 2018 campaign website.

Balderas lives in Albuquerque with his wife, Denise, and their three children.

The New Mexico attorney represents and defends the legal interests and sovereignty of the people of New Mexico, according to nmag.gov.

"The Attorney General has primary authority for enforcement of consumer protection and antitrust laws, prosecution of criminal appeals and some complex white-collar crimes, training and certification of peace officers and most natural

resource and environmental matters," the website said.

The office also works with the state's 13 district attorneys and other local, state and federal law enforcement authorities to carry out its criminal justice responsibilities. The attorney general is also the chief legal counsel and advisor to the executive branch of state government.

The office has an annual budget of \$18-22 million, according to the website, and approximately 200 employees.

The attorney general has five divisions within its criminal affairs office: special prosecutions (including a border violence unit), criminal appeals, Medicaid fraud and elder abuse and special investigations (including internet crimes against children and anti-money laundering) and victim services.

There are four divisions with the office of civil affairs: consumer and family advocacy services, consumer and environmental protection, open government and litigation.

As attorney general, Balderas secured "the largest tobacco settlement payment in state history and tens of millions of dollars in settlements from large corporations for preying on New Mexicans," according to nmag.gov. "Balderas is also aggressively litigating against the opioid industry and made New Mexico the first state to sue opioid distributors, in addition to manufacturers, for inundating New Mexico with highly addictive opioids that have devastated the state for decades."

The attorney general's office has a free app "that provides law enforcement professionals and the general public with easy access to publications and reference guides" created by the office. Visit nmag.gov to download the app.



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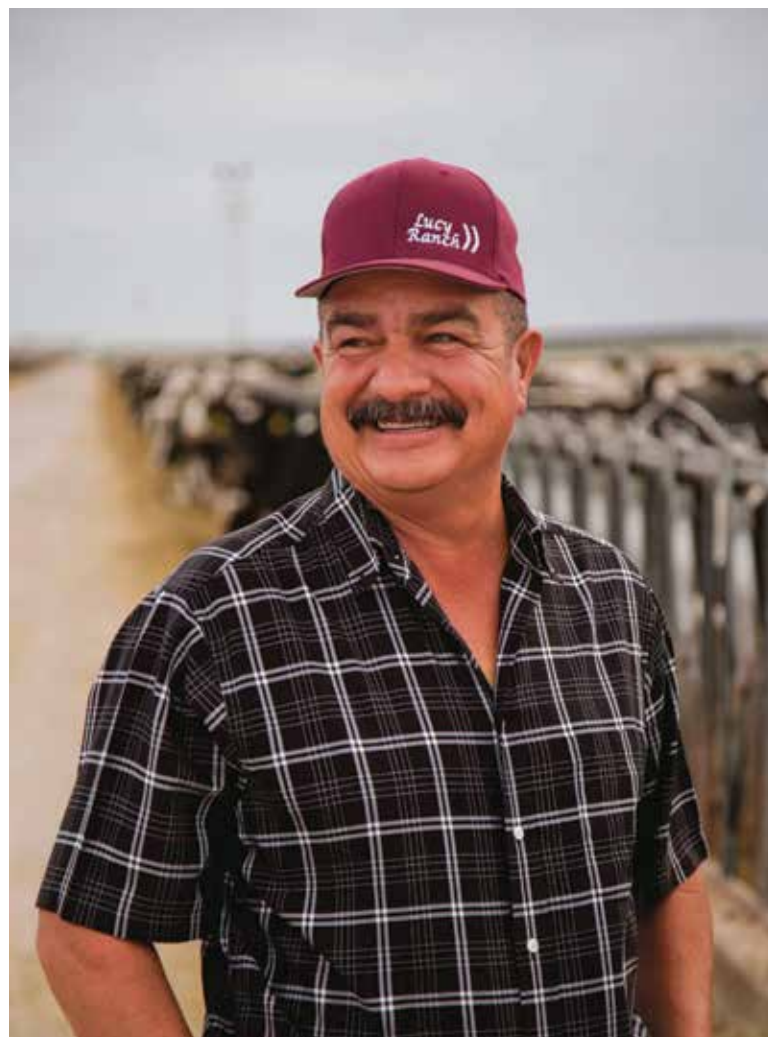
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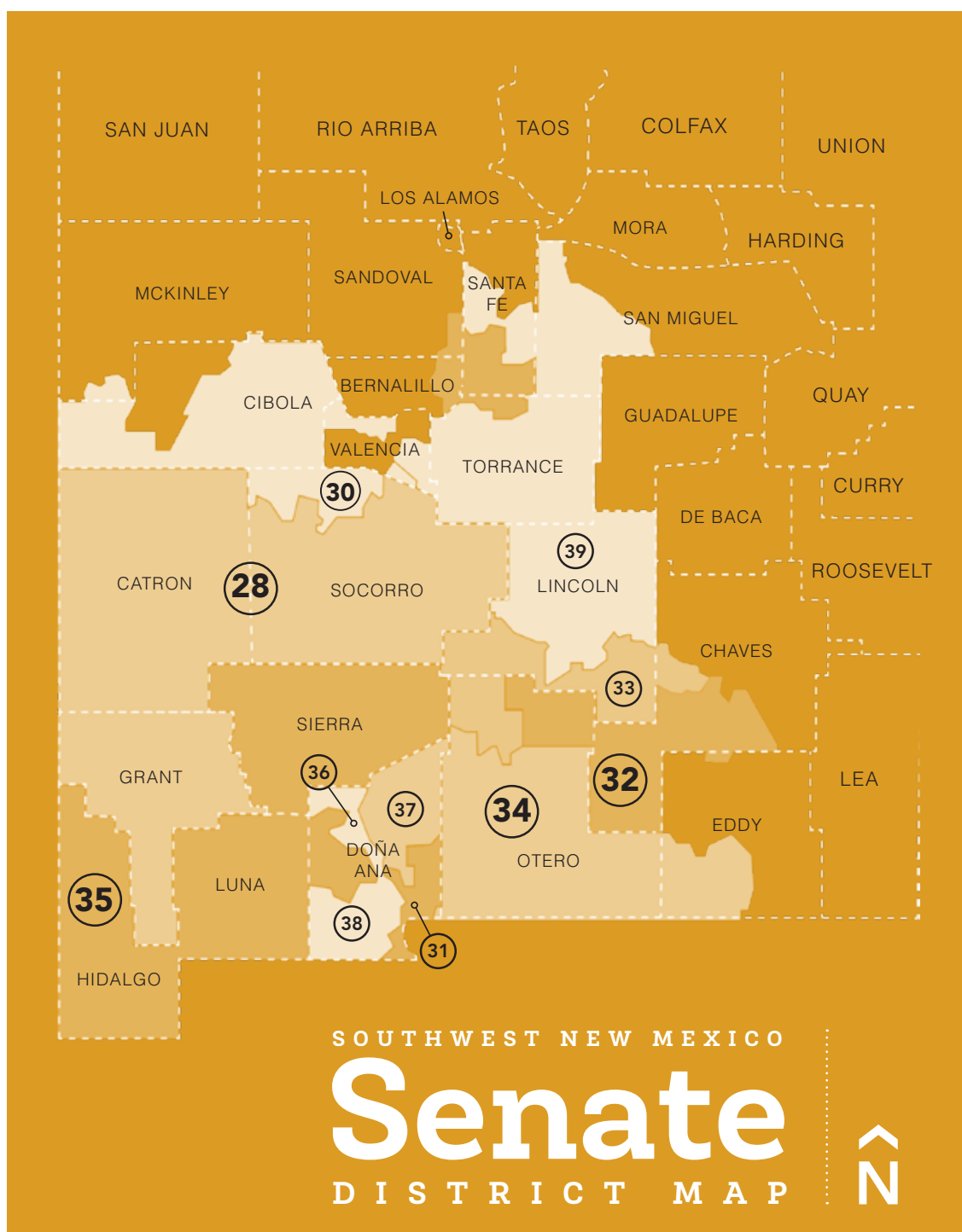
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Senate District 28 was still vacant as of presstime. Former Sen. Howie Morales was elected lieutenant governor, creating the vacancy, which was to be filled by governor appointment in early January. Senate leaders to be voted in during the session. This list subject to change. To reach your legislator during the session, call 505-986-4300. Check website for updated list of leadership positions.



SENATE NUMERICAL LIST

- 1 WILLIAM SHARER
- 2 STEVEN NEVILLE
- 3 JOHN PINTO
- 4 GEORGE MUNOZ
- 5 RICHARD MARTINEZ
- 6 CARLOS CISNEROS
- 7 PAT WOODS
- 8 PETE CAMPOS
- 9 JOHN SAPIEN
- 10 CANDACE RUTH GOULD
- 11 LINDA LOPEZ
- 12 JERRY ORTIZ Y PINO
- 13 WILLIAM O'NEILL
- 14 MICHAEL PADILLA
- 15 DANIEL IVEY-SOTO
- 16 CISCO MCSORLEY
- 17 MIMI STEWART
- 18 BILL G. TALLMAN
- 19 JAMES WHITE
- 20 WILLIAM PAYNE
- 21 MARK MOORES
- 22 BENNY J. SHENDO JR.
- 23 SANDER RUE
- 24 NANCY RODRIGUEZ
- 25 PETER WIRTH
- 26 JACOB CANDELARIA
- 27 STUART INGLE
- 28 TO BE NAMED
- 29 GREGORY A. BACA
- 30 CLEMENTE SANCHEZ
- 31 JOSEPH CERVANTES
- 32 CLIFF R. PIRTLE
- 33 WILLIAM "BILL" BURT
- 34 RON GRIGGS
- 35 JOHN ARTHUR SMITH
- 36 JEFF STEINBORN
- 37 WILLIAM "BILL" SOULES
- 38 MARY KAY PAPEN
- 39 ELIZABETH STEFANICS
- 40 CRAIG BRANDT
- 41 CARROLL LEAVELL
- 42 GAY KERNAN



DISTRICT 28

Vacant. Awaiting governor appointment in January 2019.

DISTRICT 32

Cliff Pirtle
Page 27

DISTRICT 35

John Arthur Smith
Page 30

DISTRICT 38

Mary Kay Papen
Page 33

DISTRICT 30

Clemente Sanchez
Page 25

DISTRICT 33

William Burt
Page 28

DISTRICT 36

Jeff Steinborn
Page 31

DISTRICT 39

Elizabeth "Liz" Stefanics
Page 34

DISTRICT 31

Joseph Cervantes
Page 26

DISTRICT 34

Ron Griggs
Page 29

DISTRICT 37

William "Bill" Soules
Page 32



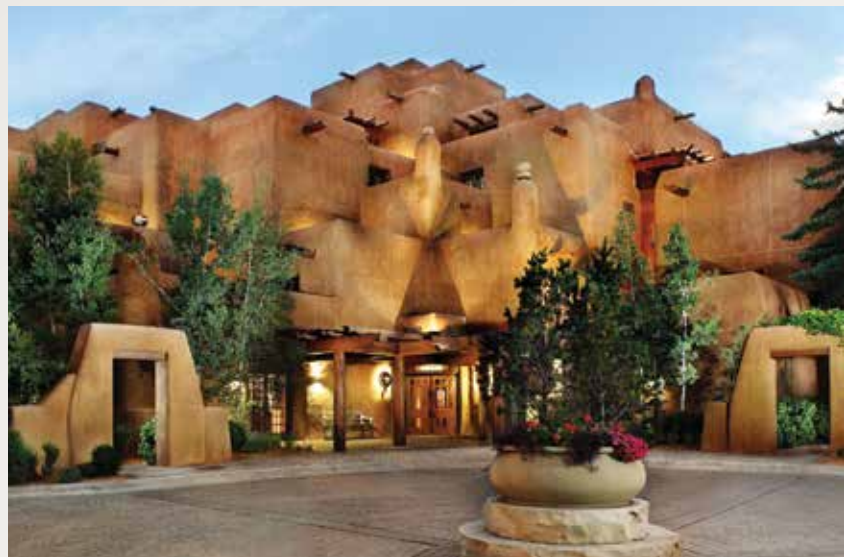
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CLEMENTE Sanchez

Rural economic development,
education are top priorities

BY ELAINE STACHERA SIMON

While a balanced budget always tops Sen. Clemente Sanchez's priority list, he is also laser focused on rural job creation and legislation that supports people who choose to live outside of metropolitan areas.

Sanchez said the 2018 legislative season had many positive outcomes, including a balanced budget. Sanchez worked to relieve some of the tax burden on small businesses, and is proud that a minimum wage bill with bipartisan support made it to the governor's office, even though it was not signed.

Sanchez said one of his district's biggest concerns is its loss of workforce talent to urban areas of New Mexico and other states. He believes it is critical to ensure New Mexico has an educated, competitive workforce that can fill the needs of industry. Sanchez emphasized that "lowering the bar is absolutely not the answer; people want to be competitive." The challenge of shoring up an education system that creates a qualified workforce is not new for New Mexico, and Sanchez hopes to make strides in the right direction.

Other initiatives include working with colleagues who are working on legislation that battles opioid addiction, legislation to send more Impact Aid funding directly to school districts, and infrastructure improvements – not only in his district but statewide.

Impact Aid grants are for the benefit of

school districts that contain nontaxable federal land and installations and make up for lost revenue and costs associated with a federal presence. Infrastructure improvements, he said, would benefit commerce and enhance safety.

Regarding education funding, another 2019 legislative priority, Sanchez said budget appropriation is paramount, with special attention to the educational needs of tribal communities. He had some concerns over higher education spending by New Mexico State University and University of New Mexico. He said the institutions' budgets could have been managed more effectively, without adversely impacting students.

Sanchez anticipates more capital outlay projects will be funded in 2019, given that oil and gas industries are strong. In District 30, he said town hall meetings have explored the needs of the district through frank discussions leading up to the session. Those needs will be what drives capital outlay requests, and he has been working with his constituents on priorities and how they fit in from a budget standpoint.

When asked to give advice for the new governor, he said, "It is time to govern. We all have to keep an open line of communication, and not be squabbling. We are going to disagree, and we all win some and lose some. We need to get together, work things out, and move our state up from the bottom of everything that's good."



DISTRICT 30

COUNTIES SERVED: Cibola, Socorro, Valencia, McKinley

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: Six

AGE: 60

BIRTHPLACE: Cubero, New Mexico

PROFESSION: Senior vice president and senior banking officer, New Mexico division of TBK Bank

EDUCATION: Bachelor's degree in business administration from Eastern New Mexico University; Master's of Business Administration, New Mexico Highlands University

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE: None

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DISTRICT 31

COUNTIES SERVED: Doña Ana**POLITICAL PARTY:** Democrat**YEARS IN OFFICE:** Six**AGE:** 57**BIRTHPLACE:** Las Cruces**PROFESSION:** Attorney**EDUCATION:** Bachelor's in architecture, University of New Mexico; master's in architecture, California Polytechnic State University; juris doctorate, UNM**OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:**

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

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JOSEPH Cervantes

Senator wants to reform capital outlay, extend school calendar, create term limits

BY MIKE COOK

State Sen. Joseph Cervantes has major reforms in mind for the 2019 legislative session, including capital outlay funding process, lengthening the school calendar and setting term limits for elected officials.

The legislature's current capital outlay process is like giving every state senator and representative a "gift card for Christmas," Cervantes said, and encouraging each one to spend the allocated amount "even if you don't need it."

As a result, he said, New Mexico's capital outlay process is consistently rated among the worst in the country.

Instead of giving each legislator a separate piece of capital outlay, Cervantes said, lawmakers should come together to pool funding for the greater good, funding projects that are most crucial to the health of the state and more expensive than any one legislator could finance.

For example, Cervantes said, he and other Doña Ana County legislators pooled capital outlay funds, got a match from then-governor Bill Richardson and were able to contribute millions of dollars to the construction of Las Cruces' aquatic center, which opened in 2011.

Combining capital outlay could pay for critical road projects around the state, he said, expanding internet service and making sure all New Mexicans have a reliable source of water. Similar efforts, he said, would benefit communities in southern Doña Ana County.

Currently, Cervantes said, about \$1 billion in capital outlay projects statewide have been funded, but are going nowhere because the funds have never been spent.

Capital outlay, he said, needs to be "a more thoughtful, studied, planned process."

In fact, Cervantes said, New Mexico's "entire system of governance ... needs to be re-evaluated," including the inadequate length of legislative sessions and legislators' lack of resources to provide constituent services in their districts.

He said New Mexico is the last state with

a volunteer legislature which receives no salary. As a result, it is made up of retirees and others who can afford to take two to three months off from work or have employers willing to subsidize their legislative service.

"That eliminates a lot of people from running for or serving in the legislature," he said.

He believes people recognize the system is not working, Cervantes said, and have an appetite for change.

He said a constitutional revision commission should be appointed to draft appropriate changes.

Cervantes also supports term limits for all levels of government, he said, which will force elected officials to rise above the priority of getting reelected.

New Mexico's public-school calendar is based on an outdated, agrarian model, Cervantes said, and needs revision. The long summer break, he said, is detrimental to students learning.

"New Mexico is too far behind to not be maximizing the resources of schools," he said, and should expand its school calendar to at least 200 days a year.

Cervantes said education will be the top issue during the 2019 session, but the legislature also needs to prepare for the outcome of the federal lawsuit between New Mexico and Texas about the use of water from the Rio Grande. In fact, he said, how the state deals with major lawsuits is another issue badly in need of reform.

If the state is party to a lawsuit, "resources are perceived to be infinite," he said, and it spends millions of dollars a year on lawyers to continue with litigation, often in cases that show little progress toward resolution.

The new governor and legislature also need to address crime, he said, because residents should feel safe and businesses must feel that their employees will be safe in New Mexico or they won't come here.

Cervantes said he expects incoming Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham to be an effective governor who won't shy away from challenges.

"I want to see New Mexico succeed," Cervantes said.

CLIFF Pirtle

Senator has held seat since 2013

BY TRACY ROY

A farmer and businessman, Sen. Cliff Pirtle represents District 32, covering southern Chaves County – including Roswell where he makes his home – and a small portion of Eddy County.

Pirtle is heading into his seventh legislative session, a 60-day session. Pirtle ran unopposed in the 2016 primary and general election. He defeated longtime incumbent Democrat Tim Jennings in the 2012 election.

Pirtle proposed a bill in 2017 to keep New Mexico on Daylight Saving Time year-round. It did not pass. He serves as a member of the Indian Affairs, Land Grant, and Legislative Health & Human Services committees. He serves in an advisory role on the Legislative Council and Public School Capital Outlay Oversight Task Force.

He submitted capital outlay requests in 2018 that included a request to fund the senior athletics program, construct a mental health facility, improve a water park, and replace roofs at the Roswell international air center and many infrastructure and transportation improvements too numerous to list. He co-sponsored a series of bills during the 2018 session which can be viewed at nmlegis.gov/BillFinder.

Pirtle was unavailable to discuss his plans for the upcoming session.



DISTRICT 32

COUNTIES SERVED: Chaves, Eddy

POLITICAL PARTY: Republican

YEARS IN OFFICE: 6

AGE: 33

PROFESSION: Farmer

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE: None

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DISTRICT 33

COUNTIES SERVED: Chaves, Lincoln, Otero

POLITICAL PARTY: Republican

YEARS IN OFFICE: Seven

AGE: 67

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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William "Bill" Burt has served as state senator for District 33 since 2011. Originally from Deming, he earned his bachelor's degree from New Mexico State University and has owned and operated Burt Broadcasting for 30 years. When it comes to serving as state senator, he said, "I love the work I do."

Burt's priority for the new legislative season is fiscal responsibility, including tax reform. He plans to sponsor a bill that exempts military retirement from state income tax.

WILLIAM 'BILL' Burt

Tax reform a priority in 2019

BY ELVA K. ÖSTERREICH

Burt said the bill also relates to jobs, noting that military retirees are often young, and a "high-quality employee pool – the type of people we need to keep in New Mexico." Yet instead of staying here to start a new career, buy a house and contribute to the economy, most leave the state because their military retirement is taxed at full rate, he said.

Burt, who serves on the Legislative Finance Committee, it is time to look at salaries in New Mexico. Teachers, correctional officers, and safety officers have received increases, but he said the state needs to "look at pay increases that make New Mexico competitive with the states around us. This state has one of the best retirement plans in the United States, comparatively, but folks need to make money while they are working toward retirement."

In his district, Burt said water management remains a critical issue. Ranching and agriculture interests are always a concern, as well as oil and gas, which provide a third of the state income. He said state regulations are some of the stiffest in the United States to make sure companies "do the right thing" to keep our water and land safe. Burt stresses that the oil and gas industries will create more jobs and expand the tax base, which pays the salaries of teachers and supports healthcare and infrastructure.

Burt believes that the 2019 legislature will look at issues that Democrats champion, and he would not be surprised if recreational marijuana and healthcare, including mental and behavioral health, were topics addressed.

He said all legislators want to make the education system better for our kids and said spending money on education effectively and efficiently is key.

He said what matters most is how the money is spent to maximize its benefit.

Regarding capital outlay, infrastructure will be a critical topic.

"The oil patch is going full tilt on the east side of state, and many highways need dramatic help," Burt said.

Police departments also need help, he said, as well as municipalities and counties that have larger projects like overhauling sewer systems or reservoirs for drinking water.

Burt is confident that everybody in the legislature wants to work with the new governor and her administration, whether or not they agree on everything. He is adamant in his belief that the permanent fund not be tapped for anything, as "the permanent fund is like a savings account — the more you have in the fund, the more interest it generates to help fund the state budget. It needs to build so that we can take care of education and other things in the state," he said.

Burt is hopeful that regardless of the divisiveness in the U.S., people from all parties can come together to move New Mexico forward.

"We can agree to disagree and not give up our principles, but we can compromise on some issues," he said. "We are lagging behind in many areas, but we have the ability to come together and make it better."

Bank 34 is proud of State Senator Bill Burt's legislative work and his efforts on our board.

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RON Griggs

Balanced budget, education top concerns for senator

BY ELAINE STACHERA SIMON

Sen. Ron Griggs, representing District 34, said the priority in the new legislative session is to balance the budget. Fortunately, with the dollars now being generated by the oil and gas industry, budget cuts to make that happen will not be necessary. Griggs said the legislature also must address the recent court decision about funding for education.

"I am sure that there will be lots of ideas on how to make that happen," he said. He is referring to the 2018 state court ruling that the governor and Legislature establish a funding system that meets constitutional requirements to provide at-risk students with a sufficient education. The deadline to present a plan that satisfies the court is April 15, 2019.

One point of pride for Griggs in 2018 was a bill he co-sponsored with Sen. Bill Burt — signed by the governor — that gives a gross receipts tax deduction to the U.S. Air Force for construction materials and services used to build facilities for a permanent F-16 fighter pilot mission at Holloman Air Force Base. Griggs also helped develop a funding source to prevent the potentially disastrous collapse of the Carlsbad Brine Well, an issue that was very important to Carlsbad.

For 2019, Griggs said the budget is in much better shape, but that legislators can't lose sight of where the state has just been. While oil and gas are booming now, it has always been cyclical. He said the state needs to use this opportunity to rework some of the tax structure and systems. Griggs said exemptions to income tax for military retirees and possibly social security could be examined.

"If we do those things, we may need to adjust taxes in other areas to account for the initial losses in revenue," he said.

He recalled that a couple of years back, he

introduced a bill that could address these changes, and he may again bring these ideas to the table in 2019.

He also said many miles of New Mexico roads need attention, and new money should be used for projects such as roads that are the best use of one-time money.

Griggs believes one of the biggest issues the legislature will face in 2019 is recreational marijuana. Several states have already legalized it, as well as Canada. Both the pros and cons now have enough supporting evidence for a serious debate, and, as Griggs said, "I just hope we arrive at the right answers."

When asked about capital outlay requests, Griggs said he bases requests on local government needs. Those entities submit requests based on the needs of the constituents.

"I lean toward infrastructure projects but have participated with other legislators in a variety of projects," Griggs said. "Some of the smaller communities in my district have no other sources of revenue, so I always carefully evaluate their needs."

Griggs pointed out that the new governor will have new money the likes of which have never been seen before, and the administration must realize that "this bubble can most certainly burst," and therefore should govern with care. The new administration will see a huge number of bills for consideration, and some will be great, and some will not, he said. The governor holds the final responsibility for what becomes law and will need to govern like New Mexico's future depends on it, he said, because it does.

Griggs said he believes New Mexico has a promising future and looks forward to working with fellow legislators and a new administration to build upon past accomplishments and open doors to new ones.



DISTRICT 34

COUNTIES SERVED: Otero, Eddy, Doña Ana

POLITICAL PARTY: Republican

YEARS IN OFFICE: Six

AGE: 66

BIRTHPLACE: Portales, New Mexico

PROFESSION: Business owner, Griggs Holdings, LLC

EDUCATION: Bachelor's degree in business administration from New Mexico State University

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE: Alamogordo City Council and Mayor of Alamogordo

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DISTRICT 35

COUNTIES SERVED: Doña Ana, Hidalgo, Luna, Sierra

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: 30

AGE: 77

BIRTHPLACE: Las Vegas, Nevada

PROFESSION: Real estate appraiser

EDUCATION: University of New Mexico

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JOHN ARTHUR Smith

'You're just brought up to get along'

BY MIKE COOK

Growing up in Deming, I never fought, and I never ran from a fight," said Sen. John Arthur Smith. "You're just brought up to get along."

That's what New Mexicans expect from their legislators, said Smith.

"The public wants people to get along," he said. "They want the system to work."

With a governor of their party for the first time in eight years and solid majorities in both houses, Democrats must "push aside the 'to the victor go the spoils' attitude" as they come together for the 2019 legislative session, said Smith.

The state likely may have nearly \$2 billion in new money by some projections – about one-third more than last year's \$6.2 billion budget – to spend in 2019, said Smith, who is the longtime chair of the Senate Finance Committee. Most of the new money is non-recurring, he said.

Education must be No. 1 on the legislature's list of budget priorities, Smith said, especially in light of a state district court ruling in the Yazzie lawsuit last July that New Mexico is not providing its students with the sufficient education mandated by the state constitution. Smith said he is hopeful the ruling will be appealed to the state Supreme Court.

"I want some type of finality put on it," he said.

The legislature was not a part of the lawsuit, Smith said, but it will have to find funding to comply with the ruling, which could carry a \$1 billion price tag.

"The judge said 'fix it, but I can't tell you how much,'" he said.

Since 87 cents of every dollar spent on education in New Mexico goes to payroll, "we really need to be focused on an outstanding classroom teacher," Smith said. "If you don't have an outstanding classroom teacher, every kid in every class is at risk."

But as the Democratic governor and legislative leaders reform education, Smith said, they need to look carefully at changes made during the Martinez administration. Just

because Martinez was a Republican "doesn't mean everything was bad," he said. "Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater."

Smith said the state doesn't have the capacity to comply with Yazzie in a single year. The legislature and governor will need to work with all 89 New Mexico school districts and charter schools to develop a reform plan.

Smith said he and other legislative leaders will rely on the legislature's committee process to develop funding recommendations.

"I'm looking for economical, efficient and sustainable (policy) coming from our education committee when we put our budget together," he said.

To spend non-recurring funds, he said, "you just have a political deal, not a plan." To accomplish long-term goals in education and other programs, Smith said, the state will need to develop new sources of recurring revenue.

Smith said legislators likely will each have a significant amount of capital outlay money to spend on local projects. In his district, Smith said there are fundamental items that need to be taken care of, including roads and municipal streets.

"Put it where they can see it," Smith said. "You better be able to show the public what you're doing with their money."

He's considering a focus on renewable energy, he said, as fossil fuel revenues diminish.

The new governor, Michelle Lujan Grisham, will need to focus on her relationship with the New Mexico House and Senate, Smith said, unlike her predecessor who "had difficulty getting along with the legislature – like Trump belittling Congress."

Smith represents all of Luna (about 50 percent of his district), Hidalgo (15 percent) and Sierra counties (20 percent) and part of Doña Ana County (15 percent). Smith and his predecessor, I.M. "Ike" Smalley, also a Democrat, have held the District 35 seat for more than 60 years between them.

JEFF Steinborn

2019 session can move New Mexico forward

BY MIKE COOK

Sen. Jeff Steinborn of Las Cruces is looking forward to the 2019 session as “a great opportunity to move New Mexico forward and solve some long-standing challenges.”

Steinborn is a Democrat whose district includes part of Las Cruces, the Village of Doña Ana, Radium Springs and Hatch, as it stretches to the Sierra County border in Doña Ana County’s northwest corner.

“(The new governor is) passionate about new policy and getting new things done for the state,” Steinborn said. “She understands how the legislature works.”

He believes she will move important projects forward in all areas of the state.

“It’s important that we work to manage state government collaboratively,” Steinborn said.

Steinborn said he plans to spend capital outlay funds in his district on critical needs, including flood control in the Hatch area, road projects and important public services in the north valley, including supplementing libraries and senior citizen centers.

He will also work with the City of Las Cruces, leaders of other communities in the district and county officials to come up with capital projects.

Education, Steinborn said, will be at the top of the list for extra funding during the 2019 session, as mandated by the state court ruling in the Yazzie lawsuit mandating the educational sufficiency called for in the New Mexico Constitution.

Funding will also need to be considered for “an incredible number of great ideas shelved by the current administration,” Steinborn said, who said he will again sponsor legislation supporting renewable energy projects, including adding solar power to more than 750 state buildings and setting statutory targets to eventually increase the state’s renewable portfolio standards (RPS) to 100 percent. RPS require that a portion of the energy sold by utilities comes from renewable resources. New Mexico’s current RPS is 20 percent.

Investments in renewable energy will also create more employment opportunities in New Mexico, Steinborn said, including

jobs to deal with climate change and reduce greenhouse emissions.

The legislature also needs to address expanding voting rights for its citizens by moving the last day to register to vote from 28 to three days before an election, he said, and by increasing registration opportunities, including automatic registration for anyone dealing with a state agency like the Motor Vehicle Division.

Steinborn said he will re-introduce his bill to consolidate state purchases of prescription drugs. The state spends about \$700 million a year on pharmaceuticals, he said, and needs a “purchasing collaborative to get all these state agencies to work together” to leverage purchasing power. That will save the state a lot of money and help private citizens save on drug purchases and other types of health care.

Steinborn also plans to reintroduce his bill to create a state office of outdoor recreation to grow that sector of the state’s economy, which he said generates almost \$10 billion a year. There has been increased interest in the proposal, including support from Lujan Grisham, and Steinborn said he hopes the office will be created within the first 30 days of the 2019 session.

It will have “a great impact on Doña Ana County,” he said, because of Organ Mountain-Desert Peaks National Monument, the Rio Grande Trail, parks and other outdoor recreational opportunities.

The state also needs to expand the tax credit it offers to filmmakers who make movies in New Mexico to grow movie and television production more actively in Las Cruces and other under-served parts of the state, said Steinborn, who is president of the Film Las Cruces nonprofit.

The state also must address developmental disabilities waivers issued by the New Mexico Department of Health for services to children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, who are among the most vulnerable New Mexicans, Steinborn said. Currently, he said, some entitled to the services are waiting up to seven years to receive them.

State services should also be re-calibrat-



DISTRICT 36

COUNTIES SERVED: Doña Ana

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: Two

AGE: 48

BIRTHPLACE: Las Cruces, New Mexico

PROFESSION: Conservationist

EDUCATION: Bachelor’s degree in government, University of Texas at Austin; graduate course work, Institute of World Politics, Washington, D.C.

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:

Eight years, New Mexico House of Representatives (2006-2010, 2013-2016)

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ed, he said, so the Children, Youth and Families Department can provide better care for at-risk children, another vulnerable population.

“We live in one of the greatest places on Earth,” Steinborn said.

New Mexico, he said, has “all the potential in the world to achieve great things; we can make it happen.”



DISTRICT 37

COUNTIES SERVED: Doña Ana

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: Six

AGE: 63

BIRTHPLACE: Las Cruces, New Mexico

PROFESSION: Retired educator, Las Cruces Public Schools, Hatch Valley Public Schools, Cobre Independent School District

EDUCATION: Bachelor's and master's degrees in psychology; Ph.D. in education and psychology, all from New Mexico State University

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:

Las Cruces Public Schools Board of Education, 1992-2000

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WILLIAM 'BILL' Soules

Education will be top issue in 2019 session

BY MIKE COOK

Education. That's what I get asked about more than anything else," said Sen. Bill Soules, a Democrat who is in the middle of his second four-year term representing Senate District 37, which includes part of Las Cruces and northwest Doña Ana County.

As chair of the Senate Education Committee, Soules said he has worked with Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham "on her education plan for moving the state forward."

New Mexico has no time to lose, Soules said, in moving from last to a world-class education system. In the long term, he said, improving early childhood education is "the best investment we can make in New Mexico."

The state also needs to invest more in teacher recruitment and professional development, Soules said, along with increasing teacher salaries. And New Mexico needs "to do a much better job with vocational education," he said, to ensure that students who don't go to a four-year college still have the skills to succeed.

The state will need to invest several hundred million dollars on education to reach the educational sufficiency mandated by the state court ruling in July in the Yazzie lawsuit, said Soules, who has long been raising the constitutionally mandated educational sufficiency issue in the legislature.

Lawmakers will have to work together to make sure education bills introduced in the 2019 session "moved education forward after a decade of stagnation," Soules said.

Educational reforms likely will include student testing, teacher evaluations and the state's A-F school grading system, which Soules said needs to be revisited and evaluated for effectiveness.

The state also needs to look at what education means for the whole child, he said, giving the system more flexibility to focus on helping students and teachers do better instead of punishing those who are not doing well.

New Mexico should be "encouraging and celebrating education and making it a career that students want to go into, because

you get to change the world," said Soules, a retired teacher and principal with a PhD in education and psychology.

The state also must make a substantial investment in infrastructure, he said, including roads, broadband access, bridges and water projects. Better roads and better communication will increase commerce statewide, he said, and that will help create more jobs. Soules said legislators will use capital outlay funds to address some of those issues.

In his district, Soules said he also wants to use capital outlay money to address flooding concerns on the East Mesa of Las Cruces and to move more residents from septic tanks to city sewer service. Soules said he will work with other local legislators, the city, the county and schools to fund the most critical capital outlay needs.

With a windfall from oil and gas in 2019, Soules said the legislature can put money back into reserve funds and "back fill the holes in all the places we took from" to pay for programs during budget shortfalls.

Soules said he will again introduce his pub bill, which would allow restaurants that have beer and wine licenses to sell New Mexico-distilled spirits.

"We've got to fix our liquor laws," Soules said. "They're holding back economic growth and development."

The current system, he said, places an artificial limitation on the number of liquor licenses available in the state and is "no longer fair-market capitalism."

His pub bill has bi-partisan support in both houses of the state legislature, Soules said, and Lujan Grisham is favorably inclined toward it, he said. If passed and signed, he said, the bill won't devalue current liquor licenses because it is narrowly crafted and requires local government approval for pub licenses in a specifically designated area.

The state's tax laws also need to be reformed, Soules said.

Because of tax breaks, he said, "we give away nearly 40 percent of the state budget before we collect it."

MARY KAY Papen

The state should diversify funding, focus on education and healthcare

BY MIKE COOK

Where would this state be if we didn't have oil and gas," New Mexico State Senate President Pro-Tem Mary Kay Papen said in late October 2018.

Revenues from the state's oil and gas industry are higher than expected, Papen said, and that means more revenue for the 2019 legislative session.

"We're doing really, really well," she said.

And, while it is important to work with what we have, Papen said, and acknowledge and be grateful for the revenue that oil and gas produce for state programs – "don't bite the hand that feeds you," she said. The state, she said, ultimately needs a blend of funding sources.

Papen said the additional revenue is a boon for all New Mexicans that will allow the state to address important needs, including highway upgrades and putting more money into state agencies to deal with issues like behavioral health.

Outgoing Gov. Susana Martinez almost destroyed mental health services in the state, said Papen, who has championed the cause throughout her nearly 20 years in the state senate.

"We have to do something to stabilize people with behavioral health problems," Papen said.

Papen carried legislation to build the

county crisis triage center, which was completed in 2013 but never opened. If the triage center is repurposed, she said, "then where are we going to do the triage? We need to make sure that we have good programs."

Papen said she also wants funding to go to New Mexico State University for a speech and hearing clinic to help deal with the rise in autism cases so parents in Las Cruces and southern New Mexico don't have to take their children to Albuquerque to be tested and don't have to wait up to six months for testing.

The legislature will also be called on to deal with education, Papen said, especially considering the ruling in the Yazzie lawsuit mandating sufficiency in education for New Mexico students.

Papen said she expects the legislature to increase teacher salaries in the 2019 session, lengthen the school year for pre-kindergarten students and "do the things it's going to take to get us off the bottom."

Papen also wants to see a bigger state investment in clean energy, she said, including more than just wind and solar programs.

Papen also supports increased funding to support Spaceport America in Sierra County and economic development in Santa Teresa and the southern part of Doña

■ CONTINUED ON PAGE 58



DISTRICT 38

COUNTIES SERVED: Doña Ana

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: 19

AGE: 86

BIRTHPLACE: El Paso, Texas

PROFESSION: Retired business owner

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

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#1 VOLUME
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VESCOVO
TOYOTA

Source: Urban Science 2018 year-to-date sales data for dealers in Las Cruces PMA.



THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT ATTORNEY
MARK D'ANTONIO

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DISTRICT 39

COUNTIES SERVED: Santa Fe, San Miguel, Torrance, Valencia, Bernalillo, Lincoln

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: Three

AGE: 68

BIRTHPLACE: Dayton, Ohio

PROFESSION: Retired

EDUCATION: Bachelor's degree from Eastern Kentucky University; master's degree in resources management from the University of Wisconsin; doctorate in administration and law from University of Minnesota

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:

Four years in the New Mexico Senate; Represented Dist. 39 1993-1996 in state senate; eight years on the Santa Fe county commission

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ELIZABETH 'LIZ' Stefanics

Water, broadband, healthcare are senator's priorities

BY ELAINE STACHERA SIMON

Sen. Elizabeth "Liz" Stefanics has much on her mind for the upcoming legislative season.

When asked about priorities, Stefanics said she will continue to work on funding for small water systems and acequias. Stefanics said that for several years she has been talking about the importance of statewide broadband, and now that the state has some resources, getting broadband into every school and library would be a great start, even if it didn't touch every rural area.

She said health and human services issues also need to be addressed. For example, there are children in her district who need cannabidiol (CBD)/ tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), but cannot use it on school property. She also intends to work on the Patient Protection Act, because some of her constituents have received medical treatment they did not agree to. She will support more funding for senior services, such as fresh fruits and vegetables in senior centers.

Regarding economic development, Stefanics said she has a bill prepared that, if passed and signed by the governor, would drive rural and small-town economic development for communities of 5,000 or fewer by expanding the Local Economic Development Act (LEDA) to include retail services.

Stefanics said several of her constituents are concerned about the placement of utility transmission lines, and she is looking at legislation that deals with property condemnation. She emphasizes that she believes strongly in alternative energy (solar, wind, and others), but respects her constituents who are concerned about this issue.

In the 2018 legislative session, Stefanics was disappointed in a law passed that consolidated elections, as she believes this creates confusion and puts an economic burden on entities (such as soil and water conservation districts) that cross counties.

However, on a positive note, Stefanics said last year state senators accomplished

several things because they really try to work together across the aisle. She cited her successful co-sponsorship of a healthcare bill with Republican Sen. Gay Kernan.

"I am happy to work across party lines to get things done," Stefanics said.

For the upcoming legislative session, Stefanics said "a couple things are popping... pre-K will be debated. Recreational marijuana might be another topic. Open primaries have been brought up, and I think that will be debated more."

She'd like to see discussion about funding for non-recurring projects, including a permanent trust fund set up to ensure small towns and rural areas have revenue to fund libraries.

About budget discussions, she said that every state agency budget that was cut should be restored. As an example, she cited the New Mexico Aging and Long-Term Services Department, which has its budget cut by \$750,000.

"Looking at my district, senior services have closed or don't have enough money to feed seniors year-round," she said.

This means cities and counties have either cut back on meals or have had to put more money into it from their own budgets.

At the time of interview, Stefanics was set to begin travel through her district to hear specific constituent requests for capital outlay projects. She expects to hear requests for safety equipment for public schools, and notes that parks are always a request. Another critical concern is fire equipment in rural areas, especially heavily wooded regions such as Lincoln County.

Her advice to the new governor is to start right away with something everyone can work on, like poverty and literacy issues. She said these two problems are important to her, because a lack of literacy contributes to poverty.

"Literacy skills — math reading, writing — are what open doors for people to get jobs."



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MAJORITY FLOOR LEADER – Sheryl Williams Stapleton

MINORITY FLOOR LEADER – Nate Gentry

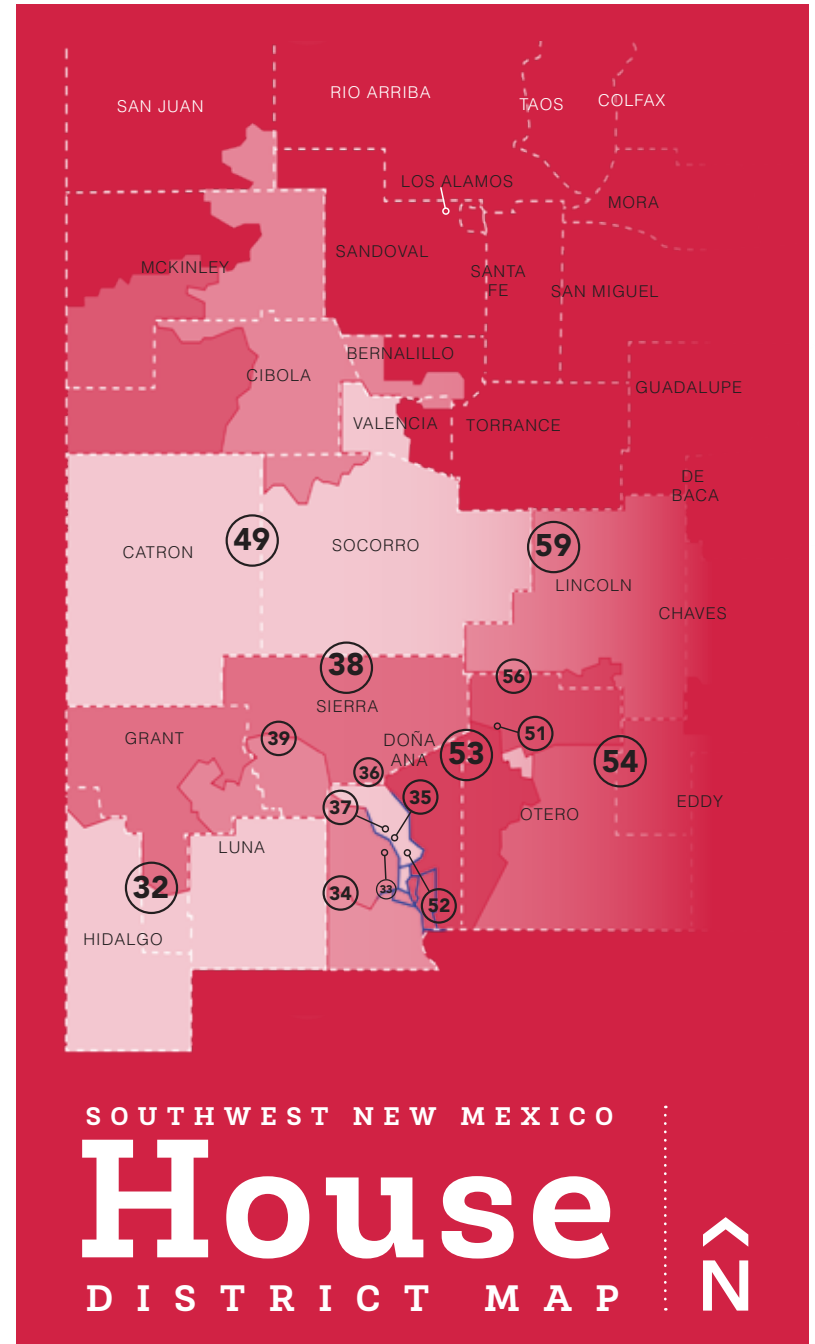
MAJORITY WHIP – Doreen Gallegos

MINORITY WHIP – Rodney D. Montoya

*House leaders to be voted in during the session. This list subject to change.
To reach your legislator during the session, call 505-986-4300.*

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DISTRICT 32
Candie Sweetser
Page 39



DISTRICT 35
Angelica Rubio
Page 42



DISTRICT 38
Rebecca Dow
Page 45



DISTRICT 51
Rachel Black
Page 48



DISTRICT 54
James Townsend
Page 51



DISTRICT 33
Micaela Lara Cadena
Page 40



DISTRICT 36
Nathan Small
Page 43



DISTRICT 39
Rodolfo "Rudy" Martinez
Page 46



DISTRICT 52
Doreen Gallegos
Page 49



DISTRICT 56
Zachary Cook
Page 52



DISTRICT 34
Raymundo Lara
Page 41



DISTRICT 37
Joanne Ferrary
Page 44



DISTRICT 49
Gail Armstrong
Page 47



DISTRICT 53
Willie Madrid
Page 50



DISTRICT 59
Greg Nibert
Page 53



DISTRICT 32

COUNTIES SERVED: Luna, Hidalgo, Grant

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: Three

AGE: 56

BIRTHPLACE: Albuquerque, New Mexico

PROFESSION: Managing partner at Luna County Broadcasting Company

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CANDIE G. Sweetser

Education is likely focus of session

BY MICHAEL SCANLON

Ready to begin her second term representing House District 32, state Rep. Candie Sweetser expects education to be the focus during the 2019 legislative session.

Central to the issue is a state judge's ruling in July that found the state is violating the constitutional rights of at-risk students by failing to provide them with a sufficient education. The ruling came in the "Yazzie lawsuit," so-named after one of the plaintiffs who sued the state over lean funding and insufficient education. The ruling gave the state until April 15, 2019, to establish a funding system that meets constitutional requirements.

"I believe the Yazzie lawsuit is going to dominate the session, trying to determine what the court decides is adequacy and trying to provide equity for all students and do the very best we can with the resources that we have," Sweetser said.

During her first term, Sweetser served as vice chair of the Agriculture and Water Resources Committee and on the Appropriations and Finance Committee, two assignments she hopes to continue in 2019.

Her district includes Luna County, most of Hidalgo County and part of Grant County.

"In my district, it always comes back to employment and the economy," she said. "We have the highest unemployment rate in the state in Luna County, so we're constantly looking at what we can do to get people employed and get business and industry moving in. That's going to be my primary focus – as always.

"It's a difficult thing to get your arms around," Sweetser said. "If it were easy, we'd be doing it."

The district also includes most of the state's border with Mexico.

"I can tell you that the situation on the border is real," Sweetser said. "People are

afraid, there's been an uptick in crime, there has been an uptick in Central American immigrants coming over and turning themselves in at the Antelope Wells border crossing. They are families. They have children with them.

"We've got to be confident in the information we're getting in order to make good decisions, but there are problems at the border that have to be addressed federally. There's not a lot the state can do," she said.

Sweetser said she plans to introduce several bills during the session.

"I'm working on an agricultural education initiative, a family advocacy initiative and some campaign finance reform bills," she said. "I was asked to cosponsor a piece on creating an endowment for rural libraries. There's a number of things I'm looking at."

But she said she's not sure how much legislation can be passed by a Legislature that will deal with pressing education issues.

The state's revenue outlook is much brighter this year after several years of low oil and gas prices, making Sweetser and other legislators hopeful for capital outlay money to bring home to their districts.

"We have a lot of needs, of course, and without having capital outlay for a period, everything kind of built up," she said. "At this point, I haven't had any specific conversations with the municipalities or the counties in my district. I have had school conversations, and they have other avenues in which to secure some capital outlay, but some of those are also closed to them."

Sweetser, a Democrat, said she's hopeful for a productive session, noting that there will be a bigger Democratic majority in the House, and a new governor who also is a Democrat.

"I've not been through the process of a whole new administration under a new governor, so I literally don't know what to expect," she said.

MICAELA LARA Cadena

Freshman brings decade of experience

BY NATISHA HALES

Although state Rep. Micaela Lara Cadena will be a freshman when she heads to the Roundhouse for the 2019 session, the Mesillera brings at least a decade of legislative experience.

Working behind the scenes during the Richardson and Martinez administrations, Cadena is no stranger to the Roundhouse. As bureau chief of recidivism reduction for the New Mexico Corrections Department and policy analyst for state Rep. Doreen Gallegos, Cadena has successfully advocated for legislation to protect foster children, support pregnant teens and address mental health needs of New Mexicans.

"I have always loved that in New Mexico our legislature is accessible and approachable," Cadena said. "You can literally just show up with a good idea, work hard and have conversations to get things done."

At first, Cadena said she had no desire to move to the forefront as a politician. However, the evolving political climate and the Cadenas' two daughters – Aymara, 11, and Salome, 7 – helped change her mind.

"My perspective every day is shaped by what it means to have little ones in this world," she said. "If I'm not willing to bring these extensive issues to the table, how do I expect things to change?"

Cadena maintained that mantra throughout her campaign to represent District 33 – which covers all of her hometown Mesilla, the rural community of San Pablo, the historic village of Tortugas and part of New Mexico State University. Since this is her first term in the state Legislature, Cadena said she is going to focus on building relationships in her community and does not plan to introduce many bills during the 60-day legislative session.

Though she is still narrowing down key issues to champion before the Legislature, Cadena has agreed to co-sponsor the End of Life Options Act with House Health and Human Services Committee Chair Debbie Armstrong. The bill would give

New Mexicans with a terminal diagnosis the option to receive a prescription for a self-administered medication to end their lives. Although several states have similar laws in place, New Mexico has been unable to successfully pass the legislation. Cadena hopes to change that.

"I trust that New Mexicans should make their own decisions about their bodies and life," Cadena said. "It's not the place of a politician. I am coming to this bill as a Hispanic woman and a Catholic from a tiny historical community. (Previous bills') sponsors were accused of bringing someone else's values into New Mexico. I get to speak to the other side of that. For myself, it's something I want if I was ever in that place."

Cadena said she also will seek a seat on the House Tax and Revenue Committee.

"We need a stable revenue base to fund our government over the long term," she said. "Our state needs tax reform. I am working to make sure that I am part of that and representing the families of 33 and Doña Ana County."

Other hot political issues that Cadena said are important to her district include building southern New Mexico's economy, responsible gun ownership, and education equity and reform. Any other legislation, including capital outlay requests, is still in the works as Cadena works to build relationships with the constituents and governmental entities of her unique district. She hopes to also foster a strong relationship with newly elected Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham.

"It's exciting to work with a brand new governor," Cadena said. "As I have worked around the Roundhouse and in New Mexico's political landscape, I know (Grisham) as someone who gets things done. She is going to be a partner who is willing to listen, and if you're willing to work, there's a way to get things done."

Cadena has brought a similar approachable strategy to her own district.

"As a freshman, I am going to make sure



DISTRICT 33

COUNTIES SERVED: Doña Ana

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: First year

AGE: 36

BIRTHPLACE: El Paso, Texas

PROFESSION: Research director

EDUCATION: High school diploma, Las Cruces High School; Bachelor's in international policy, Trinity College; master's in community and regional planning, UNM

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE: Issue-based advocate at New Mexico Capitol, Policy Analyst for state Rep. Doreen Gallegos

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I take my time to listen and learn so I can be the legislator our district deserves in the long run," she said. "I only know what I know, and I will be a much better legislator if (my constituents) reach out to tell me what they are experiencing in their daily lives and I can bring it to the Legislature."



DISTRICT 34

COUNTIES SERVED: Doña Ana

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: First year

AGE: 48

BIRTHPLACE: El Paso, Texas and grew up in Anthony, Texas

PROFESSION: Coordinator of Education, Gadsden Independent School District

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

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE: None

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RAYMUNDO Lara

New rep wants to help southern Doña Ana County during 2019 session

BY MIKE COOK

Raimundo “Ray” Lara has lived in Chamberino for half his life and sees important ways to help his community and southern Doña Ana County as a new member of the New Mexico House of Representatives.

Chamberino still looks the same as it did in 1994, Lara said.

“There’s nothing for the kids to do.”

The longtime educator wants to address the issue through bringing new businesses to the area that hire locally and generate revenue.

People in his district also want quality-of-life improvements, Lara said, including parks and community centers. New facilities could include splash parks for children, he said, and they could have internet connections to provide free Wi-Fi to local residents.

Lara said he shares the concern of farmers in his district about the federal lawsuit now before the U.S. Supreme Court regarding water sharing between New Mexico and Texas under the 1938 Rio Grande Compact. If New Mexico loses the suit, he said, it could be ordered to pay Texas in water or in cash. The state doesn’t have the resources to pay back the water, Lara said, and the financial cost could be \$1 billion.

Lara said he has discussed the water issue with New Mexico House Speaker Brian Egolf, D-Santa Fe, and will seek a seat on the House Agriculture and Water Resources Committee.

The Gadsden Independent School District administrator said he also will try to get a seat on the House Education Committee and the Legislative Finance Committee.

“I want to be an advocate for my community,” Lara said. “That’s why they sent me (to the legislature).”

Lara said he will support teacher salary increases during the session, and wants to see even higher salaries for teachers in Doña Ana County and other counties along the New Mexico-Texas border to help make those districts more competitive, he said. Lara said he has talked to other legislators in neighboring counties and is already building a coalition.

Lara said he wants to work with Doña Ana County officials to make sure the southern part of the county has adequate police and fire protection. The City of Sunland Park has a police department, Lara said, but other communities in the area rely on the county sheriff’s office for law enforcement. Lara said he will work with County Manager Fernando Macias and County Commissioner Ramon Gonzalez to make sure communities in his district — including Chamberino, Mesquite, La Union and La Mesa — have the volunteers, training and equipment to provide adequate fire service.

Lara said it will be necessary for the county to consolidate the 16 fire districts it now has, and he will support efforts to secure federal grants to help pay for added fire personnel and more training. Lara said he also wants to see more firefighters visiting elementary schools in District 34 to help children and their families learn how to prevent house fires.

Lara first ran for the House seat in 2016, losing in the Democratic primary to incumbent Bill Gomez.

He won his rematch with Gomez last June and had no Republican opponent in November.

“I’m just excited for the opportunity,” Lara said about his first legislative session.

“Come and see me,” he said. “I will open my door to you.”

ANGELICA Rubio

Building power for the people

BY MIKE COOK

My job is to build power for the people,” state Rep. Angelica Rubio said a week after her reelection to New Mexico House District 35, which includes downtown Las Cruces.

People, she said, should feel empowered to use their own personal stories to effect change.

Rubio collected almost 65 percent of the vote to win her second term in the House.

The residents of her district mirror the challenges the state as a whole faces, including job creation and economic development, Rubio said.

“Infrastructure is a big deal,” she said, including road and street improvements and vital access to clean water and clean air.

Rubio said she is also concerned about urban sprawl, which has emphasized investment in Las Cruces’ outskirts at the expense of communities within her district, including the Mesquite and Alameda Depot historic districts, the Bellamah neighborhood and other areas.

“A lot of these communities have been neglected,” she said.

An avid cyclist, Rubio said she is a strong supporter of Organ Mountain-Desert Peaks National Monument and the small businesses focused on outdoor recreation that have grown up in her district and elsewhere.

Rubio said Las Cruces’ Solano Corridor also has a lot of investment potential. That area’s business owners have a lot of really great ideas, she said.

She believes in the importance of her service on the House Energy, Environment and Natural Resources Committee and the joint House-Senate interim Radioactive and Hazardous Materials Committee.

The two committees address how we diversify our economy so we’re not so reliant on the oil and gas industry, she said, and examine health issues related to the side effects of working in those industries.

Rubio was born in Roswell and grew up in nearby Lake Arthur and continues to visit southeast New Mexico as a legislator. She is familiar with the impacts of the oil and gas industry on public health.

The committees also focus on “new and innovative ways to prosper without damaging our communities, our wildlife or our public lands,” she said. That includes the impact of building a high-level nuclear waste storage facility that is being proposed at a site between Hobbs and Carlsbad about 250 miles east of Las Cruces.

“We have to change our dependency on things that won’t serve us in the long term,” she said.

Rubio was part of a Richardson Center trip to Cuba in October. As a legislator, she said, it’s a great benefit to her to see what it’s like in the rest of the state and other parts of the country and the world.

“It’s important to be able to learn from other countries,” Rubio said, to better understand our own history and “how indigenous and native people have been treated.”

One of her tasks in the legislature, she said, is to influence leaders in the northern parts of the state to recognize that New Mexico is a border state.

Rubio said she is “cautiously optimistic” about the 2019 legislative session, when legislators must address the court ruling in the Yazzie lawsuit which found the state was not providing students with the educational sufficiency mandated by the state constitution. Addressing early childhood education will also be an important focus of the session, she said.

“How are we being realistic,” Rubio said, but also “imagining what kind of world we want to live in and we want our kids to live in?”

Rubio said she and Gov.-elect Michelle Lujan Grisham have a shared vision on many issues.

“When she says she wants to partner with the legislature, I believe it,” Rubio said.

The state’s system of government is challenging, Rubio said. Short legislative sessions and unpaid legislators, among other issues, make it “much more difficult to pass legislation that is long term,” she said. Rather, legislators are “usually reacting to what is happening in that moment. We need to create a roadmap for the next eight years,”



DISTRICT 35

COUNTIES SERVED: Doña Ana

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: Two

AGE: 39

BIRTHPLACE: Roswell, New Mexico

PROFESSION: Executive director, New Mexico CAFé

EDUCATION: New Mexico State University; California State University Los Angeles

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE: Community and campaign organizer

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Rubio said, to address the way New Mexico is governed, along with education, economic development, criminal justice, energy dependency and the environment.

“We can think ahead and make a plan rather than just react to whatever comes along in every 30- or 60-day session,” she said.



DISTRICT 36

COUNTIES SERVED: Doña Ana

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: Two

AGE: 36

BIRTHPLACE: Albuquerque, New Mexico

PROFESSION: Conservationist

EDUCATION: Bachelor's degrees in English, philosophy, College of Wooster

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE: Eight years, Las Cruces City Council

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NATHAN Small

Rep looks to implement new ethics commission

BY MIKE COOK

knew it was a core part of why I wanted to run."

Creating a commission is going to be especially important this session, Small said, and will benefit residents of his district, the county and the entire state. The commission, he said, "will stand firm against the types of corruption that hurt our state in so many different ways."

Education will be another major legislative issue, Small said.

"We now see conclusively through the (Yazzie) lawsuit, different indicators — teacher retention is struggling, class sizes are increasing," he said. "Just on so many different measures, the past course is not right or sustainable."

Investing in "our people educating our kids," Small said, is "really the choice we make about what future we have here in the state."

"As New Mexicans we know it in our hearts, our gut and frankly in our head, the better our education system, the better outcomes for every member of the state are," he said.

"We have an incredibly committed workforce," Small said. "We just have to give them the tools, the freedom and the resources to thrive and to really run with the incredible people we have here in the state."

Much of the anticipated budget surplus in 2019 will be nonrecurring funds, Small said, so structural adjustments are needed to support long-term investment in early childhood, K-12 and higher education.

Electing a policy-oriented governor last November, Small said presents an incredible opportunity for the state, who expects Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham to lead a bipartisan effort "to keep searching for and working with everyone ... to find the best ideas and the right way to implement those ideas."

"Our job as representatives of our communities during the legislative session, and frankly at all times, is striving for, working for, fighting for solutions, ways to move

our communities forward and unleash the potential in the folks we represent," he said.

During the 2019 session, Small said he will introduce bills he sponsored in 2018 that passed both houses of the legislature but were vetoed by Gov. Susana Martinez, including "legislation that will allow for key roadway safety enhancements, especially in the Hatch Valley and northern Doña Ana County and throughout the county and state," he said, along with "value-added agriculture financing legislation."

Small said he is also looking at bills that would modernize the border authority and tap the state's vast solar and wind-energy potential to create export opportunities, grow jobs, make a cleaner environment and build innovation.

"Education and infrastructure investments — those are the things that are key to unleashing our potential," Small said.

Small said legislators should work together to allocate capital outlay funds, he said, including stormwater and flood control, transportation infrastructure and expanding internet connectivity.

"This year, we dealt with extreme low water levels in Elephant Butte Lake," Small said, and "we're dealing with more frequent and challenging drought scenarios and ongoing litigation in the (U.S.) Supreme Court. We have to take multi-faceted approach that deals with those realities," and continue to support "collaborative, multi-stakeholder approaches to water management issues."

The state also needs to address climate change and how it affects agriculture.

"That can include watershed health, looking at carbon sequestration and creative ways that bring in and benefit multiple land users and stakeholders and common challenges and finding ways that the broadest possible community can both participate in and benefit from taking those challenges on head on."

We got it done against the odds; it had never passed before," said state Rep. Nathan Small, D-Doña Ana County, about an amendment to the New Mexico Constitution passed by three-quarters of voters last November to create a state ethics commission.

Small was one of the sponsors of the 2016 House joint resolution that called for the constitutional amendment.

Creating the ethics commission was a "huge part of the campaign in 2016," Small said. "I

JOANNE Ferrary

Rep looks to a bright future for New Mexico

BY MIKE COOK

We have a great opportunity to make things better and build a better future,” state Rep. Joanne Ferrary, a Democrat, said after winning reelection to a second term representing district 37 in the New Mexico House of Representatives. Her district includes part of Las Cruces and is located entirely in Doña Ana County.

With a new governor who supports their agenda and a substantial increase in their numbers in the House, Ferrary said Democrats can make major reforms in education and health care, and deal with other important issues in the 2019 legislative session.

The House Interim Education Study Committee, of which Ferrary is a member, has been working since last year studying best practices from around the world for education reform in the New Mexico, she said.

An education reform package likely will include increasing teacher salaries and reducing the number of testing days for students, said Ferrary, who sponsored a testing-reduction bill last session that was vetoed by outgoing Gov. Susana Martinez. Reforms will encourage educators to work together, Ferrary said, and will reward teachers with pay increases for furthering their own educations.

Reform will also focus on early childhood education, she said, including giving young children “emotional, social and critical thinking skills to be better prepared for learning.” The committee also has looked at the impact of adverse childhood experiences, including poverty and food insecurity, on children’s ability to learn, Ferrary said.

Increasing the state minimum wage is an important way to help families out of poverty, she said, by allowing families to make decisions on their own and not have to rely on charity.

Providing adequate funding to child protective services and expanding certification for childhood services is also critical,

she said, along with addressing behavioral health issues.

Making sure health care is affordable and accessible will also be important, she said, including improving prenatal care, ensuring new parents have the resources they need and identifying early developmental issues in children.

“There is so much preventive care we can help with early on,” Ferrary said.

Ferrary said she will again co-sponsor with state Sen. Jeff Steinborn, D-Doña Ana, a bill to consolidate state pharmaceutical purchases to get lower prices. And she will introduce a bill to expand on the legislation she introduced in 2018, passed and signed by the governor, that allows cross-certification of nurses among New Mexico and other states.

The legislature likely will consider the decriminalization of marijuana during the 2019 session, Ferrary said, and that must include provisions that ensure adequate regulation regarding underage drug use and driving under the influence of any drug. Ferrary said she will also introduce a memorial encouraging the New Mexico Secretary of Health to list opioid use disorder as a qualifying condition for the use of medical cannabis.

Ferrary said she also will reintroduce a bill to update the state’s outdated abortion law to protect women’s rights. And she plans to reintroduce a pet food label fee bill that will generate funds to support spay and neuter clinics statewide.

Ferrary said the state needs a greater investment in infrastructure, including roads, broadband and flood-control improvements. She said she will work with city and county officials and other local leaders to determine spending priorities for capital outlay funding in 2019 to improve infrastructure and address other critical needs.

Ferrary also wants the state to put 10 percent of its investment funds into businesses



DISTRICT 37

COUNTIES SERVED: Doña Ana

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: Two

AGE: 65

BIRTHPLACE: Canton, Ohio

PROFESSION: Retired

EDUCATION: Bachelor’s in individual studies, master’s in business administration, both New Mexico State University

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE: None

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in New Mexico.

Ferrary is a member of three standing House committees and six interim committees and traveled the state extensively during her first term attending committee meetings and meeting with constituents, she said.

“Legislators are taking progressive ideas people really want for our state and making it happen,” Ferrary said.



DISTRICT 38

COUNTIES SERVED: Grant, Hidalgo, Sierra

POLITICAL PARTY: Republican

YEARS IN OFFICE: Three

AGE: 45

BIRTHPLACE: Cushing, Oklahoma

PROFESSION: Nonprofit CEO

EDUCATION: Associate's degree in early childhood education, bachelor's degree in business administration, Oral Roberts University

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE: No elected office, but has served on local, state and national boards

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REBECCA Dow

Rep to work on deferred projects in second term

BY MICHAEL SCANLON

Knowing the state revenue outlook continues to improve over recent years, District 38 state Rep. Rebecca Dow ticked off a list of long-deferred projects she wants to see funded.

"For my district, I'd like to see those funds used for one-time expenditures for capital improvements for roads, infrastructure, watershed restoration, fire mitigation, improvements to state parks – there are amazing state parks in my district, Elephant Butte, Caballo, Percha, City of Rocks," Dow said. "Any investment in state parks, because they've been badly neglected."

Dow, who lives in Truth or Consequences, represents parts of Grant, Hidalgo and Sierra counties. She was reelected in November to serve a second term.

"I also think this surplus is the ideal time to do much, much-needed tax reform because we could have a reserve buffer to back us up in case, we get something wrong," Dow said. "The goal would be to eliminate loopholes. There are so many things that are exempt from tax that we need to tax everything, but at a much lower rate. By taxing more things, you can tax it at a lower rate and people will actually pay less."

"For example, out-of-state corporations do not pay corporate tax," she said. "Bringing them in at a lower rate will help bring lower rates for everyone."

Dow said she hopes the revenue surplus will hold steady for at least a couple of years to allow the state to catch up on infrastructure needs.

"We have 911 call center that are ordering their parts off eBay because they're over 10 years old and haven't been upgraded," she said. "In my district, there are roads with bridges that transport ag products and people have to go around because the bridges can't support trucks of that weight." Still, she said, those things won't necessarily

be in her capital outlay requests for this session.

"I follow the requests of my counties and municipalities on how they want to direct the capital outlay that I have," she said. "But I am advocating as heavily as I can to get these type of projects built here."

For example, Sierra County has asked for money to improve its hospital, Dow said.

In education, Dow said the state needs to take a more holistic approach.

"Parents are the No. 1 indicator of student success," she said. "So how are we going to address education in our state if we do not address what happens in homes?"

"Children have to have their basic needs met. They have to be safe and secure in their surroundings before they can be active learners. So I think the way we improve education is looking at things that happen outside the school day and making sure that when these children get to school, they're ready to learn," said Dow, whose nonprofit organization provides consultation services to for-profit and faith-based early childhood providers.

"You can understand why a child is truant; you can understand why they're not able to engage and pay attention when they just witnessed domestic violence, they're surrounded by substance abuse, they don't have a decent meal," Dow said. "There are kids in our state that need a lot of help, and our policies and procedures are counterproductive to helping them out."

With Democrat Michelle Lujan Grisham moving into the governor's office and Democratic majorities in both houses of the Legislature, Dow, a Republican, is hopeful for bipartisan cooperation.

"I hope they will listen to people with experience and expertise, in my case that's early childhood," Dow said. "I'm optimistic. At this point, I have no reason not to be."

RUDY Martinez

Working together is the key

BY MIKE COOK

The key thing is working together,” state Rep. Rudy Martinez said about the 2019 legislative session.

Martinez, a Democrat, was reelected to the New Mexico House of Representatives District 39 seat in November 2018. The district includes 14 precincts in Grant County, 11 in Doña Ana County and one in Sierra County.

A former Bayard mayor and city councillor and Grant County commissioner, Martinez was appointed to the New Mexico House in 2007 and has 10 years of experience in the legislature and 27 years of elective service at the city, county and legislative levels. He and his wife live just outside Silver City.

Serving in both city and county government, Martinez said, has helped him make informed decisions for his constituents in the legislature.

Martinez said he will work with officials in each of the counties he serves and other legislators representing those counties to determine capital outlay projects to fund. Those projects will include infrastructure needs, especially in rural communities, he said, including water and wastewater projects and street projects that include curbs, gutters and sidewalks.

In the village of Doña Ana, Martinez said he hopes to use capital outlay funds to address street lighting to make the community safer.

Martinez said he would like to address the needs of Western New Mexico University.

He also aims to help small business expand in rural communities throughout his district and hopes the legislature will fast track a bill to help toward this goal, which he sponsored last session. The bill was ultimately vetoed by the governor.

The 2018 session, he said, included good legislation that was passed by both houses of the legislature, but then vetoed by the governor.

With the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren bill signed into law last year, Martinez said he wants to take the next step and

create legal rights for grandparent caregivers, many of whom are low-income, he said. The effort will help them to provide for the children in their care.

Martinez said he anticipates major changes will be made in education during the 2019 legislative session, including more pre-kindergarten education funding. The legislature, he said, needs to help find a balance between schools and private industry to help parents find affordable childcare, which Martinez said is a huge issue for working families.

The state also needs fair and equitable salaries for teachers, he said, including a pay increase in 2019. There should also be some kind of fair increase for other school employees as well.

The state should implement a testing system that is fair to students, especially younger ones, Martinez said.

“I understand that we do have to do some testing,” he said, “but not at the level that is being done now.”

The state’s teacher evaluation system also needs an overhaul, Martinez said.

“Let the teachers do what they were trained to do,” he said.

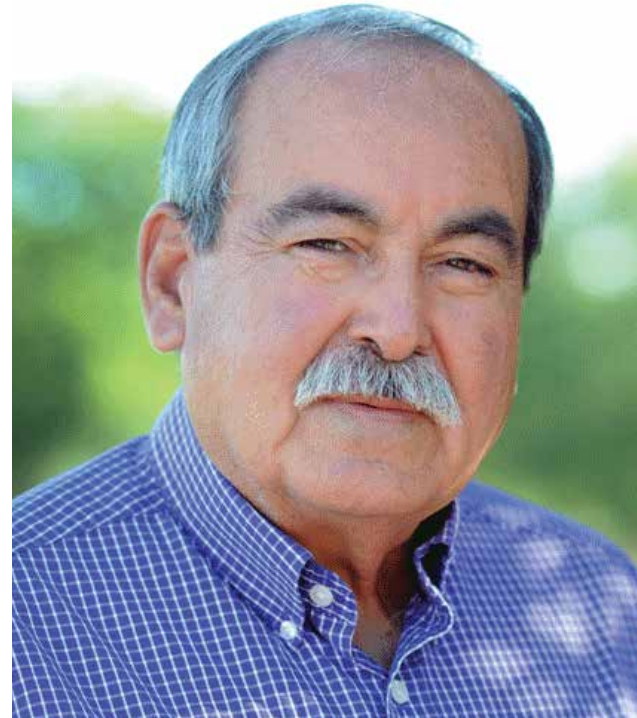
Martinez worked for Chino Mines for more than 30 years and still holds a journeyman’s license.

“It’s a good trade,” he said.

He supports vocational programs at middle and high schools to give students similar training in welding, plumbing, carpentry and other trades to benefit those who don’t want to go to college but want to remain in the state.

A member of the Interim House Water and Natural Resources Committee, Martinez said it’s essential that the legislature recognize how valuable water is and that it is available as a resource and protected as an asset. Martinez said he will also continue to support funding for water research at New Mexico State University.

As co-chair of the House Interim Military and Veterans Affairs Committee, Martinez said he will push for legislation to help military veterans across the state.



DISTRICT 39

COUNTIES SERVED: Doña Ana, Grant, Sierra

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: Three

AGE: 70

BIRTHPLACE: Santa Rita, New Mexico

PROFESSION: Employed by Chino Mines for 34 years, New Mexico licensed journeyman, member of IBEW Local 611

EDUCATION: Bachelor’s degree in business, Western New Mexico University

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE: State representative, District 39, 2007-2014; mayor and council member, Bayard, New Mexico; member, chair, Grant County Commission

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DISTRICT 49

COUNTIES SERVED: Catron, Socorro, Valencia

POLITICAL PARTY: Republican

YEARS IN OFFICE: Three

AGE: 52

BIRTHPLACE: Socorro County

PROFESSION: Rancher and businesswoman

EDUCATION: High school, some college

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE: Magdalena School Board

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GAIL Armstrong

Preparing for a busy, collaborative session

BY MICHAEL SCANLON

State Rep. Gail Armstrong sees a busy session ahead for the 2019 New Mexico Legislature, but said she's ready to get to work and embrace the changes brought about by November's election.

"Economic development and health care. Those are always the two big ones," said Armstrong, who was born in Socorro County, raised in Catron County and now lives in Magdalena. "We've had some major flooding issues in my area also, Belen and Socorro and Catron County," she said. "I know there are all kinds of things that are being talked about here at the Roundhouse – legalizing marijuana, gun control, buy-in for Medicaid – and they'll all affect my area. Of course, there will be water issues on the table. But we really need jobs."

Armstrong said she hadn't identified any of the more contentious issues she's ready to fight against, but she's especially interested in what gun-control measures might be proposed.

"I love the Second Amendment, I'm fine with the Second Amendment," she said, "but there are some issues with these bump stocks and things that might go a little above and beyond. But there is no way in heck I would vote to give up any gun."

She has bills of her own she plans to introduce.

"I'm working on quite a few, actually. They've asked me to carry the dental therapy bill," she said, referring to a proposed new level of licensing. "It's not quite a dentist, and it's not quite a hygienist, but it's kind of in-between. It's really for rural New Mexico, where they can't get a dentist out there. So, people could go out in these areas under dentists' supervision, and they also have a higher level of training."

She's working on a memorial to pay tribute to women veterans and three or four

other bills, she said.

Armstrong said her district's capital outlay needs include flood control projects and a project to build a road overpass over the railroad tracks in Jarales, a small community on the south side of Belen. The city of Belen is working with engineers and the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District to plan communitywide flood control projects. She will pursue funding to complete projects at the Socorro County Fairgrounds.

Armstrong sees sweeping changes ahead for New Mexico's education system, including changes to the policy of using standardized testing to evaluate teachers.

"I think it's going to be completely revamped, which I think is a good thing," she said. "Being held accountable is fine, but the way it was rolled out and done is not a good way."

"I would love to see teachers just do their jobs and not having to worry about being the counselor and the absentee whatever," she said. "I would love to refocus on how can we get the kids to school, how can we keep them there, and how can we make them faster, smarter and stronger."

Armstrong serves on the Health and Human Services Committee, Labor and Economic Development Committee and is co-chair of the Ethics Subcommittee. She also serves the water interim committee.

A Republican, she looks forward to working with Democratic Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham and the Democratic majorities in both houses.

"I hate politics, but as long as I'm in it, I am going to reach across the aisle and try to bring everybody in and try to stop the craziness," Armstrong said. "We're here to help the state of New Mexico and the people in it. So, let's stop our bickering and get to work."

RACHEL Black

First session is time to listen and learn

BY MICHAEL SCANLON

Freshly elected to her first term in the state House of Representatives, Rachel Black is taking her time to listen and learn about the world of New Mexico state politics.

"I'm kind of going into it with an open mind, and I plan on learning a lot," Black said. "I've already been approached by a couple of different people looking at bills they want passed and I'm doing the research on those right now."

Black, a Republican from Alamogordo, won the seat previously held by former state Rep. Yvette Herrell, who made an unsuccessful run for New Mexico's second Congressional district. Black won the seat over Democrat Jeff Swanson by a wide margin. She was unopposed in the Republican primary.

"One bill that seems real important to our law enforcement is return to work," Black said. "Once you retire — once you put in your 25 years — you can't come back and work for any city or county entity without forfeiting your retirement pension. If they retire at 40 or 50 years old, they could still work for another 20 years. That's experience we're not getting the benefit from."

She wasn't sure what else would come up, other than education.

"Just for teachers just to be able to teach and not be social workers and everything else — that would be great. And for them to get paid for what they do."

She said she still was studying specific issues, such as using standardized testing to evaluate teachers' classroom performance.

"I don't understand the process of it yet," Black said. "I've got to really get into that and why we're basing their salaries on their test scores. I'm just looking at the big picture of what I've heard."

"That's really all I've heard so far," Black said when interviewed shortly after the

election. "They're saying there's an excess in funds, so everybody is going to want a piece of that back."

She said she also would be likely to push for some capital outlay money for her district, which covers part of the city of Alamogordo and rural areas west of the city.

"I went to a capital outlay thing a couple of weeks ago, and I don't have that information in front of me, but I know there were a couple of things that were talked about I wanted to look into. The hearing was for everybody in the county. It was a lot of information. I've got to bring it back down to just Alamogordo," she said.

Despite differences on policy and priorities, Black said she was confident she'd be able to work with the Democratic majorities in the House and Democratic Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham.

"I just briefly met some of the other representatives, but we all want the same things. We want better education. So I think everyone's going to be able to sit down, get their opinions heard and see if we can get things done," she said.

Black reportedly touted her nonpolitical background before she started working at the county treasurer's office when she spoke at a political forum before the primary election last spring.

"When I first started working there, I really wasn't a political person. Having been there over the years I've seen the process of how people are affected by the laws that are written in Santa Fe," Black said, according to the Alamogordo Daily News.

"Some of the laws that are in the books don't take any consideration on how it affects us at the lower level. That was a catalyst in the decision for me to run for office, is to be a voice for the regular, everyday person."



DISTRICT 51

COUNTIES SERVED: Otero

POLITICAL PARTY: Republican

YEARS IN OFFICE: First year

AGE: 46

BIRTHPLACE: Langley Air Force Base, Virginia

PROFESSION: Chief Deputy Otero County Treasurer

EDUCATION: High school, some college

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE: 11 years, Otero County Treasurer's office

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DOREEN Gallegos

Democratic whip represents Doña Ana County

BY MIKE COOK

DISTRICT 52

COUNTIES SERVED: Doña Ana

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: Six

AGE: 50

BIRTHPLACE: El Paso, Texas

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

EDUCATION: Bachelor's and master's degrees in social work, New Mexico State University

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE: Democratic State Central Committee and finance work. Current House majority whip.

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State Rep. Doreen Gallegos is the only legislator from southern New Mexico who is part of the New Mexico House of Representatives leadership team.

Five days after winning reelection with almost two-thirds of the vote to the District 52 House seat she has held since 2013, Gallegos was reelected by the House Democratic caucus as majority whip.

"My whip job became much bigger with so many Democrats winning House seats on Election Day," Gallegos said in a news release.

The Democrats increased their number in the House from 38 to 46 members on election day.

The majority whip assists the House speaker and floor leader "in setting the legislative goals and agenda for the House Democrats," according to a news release. "The whip also works to manage the daily floor sessions" during legislative session.

Having a legislator from Las Cruces in the House leadership is important, Gallegos said, because it helps bring focus and funding to southern New Mexico. When Republicans controlled the House in 2015-16, she said, they wanted to stop giving money to the colonias.

"No, we will not," Gallegos said she told them. "That was so important."

Gallegos said she and House Speaker Brian Egolf, D-Santa Fe, "really bonded when we were in the minority. We won back the House and we really started working at putting a leadership team together."

Along with House Majority Leader Rep. Sheryl Williams Stapleton, D-Bernalillo, and House Majority Caucus Chair Rep. D. Wonda Johnson, D-McKinley-San Juan, the House Democratic leadership includes women of color, Gallegos said, and is "very inclusive of our culture of New Mexico."

Because funding the state receives from oil and gas revenues is "always boom or bust," she said, one of the major tasks before the legislature is rebuilding state revenues "in case 10 years down the road we're no longer booming."

A member of the powerful Legislative

Finance Committee, Gallegos said the legislature must restore funding to public agencies that lost it when the state was battling budget shortfalls.

"Having to sweep funding was very troublesome," Gallegos said, because it left those most in need without services.

"I don't think it's the time to look at a lot of new programs," she said.

Instead, legislators should focus on "what we've taken so we can at least get back to where we were and then look at where we need to go," Gallegos said.

Education must be a top issue in the 2019 session, she said. Schools are suffering because of budget cuts and the legislature must correct some of the damage done during Gov. Susana Martinez' administration.

Incoming Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham has "such a difference in philosophy," Gallegos said. "Now we can look at big-picture items."

District 52, which includes Las Cruces' Talavera and Las Alturas neighborhoods, Vado, Berino and Anthony, has substantial infrastructure needs, she said, including safe drinking water, especially for colonias residents.

Fire service is also a big issue, Gallegos said. Poor ratings for rural fire districts have driven up fire insurance costs, she said.

"If people can't afford to carry insurance and there's a fire, then it affects people very directly. We've got to make sure people are safe," she said.

While fire safety is primarily a county issue, Gallegos said, the legislature can help pay for more equipment and facilities to take the burden off the counties, she said, allowing it to pay for additional firefighting personnel.

Democrats had a 90-minute meeting with Lujan Grisham after their November caucus, Gallegos said, calling it "a real frank discussion" and "a breath of fresh air."

"If people are talking and communicating, can you imagine the work that's going to be done?" she said.

WILLIE Madrid

Chaparral native ready to lead District 53

BY MIKE COOK

Willie Madrid made it a clean sweep for Democrats.

The Chaparral, New Mexico resident defeated incumbent Republican Ricky Little in their 2018 rematch to claim the District 53 seat in the New Mexico House of Representatives and give Democrats control of all eight House seats that represent Doña Ana County.

His district includes Chaparral, the East Mesa communities of Butterfield, Moongate and Organ, the Dog Canyon community south of Alamogordo and Holloman Air Force Base and White Sands Missile Range.

Basic services for his constituents will be a major focus for Madrid during his first legislative session. Many in the Doña Ana County portion of his district need to get connections to waste treatment facilities, he said, while many constituents in Otero County are seeking natural gas connections.

“Getting people connected is a real big issue,” Madrid said. “It’s a common issue.”

There are also infrastructure needs on the East Mesa, he said, including roads and flooding issues that he intends to work with other legislators and use capital outlay funds to address.

As an educator, Madrid said he is hoping to be appointed to the House Education Committee.

“We really are champing at the bit,” he said. “We really want to help education tremendously in a lot of different ways.”

Less than a month after his election victory, Madrid said he is still absorbing a lot of issues and talking to constituents — especially teachers — as he considers what bills he will introduce in the 2019 session.

Addressing education and teacher raises will be essential, he said.

“We’ve done nothing but take away,” he said. “Something has to give.”

A teacher’s salary might have gone up one percent or so in previous years, but his or her insurance costs went up three to four percent at the same time.

“We’ve got to make things right,” Madrid said.

“We’re 50th in the nation. We’re just working very inadequately. We’re in desperate need of teachers throughout the entire state. We need to get back to focusing on our kids.”

Madrid said he is also looking at addressing healthcare and Medicaid as well as “some type of gun reform.”

Madrid said he has talked to Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham on several occasions and sees her as “a breath of fresh air for the state. She’s been very transparent,” he said. “She’s holding herself accountable. You have to empower people; you have to let them take ownership.”

“We’re there to work and get things done,” Madrid said about the upcoming legislative session. “We’re going to do a lot of good things for our constituents. We’re about taking care of the people and that’s what it really has to get back to.”

Madrid has been an instructional assistant for the Gadsden Independent School District for 13 years, teaching alternative skills classes, according to his biography. He teaches at the same school he once attended. Prior to his work with GISD, Madrid worked in business management, including seven years in retail business, he said.

“I’ve always been kind of blessed,” he said. “Now that I’m an educator I see both ends of it.”

Madrid has coached and managed football teams for 27 years, the biography said, including the Chaparral Middle School Knights and Chaparral High School Lobos. His teams have won seven championships.

Madrid was raised in Chaparral and has lived here 47 years, according to his biography. He “grew up in a close-knit, bilingual family,” the biography said, and “learned early on that he had a duty to help others.” Madrid is the father of four grown children.

“I’m honored, I’m humbled to be District 53’s new representative, a new voice,” Madrid said. “I’m excited that I’m being engaged all around because we need to work together.”



DISTRICT 53

COUNTIES SERVED: Doña Ana, Otero

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: First

AGE: 54

BIRTHPLACE: El Paso, Texas

PROFESSION: Instructional assistant, Gadsden Independent School District, teaching alternative skills classes

EDUCATION: Bachelor’s in business management, University of Phoenix; studied family and consumer science at New Mexico State University

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE: None

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DISTRICT 54

COUNTIES SERVED: Chaves, Eddy, Otero

POLITICAL PARTY: Republican

YEARS IN OFFICE: Four

AGE: 64

BIRTHPLACE: Carlsbad, New Mexico

PROFESSION: Retired senior vice president of Holly Corporation

EDUCATION: New Mexico State University

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE: Lobbyist in Santa Fe and Washington, D.C. for 15 years.

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JAMES Townsend

Infrastructure upgrades, right-to-work legislation occupy attention

BY MARTY RACINE

For James Townsend, the biggest immediate needs in his rural south-eastern New Mexico district revolve around infrastructure.

"Roads and bridges are a significant need in this district," said the three-time-elected representative, who was unopposed in both the primary and general election in 2018.

Yet, as Minority Leader and a member of the House Appropriations & Finance Committee and a designee of the Legislative Finance Committee, Townsend tempers any spending initiatives with calls for fiscal restraint.

"My top priority will be to advance the issues of our caucus and to support fiscal responsibility and to build a platform for businesses and individuals to flourish in our state," he said.

That said, increased revenue from oil and gas leases, much of it due to a surge of activity in his district, will benefit state coffers. The question, Townsend said, is how best to direct those funds in the most beneficial, efficient manner.

"I think education will be a top priority. Education, public safety and job bills should dominate the (session's) time. With the surplus that we have, supplied primarily with oil and gas activities, I expect many bills and many new initiatives."

As a Republican, Townsend realizes he will be working with a Democrat governor for his first time in office. But with the election of Michelle Lujan Grisham, he voices optimism that both parties will come together for the good of the state.

"The new governor sets the stage for many initiatives," he said. "She will set the tone for the legislature and can be the catalyst for development of meeting the needs of our state."

Still, there is the inevitable partisan divide on issues such as the role of government in public education, where he favors diverting more control from state bureaucracies into

the hands of local school boards. Beyond education, he feels agency regulations out of Santa Fe are often burdensome and costly to job creation and building projects.

"I think it's gotten worse over the last few administrations," he said, including the Republican administration of Gov. Susana Martinez. "We have made some poor choices. ... Those burdens have weighed heavily on our infrastructure."

Townsend, like most Republicans, also favors right-to-work laws that prohibit mandatory union membership, and blames New Mexico's failure to become a right-to-work state as a contributor to the state's low job creation rate.

"I think failure to address right-to-work is ... a problem," he said.

A move by the group Americans for Prosperity has targeted specific counties in non-right-to-work states such as New Mexico, he said. The ordinances essentially say employees covered by the National Labor Relations Act can't be forced to join a union or pay dues within unincorporated areas of the counties. They don't affect current contracts but apply to renegotiations and extensions.

At last count, eight counties in the state, including all three in Townsend's district, have passed right-to-work ordinances. A similar county-by-county strategy in Kentucky eventually led the Republican governor there to sign statewide legislation that made the Bluegrass State the nation's 28th to adopt right-to-work.

That might be more contentious in New Mexico, as Lujan Grisham, in a campaign debate with her Republican opponent, Steve Pearce, made clear her opposition to right-to-work. It remains to be seen whether the 2019 New Mexico Legislature attempts to contest the legality of county ordinances, or whether a Democrat administration will encourage lawsuits targeting those eight, mostly rural, counties.

ZACHARY Cook

Tax reform is high priority

BY MARTY RACINE

At the tender age of 45, Zachary Cook has already been elected to the New Mexico House of Representatives six times. In 2018, he was sent back to Santa Fe without opposition in both the primary and general elections.

Cook, an attorney by trade, has served on the House Judiciary Committee; the House Local Government, Elections, Land Grands & Cultural Affairs Committee; and the House Rules & Order of Business Committee. He has been an intern on the Legislative Council; the Courts, Corrections & Justice Committee; the Criminal Justice Reform subcommittee; and the Indian Affairs Committee.

In 2018 he sponsored legislation calling for an auditor review of publicly financed campaigns and co-sponsored several ceremonial bills.

This session, he said, his biggest concerns pertain to “economic growth, education and infrastructure. I will continue to work with my colleagues towards comprehensive tax reform to make New Mexico more enticing to new and expanding businesses; eliminating numerous exemptions and lowering the GRT (to) level the playing field for business and reduce the tax burden on all New Mexicans.”

Cook has long been a proponent of simplifying the state’s tax code and “making it fair for everyone.”

Public education will be a major topic in 2019, and Cook said, “I think we should focus on the early childhood programs that have shown results.”

But like many Republicans in Santa Fe, Cook opposes dipping into the state’s permanent fund to bankroll new legislative initiatives regarding education and other concerns.

“We have enough new money (from oil and gas) to avoid using the permanent fund and to gradually expand (education) and other programs in the areas of the state that continue to lag,” he said.

As such, his priorities for the legislative session are “focusing on capital outlay reform, the newly established ethics commission and comprehensive tax reform.”

Among his capital outlay requests for his district are water and forestry projects. Ruidoso has been incrementally updating its water lines over the past several years, and the Lincoln County seat of Carrizozo and the crossroads community of Hondo have each faced critical water system problems.

Prior to the 2018 election that ushered in Democrat governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, Cook said it is unclear how a new governor succeeding Susana Martinez would impact the 2019 session.

“It’s too early to tell,” he said at the time, “but I remain optimistic about New Mexico’s future.”

Regarding public education, about which there seems to be bipartisan consensus over the need for improvements, Cook said, “We need more accountability from parents and students when it comes to education. I am an advocate of shifting administrative dollars to the classroom and increasing the budget for teachers. However, additional dollars will not work without accountability.”

And, like several his Republican colleagues, Cook strikes a cautionary note about the state’s sudden windfall from oil and gas revenues.

“Most of our revenue increases are from oil and gas, an incredibly volatile source,” he said. “I am hopeful that when it comes to the budget, the legislature and governor show fiscal restraint. The last thing we want to do is significantly grow state government only to have our revenue source drop or level off.”

Also, as with many Republicans, Cook is a staunch advocate for right-to-work legislation that would outlaw mandatory union membership for employees. That said, his optimism for achieving same was higher two years ago under a Republican administration.



DISTRICT 56

COUNTIES SERVED: Lincoln, Otero

POLITICAL PARTY: Republican

YEARS IN OFFICE: Ten

AGE: 46

BIRTHPLACE: Denver, Colorado

PROFESSION: Attorney

EDUCATION: Bachelor of Arts degree in English and Spanish, University of New Mexico; Master’s of Business Administration, Thunderbird School of Global Management; Juris doctorate, University of New Mexico

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE: None

CONTACT INFORMATION

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DISTRICT 59

COUNTIES SERVED: Chaves, Lincoln

POLITICAL PARTY: Republican

YEARS IN OFFICE: Two

AGE: 60

BIRTHPLACE: Roswell, New Mexico

PROFESSION: Attorney, specializing in oil and gas

EDUCATION: Bachelor's degree, University of New Mexico; juris doctorate cum laude, Pepperdine (California) University

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:

Chaves County Commission, eight years; former chair of the Chaves County Republican Party

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GREGORY Nibert

Don't get carried away with temporary revenue

BY MARTY RACINE

After his first term in office Gregory Nibert successfully ran for reelection in 2018 when he was unopposed in the Republican primary and won the general election over Libertarian candidate Carl Swinney.

During his first term, Nibert was a member of the House Energy, Environment & Natural Resources Committee; the House Judiciary Committee; the House Printing & Supplies Committee; and the House Enrolling & Engrossing Committee. He was an interim member of the advisory committee on Water & Natural Resources.

As he looks at a budget surplus resulting from a rebound in the oil and gas industry, he strikes a cautionary tale.

"We need to make sure we do not create new programs that require recurring revenue streams simply based on the great deal of money the state has collected in the past year, as that money is not certain to be there every year," he said.

"We need to attend to infrastructure needs that have been postponed and delayed during the economic downturn," he said. "We should return most if not all of the money the state took from schools and other government entities during the financial crisis."

As for legislation or concerns he plans to address during the session, Nibert mentions creation of Airport Authority Districts, U.S. Highway 380 safety concerns and "other touchup legislation dealing with real property and possibly some crime legislation requested by the district attorneys."

U.S. Highway 380, which stretches from Greenville, Texas, to San Antonio, New Mexico, is a main connector between southeastern New Mexico to Interstate 25. It is largely undivided.

Regarding capital outlay requests for his district, Nibert again stresses the need for water projects "from wells to water lines."

"Carrizozo (the Lincoln County seat) has a real ongoing issue with clean drinking

water," Nibert said at the beginning of his previous term two years ago. "We must allocate resources to secure adequate clean potable water resources for the citizens of Carrizozo."

Hondo, to the east, he said, at the time, needed its entire water system replaced, from the storage tank to the lines.

Other 2019 capital outlays, Nibert said, will target "roads and highways, historical district preservation, construction equipment and communication equipment."

The major historical district in his legislative district includes the unincorporated town of Lincoln, once the stomping grounds of Billy the Kid and site of the infamous Lincoln County War.

Asked, prior to the 2108 gubernatorial election between candidates Michelle Lujan Grisham and Steve Pearce, how a new governor might impact this year's session, Nibert said, "(It) sounds like both candidates have a robust agenda focused on crime, education and roads," he said.

Regarding public education, Nibert said the scales have tipped over the years from teaching the basics to socio-political issues.

"We need to reinstitute discipline in the classroom and allow teachers to teach and not have to deal with the social issues, red tape and non-educational roles we have thrust upon them," he said. "I agree we should have an alternative track to college preparatory curriculum that is focused on the trades and vocational training for the actual jobs available in the school's community."

As to why he sought reelection, Nibert said it's an "honor to continue to represent Chaves and Lincoln counties and be a voice for rural New Mexico in the House of Representatives. It is my desire to serve with dignity and honor, working with all legislators to make New Mexico a better place to live, work and raise our children and to provide our children with an opportunity to compete on a global scale."

Catron County

Focus on recreation promotion, infrastructure will help county rebuild

BY TRACY ROY AND ELVA K. ÖSTERREICH

Catron County, New Mexico's largest county at nearly 7,000 square miles, is larger than four states. But its population hovers around only 3,500, according to the latest U.S. Census. In fact, the county has 900-plus miles of dirt roads and an elk population of about 12,000. You're more likely to spot an elk than a person, and the county is known for its hunting, hiking, stargazing and wildland exploration opportunities.

It's no surprise, then, that Catron County relies on tourism as a main source of income. Last year's upgrades at the county's airport, a new fuel system and a weather observation station, were intended to better serve visitors and emergency responders. The U.S. armed services use the airport during annual training exercises, including National Guard.

Bordering Arizona, parts of the Gila National Forest, the Apache National Forest and Cibola National Forest lie in Catron County. The county seat is Reserve, which was given its name for its role in establishing what used to be called "forest reserves." It is also home to the Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument, as well as several mountains, bodies of water and campgrounds. The Continental Divide follows the mountaintops of the county and the trail provides plenty of trout fishing and big-game hunting.

Catron County's new manager, Bill Green, was raised on a ranch, taught in Quemado Independent Schools and served as school superintendent, based in Reserve, for six years. Taking over at the county in June 2018, Green said his goal is to improve the county.

"I want to see if we can get the county back on its feet," he said. "I want to find ways to get more recreation activities, make it more of a vacation spot. I don't want it to be a secret. We need to get businesses in the county to get on our feet."

Green said the county is asking the legislature for help to purchase a portable crusher operation.

"With 1,000 miles of dirt road, there is a lot of improvement we could do," Green said.

The roads issue is connected to most

other issues in the county as well. The average age of a Catron County resident is 62, Green said. Medical and emergency services are essential and road improvements are all important for those services to reach community members.

"A communication system is important in a county this big," Green said. "We are spread out with our population making us the second or third oldest county in the United States. We have become a place for people to retire to, and that has put a real stress on our EMS structure."

During the 1980s, Catron County had a real logging business, he said. Reserve was three times bigger than it is now. With a lot of local jobs tied to logging, when the spotted owls became a concern, the business went bust. Since then, logging permits have opened, and contracts are possible again, but it is a long process to rebuild that business.

"The only new thing is hunting and the guide services that we have here offer jobs to people," Green said. "The cattle business is down, and we have a pretty tough cattle market to deal with. We have wolves and that is pretty devastating to cattle at the southern end of the county."

Hunting hasn't stepped in and replaced logging, but it has helped. Green said tourism and hunting are not businesses to build a stable economy around.



LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

- Catron County legislative priorities for 2019 are the same as the official priorities named by the New Mexico Association of Counties.
- **HB 2 Appropriations:** Support Detention Reimbursement Fund; Prisoner Transport and Extradition; and emergency medical services funding.
 - **Tax Reform:** Support tax-reform efforts that improve economic efficiency, development, ease of administration and overall fairness of the state and local tax system.
 - **Forfeiture Act:** Support for addressing unintended consequences of the 2015 amendments to the New Mexico Forfeiture Act.
 - **Fire Protection Fund:** Support removal of the State Fire Marshal's Office and Fire Protection Fund from the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission.
 - **Behavioral Health:** Support requirement of the New Mexico Human Services Department to ensure the provision of comprehensive services to nonviolent adult and juvenile offenders who have a serious mental illness, including co-occurring substance use disorders.

QUICK FACTS

PEOPLE

Population: 3,587 (2017 estimate)

Households: 1,425 (2012-2016)

Median household income:

\$38,142 (2016)

Persons below poverty level:

21.2 percent (2016)

BUSINESS

Total employer establishments: 59 (2016)

Total employment: 418 (2016)

Non-employer establishments: 356 (2016)

GEOGRAPHY

Land area (square miles): 6,923.69

Persons per square mile: 0.5 (2010)

EDUCATION

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

QUEMADO INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

P.O. Box 128, Quemado, NM 87829-0128

575-773-4700

575-773-4645

quemadoschools.org

RESERVE INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

24 Mountaineer Road, Reserve, NM 87830

575-533-6242

reserve.schoolblocks.com

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 State Highway 12 that continues along the Tularosa Valley.

CRUZVILLE

Census-designated place

Population: 72

Visitors may notice a curious thing about the fence posts near Cruzville, located in the Apache National Forest. 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 that 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 sleepy historical village near the Arizona border 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 U.S. 60 led to a small unincorporated community on the Continental Divide (elevation 7,979 feet) originally known as Norman's Place. Clyde Norman owned the town's only gas station and café, and when he began selling pies in the 1920s the community 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 work 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 sets 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. Today, Reserve is the Catron County seat.

ELECTED OFFICIALS

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LINDA COOKE

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CATRON COUNTY

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Wolves in Catron County

BY ELVA K. ÖSTERREICH

Catron County Manager Bill Green believes wolves are damaging the county's cattle business.

"The cattle business is down, and we have a pretty tough cattle market to deal with," he said. "And we have wolves which are pretty devastating to cattle at the southern end of the county. We are fighting an uphill battle."

Green said there were more than 97 confirmed livestock kills by June of this year.

"We have a pretty thriving wolf population out here," he said. "That's a tough thing. And now there are wolves in the northern part of the county."

The county has an experienced trapper that has been doing the counting and managing.

The wolves take mostly calf crop, Green said. The numbers are where the disagreement begins with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish saying the animals don't kill so many and county residents believing there are many more than the government claims.

"We have people saying wolves aren't running in pairs anymore, they are running in packs now," Green said. "Whenever you have ranchers, they will tell you an 80 percent calf crop is a low bar and now we have 40 to 50 percent. You can't make a business work that way."

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Game and Fish and the Arizona Department of Game and Fish signed a memorandum of agreement in March 2018 to further collaboration between the agencies and to work on the recovery

of Mexican gray wolves. The memorandum increases cooperation to achieve the downlisting and eventual delisting the Mexican Wolf in accordance with the revised 2017 Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan.

The new recovery plan requires wolf population levels reach an average of at least 320 in the U.S. and 200 in Mexico for eight consecutive years to be taken off the endangered species list, along with other criteria. At last count (as of March 2018), 114 Mexican gray wolves were roaming the U.S., a growth of just one since the prior year. At least 51 of those live in New Mexico.

Many who live in Catron County don't feel the wolves should be there.

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Doña Ana County

Second most populous county seeks \$95 million by 2024

BY MIKE COOK

Doña Ana County was created in 1852 as one of the nine original counties in New Mexico Territory. It was named for Doña Ana Gomez Robledo (1604-80), granddaughter of the oldest colonist of the 1598 Juan de Oñate Expedition to leave descendants in New Mexico, according to nmhistoricwomen.org/location/do-na-ana-robledo.

The county contains about 3,800 square miles, ranking it 16th in size among the state's 33 counties. It has about 216,000 residents, making it the second most populous county in the state, behind Bernalillo County. Doña Ana County experienced three percent growth between April 2010 and July 2017, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

The county includes more than two dozen communities in addition to the cities of Las Cruces, Anthony and Sunland Park; the Town of Mesilla; and the Village of Hatch.

According to the Census Bureau, 79 percent of county residents age 25 and older had a high school diploma or higher degree,

2012-16, and more than 25 percent were living in poverty. Median household income 2012-16 was \$38,636 and per capita income was \$20,143.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics said the county's March 2018 unemployment rate was 6.4 percent, compared to about 4.8 percent in the City of Las Cruces.

The county's 2018-19 budget shows \$143 million in revenues and \$154 million in expenses. The budget includes 924 positions.

The Doña Ana County Commission is comprised of five members, who represent geographic districts that cover the entire county.

The county's infrastructure capital improvement plan (ICIP) FY lists projects across the county ranked by priority for which the county is seeking funding.

The county has a total of 61 items on the ICIP list that have received a little more than \$4 million in funding to date, with \$95.6 million in additional funding being sought through 2024.

TOP 12 ICIP ITEMS

From the Doña Ana County Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan, ranked by priority:

- \$8.5 million for storm and surface water control at Dragonfly Channel on the East Mesa, east of Isaacs Lake.
- \$13.3 million for storm and surface water control at the Hatch Flood Control Dam.
- \$3 million to complete wastewater treatment infrastructure improvement at the Sleepy Farms colonia near Vado.
- \$2 million for improvements to Dripping Springs Road east of Las Cruces.
- \$574,000 for lighting and playground equipment at Dolores Wright Park in Chaparral.
- \$401,744 for remodel and expansion of the fire station in Doña Ana, north of Las Cruces. The county has funded \$51,744 so far.
- \$100,000 for solar panels for the Mesilla Valley Regional Dispatch Authority in Las Cruces.
- \$126,465 for pavement reconstruction for Quail Run Avenue, east of Los Alturas Drive and south of Geothermal Drive.
- \$33,500 for improvements to roads in Organ, New Mexico east of Las Cruces.
- \$100,000 for the Casas Linda drainage and pond project in Sunland Park to provide storm and surface water control
- \$31.14 million to add a crosswind runway at the Doña Ana County International Jetport at Santa Teresa. It has funded \$138,000 of the project to date.
- \$1 million more toward a total project cost of \$2.1 million to build at HAZMAT response facility in Santa Teresa.





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Email: hatchchamber@gmail.com

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Phone: 575-524-8900 Fax: 575-532-9255

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ELECTED OFFICIALS

DOÑA ANA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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Las Cruces, NM 88007
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www.donaanacounty.org

DISTRICT 1

Lynn Ellins
575-525-5808
lellins@donaanacounty.org

DISTRICT 2

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575-525-5800
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rgonzalez@donanacounty.org

DISTRICT 3

Shannon Reynolds
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DISTRICT 4

Isabella Solis
575-525-5810
575-635-2479 (cell)
isolis@donaanacounty.org

DISTRICT 5

Karen Trujillo
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LAS CRUCES CITY COUNCIL

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DISTRICT 3

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DISTRICT 4

Jack Eakman
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DISTRICT 5

Gill Sorg
Mayor pro-tem
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DISTRICT 6

Yvonne Flores
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MAYOR

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DISTRICT 1

Kasandra Gandara
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DISTRICT 2

Greg Smith
gsmith@las-cruces.org

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 33

Ana county.

Legislators must be aware that they can't rush to spend new revenue just on new projects, she said.

"We have to backfill projects we took money from" during budget shortfalls in previous session, Papen said. The state also needs to rebuild its reserve funds.

Oil and gas funding are cyclical, Papen said.

"It will drop again. We need to be prepared for that," she said.

State senators each received \$1 million in capital outlay funds during the 2018 session,

Papen said, and that could increase to \$2 or \$3 million in 2019. She and other Doña Ana County legislators will collaborate and seek local and federal matches to address community needs like roads and projects at NMSU, including the autism program, completing work on women's athletic facilities, Arrowhead Research Park and the state Water Resources Research Institute.

The City of Las Cruces has many needs capital outlay might help address, Papen said, including traffic calming and street repair, a downtown parking garage and work on Frenger

Pool. Papen said she will also work with Doña Ana County on its capital outlay needs.

State liquor laws could be examined by the legislature, Papen said.

A plan is needed to protect liquor-license owners who have invested a lot of money in licenses, Papen said, but also to create the opportunity for more people to buy licenses at an affordable price.

The 2019 session, Papen said, will be a real opportunity to move New Mexico forward and find solutions for the needs of at-risk children and families and to improve health care.

Economic Development Department reports nearly 4,000 new jobs were created in 2018

BY MIKE COOK

FY17 was an outstanding year for New Mexico as we worked to create new jobs and make our state a better place to do business,” outgoing New Mexico Economic Development Department Sec. Matt Geisel said in NMEDD’s 2017 annual report.

“A total of 1,729 new jobs were created as a result of EDD’s programs, 775 of those being rural jobs. New partnerships with Facebook, Keter Plastics, Wholesome Valley Farms and SolAero (to name a few) have brought investment and life changing opportunities to our communities and are helping us create a healthier economy.”

The New Mexico Film Office finished FY17 with more than \$500 million in direct spending by film companies, Geisel said in the report, which exceeded all previous records. “They also went above and beyond the year’s target for film and media worker days,” he said. “The film office has now enjoyed three record breaking years in a row.”

In October 2018, Netflix bought ABQ Studios in Albuquerque.

In June 2018, the report said, “Stampede Meat signed the final documents to purchase the former Tyson plant in Sunland Park. The project represents the largest jobs announcement in over a decade, creating 1,295 jobs at full capacity. The 285,000 square foot building has been empty for several years; the company will invest \$36 million in infrastructure and in updating the facility. This location allows for collaborations with the NMSU College of Agriculture, as well. NMEDD will invest up to \$3 million in Local Economic Development Act (LEDA) funds. New Mexico successfully

competed against Texas, Oklahoma and Iowa for the project.”

“NMEDD closed FY18 with a total of nearly 4,000 new jobs, 2,414 of which are in rural communities,” the department said in its FY18 fourth-quarter report.

That report noted that Little Toad Creek of Silver City expanded its brewing operation, “which resulted in \$80,000 in private investment in the Las Cruces MainStreet District, and additional jobs at their new tap room,” which is in Downtown Las Cruces.

Erickson Metals in Santa Teresa “was able to acquire \$1 million in additional equipment and hire three new positions during the fourth quarter of 2018, the report said.

Geisel was appointed NMEDD secretary by Gov. Susana Martinez in October 2016.



DOÑA ANA QUICK FACTS

PEOPLE

Population: 215,579

Households: 74,989 (2012-16)

Median Household Income: \$38,636 (2012-16, in 2016 dollars)

Persons below poverty level: 25.6 percent

BUSINESS

Total employer establishments: 3,615 (2016)

Non-employer establishments: 12,557 (2016)

Total firms: 16,298 (2012)

GEOGRAPHY

Land Area (square miles): 3,807

Persons per square mile: 55

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, www.census.gov

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DOÑA ANA COUNTY COMMUNITIES

ANTHONY

City Population: 9,339 (2017 estimate)

Mayor: Diana Murillo-Trujillo

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 (2010)

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 that was established with the installation of a post office in 1880.

CHAPARRAL

Census-designated Place

Population: 14,631 (6,965 in Doña Ana County)

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 (2010)

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 (2010)

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 (2010)

Likely named for assassinated president James A. Garfield, Garfield lies 50 miles northwest of Las Cruces. Its post office was established in 1896.

HATCH

Population: 1,601 (2014 estimate)

Village Mayor: 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: 737 (2016 estimate)

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, and Stahmann Farms.

LA UNION

Census-designated Place

Population: 1,124 (2016 estimate)

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 state road 28. It is home to New Mexico's oldest winery, La Viña.

LAS CRUCES

City Population: 101,712 (2017 estimate)

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 (2014 estimate)

Mayor: Nora L. Barraza

With its rich history, Mesilla was once the economic and social center of the Mesilla Valley. It was 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. The historic plaza, with its quaint shops and restaurants, is a major tourist attraction.

MESQUITE

Census-designated Place

Population: 1,112 (2010)

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 (2010)

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 (2010)

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: 1,888 (2016 estimate)

Once known as Fort Seldon Springs, Radium Springs derives its name from free-flowing mineral hot springs that contain enough radium per liter to inspire its current name. It lies 17 miles north of Las Cruces.

RINCON

Census-designated Place

Population: 271 (2010)

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, Mass., established a post office, renaming the community after their home.

SAN MIGUEL

Census-designated Place

Population: 1,153 (2010)

Established in 1850, San Miguel lies 10 miles south of Mesilla on state road 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: 836 (2016 estimate)

With 1.22 square miles of land area containing slightly more than 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: 194 (2014 estimate)

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 (2010)

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: 17,061 (2017 estimate)

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 (2010)

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 (2010)

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 (2010)

Consisting of the main residential area for the White Sands Missile Range, White Sands is located on the east side of the Organ Mountains.

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GO bonds produce \$150 million for city, NMSU projects

BY MIKE COOK

City and statewide general obligation (GO) bond elections in 2018 will provide more than \$150 million in funding for City of Las Cruces and New Mexico State University projects.

A Las Cruces vote-at-home election in July and August generated \$35.6 million, as city voters approved four GO bonds to pay for major city initiatives, including city parks and sports fields improvements (generates \$16.9 million, approved by 57 percent), new and upgraded recreation trails (\$2.7 million, 57.5 percent approval), a new fire station to replace the one on Valley Drive to serve west Las Cruces (\$6.2 million, 69.5 percent approval) and a new animal services center (\$9.8 million, 67 percent

approval).

The projects would be paid for with local property tax funds, which will increase about \$105 per year for a person who owns a house valued at \$150,000.

The July election was the first large-city election conducted entirely by mail. It drew a 25 percent turnout from among eligible city voters, which is 2.5 to three

times the average for city elections.

For more information on the city GO bond election, visit www.las-cruces.org and enter go-bond-2018 in the search box.

As part of the Nov. 6 general election ballot, New Mexico voters approved four statewide GO bond issues, which will be paid for through statewide property tax.



APPROVED GO BOND ITEMS

- **Senior citizens centers:** Anthony Senior Community Center: \$238,700; Betty McKnight Multipurpose Center (Chaparral), \$100,000; Mesilla Community Center, \$111,500; and Munson Senior Center (Las Cruces), \$58,000.
- **Higher education, special schools and tribal schools:** NMSU has more projects on this bond than any other New Mexico college or university. NMSU-Las Cruces, \$25 million for improvements to the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences; NMSU-Doña Ana Community College, \$1.7 million for infrastructure improvements campus-wide, including roof repair and replacement.
- **Public libraries:** For academic (\$4 million), public school (\$4 million), tribal (\$750,000) and public libraries (\$4 million) statewide. Purchases could include print, non-print and electronic resources, collaborative resources, broadband internet equipment and furniture, as well as resource acquisitions and information technology.
- **Public school buses:** \$6.137 million for public school buses.
- **Constitutional amendments:** Amendment 1 gives the state legislature authority to provide for appellate jurisdiction by statute. Amendment 2 creates an independent state ethics commission.

Las Cruces' legislative priorities

BY MIKE COOK

The Las Cruces City Council approved a "Top 10 List" of city projects for which it will seek capital outlay funding from local legislators during the 2019 session of the New Mexico Legislature.

The projects would cost a total of \$12.9 million.

Legislators and the governor usually receive funds at each session to pay for local capital projects. Doña Ana County legislators often pool the capital outlay money they receive to jointly fund requests from the city, the county and other governmental entities and organizations.

In 2014, the city received \$8 million in capital outlay funds, city Grants Administrator Amy Johnson Bassford said, but it received \$0 in 2017. The city received \$2 million this year, she said.

The city's top capital outlay projects list for 2019 includes:

- \$2.5 million for the design phase of a

five-story downtown parking garage;

- \$1.2 million for septic system improvements in the Hacienda Alameda Acres and Hacienda Acres areas;

- \$890,000 for park improvements, including lighting and security cameras at Veterans and Gomez parks and on Plaza de Las Cruces and in the downtown parking lot behind Rio Grande Theatre;

- \$2 million for landscaping of medians on Roadrunner Parkway and Lohman Avenue;

- \$1.1 million for four Las Cruces International Airport projects, including improvements to runways, taxiways, roads and parking areas, including landscaping and signage;

- \$1.1 million for improvements to the water tank near the airport;

- \$850,000 for improvements to Branigan Cultural Center, including interior and exterior repairs;

- \$850,750 for Las Cruces Police Department equipment, including 55 mobile data terminals and SWAT vehicles;

- \$900,000 for a Las Cruces Fire Department digital communications system; and

- \$1.42 million for road and flood control improvements on Van Patten and McFie avenues.

The 10 items were culled from the city's earlier list of 29 capital outlay requests totaling almost \$42.22 million.

Doña Ana County is represented by eight members of the New Mexico House of Representatives, including six whose districts are entirely in the county, one who represents parts of Doña Ana and Otero counties and one who represents parts of Doña, Grant and Sierra counties; and five state senators, including four whose districts are entirely in Doña Ana County, one whose district includes parts of Otero,

Eddy and Doña Ana counties and one whose district includes parts of Doña Ana, Hidalgo, Luna and Sierra counties.

City legislative lobbyist Larry Horan said the legislature will have significant additional money to spend in the 2019 session because of increased oil and gas revenues.

"The state really is rolling in dough," Horan said at the Dec. 17 council meeting.

But, he said, the funding requests legislators receive for capital outlay will exceed funds available.

Exactly how much each legislator will receive in capital outlay funds won't be known until late in the 60-day session, which begins Jan. 15, 2019, Horan said.

Mike Cook may be contact at mike@lascrucesbulletin.com.



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HERE'S TO A GREAT 2019!

"As mayor of Las Cruces, my fellow members of City Council and I look forward to working with Governor Michelle Lujan-Grisham, 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

CITY OF LAS CRUCES TOP CAPITAL PROJECTS



\$2.5 million

Downtown Parking Garage

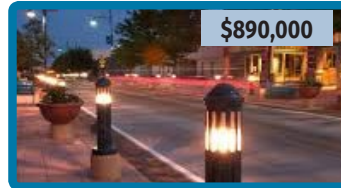
Design a 400 space, multi-level and mixed-use parking structure on City-owned lot in the Downtown area. Will help serve as an economic driver to the fast-developing "Heart of the City."



\$1.2 million

Septic System Improvements

Continue replacing septic systems located within Las Cruces city limits to help reduce potential public health impacts caused by proximity to public water supplies.



\$890,000

Parks Improvements

Improve lighting and install security cameras at Plaza de Las Cruces, Veterans Park and other parks to increase guest safety and deter incidents of vandalism.



\$2 Million

Median Improvements on Major Roadways

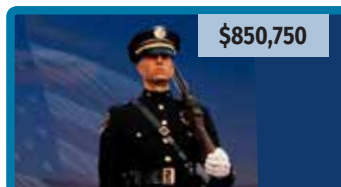
To address environmental and social issues for residents. Provide harvesting of storm water, increase shade and improve driver experience.



\$900,000

Fire Department Communications Systems

Make fire department compliant with 911 center; upgrade 22-year-old communication system to P25 Digital. Includes encryption for high security communications.



\$850,750

Police Department Equipment

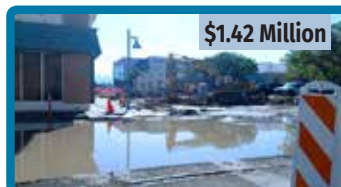
Tactical vehicles; incident command and mobile operations command vehicles and mobile data terminals.



\$850,000

Branigan Cultural Center Improvements

Eliminate water penetration; repair walls, roof and parapets. Replace lintels and window trim; re-glaze windows and repair interior mural.



\$1.42 Million

Road & Flood Control Improvements

As prioritized by the Pavement Management Program. Reconstruct roads and improve flood control. Includes sidewalks, curb and gutter, drainage, street lighting, signage and paving.



\$1.1 million

Airport Water Tank Rehab

Adjacent to Las Cruces International Airport – supplies water and water pressure to the airport and West Mesa area.



\$1.1 Million

Airport Improvements

Improvements to non-FAA covered areas of Las Cruces International Airport to help increase air traffic.

2019 REQUESTED LEGISLATION

- Establish and maintain a Neurodegenerative Disease Registry.
- Share detailed GRT data from exporting businesses with local governments to improve efforts to support said businesses by improving their supply chain from local sources and assisting them to identify other markets in which to export their products.
- Share detailed GRT data from individual businesses with local governments to improve enforcement of business licensing, tax payments, and the analysis of economic market data.
- Create a study group with representation from NMML and the New Mexico Association of Counties to develop a tax reform plan for the State of New Mexico.
- Review of the physician reimbursement rates in New Mexico.
- Allow New Mexico produced spirits to be sold at establishments licensed to serve beer and wine.
- Establish outdoor recreation as a priority and create a New Mexico Office of Outdoor Recreation.
- Review the enforcement of existing regulations to improve physician reimbursement rates in New Mexico, specifically, but not limited to:
 - » Capitation distribution requirements under NMAC:8.308.20.9;
 - » Credentialing of physicians within the required 45-day period by managed care organizations.
 - » Payment of interest on late payments to physicians.
 - » Retroactive adjustment by the health care insurance within 18 months.
- Continued adequate legislative funding for the State Attorney General's Office related to the water litigation for TX v. NM & CO.
- Undertake a financial and operational feasibility study for the development of a behavioral health hospital for southern New Mexico, inclusive of the state's participation in conjunction with municipal and county governments.
- Develop a statewide healthcare-for-all solution by designing a public-option buy-in for healthcare coverage, modeling on Medicaid or similar plan model.
- Enact the End of Life Options Act, allowing for open and accessible options for the terminally ill, mentally competent adults seeking control over their own deaths.
- Better ensure the safety of students in Las Cruces schools by improving mental health services, and providing a secure, weapons-free environment for learning.



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FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Stuart C. Ed, City Manager • 575/541-2076 • sed@las-cruces.org • Lawrence Horan, Lobbyist • 505/859-2895

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Sincerely,

Amanda López Askin, Ph.D.
Doña Ana County Clerk



845 N. Motel Blvd., Las Cruces, NM 88007 (575) 647-7428 DACElections.com

New Mexico State University welcomes new leadership

BY MIKE COOK

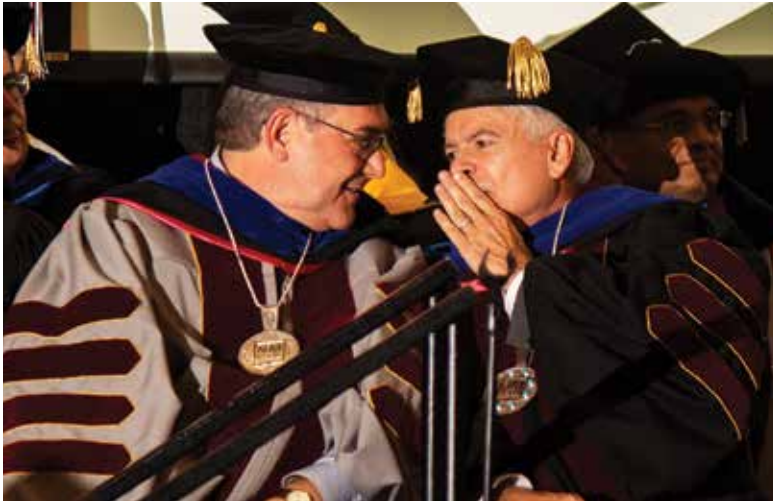


PHOTO BY STEVE MACINTYRE

New Mexico State University President Dr. John D. Floros, left, and Chancellor Dr. Dan E. Arvizu share a few words during their inauguration ceremony, Nov. 15, 2018, at Corbett Center on campus. (Photo by Steve MacIntyre)

New Mexico State University will greet the 2019 session of the New Mexico Legislature with a new leadership team. Dr. Dan Arvizu became NMSU's second chancellor June 1, succeeding Garrey Caruthers. Dr. John Floros became NMSU president of NMSU's main campus in Las Cruces a month later. It's the first time the NMSU system has had both a chancellor and a president.

Arvizu lived in Alumni and Garcia halls when he was a student at NMSU, he said, and "would walk the length of the campus daily" to attend classes at the engineering center near Hadley Hall. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in mechanical engineering in 1973 and went on to earn a masters and a

rewarding experiences on campus," Arvizu said. He played in both the marching band and orchestra at NMSU, along with studying engineering.

The new chancellor said he plans to "take full advantage of what we already have in place," and will meet with NMSU students, staff and faculty and community members and leaders to learn more about NMSU and "hopefully take the institution to another level."

When Floros arrived at Kansas State University in 2012, he set 12-year goals to increase student enrollment and student success in its college of agriculture, where he was the dean and director of extension.

"We accomplished every single one of these

PhD in the same field from Stanford University.

"I am inspired and humbled," Arvizu said. "It's a great honor to be at the helm of my alma mater."

Arvizu grew up in Alamogordo, played first-chair trumpet in the Alamogordo High School Band and attended NMSU on a music scholarship. Being a member of the Aggie Pride Band was "one of my most

projects in six years, not 12," Floros said. Floros' successes include record enrollment, nearly 100 percent graduate placement and a major increase in philanthropic giving. As a result, the K-State ag college is consistently rated among the top five in the nation.

Part of the reason he wanted to come to NMSU, Floros said, was that, like K-State, NMSU is a land-grant-university.

"The land-grant mission was definitely an attraction to me," Floros said. "Working for a university whose mission is really to educate the masses, retrain the workforce, reach out to the communities ... that's why I'm in academia."

In addition to education, research and outreach, Floros said he and Arvizu must "bring a lot of different disciplines together, a lot of different minds, a lot of different approaches (to meet) the challenges we're facing in society, from food to natural resources to water to energy."

Since 2008, 12 million jobs have been created in the U.S., Floros said. "99.5 percent have gone to people with higher education degrees – at least four-year degrees," he said. "Those are the numbers we need to get out to the public. It's higher education that drives this country."

"We have to change with the times," Floros said. "We have to figure out what that change means to us. We have to be ahead of that change."

Floros said he can help NMSU "connect agriculture to arts and sciences, engineering, education" because his connections to agriculture "go back to birth."



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Santa Teresa: N.M.'s Economic Engine

New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham will spend a lot of her time attending ground breakings, ribbon cuttings and grand openings for new and expanded businesses in the southern Doña Ana County industrial hub of Santa Teresa.

Santa Teresa should rightly be high on her radar, because it is the state's shining star of job creation and enhanced interstate and international trade for the State of New Mexico.

All of that growth is good for every corner of the state, and it is critical that the New Mexico Legislature continue funding infrastructure investments that will allow the growth to continue unabated.

The elected officials and management team of Doña Ana County are committed to shepherding Santa Teresa toward its full potential. To do that, we need help from the Legislature to continue to make improvements to major arterials that are enabling ever-growing heavy truck traffic.

We need commitments to help us build out the Doña Ana County International Jetport at Santa Teresa to accommodate more frequent and longer-range cargo movement. And while we celebrate recent announcements of more than 1,000 new jobs being created in just the last six months through Admiral Cable and Stampede Meats, we await even further announcements relative to the dynamic growth in southern Doña Ana County.

Every investment made by the New Mexico Legislature in Santa Teresa will have an immediate and far-reaching positive effect on the undeniable economic momentum that is underway and unwavering.

We implore the 2019 New Mexico Legislature to join us in continuing to invest in Santa Teresa and its promise for the state and region. From enhanced GRT revenue to job creation and explosive trade growth, Santa Teresa keeps proving that every dollar invested there has a positive outcome for New Mexicans of every political affiliation.

The engine of economic prosperity and eventual self-sufficiency is humming loud and clear in Santa Teresa. Working closely together, we can make it sing!

Southern Doña Ana County

County challenged with growth

BY ELVA K. ÖSTERREICH

Doña Ana County Public Information Director Jess Williams calls the southern part of the county a soup. He, and many others, consider the area around the Santa Teresa Border crossing the home of New Mexico's economic engine.

"Over the course of the next 25 years it will not surprise me if Santa Teresa is the second or third largest city in the state of New Mexico," Williams said. "We have the airport which serves Santa Teresa planes, the Union Pacific rail hub for intermodal rail travel and a four-lane highway which not only connects to I-10 but also goes directly to the border."

Doña Ana County Jetport Manager Bill Provance calls the area an inland port and said about 50,000 semi-trucks pass through every year and the number will continue to grow.

Williams said a family on the Mexican side of the border crossing owns the land and plans to develop it in conjunction with what is happening on the American side.

"As the soup begins to cook, you are going to see more and more residential development, more commercial development to support the residential development, and you are going to see a city spring up," Williams said. "There is nothing happening anywhere that is as bright for New Mexico's future as the Santa Teresa region and the growth we are seeing and the growth we are continuing to see. So, getting the state to partner with us to invest in Santa Teresa is critical."

Current projects in the area around Santa Teresa include money for the Camino Real Regional Utility Authority (CRRUA), which is responsible for the management and maintenance of the Sunland Park and Santa Teresa water and waste water system and improving Airport Road and Industrial Road, both phased projects.

"The roads initiative is separate from the legislative initiatives," Williams said. "The county has dug into our cash reserves; we have identified about \$10 million, and we are doing some road improvements in the county and a lot of them in the southern part are self-funded."

Since Union Pacific went live with its transport hub, he said the county has railroad cars transporting tractor trailers.

"Hundreds of trucks are coming in and out of there," he said. "It creates tremendous strain on existing roads. It's critical we build it up and continue to have a plan to keep up with the infrastructure needs."

Supporting CRRUA is "a huge component in making sure we can support the industrial growth that continues to grow in Santa Teresa," Williams said.

One of the biggest issues in the area is that the industrial park is full, Williams said. That slows growth down a little bit. A lot of the companies want a building already in place.

The Rio Grande Valley is historically agricultural, Williams said.

"That's its base and New Mexico State University is a land grant institution. But things are shifting. What we are seeing in the south valley is farmers are making choices about the best use of their land," he said. "Some are continuing farming, and some are subdividing to developers. That is a push-pull that is going to happen any time we see an area developing as rapidly as Santa Teresa. It will be up to the individual farmers what is the best value, whether they want to continue a heritage or whether they want to establish a hefty bank account for their heirs."

The exponential growth began as soon as the border crossing was approved and constructed, Williams said.

"It began when the county began to build its industrial parks in the southern area near the port of entry," he said. "It took off like lightning when Union Pacific put in its rail hub (2014), that was lightning. That gave us all of the soup."



Jetport is a growing hub

BY ELVA K. ÖSTERREICH



In Santa Teresa, on Airport Road, the Doña Ana County airport — also known as the International Jetport — serves as a hub for the busy industrial area. Jetport Manager Bill Provance and a single maintenance person are the only county personnel there, but the place buzzes with activity and grows daily.

The building where Provance has his office is also the Santa Teresa HAZMAT Response Facility. Legislative appropriations have been used to help fund an expansion of the facility and the county is looking for more funding to finish the project and build a third apparatus bay for emergency response vehicles.

"It was originally planned to be a 24-hour, planned facility with four dorm rooms," Provance said. "It serves as a fire station, HAZMAT facility and aircraft recovery. Activity (in Santa Teresa) is ramping up and we are finally catching up. The industrial park is growing by leaps and bounds."

The second phase, recently completed, cost \$1.3 million and included new offices, refurbished exterior and expanded space.

The airport has 165 airplanes based there and 20 of those are jets, giving the facility the "jetport" title. It sees an average of 200 to 250 operations every day.

Doña Ana County owns all the land under the facility and the fire station, customs building and three hangars. The rest of the structures are private but under long-term leases, including the National Weather Station based there.

Provance said the current 9,550-foot-long runway is being rebuilt this summer, in three phases.

"The center section is built only to 20,000-pound airplanes and we have two 80,000-pound airplanes here," he said.

The Gulf Stream G5, one of the 80,000-pound planes, that's what \$45 million

■ CONTINUED ON PAGE 72



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SUNLAND PARK



FIRE DEPARTMENT

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 69

looks like,” Provance said.

But the 80,000-pound designation is not only needed for the planes housed at the airport, it could bring a plethora of business to the area. At one point it was designated as a reliever airport for El Paso Airport, he said.

“When we can get the runway built up, it will be designated up that way again,” he said. “An air cargo study that showed if we had the capability, organizations like FoxConn could fly three 737s a day to offload computer parts, and drive them across the border.”

Currently, the computer parts land in Los Angeles, and are trucked from Los Angeles to Santa Teresa to cross the border. Provance said the FoxConn plant builds 50,000 Dell computers a day and ships them all over the world.

The crosswind runway, part of the master plan update, would provide a runway for small airplanes landing during times the New Mexico winds keep them for coming down at the facility. He said small airplanes cannot legally land there when the winds are stronger than 20 miles per hour.

“That project will be done in phases also,” he said. “The first will be about 6,000 feet long that will handle the planes we have here, but it will be built to handle 100,000-pound airplanes. Eventually we want it to be 12,000 feet long and 150 feet wide and handle the 757.”

The jetport is home to a busy flight school and a maintenance hangar with its services booked through December.

“Every hangar is full,” he said. “We have a waiting list of 34 people.”

The facility is used by the Army to practice landing and take off for helicopters. The El Paso Police Department conducts driving and motorcycle classes there. The CIA practices driving skills there on the “heavy ramp,” a large concrete area. Barnett’s Harley Davidson out of Las Cruces can be found there, working its bikes on the ramp sometimes during special events. The War Eagles Air Museum is also a tenant.



Hatch was originally settled as Santa Barbara in 1851, however Apache raids drove the farmers away until 1853 when the nearby Fort Thorn was established. When Fort Thorn closed in 1859, the town was abandoned again in 1860. It was not until 1875 that it was re-occupied and that time it was renamed for Indian fighter Edward Hatch, who was then commander of the New Mexico Military District. The Hatch Chile Festival is an annual event that occurs each Labor Day. This event attracts people world wide to a place known as the chile capital of the world. The small town has accommodated up to 30,000 people for this event. The small farming community is known worldwide for raising exceptional chiles.

Officer Richard Garcia and K-9 Nia

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Grant County

County aims for facility improvements

BY ELAINE STACHERA SIMON

Grant County is home to some of the wildest and most beautiful land and darkest skies in New Mexico – the Gila National Forest. The Gila comprises 3.3 million acres, including the Gila Wilderness, the first designated wilderness area in the United States. Adjoining the Gila Wilderness is the Aldo Leopold Wilderness, established in 1980 and named for pioneering ecologist Aldo Leopold, author of *A Sand County Almanac*. The Black Range is contained within the 202,016 acres of Aldo Leopold Wilderness, as is approximately 33 miles of the Continental Divide.

Silver City is the county seat for Grant County. Not only is Silver a great “jumping off” point for exploring the Gila or the Continental Divide, but it’s home to Western New Mexico University, which houses the world’s largest permanent collection of Mimbres pottery, it’s one of the “100 Best Art Towns in America,” and it has been the location for the Tour of the Gila road cycling event for more than 30 years.

When it comes to ensuring the disparate needs of the county are met, a group of local stakeholders called the Prospectors comes together to ensure that all perspectives have a place at the table. According to Grant County Planning Director Michael “Mischa” Larish, the Prospectors are “non-partisan, non-lobbying representatives from the school district, different nonprofits, businesspeople, and county, city, and municipal representatives who come together to educate the legislature as to what community needs are.”

Included in this year’s presentation to the legislature are five capital outlay requests:

- New patrol vehicles for the Grant County Sheriff’s Department
- Repair and renovation of the Grant County Administration parking lot in Silver City
- Repair, and renovation of the roof for the Grant County administrative facility
- Planning, property acquisition and construction of runways at the Grant County Airport
- Funding to renovate and equip the terminal building at the Grant County Airport.

One significant challenge noted in the legislative funding application that Grant County faces (and that other counties throughout

New Mexico face) is the escalating cost related to caring for detainees at the county detention center who suffer from issues related to substance abuse and mental illness.

According to District 38 Rep. Rebecca Dow (R-Grant, Hidalgo, Sierra), an important function of the legislature is ensuring that it “prioritizes what the county brings to us.” Water and fire issues are always a concern. People in this region are “very individualistic,” though, and “don’t want more regulation in their day-to-day lives,” Dow said. Rather, they’ll come together to solve a problem.

Dow gives the example of watershed restoration necessary for the prevention of catastrophic fire. She notes that “an eclectic group representing the far left to the far right” came together with assistance from a mediator “in order to plan and prioritize where fire hazard mitigation needed to occur.”

“We had everyone from monks from the monastery to Sierra Club representatives, farmers, and ranchers,” said Dow.

Dow adds that improving early childhood education is always a priority, a dearth of research about improving and updating best practice in foster care is ongoing.

Fort Bayard is a historical community treasure that needs to be saved, Dow said. Santa Clara is ready to take over the ownership and management of the town, and Dow believes it needs to be given the opportunity to do so.

“There is a story to be told at Fort Bayard, and there is economic opportunity,” she said. “The buildings are amazing, and other forts in New Mexico have had success incorporating RV parks, trails, restaurants, breweries and hotels.”



LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

- HB2 appropriations:
 - Restore funding for Detention Center to original \$5 million
 - Reimbursement of travel expenses to sheriff’s department for transportation of state prisoners
 - Emergency Medical Services funding
- Behavioral health
- Tax reform
- Fire protection
- Forfeiture Act Reform

QUICK FACTS

PEOPLE

Population: 27,687 (2017)

Households: (2013-2017) 11,879

Median household income: \$40,470 (2013-2017)

Persons below poverty level: 20.3%

BUSINESS

Total employer establishments: 602 (2016)

Total employment: 6,909 (2016)

Total non-employer establishments: 1,531 (2016)

Total firms: 1,930 (2012)

GEOGRAPHY

Land area (square miles): 3,962

Persons per square mile: 7.4

Source: www.census.gov



GRANT COUNTY COMMUNITIES

BAYARD

City Population: 2,185

Incorporated in 1938, Bayard is nestled in the foothills of the Gila and Mogollon mountains.

CLIFF

Census-designated place

Population: 293

Primarily a farming and ranching community, the post office was established in 1894. In 2017, "Woman-Ochre," a 1955 painting by Willem de Kooning worth \$165 million that had been stolen from the University of Arizona Museum of Art in 1985, was found hanging on the wall in the home of a recently deceased couple in Cliff.

HURLEY

Census-designated place

Population: 1,210

The town of Hurley was constructed by the Chino Mining Company. The Chino Mine is one of the largest open pit mines in the world.

PINOS ALTOS

Census-designated place

Population: 198

Spanish for "tall pines," Pinos Altos is in the Gila National Forest. When three miner 49ers stopped to take a drink in Bear Creek in 1860 and discovered gold, the town of Pinos Altos was born. With a Main Street that looks like an Old West movie set, many buildings have been restored with original 1800s memorabilia and artifacts.

SANTA CLARA

Village Population: 1,800

Santa Clara celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2018. Originally named Central City, the name was changed to Santa Clara in 1996. Santa Clara is the home of Fort Bayard National Cemetery, placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2002.

SAN LORENZO

Census-designated place

Population: 97

Located in the Mimbres Valley, the hills surrounding rural San Lorenzo boast an abundance of birdlife and wildlife. Nearby, the San Lorenzo Canyon Recreation area offers opportunities for hiking and primitive camping.

SILVER CITY

Town, County Seat

Population: 9,647

Home to Western New Mexico University, Silver (as it's known to locals) is famous for its thriving culture of arts and music, festivals, and as the gateway to the Gila National Forest.

ELECTED OFFICIALS

GRANT COUNTY COMMISSION

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1400 Highway 180 E,
Silver City, NM 88061
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Billy Billings

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Javier C. Salas

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jsalas@grantcountynm.com

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575-538-3731

DISTRICT 2

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www.silverschools.org

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P.O. Box 1000, Bayard, NM 88023
575-537-4010
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NM 88062

P.O. Box 680, Silver City, NM 88062
800-872-9668, 575-538-6011
wnmu.edu

Hidalgo County

Seeks road improvements, ambulance

BY TRACY ROY

Last year, Hidalgo County was hit hard by a strapped budget while dealing with bad roads, unhappy teachers and not much hope for help. However, due to a reauthorization of funds, it was able to complete renovations at its fairgrounds.

"We had electrical upgrades and renovations completed over the past two years," said Hidalgo County Manager Tisha Green. "Our fair was without lighting issues this year and appreciated by citizens. The project is now complete and closed."

The county may fare better with funding for new projects this year due to a financial windfall at the state level, and officials are looking to fund three of four projects on its priority list.

Additionally, a focus on fixing education woes during the 60-day legislative session could help repair the county's teacher shortage.

"Teacher shortages are a very real problem, not just in Hidalgo County, but statewide," said Stephen Lucas, superintendent of Lordsburg Municipal Schools. "Pay is an issue, as well as the remoteness of the region. The upcoming legislative session can help address pay issues, but it takes a very special type of person to live and be happy in a rural, remote area. Here, we think nothing of driving a couple of hours to get to Las Cruces or Tucson

for entertainment, doctor visits, etc."

With residents needing to drive a long distance to conduct the business of their lives, roads in need of repair remain an issue across the sprawling, rural county.

Hidalgo's legislative priorities include requests for capital outlay funds to purchase a road department truck and make road improvements to Glen Acres, which include correcting drainage problems, according to County Manager Green.

Other priorities include the purchase a new ambulance and a shelter to house it in a remote area.

Last year, Hidalgo County Commission Chairwoman Marianne Stewart said that another concern for the county is securing PILT funding (Payment in Lieu of Taxes). PILT is a program in which the federal government pays counties compensation for the property taxes lost due to federal ownership of land. In New Mexico, roughly a third of the land is owned by the federal government. In Hidalgo County, those funds amount to about \$700,000 and relied on by the county, Stewart said last year.

"Myself and all three commissioners plan on visiting Santa Fe during the legislative session to discuss and request assistance that is needed in the bootheel of New Mexico," Green said.

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

- Purchase of a new ambulance
- Road improvements to Glen Acres to include drainage issues
- Road department truck purchase
- Ambulance shelter purchase to house ambulance in remote area

QUICK FACTS

PEOPLE

Population: 4,302 (2016 estimate)

Households: 1,858 (2011-2015, 5-year survey)

Median household income: \$34,444 (2011-2015)

Persons below poverty level, percent: 26.7 percent (2011-2015)

BUSINESS

Total employer establishments: 100 (2015)

Non-employer establishments: 207 (2015)

Total number of firms: 250 (2012)

GEOGRAPHY

Land area (square miles): 3,436.86

Persons per square mile: 1.4 (2010)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, www.census.gov



EDUCATION

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

LORDSBURG MUNICIPAL SCHOOLS

401 W. 4th St.,
Lordsburg, NM 88045
575-542-9361
www.lmsed.org

ANIMAS INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

#1 Panther Blvd.,
Animas, NM 88020
575-548-2299

UNIVERSITIES/ COLLEGES

HIDALGO LEARNING CENTER, WESTERN NEW MEXICO UNIVERSITY

520 West Second St.,
Lordsburg, NM 88045
575-542-3315
[wnmu.edu/ExtUniv/
Hidalgo_Learning_Center.shtml](http://wnmu.edu/ExtUniv/Hidalgo_Learning_Center.shtml)

HIDALGO COUNTY COMMUNITIES

ANIMAS

Census-designated place

Population: 240

Founded around 1753 by the Spanish, Animas became part of the newly independent country of Mexico in 1821. A ranching community, it is located in the area sold to the United States with the Gadsden Purchase of 1853. The name probably came from the Spanish for souls, or lost souls and may refer to the numerous people who died during the early days of Apache-settler conflict.

COTTON CITY

Census-designated place

Population: 393

The Cotton City area was centered around a cotton gin for many years. The region has had a strong farming base, growing chile, cotton, beans and corn. Cotton City is included with Animas for mail and educational services. Gas and food are bought elsewhere.

GLEN ACRES

Census-designated place

Population: 337

Glen Acres is a golf and country club subdivision next to Lordsburg. The city of Lordsburg is working to incorporate the area in order to include it in water and sewage services.

LORDSBURG

City, County Seat

Population: 2,531

Located on Interstate 10, 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. The town received publicity in the classic 1939 Western, "Stagecoach," starring John Wayne.

RODEO

Census-designated place

Population: 101

One mile from the Arizona border on state Highway 80, Rodeo is New Mexico's westernmost town. Founded in 1902 as a rail stop, it once was an important shipping point for livestock. The town today is home to the Chiricahua Art Museum and the Chiricahua Desert Museum.

VIRDEN

Village Mayor: Rulene M. Jensen

Population: 154

Established by the New Mexico Mining Company as Richmond in 1916, this site along the Gila River was chosen to build a stamp mill. In 1912, Mormons leaving Chihuahua during the Mexican Revolution entered into talks with the company, eventually purchasing the area for \$50,000 and renaming the town Virden in honor of NMMC president Ernest Virden.

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ROBERT BARRERA, MAYOR

SUSIE COLE

ERNEST GALLEGOS

IRENE GALVAN

EDDIE LOPEZ

RODNEY PLOWMAN

ROXANN RANDALL



Lincoln County

Long-delayed projects move front and center

BY MARTY RACINE



PHOTO COURTESY DIANNE STALLINGS/UIDOSO NEWS

A new headquarters for the county's emergency medical services was built in the first phase of the hospital project.

Sprawling Lincoln County, from the alpine peaks of Sierra Blanca at 12,000 feet to the piñon and juniper country sloping toward the wide horizon, has many personalities.

The main attraction is the Ruidoso area, an outdoors oasis known for camping, hunting, mountain biking, quarter-horse racing and hiking during its relatively cool, green summers; and, in a good snow year, for top-shelf skiing and snowboarding.

And year-round, flatlanders, many from West Texas, are attracted to the casinos that dot the area between Ruidoso Downs and the adjoining Mescalero Apache Reservation.

Below Ruidoso, the sparsely settled towns hold onto the secrets to history — the boom-and-bust mining towns, the daring escape of Billy the Kid, the infamous Lincoln County War, the Apache raids that built venerable Fort Stanton, the legend of Smokey Bear... even the "Roswell" UFO crash that is actually traced to Corona at the northern edge of the county.

For all its beauty, Lincoln was mostly settled long ago, and infrastructure has always been an issue — even in Ruidoso, with its aging water lines and its main reservoir of Grindstone Dam that required structural repair several years ago.

Those concerns have shifted in 2019 to construction and renovation projects that have been discussed for years.

"Expansion of White Oaks Volunteer Fire Department station for \$225,000 and the Lincoln County Detention Center for \$550,000

top the list Lincoln County commissioners are sending for consideration of funding in the 2019 legislative session," reporter Dianne Stallings wrote in the Oct. 26, 2018, Ruidoso News.

"Commissioners also included a \$3.8 million shortfall in dollars for the replacement of the county-owned Lincoln County Medical Center in Ruidoso."

The \$3.8 million shortfall is due to "missing philanthropy" that had been expected to raise \$5 million of the \$35 million project, according to the News.

Presbyterian Healthcare Services is expected to raise \$1.2 million as part of its contract leasing the hospital from the county.

The hospital vote followed the voicing of concerns about including a big-ticket item on the legislative list.

"Commissioner Lynn Willard said with a big-ticket item, if other smaller projects were left off, the county 'could come up with nothing,'" Stallings wrote.

She continued: "Commissioner Dallas Draper, sitting in as chairman in the absence of (chairman) Preston Stone, said the list will contain two other less expensive options for funding and he's comfortable with adding a large ticket for the hospital."

In the same meeting, some projects were removed from Lincoln County's capital outlay request, including replacement of the Hondo Senior Center for \$480,436 because the county received a Community Development Block Grant for that work, Stallings wrote.

A \$400,000 land acquisition item also was removed because it was not ready under new guidelines from the Southeastern New Mexico Economic Development District.

According to the Ruidoso News, Lincoln County Manager Nita Taylor said about 25 projects are on the full Infrastructure and Capital Improvements Proposal (ICIP) and with the removal of the Hondo Senior Center and land acquisition, other items, including repaving three miles of county roads for \$500,000, moved up the roster.

QUICK FACTS

PEOPLE

Population: 19,395 (2017 estimate)

Households: 7,902 (2013-2017, 5-year survey)

Median household income: \$42,145 (2017)

Persons below poverty level: 15.8 percent (2017)

BUSINESS

Total employer establishments: 677 (2016)

Total employment: 5,080 (2016)

Total non-employer establishments: 1,863 (2016)

Total firms: 2,794 (2012)

GEOGRAPHY

Land area (square miles): 4,831

Persons per square mile: 4.2 (2010)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, www.census.gov

EDUCATION

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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P.O. Box 278, Capitan, NM 88316

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575-648-2346

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P.O. Box 258

575-849-1911

www.cpscardinals.org

HONDO VALLEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

111 Don Pablo Lane, Hondo, NM 88336

575-653-4411

www.hondoschools.org

RUIDOSO MUNICIPAL SCHOOLS

200 Horton Circle, Ruidoso, NM 88345

575-630-7000

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UNIVERSITIES/COLLEGES

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709 Mechem Drive, Ruidoso, NM 88345

575-257-2120

www.ruidoso.enmu.edu

LINCOLN COUNTY COMMUNITIES

ALTO

Census-designated place

Population: 1,213

Located in the Lincoln National Forest, five miles north of the village of Ruidoso, this golf course community is at 7,300 feet and received its name from the Spanish word "high" because of its elevation.

CAPITAN

Village

Population: 1,413

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

Town, County seat

Population: 936

Carrizozo was founded in 1899 and grew to prominence as the main railroad access for the county. The town experienced significant population growth in the early decades of the 1900s, but as significance of railroad transport diminished, the population gradually declined. Carrizozo has a burgeoning art district downtown and is known statewide for a cherry cider drink, often found in rural convenience stores.

CORONA

Village

Population: 160

Corona was 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

Billy the Kid, Kit Carson and Black Jack Pershing all spent time at Fort Stanton. Built in 1855, Fort Stanton is now one of the best-preserved military installations from New Mexico's frontier era. Having served as a tuberculosis hospital and a WWII internment camp, it now encompasses 240 acres of historic trails, buildings and hosts regular living history programs.

HONDO

Census-designated place

Population: 341

In the 1880s, Spanish settlers founded La Junta ("the junction") where the Rio Bonito and Rio Ruidoso converge to form the Rio Hondo. The name was changed to Hondo ("deep") after the river.

LINCOLN

State historical site

Population: 51

Seventeen structures comprise the Lincoln Historical Site, with adobe and stone buildings preserved as they were in the late 1800s and representing the factions involved in the Lincoln County War (1878-1881). A National Landmark since 1960, Lincoln is the historical home of Billy the Kid and holds an annual festival featuring an open-air enactment of "The Las Escape of Billy the Kid."

RUIDOSO

Village

Population: 7,756

This mountain resort town is a popular destination for desert dwellers seeking cool temperatures and green scenery in the summer and skiing in the winter. Located in the Sierra Blanca mountain range, the village takes its name from the Rio Ruidoso, which means "noisy river." The impressive Spencer Theater attracts world-class performances of music, dance and drama.

RUIDOSO DOWNS

City

Population: 2,583

Formerly known as Hollywood and Greentree, this city that adjoins Ruidoso draws visitors to The Ruidoso Downs Race Track, Billy the Kid Casino and the Hubbard Museum of the American West.

SAN PATRICIO

Town

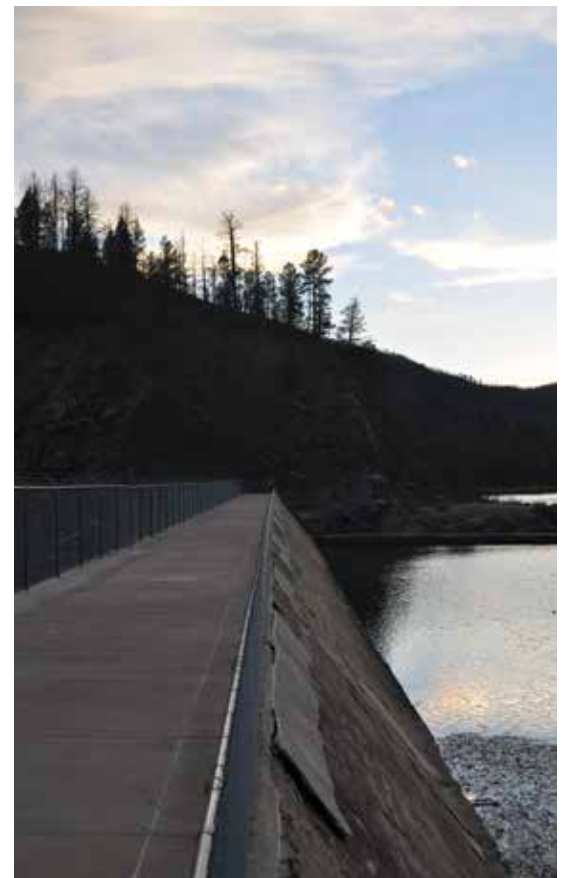
Population: 564

This community, at 5,400 feet, is home to a Benedictine spirituality center and the Hurd-La Rinconada Gallery owned by artist Michael Hurd, which displays original works of art by the Wyeth and Hurd families. 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 Population: Undetermined

Located on the outskirts of the Lincoln National Forest, White Oaks began as a gold boomtown in 1879 when gold and coal were discovered nearby. During its heyday, it boasted 50 different businesses, including four newspapers, two hotels, three churches, a sawmill, a bank, an opera house, livery stables and saloons and gambling houses. By the early 1900s, the mines had dried up and the town was almost — but not completely — abandoned. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, one of the town's saloons remains open — the No Scum Allowed Saloon.



ELECTED OFFICIALS

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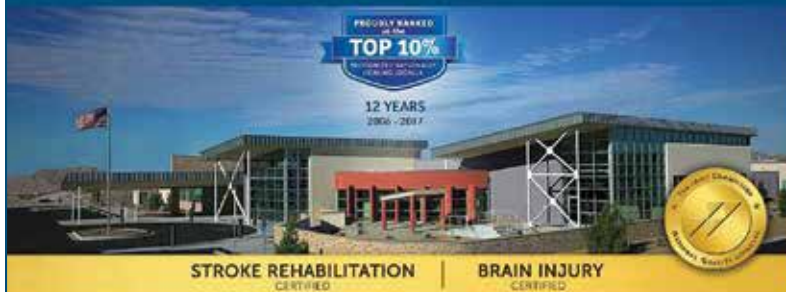
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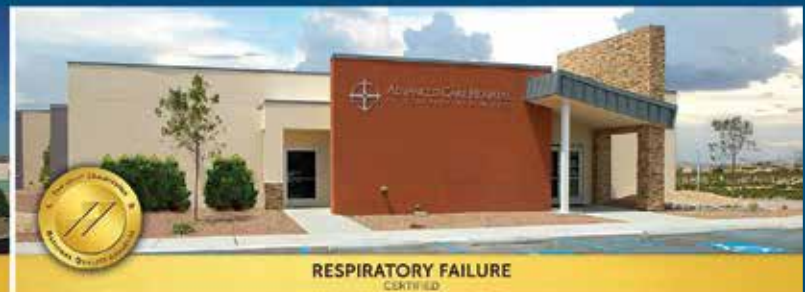
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Luna County

Deming, county focus on the basics

BY RICHARD COLTHARP

Like much of New Mexico, the folks in Deming and Luna County are continually working to improve infrastructure, education and the economy.

Community leaders have begun some specific projects in these areas and are hopeful some state funds can be available for others.

"We are working with the University of New Mexico School of Architecture and the Woodbury school in California on an incubator project," Deming Mayor Benny Jasso said. "Students have designed several concepts. This will be part of our West side of Deming revitalization project."

The project will enable fledgling business to rent space at a reduced rate and allow them access to classes from Deming Luna County Economic Development and Western New Mexico University.

Deming opened its Early College High School in the fall of 2018 and is supported by four primary entities: Deming Public Schools, the City of Deming, Luna County and Western New Mexico University. Jasso said the school is off to a great start.

"We're working to support them," he said. "They are probably going to need more room. We're trying to figure out how each entity can help make that happen."

Glory Juarez, Luna County's interim manager, said the county is actively working with its area partners.

"The county, in collaboration with the City of Deming and Village of Columbus, will be seeking funding to improve infrastructure – roads, drainage, diversion berm, expansion of recreational facilities, improvement of Infor-

mation technology facilities – and purchasing a tire shredder to improve solid waste and environmental issues," Juarez said.

The shredder may not be the glitziest item on anyone's legislative priority list, but it's needed and quite practical.

"We have quite a few tires built up," Jasso said. "It affects us at the landfill too. No matter what you do with whole tires, they always come back to the surface."

Jasso said the cost of the shredder is around \$800,000.

Both Juarez and Jasso said they hope some capital outlay money can come back in the form of road improvements and maintenance.

"We have a lot of road projects here in Deming," Jasso said. "We're hoping to capture some of the monies for the roads."

"Cedar Street runs along I-10, on the south side, but does not connect," Jasso said. "We really need to do that. It would be a good economic boost to us if we can connect."

The city and the county are working together on this project, as well as on additional recreational facilities," Juarez said.

The recent Port of Entry Expansion in southern Luna County, connecting the Village of Columbus on the New Mexico side to Palomas on the Mexico side, has created additional, accompanying projects, which will bring construction activity to the region.

These include a study on the 36-mile corridor of New Mexico Highway 11 between Columbus and Deming, diversion berms in Columbus to protect the Port of Entry, and a Border Economic Development Plan.

QUICK FACTS

PEOPLE

Population: 24,078 (2017)

Households: 9,088 (2013-2017, 5-year estimate)

Median household income: \$27,602 (2017)

Persons below poverty level: 28.3 percent

BUSINESS

Total employer establishments: 382 (2016)

Total non-employer establishments: 982 (2016)

Total number of firms: 1,353 (2012)

GEOGRAPHY

Land area (square miles): 2,965

Population per square mile: 8.5 (2010)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, www.census.gov/quickfacts

EDUCATION

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DEMING PUBLIC SCHOOLS

1001 S. Diamond Ave.,
Deming, NM 88030
575-546-8841
www.demingps.org

UNIVERSITIES/COLLEGES

MIMBRES VALLEY LEARNING CENTER (WNMU)

2300 E. Pine St.,
Deming, NM 88030
575-546-6556
wnmu.edu/ExtUniv/deming



LUNA COUNTY COMMUNITIES

COLUMBUS

Village Population: 1,609 (2017 estimate)

South of Deming 30 miles and three miles north of the U.S.-Mexico border, opposite the Mexican village of Puerto Palomas, Chihuahua, stands Columbus, the second-most-populous town in Luna County. In 1916, the town was attacked by Mexican revolutionary Francisco "Pancho" Villa, killing eight soldiers and 10 residents, in what historians refer to as the Battle of Columbus. Columbus Elementary School serves schoolchildren from both Columbus and its neighbor to the south, Palomas, by busing students across the border.

DEMING

City Population: 14,183 (2017 estimate)

The Luna county seat, Deming is the largest city in the county and is home to nearly 60 percent of its population. Founded in 1881 and incorporated in 1902, Deming began as a main port of entry near the Mexican border and has grown into an agricultural center and transportation hub. Tourism and retirement are also major industries.



ELECTED OFFICIALS

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DISTRICT 3

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Otero County

Stability, growth are priorities

BY JENNIFER GRUGER

Holloman Air Force Base (HAFB), commercial airline possibilities, outdoor adventure and newly elected officials are all at the center of economic development in Otero County.

The Otero County Commission continues with a three-member commission this year with Lori Bies in District 3 joined by two newly elected Commissioners, Couy Griffin in District 2 and Gerald Matherly in District 1. County Manager Pamela Heltner reported a number of priorities for the county and economic stability and growth were consistent topics during the election season.

The communities of Cloudcroft, Tularosa and Alamogordo all have new members on their city councils, with Tularosa also electing new mayor Margaret Trujillo. Each community reported efforts to expand tourism efforts to bring attention to this culturally and historically significant area. The City of Alamogordo is focused on promoting the "Adventures for Life" brand and developed a mobile app for visitors to the area. Search "Alamogordo, New Mexico" on the App Store for Apple or Google Play for Android.

The 49th Wing at Holloman Air Force Base, home to the MQ-9 Reaper remotely piloted aircraft and F-16 Viper as well as 30 tenant units (units who work on the base but don't work directly for the Wing) has a new commander, Colonel Joseph L. Campo. G.B. Oliver, interim executive director of the Alamogordo Chamber of Commerce, said of Colonel Campo, "We have someone dedicat-

ed to interlocking the communities here with the base."

Oliver, along with Rene Hatfield, chair of the Otero County Economic Development Council, cited numerous formal inquiries from new medium to large businesses looking at Alamogordo as a destination for establishing new or expanded locations and credit the Air Force base as one reason for an apparent uptick in interest.

At New Mexico State University – Alamogordo, Dr. Ken Van Winkle, president of the campus cites two bachelor's degree programs available completely onsite in Alamogordo: one in nursing and the other in elementary education. In process are associates degrees in computer science, allied health, IT and business management technology, as well as a medical assistance and phlebotomy certificate program. Van Winkle explained that he initiated a pilot program that eliminated fees for airmen, spouses and families for these and other programs in order to show this unique community that they matter. Acknowledging there are other post-secondary educational offerings to airmen and their families, Van Winkle pointed out, "We're the campus that is only six miles away."

Along with tourism and marketing the outdoor lifestyle of the Southwest, improved housing options, education and healthcare expansion continue to be the focus for Holloman Air Force Base and the communities throughout Otero County.

LEGISLATIVE CONCERNS

- **Timberon Fire Station:** \$750,000 to build a new 8-bay, 9,000 square feet fire station to replace the one with structural issues that limit its use.
- **Alamo Street Repaving:** \$1.25 million to resurface this heavily traveled road
- **Emergency Operations Center:** \$115,000 was received last year to finish remodel on the existing building. An additional \$50,000 is being requested to purchase and install equipment
- **Riata Road Pecos Crossing:** \$2 million to construct a bridge/roadway and stabilize a current low-water crossing through an arroyo for the safety of the citizens that traverse that road
- **Detention center expansion:** \$18 million for three-phase project secured by general obligation funds

QUICK FACTS

PEOPLE

Population: 65,817 (2017)

Households: 23,043 (2012-2016)

Median household income: \$41,502 (in 2016 dollars)

Persons below poverty level: 20.5 percent

BUSINESS

Total employer establishments: 962 (2016)

Total non-employer establishment: 3,298 (2016)

Total number of firms: 3,918 (2012)

GEOGRAPHY

Land area (square miles): 6,613.21

Persons per square mile: 9.6 (2010)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, www.census.gov



Otero County has its eye on the skies

BY JENNIFER GRUGER

In 2018, F-16 Viper fighter jet squadrons became a permanent mission at Holloman Air Force Base (HAFB), due in large part to the efforts put forth to respond to the need for a skilled workforce to handle maintenance on the planes, according to Lance Grace, executive board member of MainGate United and Chairman of the White Sands Airport Advisory Board. MainGate United is a subcommittee of the Alamogordo Chamber of Commerce. That group is working with the community and civilian contractor AECOMM to beef up the workforce.

“Getting the maintenance people here turned out to not be a problem. The workers who took those jobs love it here!” Grace said.

Information provided by Arlan Ponder, director of media relations for HAFB, 49th Wing Public Affairs, confirms that as of late 2018, HAFB is also now home to MQ-9 Reaper and sensor operator (enlisted personnel who control the cameras on Remotely Piloted Aircraft) formal training unit. The 49th Wing saw the transfer of the base’s flying training mission to Air Education and Training Command (AETC).

The transition, effective Oct. 1, 2018, aligns the wing and all co-located units, which hosts MQ-9 Reaper and F-16 Viper formal training

units, under the 19th Air Force, the numbered air force responsible for flying training across the Air Force.

Additionally in 2018, the Alamogordo-White Sands Regional Airport completed a \$5.25 million project using federal, state and local dollars adding a 2,200-foot runway extension. This expansion provides an F-16 alternate emergency landing capability for the U.S. Air Force and meets requirements for the BAe-146 U.S. Forest Service fire suppression aircraft upgrade. Due in part to the runway extension, along with other favorable data points, Grace said “Alamogordo is now the only community in New Mexico that has the economic ability to support regional jet service (commercial air service) that is not currently doing so.”

Movement in the direction of adding commercial air service with airplanes that could handle 50-100 passengers and include flights to international airports is underway.

As the communities in Otero County continue efforts to expand housing and improve the quality of education, these developments combine to make the area more appealing to businesses looking for new locations to build new operations or expand existing operations.

Growing connectivity: Tularosa network gets \$18 million loan from USDA

Assistant to the Secretary for Rural Development Anne Hazlett has announced the U.S. Department of Agriculture is investing in infrastructure projects in a dozen states to improve e-connectivity in rural communities, according to a news release.

“In the modern economy, rural broadband is a lifeline to quality of life and economic opportunity,” Hazlett said. “With that impact, USDA is fiercely committed under the leadership of Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue on expanding access to e-Connectivity in rural America.”

Tularosa will build 176 miles of fiber-optic facilities, construct new fiber-to-the-premises (FTTP) facilities, and upgrade digital subscriber line (DSL) and FTTP electronics. The improvements will enhance services and provide subscribers voice and higher broadband speeds.

According to a 2018 report by the Federal Communications Commission, 80 percent of the 24 million American households who lack reliable, affordable, high-speed internet are in rural areas. USDA’s investments in broadband infrastructure are helping transform rural America, providing innovation and technology to increase economic competitiveness and opportunities, the USDA news release said.

USDA is investing \$91 million through the Telecommunications Programs. The 19 projects will benefit more than 27,000 businesses and households in 12 states.

In New Mexico, the Tularosa Basin Telephone Company Inc. will use an \$11.8 million loan to improve telecommunications for nearly 10,000 customers in the Carrizozo, Cloudcroft and Tularosa exchanges.

EDUCATION

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ALAMOGORDO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

1211 Hawaii Ave.,
Alamogordo, NM 88310
575-812-6000
www.aps4kids.org

CLOUDCROFT MUNICIPAL SCHOOLS

10 Swallow Place,
Cloudcroft, NM 88317
P.O. BOX 198
575-601-4416
www.cmsbears.org

TULAROSA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

504 First St.,
Tularosa, NM 88352
575-585-8800
www.tularosak12.us

NM SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

1900 N. White Sands Blvd.,
Alamogordo, NM 88310
575-437-3505
www.nmsbvi.k12.nm.us

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(Formerly known Father James B. Hay Catholic School)
Grades PreK – 6
1000 E. Eighth St.,
Alamogordo, NM 88310
575-437-7821
www.fjbhccatholic.org

IMAGO DEI ACADEMY

Classical Christian School K-12
1100 Michigan Ave.,
Alamogordo, NM 88310
575-434-3903
www.imagodei.academy

LEGACY CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

Private, Catholic, Grades K-12
3001 Thunder Road,
Alamogordo, NM 88310
575-434-0352
www.legacychristianacademy-edu.com

UNIVERSITIES/COLLEGES

NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY-ALAMOGORDO

2400 North Scenic Drive,
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575-439-3600
www.nmsua.edu

PARK UNIVERSITY

49th FSS/FSDE 596 4th St.
Building 224, Suite 213,
Holloman AFB, NM 88330
575-479-2337
www.park.edu/campus-centers

OTERO COUNTY COMMUNITIES

ALAMOGORDO

City, County Seat

Population: 31,248

Mayor: Richard Boss

Home to the oldest zoo in the Southwest, Alameda Park Zoo, as well as the New Mexico Museum of Space History and the Clyde M. Tombaugh Planetarium. Its culture and economy are augmented by nearby Holloman Air Force Base.

BENT

Unincorporated community

Population: 119 (2010)

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: 1,638 (2010)

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, included in the Las Cruces Metropolitan Statistical area, has grown rapidly in recent years.

CLOUDCROFT

Village Population: 688 (2017)

Mayor: Dave Venable

Located high atop a forested "island" in the arid desert, Cloudcroft's elevation (8,600 feet) brings a relatively mild, wet summer that makes this Alpine village a popular seasonal destination.

HIGH ROLLS-MOUNTAIN PARK

Unincorporated Community

Population: 834 (2010)

Located at the southernmost tip of the Sacramento Mountains, High Rolls includes a general store, a post office, an elementary school, two churches and occasionally a bar. It has many local attractions, including a Cherry Festival and Apple Festival.

HOLLOMAN AFB

Census-designated place

Population: 21,000 Active Duty, Guard, Reserve, retirees, DOD civilians and their family members
Established in 1942, six miles west of Alamogordo, the base was named in honor of Col. George V. Holloman in 1948, a pioneer in guided missile research. Total economic impact is more than \$480 million per year.

LA LUZ

Census-designated place

Population: 1,615

Founded in 1719, La Luz is the oldest settlement in the Tularosa Basin. It lies on the eastern edge of the Tularosa Basin and on the western flank of the Sacramento Mountains.

MAYHILL

Unincorporated community

Population: 80

Surrounded by the Lincoln National Forest, Mayhill is almost entirely residential, with several vacation homes as well as farms and ranches. The population density is two people per square mile.

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 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, just north of El Paso, Texas, was a small railroad town and yard. It was named after Texas real estate developer Henry L.E. Newman.

OROGRANDE

Unincorporated community

Population: 52

Established as a mining town in 1905 and named Jicarilla Junction due to its proximity to the Jicarilla Mountains, the town was renamed Orogrande (Spanish for big gold) in 1906. It is a semi-ghost town that does offer a functioning gas station/convenience store.

PIÑON

Unincorporated community

Population: 71

The town is in the piñon-juniper shrub lands habitat with an altitude of 6,060 feet. The population remained stable between 2000 and 2010.

SUNSPOT

Unincorporated community

Population: 674

Located at an elevation of 9,200 feet, 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 home to 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

Considered a resort and retirement community, high in the Sacramento Mountains, Timberon has a golf course, lodge and airstrip.

TULAROSA

Village Population: 2,930 (2017)

Mayor: Margaret Trujillo

Tularosa 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: 63

Nestled on the east slope of the Sacramento Mountains at 7,047 feet, Weed was founded in 1884 by George and Elizabeth Lewis. It was named after William H. Weed, who opened a branch store there.

ELECTED OFFICIALS

OTERO COUNTY COMMISSION

1101 New York Ave.,
Alamogordo, NM 88310
575-437-7427
www.co.otero.nm.us

DISTRICT 1

Gerald Ray Matherly
575-437-7427

DISTRICT 2

Couy Dale Griffin
575-437-7427

DISTRICT 3

Lori Bies
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ALAMOGORDO CITY COMMISSION

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DISTRICT 2

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DISTRICT 3

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DISTRICT 4

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DISTRICT 5

Alfonso "Al" Hernandez
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DISTRICT 6

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TULAROSA VILLAGE COUNCIL

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Tularosa, NM 88352
575-585-2771

Margaret Trujillo, Mayor
575-585-2771

Janie Portillo, Trustee
575-585-2771

Jeni "Bebe" Flores, Trustee
575-585-2771

Patrick Garcia, Mayor pro-tem
575-585-2771

Robert Sainz, Trustee
575-585-2771

CLOUDCROFT VILLAGE COUNCIL

201 Burro Ave.,
Cloudcroft, NM 88317
P.O. Box 317
575-682-2411

Dave Venable, Mayor
villageofcloudcroft@tularosa.net

Bill Denney, Mayor Pro-tem
billd@ote-coop.com

Cindy Voight, Trustee
craigcindyvoight@gmail.com

John Tieman, Trustee
villageofcloudcroft@tularosa.net

George Mitchell, Trustee
villageofcloudcroft@tularosa.net

Sierra County

Leaders optimistic about growth, improvements

BY RICHARD COLTHARP

Truth or Consequences Mayor Steve Green and Sierra County Manager Bruce Swingle are bullish on their region heading into 2019.

For Green and Swingle, the reasons for optimism are more tangible than ever.

The Spaceport America Visitors Center is up and going in downtown Truth or Consequences. The southern road to Spaceport America, connecting the facility to Interstate 25 and enabling efficient access from Doña Ana County, is complete. Virgin Galactic, Spaceport America's primary tenant, made a successful space test flight with its SpaceShip Two in California in December 2018. New activity in T or C's downtown, and increased popularity of its signature hot springs spas, has lifted economics and energy in the county's largest city. The New Mexico State Veterans Home has added a \$26 million, 59-bed, memory care unit at its campus in Truth or Consequences.

"I am optimistic about a lot of things happening now, and on the horizon," said Green of T or C, which, which welcomes a brand new city manager, Morris Madrid, appointed in late December.

"We're ecstatic," Swingle said about the activity at Spaceport America.

Even one of the more troubling aspects of the region — the drought and its effect on Elephant Butte Reservoir — has hope in the future. A joint powers commission, comprising the City of T or C, Sierra County, the City of Elephant Butte and the Village of Williamsburg, is continuing its efforts to create a minimum pool of water for the reservoir.

"We have been able to identify additional

partners who have an interest in the wildlife preservations, B.A.S.S. (Bass Anglers Sportsman Society) Nations being one of them," Swingle said. "I think the community and region as a whole realizes the significance of the lake at Elephant Butte, not only to the economy, but the environmental aspects of wildlife and fishery."

The reservoir has historically been the No. 1 recreational destination in the state, generating as much as 90 percent of the budget for the entire New Mexico State Parks system.

With tourism driven by the lake, the hot springs, Spaceport America, as well as the arts and T or C's burgeoning downtown, community leaders want to make sure tourists are taken care of and want to return.

"We're really thrilled with our active MainStreet organization," Green said. "And we received a USDA grant for hospitality training, which is for all types of businesses that interact with visitors, and also to treat our own citizens as visitors, and give them a great experience."

Another key priority for the region has little to do with tourism.

"Our No. 1 focus is funding the next phase of the construction of the hospital," Swingle said. "That is the region's sole capital outlay request."

Just as with the reservoir's joint powers commission, the region's four municipalities collaborate on the hospital as owners of Sierra Vista Hospital. T or C and Sierra County each own 40 percent. The City of Elephant Butte owns 15 percent, and Williamsburg, 5.

"All four entities have supported resolutions to be unified in our request for capital outlay," Swingle said.

The 60-year-old hospital already has a new emergency room and other improvements. The \$5.2 million request will go toward debt on the \$26 million loan that made those upgrades possible and future upgrades easier to do.

"We're really excited about this," Green said. "Being an older community, healthcare becomes a very important part of the mix."

"We are moving in a very positive direction financially and professionally," Swingle said of Sierra Vista Hospital, which employs about 230 people. "And the region's been very forthcoming in supporting the hospital and the

management company hired to improve operations and efficiencies."

TAKING FLIGHT

Virgin Galactic has been the focus of much of the Spaceport America discussion in the last decade, and some have criticized the state's expense on the project.

Swingle, Green and others, though, remain solidly positive about Spaceport America's future and, perhaps more important, its present.

Most New Mexicans don't realize the impact the spaceport has already had on Sierra County in recent years.

■ CONTINUED ON PAGE 86

QUICK FACTS

PEOPLE

Population: 11,116 (2017)

Households: 5,400 (2013-2017, 5-year survey)

Median household income: \$29,690 (2017)

Persons below poverty level: 26.6 percent

BUSINESS

Total employer establishments: 217 (2016)

Non-employer establishments: 713 (2016)

Total number of firms: 837 (2010)

GEOGRAPHY

Land area (square miles): 4,178

Persons per square mile: 2.9 (2010)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, www.census.gov

EDUCATION

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES MUNICIPAL SCHOOLS

180 N. Date St.,
Truth or Consequences, NM 87901
575-894-8166
torcschools1.schooldesk.net

UNIVERSITIES/COLLEGES

WESTERN NEW MEXICO UNIVERSITY GARDNER LEARNING CENTER

601 Sunset St.,
Truth or Consequences, NM 87901
575-538-6369
extended.wnmu.edu/torc



■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 85

"Numerous (non-Virgin) launches are occurring," Swingle said. "We have five companies working at Spaceport America now, and there are 10 or 11 working that the spaceport has signed nondisclosure agreements with. There is a lot of activity, and companies continue to hire. We're excited. Virgin Galactic is moving folks into the area as we speak. Even though I believe it's only at about 3 percent of capacity, the spaceport has continually grown its gross receipts and employees year over year. Our county is receiving much more in gross receipts tax than we're putting in, and our hotels and restaurants are full from the activities."

Now that Virgin has had a successful spaceflight test, the much-anticipated private citizen flights are closer than ever to taking off here in New Mexico.

In December 2018, Virgin founder Richard Branson cautiously predicted that, after some further examination of equipment and operations, probably by mid-2019, "We will move the operation to the spaceport in New Mexico. Then I will then go up, and we'll do another set of tests. If every box is ticked, we will start to be able to take members of the public up."

OTHER LEGISLATION

Swingle said Sierra County is on board with several other counties and legislators who want to modify two state tax ordinances.

"One is cleaning up correctional facility gross receipts tax verbiage," Swingle said. "The current language creates an accounting nightmare for us and for (the New Mexico Finance Authority). We need to resolve these accounting problems."

The other ordinance needing modification, Swingle said, regards the taxing of emergency medical services and behavioral health.

"The current language does not allow you to use money for infrastructure," Swingle said. "But the tax is initiated at the local level and local governments know more of the needs. We hope legislators will allow us to use the money for its intended purpose."

Emergency services and behavioral health often cannot be performed without proper buildings and infrastructure, Swingle said. For example, a communications center is necessary for dispatching emergency services.

"To have key infrastructure exempted was likely not the intent of legislature," Swingle said.

ABOVE AND BELOW

At street level in T or C, things are hopping, literally and figuratively.

The popular T or C Brewing Co. has "helped the drumbeat of downtown," Green said. "When I came in 2000, there were like 16 empty storefronts. Now we're down to two or three. Now you can't get a parking place on Broadway on Saturday night."

"And a couple of our spas have done major upgrades. It's encouraging to see investment in your own community by existing businesses who had suffered through hard times. It's very satisfying as an elected official. Other people realize there is good opportunity for investment in T or C, and there are things on the horizon to happen. People are starting to say, 'Let's take a look at Truth or Consequences.'"

Below the street, infrastructure problems lurk.

"We are always trying to find funding sources for that," Green said. "We want to build stronger infrastructure to attract new businesses and new residents to the community."

T or C has a USDA grant phasing in an upgrade to the wastewater treatment plant, which was out of compliance do to change in schedule regulations.

"We're replacing potable water lines and sewer lines," Green said. "The pipes are very old, and the lack of rain has made the ground really dry, and lost some of support the pipes were resting on. The pipes angle down, creating more leaks."

Back above ground, Healing Waters Plaza, in the heart of downtown, is a new feature in the community, celebrating Truth or Consequences' hot springs and centrally positioned for local events.

"The geothermal waters bubble up, and it ties everything together," Green said. "It fronts right on the Sierra Grande Lodge property and is right behind the visitors center, where the Spaceport America tours start."

FURTHER ON THE HORIZON

Another potential economic boon is still awaiting approval from state and federal overseers: the Copper Flat Mine.

The project would re-open a long-dormant mine six miles northeast of Hillsboro. It would bring an estimated \$175 million in taxes, 270 direct jobs and 1,300 indirect jobs, Swingle said, from construction and operation.

"It would absolutely be a game-changer for Sierra County," he said.

ELECTED OFFICIALS

SIERRA COUNTY COMMISSION

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www.sierraco.org

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Kenneth Lyon, District 3
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Frances Luna, District 3, Vice chair
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Sandra Whitehead, Mayor pro-tem
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Kathy Clark, Commissioner
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Rolf Hechler, Commissioner
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Paul Baca, Commissioner
paul.baca@torcnm.org

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Kim Skinner, Mayor pro-tem
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Gerald LaFont, Councilor
gerald.lafont@cityofelephantbutte.com

Edna Trager, Councilor
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Travis Atwell, Councilor
travis.atwell@cityofelephantbutte.com

VILLAGE OF WILLIAMSBURG TRUSTEES

309 Veater Road, Williamsburg, NM 87942
575-894-6385
www.villageofwilliamsburg.com

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mayor@villageofwilliamsburg.com

Majorie Powey, Mayor Pro-tem
mpowey@villageofwilliamsburg.com

Guillermo Hernandez, Trustee
ghernandez@villageofwilliamsburg.com

SIERRA COUNTY COMMUNITIES

ARREY

Census-designated place

Population: 232

The community just south of the Caballo Reservoir 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. At its height, it had more than 1,000 people living there. Some old structures remain.

CUCHILLO

Census-designated place

Population: 35

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. A few historic buildings have survived.

CUTTER

Census-designated place

Population: Unavailable

A railroad station 20 miles east of Truth or Consequences, 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: 1,341

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 when all the summer homes are occupied.

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: 124 (2010)

Now a quaint small town, gold and silver mines once made Hillsboro the county seat in 1884 and it 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.

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, Butch Cassidy and The Sundance Kid among its notable visitors. It's often referred to as a ghost town, though a few hardy souls remain.

LAKE VALLEY

Census-designated place

Population: 63 (2016 estimate)

The mining town of Lake Valley was founded in 1878 after silver was discovered. Almost overnight, it blossomed into a major settlement with a population of 4,000. Today, all that remains is a ghost town, though a few folks carry on in the statistical census area. The Bureau of Land Management has restored the schoolhouse and chapel for a self-guided, interpretive walking tour.

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.

TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES

City Population: 6,103

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 became an early television show. An attraction always has been its access to hot springs that are featured in bathhouses and hotels. In recent years, that has been complemented by a funky eclecticism downtown and the town's position as the closest fully developed area to Spaceport America.

UPHAM

Unincorporated community

Population: Unavailable

Uninhabited, unincorporated community approximately 30 miles east of Truth or Consequences. Its known for its proximity and route to Spaceport America.

WILLIAMSBURG

Village Population: 437

When Hot Springs changed its name in 1950 to Truth or Consequences, a group of residents moved down the road in protest, naming itself 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 (2016 estimate)

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. A flood in the 1950s wiped out many of the town's buildings, but Winston's home survived, and a general store is still open seven days a week.



Socorro County

The old and the new converge in Socorro

BY RICHARD COLTHARP

The longest-running entities in Socorro are probably the San Miguel Church, New Mexico Tech and the Capitol Bar.

Socorro Mayor Ravi Bhasker may not be quite as established as a local institution, but he's getting close. In November 2018, Bhasker was elected mayor for his eighth consecutive term since 1990.

Over the last couple of centuries, there has been periodic talk that Socorro, so centrally located in the state, would be a nice home for the state capitol. Other than the naming of the famous bar, which has been around since 1896, there hasn't been much action on that front.

Periodically, though, Socorro does become a center of attention in New Mexico.

Take, for instance, last summer.

"We got to do something really cool in June 2018," Socorro County Manager Delilah Walsh said. "Socorro hosted the state counties conference for the first time. We got to show off our community, as well as the university. At the rodeo arena we had dances and a barbecue. Every hotel room was booked for the first week of June. It had a really big impact. The restaurants were packed, and we were able to pull off a good conference."

Socorro is also the center of attention for days at a time for first responders from all over the country, who use the resources of New Mexico Tech's Energetic Materials Research and Testing Center. The first responders come in for classes and training with dozens of people at a time, giving the entire community an economic boost.

And the City of Socorro Rodeo and Sports Complex is also a center of attention.

It's hard to find a weekend now that's not

hosting at least one rodeo or soccer event.

Like everyone else in New Mexico, both the city and county have infrastructure needs in the form of roads and street maintenance.

Now that the county has its detention center, completed two years ago, officials are looking toward saving costs within operations.

"The biggest thing we're looking for is doing some energy efficiency," Walsh said. "We're looking at solar panels for our detention center, which has our highest electricity expense, since it runs 24-7. So, we'll be looking for some money for solar, the planning and feasibility. Fortunately, we built the detention center so that it can take solar power."

In the county's other buildings, other measures will be needed. The courthouse, for example, which was built in 1940, needs new, energy-efficient doors and windows.

"Those are our two largest buildings," Walsh said. "If we can reduce those energy costs, it really helps the bottom line of our budget."

"Our priority goal is to look at operational expenses and get leaner operationally, so we can put money where it is most needed."

Another infrastructure weakness was exposed during a summer flood.

"The roughest part of our year was the major flooding we had throughout the region," Walsh said. "San Antonio was one of the hardest hit areas."

In July 2018, flash flooding from the box canyon upstream knocked big poplar trees into culverts under Interstate 25, blocking them. Instead of flowing through the arroyos, the waters used U.S. Highway 380 as a conduit, hitting homes and farms.

The county had already been awarded close

to a million dollars in colonias funds a month before. Because it was a natural disaster, and because a flood mitigation study had been done, the county is eligible for more FEMA funds to use for future flood prevention.

"It had a devastating impact, but on other hand it's helping us push to a better solution in the future," she said.

Walsh said the detention center is a great improvement from the old one, with more options for classification, and inmate separation, which improves the safety of inmates as well as staff.

However, the nature of the building cannot prevent another issue, which detention centers statewide are feeling.

"We are the de facto mental health facilities in New Mexico," Walsh said of county detention centers. "We're not seeing that abate at all. We really need some major substance abuse and behavioral health services. It's taking incarceration before some of these people can be seen by a medical professional. Inmate medical prescription needs are skyrocketing, and we don't have the funding for it."

Another long-awaited project for the county is the construction of the Veguita Health Center, which should be finished in early 2019.

"That is our highest poverty area," Walsh said. "And there are no close health services. They are 45 minutes from the nearest doctor."

QUICK FACTS

PEOPLE

Population: 16,798 (2017 estimate)

Households: 4,698 (2013-2017, 5-year survey)

Median household income: \$34,037

Persons below poverty level: 28.3 percent

BUSINESS

Total employer establishments:

229 (2016)

Non-employer establishments:

746 (2016)

Total number of firms: 961 (2012)

GEOGRAPHY

Land area (square miles): 6,646.68

Persons per square mile: 2.7 (2010)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, www.census.gov/quickfacts



MRGEDA helps region move forward, promote counties

The Middle Rio Grande Economic Development Association continues to progress in its promotion of Sierra County, Socorro County, Catron County and part of Valencia County.

The group formed a couple of years ago to capitalize on their joint strengths, which include:

- Agricultural business
- Recreation, tourism and the arts
- Healthcare
- Forest products and renewable energy
- Technology and workforce education

From a healthcare standpoint, grants from the Con Alma Health Foundation and Presbyterian Medical Services are helping MRGEDA's regions identify substance abuse and treatment voids.

"Now we are developing strategies to fill those voids. There's absolutely unprecedented work being done for rural New Mexico," said Sierra County Manager Bruce Swingle. "We're working on all cylinders. I don't think

there's a greater threat to the region's economic sustainability than mental health and substance abuse."

In the area of arts, last fall's Mid Rio Grande Film Festival in Socorro showed and promoted films about the region, awarding prizes and providing an outlet for New Mexico filmmakers.

"We completed an agribusiness study to measure capacity for Socorro and Sierra counties," said Socorro County Manager Delilah Walsh. "Socorro County has capacity for livestock production for commercial use and Sierra has same potential for farm products, such as chile and vegetables. We really could justify a processing facility for Sierra and livestock processing for Socorro.

"I think we're seeing the positive aspects and more active development of our MRGEDA," Walsh said. "We are starting to see the fruits of those labors, developing areas in our community where business can grow."

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SOCORRO COUNTY COMMUNITIES

ABEYTAS

Census-designated place

Population: 63 (2016 estimate)

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: 100 (2016)

Ten miles north of Socorro lies Chamizal, an unincorporated community off NM State Road 408 with an area of 0.442 square miles.

CLAUNCH

Census-designated place

Population: Unavailable

This community, named for the Claunch Cattle Co., in northeast Socorro County along state Highway 55, sits almost directly in the center of New Mexico.

ESCONDIDA

Census-designated place

Population: 47 (2016 estimate)

Just south of Escondida, Lake Escondida has fishing, camping and picnic areas, and is an increasingly popular recreation spot.

LEMITAR

Census-designated place

Population: 327 (2016 estimate)

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: 265

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. Since 2000, it has had a population growth of 244 percent.

MAGDALENA

Village

Population: 913 (2014 estimate)

More accustomed to attention as the closest community to the Very Large Array, Magdalena made national headlines after the state's severe drought resulted in the town's well running dry. The village redrilled the well, which did get the water flowing again, but it was pumping only about a quarter of what it previously produced. Mining (silver and zinc) and a railroad spur brought the village a period of prosperity. 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: 414

A farming community on the west bank of the Rio Grande north of Socorro, Polvadera was founded in the 1620s but abandoned in 1680 after the Pueblo Revolt, when the native people revolted against 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, once a thriving railroad town. The San Acacia Butte was a guidepost for traders along the El Camino Real. The community is now largely deserted, though a few families remain.

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 just may have the very best. 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. San Antonio is also a gateway to the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge.

SAN ANTONITO

Census-designated place

Population: 94

San Antonito is an agricultural community along state Highway 1.

SOCORRO

City

Population: 8,751 (2014 estimate)

The county seat of Socorro County is home to the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, better known as New Mexico Tech. With about 2,000 students, it 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: 263 (2016 estimate)

A farming community just east of the Rio Grande at the northern tip of Socorro County.

To our legislators:

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SOCORRO COUNTY COMMISSION

Joe Gonzales, District 1

Martha Salas, District 2

Manuel Anaya, District 3

Antonio Ray Martinez, District 4

Glen Duggins, District 5

County Manager - Delilah Walsh



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Socorro's New Mexico Tech mines faculty, staff and alumni for new mascot

Last fall, Socorro's New Mexico Tech community elected Miners as the official mascot for the university.

More than 1,500 people voted – students, employees, and alumni. Miners received more than 60 percent of the vote. Roadrunners was a distant second, followed by Isopods, Bighorns and Burros.

In August 2018, NMT President Dr. Stephen Wells and the Board of Regents put forth an initiative to adopt an official mascot. While Miners was widely considered the mascot of the university for decades, no previous administration or board action had formalized it. Alumni, faculty, staff, and students submitted suggestions for four weeks, then cast ballots online for five finalists.

All of NMT's club sport teams will use the new mascot as their official team name.

As to the look of the newly-formalized mascot, NMT's Office of Communication and Marketing is working with several design options from artists both in the Socorro community and around the state.

ELECTED OFFICIALS

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WSMR testing essential for new technologies

BY ELVA K. ÖSTERREICH

Southern New Mexico's economy owes much to the U.S. military and facilities working together to keep the country safe. White Sands Missile Range (WSMR) and Holloman Air Force Base (HAFB) occupy a substantial amount of land between Las Cruces and Socorro. Fort Bliss, based in Texas, includes range space in New Mexico.

During a Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce Military Update Luncheon on Sept. 5, 2018, WSMR Brig. Gen. Gregory Brady talked about the changing mission of the Army to focus on new technology. Brady assumed command of White Sands Missile Range on Aug. 10, 2018.

Brady replaced Brig. Gen. Eric L. Sanchez who ran the range beginning Aug. 25, 2016. During a 2017

interview, Sanchez said he has never seen the kind of community support as southern New Mexico provides the range.

"I've been all over the world and had many jobs and I'll tell you the support that we get from the local communities is unmatched," Sanchez said. "Alamogordo, Las Cruces, El Paso — even the little town of Mesilla — they are very supportive and work with us closely and we appreciate that greatly."

What Sanchez started, a shift in the Army's mission at WSMR, Brady will continue.

"(WSMR) started with the atomic bomb, then based on the great amount of land we had, it became the missile test center for the United States and other countries as well," Sanchez said. "Really, there is nowhere else in the United States that you can do the testing that goes on here."

WSMR offers the U.S. Department of Defense capability to test against different threats, he said, as well as test-driving new technology.

Sanchez said WSMR leases facilities in addition to land.

"There could be 20 to 30 smaller things going on at the same time — microchips, circuit boards, you never know what," Sanchez said. "You can walk into any one of these buildings and you will see someone doing tests on something."

One of the strong assets at WSMR, Sanchez said, is the personnel available for DoD to take advantage of years of knowledge.

"There are people here with 25 to 30 years of knowledge," he said. "They created a lot of the capability we have. They engineered this stuff."

Between the expanse of land available for exercises and experimentation and the proximity to Fort Bliss, McGregor Range, HAFB and Cannon Air Force Base (near Clovis), WSMR is set up for just about anything, including the ability to conduct live air missions for live tests of U.S. capabilities.

"This really gives us a lot of options," Sanchez said. "Really, the sky is the limit on coming up with ideas on how we can use the range."

WSMR also welcomes the public into its confines several times a year. The annual Bataan Death March event in March recreates a harrowing forced

march in the Philippines during World War II.

The other commemoration on the range is the Trinity Site, where the first test of the atomic bomb took place July 16, 1945. The site is open to the public twice a year, on the first Saturdays in April and October.

HAFB now trains approximately 170 new and requalifying F-16 pilots per year before sending them to their operational units. Former Lt. Gov. John Sanchez has said "In the midst of a severe fighter pilot shortage, Holloman has been chosen to play the pivotal role."

The F-16 training mission influx is fortuitous for the community as the German Air Force, training pilots at Holloman since 1992, is in the final stage of withdrawal. The Tornado pilot training mission will end this year as it has become easier to take the Tornados to Germany and train at home.

Located in El Paso, Fort Bliss is home to the 1st Armored Division, which returned to U.S. soil in 2011, after 40 years in Germany. Fort Bliss is comprised of approximately 1.12 million acres of land in Texas and New Mexico.

Despite plans that could cut the Army's strength from the 565,000 soldiers it had in 2011 down to 165,690, Fort Bliss serves as a regional training center. There are 32,836 total military on Fort Bliss; 12,128 total civilian workers on Fort Bliss; and 40,384 total family members. More than \$6 billion has been invested in the installation during the most recent base realignment and closure process.



MILITARY BASES AT A GLANCE

HOLLOMAN AIR FORCE BASE

Branch: Air Force

Established in 1942 as Alamogordo Army Airfield

Land Area: 59,639 acres

Commander: Colonel Joseph Campo, Commander of the 49th Wing

Website: www.holloman.af.mil

WHITE SANDS MISSILE RANGE

Branch: Army

Established in 1945

Land Area: 3,200 square miles, spanning five counties.

Largest military installation in the US.

Commander: Brigadier General, Gregory "Greg" Brady, Commanding General

Website: www.wsmr.army.mil

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 square miles. The Army's second largest installation.

Commander: Major General, Patrick E. Matlock, Commanding General



Space exploration is a joint effort

BY ELVA K. ÖSTERREICH

In 2018, the local race for space became more of a joint effort to continue to move toward space exploration and commercialization. In New Mexico that effort shines as our Spaceport America becomes a hub for businesses related to space. Also, the long-awaited southern road to Spaceport was officially opened on in October 2018.

The road was finished in July, said Spaceport American Director of Site Operations Chris Lopez. Construction had started in January after the Doña Ana County commissioners chose Mountain States Construction of Albuquerque to do the work.

“It’s another proud New Mexico company we were proud to work with,” Lopez said. “And I can’t say thank you enough for Doña Ana’s leadership role and our partnership with Sierra and Doña Ana counties. This is a great example of multiple agencies working together.”

The road, which was mostly funded by the Spaceport Authority, will be maintained by both counties in their own jurisdictions.

“We’ve been working for several years — BLM, the state land office, ranchers along the road — to get this road completed,” Lopez said. “Some folks have been working on it so long they can’t remember, over 10 years.”

Sierra County will still get Spaceport America business, Lopez said, as the official visitor’s center is in Truth or Consequences.

Spaceport authorities are seeing positive feedback and seeing an increase in activity and supplies coming from the southern side. Virgin Galactic is ramping up activity in the area in preparation for bringing employees and their families to the area.

Spaceport CEO Dan Hicks gave presentations to two legislative interim committees in October 2018. He said he will request an additional \$700,000 in the annual operating budget for the spaceport. Additional state funding last year allowed the spaceport to add 10 new positions, including four aerospace engineers.

If the state approves the additional funding, most of it will go to new staff, Hicks said.

The top priorities for capital outlay are a payload integration processing facility, an additional hangar and a visitor’s center on site.

Patricia Hynes, curator of the International Symposium for Personal and Commercial Spaceflight, has long worked to help grow the commercial space industry. But the purpose of the symposium, held yearly in Las Cruces, is shifting, she said.

“The industry is going to go forward,” she said during the conference. “When I hear Neil Degrasse Tyson talking about Elon Musk and why NASA is going to use Musk’s rocket to go to Mars, I think we are connecting the dots.”

Hynes is adamant about New Mexico’s role in the space industry.

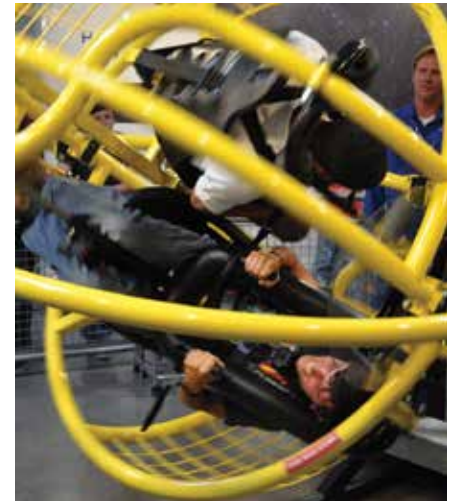
“I want people to remember the space industry started in New Mexico with White Sands Proving Grounds and we haven’t fought hard enough to keep our space heritage. But we are starting to get champions — Las Cruces, the county, the Spaceport ambassadors, business people. People who care what is going on in space industry need to lead and encourage the people who aren’t engaged yet.”

Commercial capability is being developed by SpaceX, Virgin Galactic, Blue Origin, Sierra Nevada — all of whom come to International Symposium of Personal and Commercial Spaceflight (ISPCS), she said. They partner with the government but maintain their own customer bases.

“We were able to commercialize because individual companies recognized the value,” Hynes said. “The reason is to bring the industry together to help grow that partnership.”

The Space Festival, hosted by Las Cruces and numerous other organizations in southern New Mexico, celebrates the history and future of space in the state. The next festival will take place April 11-14, 2019.

“2019 is an extremely exciting year for space tourism in Las Cruces,” said Phil San Filippo, director of economic development for the City of Las Cruces.



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National Monument infrastructure improvements enhance visitor experience

National parks have experienced record-breaking visitation, with more than 1.5 billion visitors in the past five years. Across the country, the combination of aging infrastructure and increased visitation has put a strain on park roads, bridges, campgrounds, water lines, restrooms and other services. This has led to an \$11.6 billion deferred maintenance backlog nationwide.

Revenue from entrance fees goes directly to the National Park Service to ensure a quality experience for all who visit. In White Sands National Monument, 80 percent of entrance fees stay in the park and are devoted to spending that supports the visitor.

In April 2018, the National Park Service announced service-wide fee increases for all parks that charge entrance fees. Therefore, White Sands will modify its entrance fees to generate extra funding for infrastructure and maintenance needs. Effective Jan. 1, 2019, the entrance fees to the park will be \$20 per vehicle, \$10 per person and \$15 per motorcycle. All the money received from entrance fees remains with the National Park Service with 80 percent of the revenue staying at White Sands National Monument.

Entrance fees at White Sands, totaling \$4.6 million in the last 10 years, has enabled rehabilitation of the monument's 1930s era sewage system and replacement of all cedar rail fences. Currently, needed repairs to the

park's accessible Interdune Boardwalk trail and restoration of the porch poles of the historic Spanish pueblo-adobe visitor center are in progress.

Other past improvements include new vault restrooms and picnic shelters in the dunes area, new museum exhibits added in 2010, new interpretive signage added to road pull-offs and hiking trails and develop education curriculum for K-12 students.

White Sands has charged an entrance fee since 1937 and the current rate of \$5 per person has been in effect since 2016. The park is one of 117 National Park Service sites that charge an entrance fee; the other 301 national parks remain free to enter.

The National Park Service has a standardized entrance fee structure, with four groups based on park size and type. Some parks not yet aligned with the other parks in their category will raise their fees incrementally and fully incorporate the new entrance fee schedule by Jan. 1, 2020.



Kids love exploring and learning about the animals at White Sands on the Dune Life Nature Trail.



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JEFF Witte

Ag secretary works to grow New Mexico's plate

BY MIKE COOK

We grow the plate.” That’s how New Mexico Sec. of Agriculture Jeff Witte described the state’s ag industry in a recent interview.

“We grow everything on the plate,” Witte said, from cattle raising in Roosevelt, Curry and Chavez counties and tomatoes in Bernalillo, Rio Arriba and Santa Fe counties to apples in Lincoln and Otero counties and pecans and chile in Doña Ana County.

Witte also anticipates the 2019 legislature will have a full plate as it incorporates “a lot of new faces and new ideas and revisits old legislation” during what promises to be a session of “tremendous excitement” as the new governor and legislators look at policies to move the state in a forward direction, he said.

Agriculture produces 15-17 percent of the state’s gross domestic product, Witte said, and along with oil and gas and tourism is one of the top three industries in New Mexico.

Ag contributes not only to food production and economic development, he said, it’s also a vital part of “maintaining an atmosphere of open space.”

“Every county has got a component of agriculture,” Witte said.

For many, it’s their primary economic driver, and it is “vitally important in rural New Mexico,” he said.

Doña Ana County, for example, is the leading pecan-producing county in the world, Witte said. That benefits farmers, equipment dealers, cold-storage facilities and processors.

Chile production in the county also boosts New Mexico’s image and attraction to visitors, he said, because the state is known throughout the world for its chile and chile products.

Doña Ana County also produces a huge crop of summer onions, as well as cabbage and lettuce, alfalfa and dairy cows, he said.

Among the bills he will follow during the 2019 legislative session, Witte said, is the pub bill that state Sen. Bill Soules, D-Doña Ana, plans to re-introduce. It would allow restaurants with beer and wine licenses to also sell New Mexico-distilled spirits in designated areas if locally approved.

That could help the state’s wine and microbrew industries “continue to grow and expand,” Witte said, and increase sales of barley, hops and wine grapes.

“It creates an economy and a social atmosphere,” he said and contributes to “entertainment tourism.”

After years of fiscal constraints, Witte said 2019 will be an opportunity for the ag industry to continue building in the state, re-engage with the business community, expand international trade and enhance the its worldwide footprint.



SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE

YEARS IN OFFICE: Eight

AGE: 55

BIRTHPLACE: Santa Fe, New Mexico (grew up on a ranch near Stanley, New Mexico)

EDUCATION: Bachelor’s degree in agricultural business management, master’s degree in agricultural economics, both from New Mexico State University.

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE: Director of governmental affairs for the New Mexico Farm and Livestock Bureau

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After bill passage, hemp touted as potentially lucrative industry

BY MICHAEL SCANLON

New Mexico farmers will have a promising new cash crop to consider in 2019, now that the state has finalized rules to cover the cultivation of a long-banned plant.

"I love growing hemp," said New Mexico farmer Jill Browning, who bought farmland four years ago in Colorado to get started in the hemp business. "Hemp is just a phenomenal plant. It provides so much opportunity."

Browning, who lives in Santa Fe and has a farm at Estancia, is chairwoman of the New Mexico Hemp Association. She noted a large and growing commercial market for CDB oil, with its potential health benefits. Overall, sales of industrial hemp products are expected to double in the next three years.

Strict federal regulations have stymied the growing of hemp, a genetic relative of marijuana, in the United States since 1970. But as states began to legalize marijuana for medical — and even recreational — purposes, Congress passed a measure in the 2014 federal Farm Bill allowing states to regulate the cultivation of hemp. Colorado was the first state to liberalize marijuana laws, which opened the door for Browning and others to plant the crop there.

In 2017, the New Mexico Legislature passed a bill, which took effect last summer, calling on the state Department of Agriculture to establish a set of rules for growing hemp. The New Mexico State University Board of Regents approved the rules on Nov. 29, and the state expects to begin issuing licenses to prospective hemp-growers by early next year.

"Industrial hemp is not new to New Mexico," said state Agriculture Secretary Jeff Witte. "In fact, we grew it back in the (19)20s and 1930s. But it's a band new opportunity, and we've got a lot of farmers and processors out there that are excited about the opportunities."

"The potential upside is tremendous," Witte said, adding that other states already have hemp programs. "The return with some of the varieties are \$10,000 per acre. In New Mexico we haven't done it in a long time, but this ... can be a viable crop."

Officials said it's too early to estimate the economic impact of the crop in Doña Ana County or elsewhere in New Mexico because the state has yet to begin issuing licenses and there are many variables.

The new rules establish licensing requirements, set caps on fees, and spell out inspection, sampling and testing requirements. If a sample of hemp is found to contain more than

0.3 percent of the psychoactive agent THC, it will be destroyed (visit www.nmda.nmsu.edu).

NMSU President John Floros said the university is in a unique position to support New Mexico farmers, "not only to grow the right varieties in the right place, but also to support an industry that will grow beyond just growing hemp, an industry that will take the raw material and transform that into final products, from industrial products, to cosmetics to food to pharmaceuticals — you name it."

He said the university can help hemp growers address agronomic issues, create new varieties, and help with chemistry, engineering, biology and marketing.

"We are prepared to put a Center of Excellence together to support our farmers," Floros said.

University Chancellor Dan Arvizu said those endeavors are a natural fit for NMSU.

"One of the things we are very, very focused on is how our university system can actually encourage economic development," Arvizu said. "One of the ideas we had, based on the competencies and capabilities that we have, is to look very carefully at how we reduce the risk to investment in our communities and bring investors who can see a way to get a valuable return on their investment."

"It is a partnership between the state, the university, the business community, farmers, so that we can bring them a full suite of competencies and capabilities to reduce the risk to their investment. So, a Center of Excellence for New Mexico State plays a role as a catalyst."

The legislation that paved the way for the new crop passed the state Legislature in 2017 but was vetoed without explanation by Gov. Susana Martinez. Last spring, the state Supreme Court found the veto improper because Martinez did not explain the reason for it, and allowed the measure, along with other vetoed bills, to take effect.

With that ruling, the state Agriculture Department promptly began developing rules.

NMSU Regents Chairwoman Debra Hicks said the department will play a key role as



New Mexico Agriculture Secretary Jeff Witte speaks at a news conference on Nov. 29, 2018, at New Mexico State University as NMSU Board of Regents Chairwoman Debra Hicks and NMSU President John Floros look on. The news conference was to announce new rules that will allow New Mexico farmers to grow hemp.

hemp farming gets underway.

"The Department of Agriculture also will have the laboratories available to test the hemp to make sure that it complies with regulations," Hicks said. "This is an economic driver for New Mexico. We have adjacent states that have already incorporated hemp, but ... we are in a prime position when we have the Center for Research Excellence, we have the Department of Agriculture, we have our farmers and our growers who are already here."

Hemp, like marijuana, is a member of the cannabis sativa family. The plants are similar in appearance, but, unlike marijuana, hemp contains negligible amounts of the psychoactive compound tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC.

Browning said the plant's oil and fiber have many potential commercial uses, and her Colorado operation has been profitable.

"To monetize hemp right now, the main way to do that is to grow it for the CDB oil," Browning said. "It is an expensive business to get started with. So, we started off slow and we built up. We started with just a couple of acres, then 20 acres, then 40 acres, and this year 70 acres."

"There's been industry reports that the market for CDB will not be satisfied for at least 10 years. here is definitely a market for the CDB. I think relatively quickly, there'll be markets for other hemp products."

She said there are three different kinds of hemp plants. Grain plants are primarily grown for the seeds, which have a variety of uses; CDB plants for oil; and fiber plants.

"Our plants, once we extract the extract the

Education and the budget

leaf material and the bud material, we can use the stems for things like making hemp pellets for your fireplace. If you have a pellet stove it burns hotter and burns with less ash."

A crop takes about four-and-a-half months to mature. Browning hopes to grow about 200 acres of hemp in New Mexico next spring.

"When you grow hemp, genetics matter, your farmer matters, your nutrients matter, weather conditions matter," she said. "Anybody can grow a plant with anywhere from 2 percent CBD to 16-17 percent CBD and keep the THC level at or below .3. You sell by the percentage of CBD. Right now, the going rate for Grade A hemp is \$3 to \$5 per percent. That's \$50 per pound.

"At the beginning of planting season, we hope for 1,000 pounds per acre. Sometimes it's more, sometimes it's less.

"What I see here in New Mexico is an opportunity for people who aren't going to be farmers that are going to be on the science side of this or the innovation side and start applying new techniques and come up with something great. And it's going to be from New Mexico. I think there's just a lot of potential here."

New Mexico spends about 44 percent of its current \$6.3 billion budget on K-12 education.

"The New Mexico public school funding formula is based on a model developed by the National Education Finance Project (NEFP) in the late 1960s and early 1970s," according to the New Mexico Public Education Department's (NMPED) April 2016 report entitled "How New Mexico Public Schools are Funded."

As a result of the work of the state Advisory Committee on School Finance, "the 1974 New Mexico Legislature enacted the Public School Finance Act, which has been widely acclaimed as one of the most innovative of the school finance plans currently being used across the country," according to the NMPED report.

The intent of the act "is to equalize financial opportunity at the highest possible revenue level and to guarantee each New Mexico public school student equal access to programs and services appropriate to his or her educational needs regardless of geographic location or local economic

conditions," the report said.

"Most state funding for public school operational costs comes from the state general fund," according to www.nmlegis.gov. "State funding for schools also includes the public schools' share of interest earned on land grant permanent fund, the depository for certain income earned through activity on state trust land, and other income from state trust land designated to benefit public schools."

"Public education is the largest share of the state's operating budget," according to www.nmvoices.org. "In most states, education is funded primarily with local (city and county) property taxes. New Mexico's funding system is much more centralized, with the vast majority coming from state income and gross receipts taxes. Hawaii is the only other state with a similarly centralized tax system."



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ADVERTISER INDEX

A

AARP 13
 Advanced Care Hospital of
 Southern New Mexico 79
 Allen Theaters 27
 Aprendamos 13

B

Bank 34 28
 BlueCross BlueShield of NM 7
 Burrell College of Osteopathic
 Medicine 57

C

Casa de Peregrinos 59
 Century Bank 15
 Citizens Bank 55
 City of Las Cruces Mayor's Message 65
 City of Socorro 89
 City of Sunland Park 70, 71
 City of Truth
 or Consequences 87
 Community Foundation
 of Southern
 New Mexico 8
 Cowboys for Cancer Research 93

D

Doña Ana Community
 College 61, 63
 Doña Ana County Bureau
 of Elections 66
 Doña Ana County, Santa Teresa 68

E

El Paso Electric 16

F

First American Bank 22

G

Greater Las Cruces
 Chamber of
 Commerce 64

H

Haciendas at
 Grace Village 13
 Heritage Hotels & Resorts 24

L

Las Cruces Public Schools 14

M

Memorial
 Medical Center 3
 Mountain View Regional
 Medical Center 100
 Mesilla Valley Economic
 Development Alliance 64

N

New Mexico Department
 of Agriculture 95
 New Mexico Lottery 12
 NM State University 2

P

Pioneer Bank 55
 Presbyterian 97

R

Rehabilitation Hospital of
 Southern New Mexico 79

S

Socorro County 90
 Sunpower 9

T

Third Judicial District Attorney 33
 Thomas Branigan Memorial Library 59

U

UNM Cancer Center 99

V

Vescovo Toyota 33
 Village of Hatch 72

W

Wells Fargo 5

Z

Zia Natural Gas 63





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