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2020

SOUTHWEST NEW MEXICO

Legislative Guide

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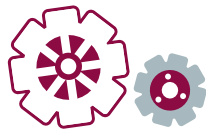
THE LAS CRUCES
Bulletin



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Kenton Martin
Environmental Scientist

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Service-oriented legislators set noble example



The 2020 session, 30 days of activity for our state's citizen-legislators, is supposed to be just about the budget. But something else always comes up.

This year is might be tax reform. It might be recreational marijuana. It might be something related to technology. Sometimes it's obvious, and sometimes there's no point in looking ahead.

Sometimes, though, it's worth pausing, taking a moment and looking back.

Since the last legislative session,

New Mexico has lost four men who served with distinction in the Roundhouse for a collective 114 years.

John Pinto, of Gallup, first earned recognition as a World War II-era Navajo Code Talker. In 1976, he was elected to the state senate, representing McKinley and San Juan counties, a role he served 42 years, until his death last May 24. He was 96. Just a few weeks before his passing, the state and legislators committed more than \$1 million toward building a Navajo Code Talkers Museum, a long-time dream of Pinto's.

Carlos Cisneros, of Questa, was elected to the state senate in 1984, representing parts of Los Alamos, Rio Arriba, Santa Fe and Taos counties, a role he served 34 years, until his death last Sept. 17. He was 71.

Bill Pratt, of Albuquerque, served a much shorter time as a state representative, having been appointed, then elected in 2018 to

represent District 27 in Bernalillo County. Despite his short time in the legislature, was long recognized for his service as an orthopedic surgeon, the profession from which he retired. Pratt passed away last Dec. 25 at age 84.

Another legislator elected in 1976 was Henry "Kiki" Saavedra, of Albuquerque, who served his district through 2014, nearly 40 years. Saavedra died during last year's session, on Jan. 28 at age 82.

Our citizen legislators, especially when they served a long time, become family. They became family to many state employees, family to their constituents and family to each other. Like family, they often disagreed with their fellow legislators, but usually reconciled in the end. Like family, they looked out for each other. These guys, according to the comments generated by their friends and colleagues, served seriously, respectfully and joyfully.

Will we see their like again?

I hope so. I hope we see it during the 2020 legislative session.

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 most other states. 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. The building occupies 232,346 square feet and was built at a cost of more than \$4 million, equivalent to about \$30.2 million in today's dollars. 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 Sec-



retary 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 arrivers 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

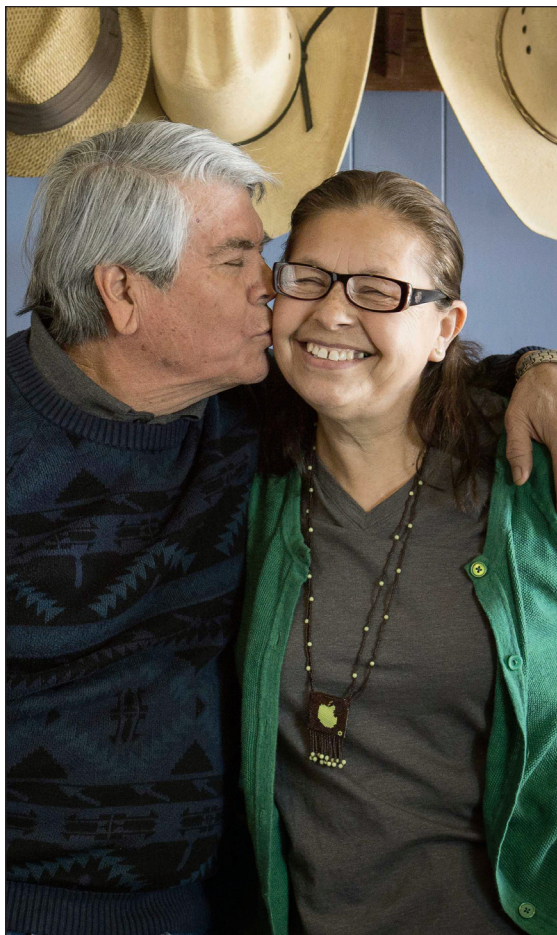
the House and Senate. A compromise worked out in a conference committee is subject to approval by both houses.

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
505-383-6222, oaaa.state.nm.us
310 San Pedro, Ste. 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, naging.state.nm.us
2550 Cerrillos Road, Santa Fe, NM 87505
P.O. Box 27118, Santa Fe, NM 87502-7118
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, 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: Brian Blalock
505-827-7606, cyfd.org
P.O. Drawer 5160, Santa Fe, NM 87502-5160
Provides an array of prevention, intervention, rehabilitative and after-care services to New Mexico children and their families.

CORRECTIONS DEPARTMENT

Secretary: Alisha Tafoya Lucero
505-827-8645, cd.nm.gov
4337 NM 14, Santa Fe, NM 87508
P.O. Box 27116, Santa Fe NM 87502-0116
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., Ste. 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, gonm.biz
Joseph M. Montoya Building, 1100 S. St. Francis Drive, Santa Fe, NM 87505
P.O. Box 20003, Santa Fe, NM 87504-5003
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, 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: John D'Antonio
505-827-6091, 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: James C. Kenney
800-219-6157, env.nm.gov
Harold L. Runnels Building, 1190 St. Francis Drive, Ste. 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, 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, 1100 S. St. Francis Drive, Santa Fe, NM 87502
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: Kathyleen Kunkel
505-827-2613, nmhealth.org
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, hed.state.nm.us
2044 Galisteo St., Ste. 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 Lindsey
505-476-9600, nmdhsem.org
13 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, hsd.state.nm.us

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

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:** Lynn Trujillo

505-476-1600, 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, doit.state.nm.us

715 Alta Vista St., Santa Fe, NM 87505

P.O. Box 22550, Santa Fe, NM 87502

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:** Maj. Gen. Kenneth A. Nava

505-474-1200, governor.state.nm.us/our-leadership/

new-mexico-national-guard

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 confirmation

505-395-2888, lopdnm.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:** Ryan Stewart

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

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:** Mark Shea

505-827-3370, dps.state.nm.us

4491 Cerrillos Road, Santa Fe, NM 87507

P.O. Box 1628, Santa Fe, NM 87504-1628

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

505-476-4500, 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. The RLD also licenses the sale, service and public consumption of alcoholic beverages, industry training and education on statutory compliance, prosecuting citations and otherwise enforcing the provisions of the Liquor Control Act.

STATE PERSONNEL OFFICE**Director:** Pam Coleman

505-476-7759, 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:** Stephanie Schardin Clarke

505-827-0700, 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, 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

505-795-1401, dot.state.nm.us

1120 Cerrillos Road, Santa Fe, NM 87504-1149

P.O. Box 1149, 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:** Brig. Gen. Judy Griego

505-383-2400, nmdvs.org

407 Galisteo St., Room 134, Santa Fe, NM 87504

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

WORKERS' COMPENSATION ADMINISTRATION**Director:** Verily Jones

505-476-7381, workerscomp.nm.gov

1596 Pacheco St., Ste. 202 Santa Fe, NM 87505

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, dws.state.nm.us/en-us

401 Broadway NE, Albuquerque, NM 87102

P.O. Box 1928, Albuquerque, NM 87103

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

U.S. SENATORS



Senator Tom Udall

DEMOCRAT

Address:

201 N. Church St., Ste. 201B
Las Cruces, NM 88001

Phone: 575-526-5475

Website:

www.tomudall.senate.gov



Senator Martin Heinrich

DEMOCRAT

Address:

Loretto Towne Center,
505 S. Main St., Ste. 148,
Las Cruces, NM 88001

Phone: 575-523-6561

Website:

www.heinrich.senate.gov

U.S. REPRESENTATIVES



Debra Haaland

DEMOCRAT, DISTRICT 1

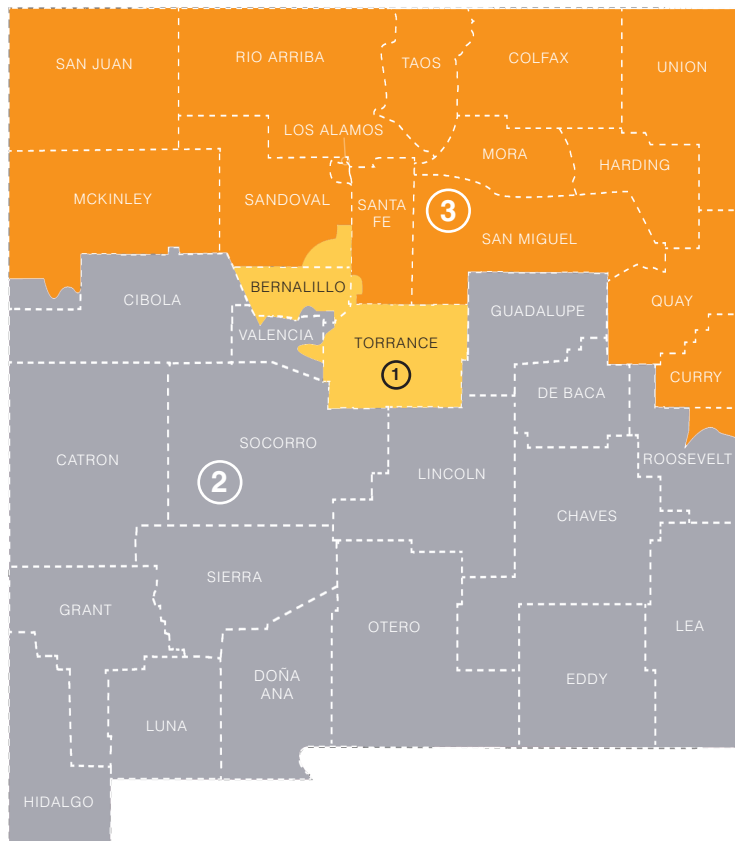
Address:

400 Gold Ave. SW, Ste. 680
Albuquerque, NM 87102

Phone: 505-346-6781

Website:

haaland.house.gov



Xochitl Torres Small

DEMOCRAT, DISTRICT 2

Address:

240 S. Water St.
Las Cruces, NM 88001

Phone: 575-323-6384

Website:

torressmall.house.gov



Ben Ray Lujan

DEMOCRAT, DISTRICT 3

Address:

1611 Calle Lorca, Ste. A
Santa Fe, NM 87505

Phone: 505-984-8950

Website:

lujan.house.gov

What to expect from Legislative session

BY MIKE COOK

The second session of the New Mexico Legislature will convene Tuesday, Jan. 21, 2020 at the Roundhouse in Santa Fe and will adjourn sine die (“without day,” or, essentially, “no more days”) Thursday, Feb. 20.

Because it is a short session (those in even-numbered years are 30 days long, while sessions in odd-numbered years are 60 days), the 2020 session is restricted to budget items and items on the call list of Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham. Tuesday, Feb. 5 will be the last day to for bill introduction. Bills passed during the session but not acted on by the governor will be pocket vetoed effective Wednesday, March 11. Wednesday, May 20 is the effective date of legislation passed during the session and signed by the governor which is not a general appropriation bill or a bill carrying an emergency clause or other specified date.

The best way to follow the action during the session is on www.nmlegis.gov, which is the legislature’s website. You can find all 112 legislators by name and by district, and you can track the bills each has pre-filed or



introduces during the session.

For example, if you go on the website and click on “legislators” near the top of the page, you can choose from a drop-down menu that includes “find my legislator,” House members, Senate members, leadership of each house and legislative districts.

So, for example, if you want to find state Sen. President Pro-Tem Mary Kay Papen, D-Doña Ana, go to “Senate” and scroll down to find her alphabetically from among the Senate members shown. Click on her

name and you will see the district and the county (or multiple counties for some legislators) she represents, when she was first elected, how to contact her and what committees she serves on.

You will also see “sponsored legislation” on her page. In that drop box, pick a session by year to see what bills she has introduced every year since she began serving in 2001. You can even see what bills Papen has pre-filed in the 2019 session and keep track of her sponsored legislation throughout the session. Just click on the bill number to see the text of the bill as it was filed, revisions and final version (if any), as well as co-sponsors and what finally happened to the bill – if it died in committee, failed in a full vote of the House or Senate, was vetoed or signed into law by the governor.

The website will also give you membership of each House and Senate committee and the bills coming up before it. You can even follow action in the House and Senate on the webcam link. There’s a lot of other great current and historical information about the legislature on the website as well.

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BY MIKE COOK

GOVERNOR

MICHELLE LUJAN
Grisham

Governor heads into second session as state's leader

Michelle Lujan Grisham is the 32nd governor of New Mexico and the first Democratic Latina to be elected governor in U.S. history.

In 2019, Lujan Grisham “oversaw one of the most productive legislative sessions in state history, signing a broad package of bipartisan bills into law, notably a historic investment in public education and a landmark transition to clean energy,” according to www.governor.state.nm.us.

A longtime state cabinet secretary at both the New Mexico departments of Aging and Long-term Services, and Health, Lujan Grisham “has been a leading advocate for senior citizens, veterans and the

disabled as well as investments in health care infrastructure and innovative programming that has improved access and quality of care for New Mexicans across the state,” the website said.

Lujan Grisham was elected to the U.S. Congress in 2011, serving three terms in Washington on behalf of After losing her first bid for New Mexico’s District One U.S. House seat in the 2008 Democratic primary, Lujan Grisham was elected to the Bernalillo County Commission in 2010, serving two years before winning the District One U.S. House seat with 59 percent of the vote in 2012. She was re-elected in

■ GRISHAM CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat**YEARS IN OFFICE:** First**AGE:** 59**BIRTHPLACE:** Santa Fe, N.M.
(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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BY MIKE COOK

SECRETARY OF STATE

MAGGIE TOULOUSE
Oliver

Secretary wants to be voice for all of New Mexico

As New Mexico’s secretary of state (NMSOS), Maggie Toulouse Oliver said she has been a voice for Las Cruces and southern New Mexico. “That’s part of why I’m down here as much as I am,” she said at a stop at The Bean Café on Avenida de Mesilla in early August.

After serving 10 years as Bernalillo county clerk, Toulouse-Oliver was appointed New Mexico’s 26th secretary of state in 2016 and elected to a full four-year term in 2018, winning almost 58 percent of the vote against Republican and Libertarian opponents.

A lifelong New Mexico resident, Tou-

louse Oliver attended Albuquerque Public Schools and earned both her BA and MA in political science from the University of New Mexico. She lives in Santa Fe with her two sons.

Toulouse Oliver identified these initiatives on her website (www.sos.state.nm.us):

- NMVote.org is a one-stop shop for information and resources about voting and elections in New Mexico where you can register to vote online, update voter registration information, request an absentee ballot, find a voting location, see information about upcoming elections and more.
- The Safe at Home program allows victims

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat**YEARS IN OFFICE:** Three**AGE:** 42**BIRTHPLACE:** Albuquerque, N.M.**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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of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking or similar crimes to receive mail using the NMSOS address as a substitute for their own, keeping victims’ actual addresses confidential and reducing their risk of being tracked using public records.



LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

HOWIE C. Morales

Lt. Gov, Morales hits ground running

BY RICHARD COLTHARP

On Opening Day of the 2019 Legislative Session, Howie Morales wore a red vest.

It's a longstanding tradition for New Mexico lieutenant governors to wear red on Opening Day, and when Morales donned the vest, he was in familiar territory.

Morales served in the state senate for 10 years, observing lieutenant governors Diane Denish and John Sanchez preside over the chamber.

"I got to know Diane and John and had some wonderful collaboration," Morales said. "As lieutenant governor, you have to have the ability to work with different legislators on policy and the budget."

Though he knew much about the job before he took it, there were still surprises, such as "the amount of miles covered across the state."

He also didn't anticipate learning two jobs at once, being named interim secretary of the Public Education Department in early January 2019, and filling in until Ryan Stewart took the position in August.

Morales didn't mind the extra miles, learning more about the state.

"Now I'm responsible for the whole state, not just one district," he said. "Finding areas where we have solutions is key. The best thing about being lieutenant governor is the relationships with individual legislators

■ MORALES CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: First

AGE: 47

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: Interim Public Education Department secretary, New Mexico state senator 2008-18, Grant County clerk 2005-08

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ATTORNEY GENERAL

HECTOR Balderas

Attorney General continues role as state public servant

BY MIKE COOK

New Mexico Attorney General Hector Balderas may be unique among elected officials in New Mexico history.

Balderas is serving his second four-year term as AG. Before that, he served eight years as state auditor. He served a single term in the New Mexico House of Representatives before being elected auditor in 2006 at the age of 33.

In statewide races, Balderas, a Democrat, received about 55 percent of the vote when he was elected state auditor in 2006 and when he was re-elected in 2010. He received almost 59 percent of the vote when he

was elected attorney general in 2014 and almost 62 percent when he was re-elected AG in 2018, winning 21 of the state's 33 counties and defeating both Republican and Libertarian opponents. Balderas' only statewide loss was in the 2012 Democratic primary for the U.S. Senate. Then U.S. Rep. Martin Heinrich received about 59 percent of the vote to Balderas' 41 percent to win the seat of retiring Democrat Jeff Bingaman.

Balderas has a bachelor's degree from New Mexico Highlands University (2001) and a juris doctorate from the University of New Mexico Law School.

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: Four

AGE: 46

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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He became the first person from Wagon Mound (located in Mora County and about 108 miles northeast of Santa Fe) 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.



SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE

YEARS IN OFFICE: Nine

AGE: 57

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 EXPERIENCE: Director of governmental affairs for the New Mexico Farm and Livestock Bureau

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JEFF Witte

Ag secretary sees opportunity

BY ALEXIA SEVERSON

According to the New Mexico Department of Agriculture's most recent statistics, the state's agriculture production was \$3.38 billion in 2017, a 5 percent increase over 2016, turning out everything from onions and chile to beef and dairy products, and leading the nation in pecans.

As New Mexico's agriculture industry continues to grow, so do the possibilities for expansion and economic success, according to New Mexico Sec. of Agriculture Jeff Witte.

"We have a lot of opportunities in the state to grow and diversify our economy – that includes oil and gas, but it also includes adding value and adding opportunities in agriculture, and I think the time is now to really get aggressive in that area..."

Witte said one of Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham's priorities is value-added agriculture, which increases the economic value and/or consumer appeal of the state's agricultural products.

"This year, the big move has been toward capturing the excitement around the introduction and production of hemp," Witte said. "And we've had several announcements across the state where the state has invested in value-added opportunities in this product."

Witte said he also sees opportunities within the state's beef industry.

"You've got a beef industry that's been forever producing beef, but in the

near future – I'd say we're probably two years away – bringing back state meat inspections so that we can have the ability to have our producers actually direct market to consumers and to schools that require a USDA inspection," he said.

Attracting more producers into direct marketing is a goal of the NMDA, Witte said. Direct marketing allows consumers to purchase fresher fruits and vegetables, enhances homegrown flavor and cuisine and keeps the money local.

"Communities that are successful are the ones that can take and keep their own product, whether its agriculture or anything else they develop," he said.

Changes to NMDA headquarters, located on the New Mexico State University campus, are also in the works.

"Last year the legislature gave us a capital outlay appropriation to address our building issues related to life safety and settlement," Witte said.

NMSU will also be asking for funding for phase two of the College of Agricultural, Consumer, and Environmental Sciences (ACES)'s modernization program, which includes the construction of three new agriculture facilities on campus, built in part with general obligation bond funds approved by New Mexico voters in November 2018.

"That whole project is really important to the future of agriculture – not only in New Mexico, but across the country," Witte said.

The AgriFuture Educational Institute aims to connect, inform and inspire the next generation of farmers, ranchers and all people involved in agriculture.

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RYAN Stewart

New education secretary sees reasons for optimism

BY MIKE COOK

Ryan Stewart is the newest member of Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham's cabinet. He was named secretary of the New Mexico Department of Public Education (NMPED) in August, replacing Karen Trujillo of Las Cruces, who is now interim superintendent of Las Cruces Public Schools. (Former LCPS Chief of Staff Tim Hand remains deputy NMPED secretary of Policy, Strategy and Accountability. NMSU graduate Gwen Perea Warniment is NMPED deputy secretary of Teaching, Learning and Assessment.)

Prior to his appointment at NMPED, Stewart served as regional executive director for Partners in School Innovation, charged with leading the organization's East Coast business engagements, according to an NMPED biography. The program supports districts and schools serving predominantly low-income students of color to design and implement research-based, systemic approaches to school transformation, the biography said.

Stewart also served as executive director of the Office of School Improvement and Innovation at the School District of Philadelphia, overseeing efforts to foster innovation in line with the school district's strategic improvement goals.

Prior to joining the School District of Philadelphia, he worked in California for the New Teacher Center, a national nonprofit specializing in new teacher induction, and served as a coach for new teachers as well as a professional developer in math instruction and in establishing professional learning communities. Stewart began his career as a math and science teacher in California.

Stewart earned a bachelor's degree in economics from Stanford University and a doctorate in education leadership

from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

"I believe Ryan is the man for this moment," Lujan Grisham said when she announced his appointment. "I'm certain educators, superintendents, parents, legislators and stakeholders will be struck by his energy and vision, as I was, and I'm further certain New Mexico public school students will greatly benefit from the turnaround he will oversee."

"I have been inspired by the optimism that our amazing educators exude in nearly each and every conversation," Stewart said on his blog (webnew.ped.state.nm.us/news/october-2019). "The major reasons for optimism that I have heard repeatedly include investments in teacher salaries, the forthcoming improvements to our accountability systems and a changing narrative about the power and professionalism of educators in the state."

"Perhaps more than any other issue, teacher recruitment has been noted as a major concern for principals and superintendents," Stewart said on the blog. "Educators have expressed concerns and ideas about all areas of the teacher pipeline, including how we get more college students into teacher preparation programs; how we ensure that teachers have the right pre-service training to enable them to be successful when they enter the classroom; how our licensure system operates in service of getting great teachers into the classroom; and how our compensation, benefits and retirement systems enable us to keep great educators in the classroom."

"One of the most exciting aspects of this moment in New Mexico education is the opportunity to completely remake our data and accountability systems," Stewart said. "In addition, it has



SECRETARY OF THE NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

YEARS IN OFFICE: First

AGE: 38

BIRTHPLACE: City, State

PROFESSION: Profession

EDUCATION: bachelor's degree in economics from Stanford University, doctorate in education leadership from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

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been great listening to educators, PED staff and other stakeholders on the immense work going into the reimagining of our student assessment system, our teacher evaluation system and our school report cards. I am encouraged about the possibilities that these initiatives entail for ensuring that each of these systems result in the data-informed and student-centered conversations about teaching and learning that lead to educator growth and improved student outcomes."



SECRETARY OF THE NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS

YEARS IN OFFICE: One

AGE: 41

BIRTHPLACE: Busan, South Korea

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

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BY MIKE COOK

Former Doña Ana County commissioner and state representative Bill McCamley said his job as secretary of the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions

BILL McCamley

Secretary sees education, job training as vital in growing state workforce

(DWS) includes making sure “the system works smoothly so people can get the help they need,” and serving as a voice for southern New Mexico in Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham’s cabinet.

After nearly a year on the job, McCamley said the biggest surprise for him is the wide number of different things the department does. DWS has about 400 employees in 17 offices statewide to help job seekers during “a tough time in life,” McCamley said. It also partners with employers to grow and improve New Mexico’s workforce through education and job training, operates a statewide job placement program, deals with discrimination issues, enforces the state’s wage rules and conducts economic research.

DWS is working to develop career pathways in education through collaborations with the New Mexico Department of Agriculture based at New Mexico State University, Virgin Galactic, Las Cruces-based Electronic Caregiver and other cutting-edge employers to proactively “create an economy that works for everybody,” McCamley said.

DWS enforces minimum wage laws, making sure workers are paid the wages to which they are entitled, he said. Sometimes, McCamley said, employers aren’t following wage laws simply because they don’t know the law. DWS

provides education so all rules about wages are clearly understood.

Within a few days last October, McCamley talked to coal plant workers in Farmington, where DWS is helping diversify the economy as the state moves toward being carbon free; then he was at the Roswell DWS office to focus on constituent services and then back in Las Cruces, where he still owns a home, before returning to Santa Fe.

“We want to bring government to you,” McCamley said, so “everyone has access to what we do.”

McCamley said job creation will be a major focus for Lujan Grisham during the 2020 legislative session, including increased educational opportunities, adding that about 95 percent of jobs created in New Mexico since the 2008 recession require more than a high school diploma. Setting up an early childhood trust fund will also be on the governor’s agenda, he said, which will boost high school graduation rates and career advancement as it directly benefits both children and their parents, McCamley said.

Capital outlay funding for roads, water and sewer systems and increased broadband access will also be important in the 2020 session, he said, because “you can’t start to grow businesses without infrastructure.”

■ MORALES CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

and advocacy groups, even those you may not be in agreement with. Washington could learn a whole lot from watching the way we do things in New Mexico.”

A holder of a doctorate in education from New Mexico State University, Morales was also okay with filling in at the PED.

“Education is my interest, it’s my background and I was proud of helping direct change in that area,” Morales said.

“Coming in with the budget, as far as educa-

tion, we’ll continue to increase support across the state, also with early childhood, higher ed and PED,” he said. “Infrastructure is another area we’re going to have to invest in – roads, water systems, broadband and more.”

Morales believes the legislature can work within the budget to do these things and “invest in our most important individual citizens – senior citizens, veterans and the disabled.

“There are so many needs across New Mexico.”

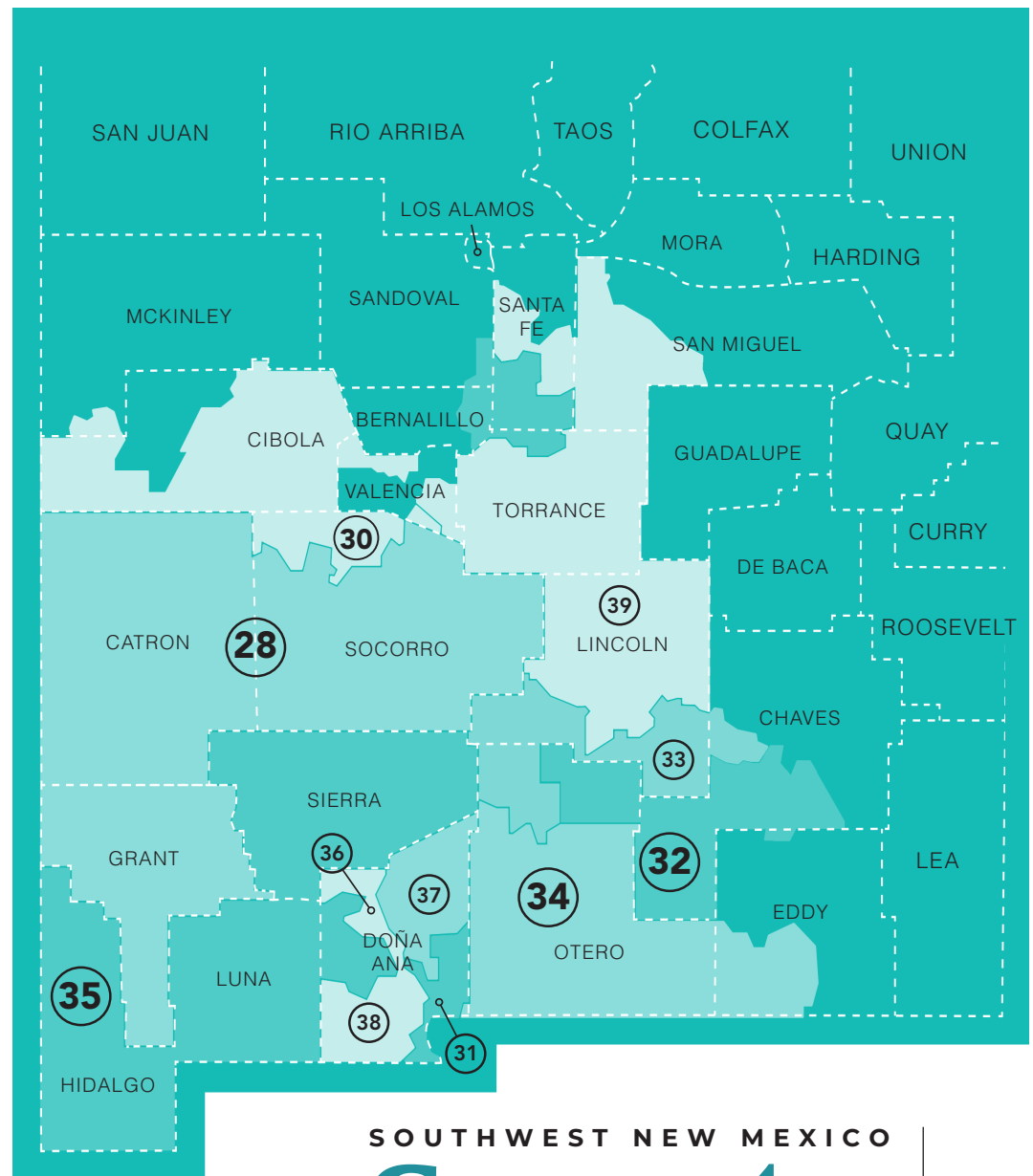
■ GRISHAM CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

2014 with the same margin, and with 65 percent in 2016.

“Lujan Grisham was born in Los Alamos and graduated from St. Michael’s High School in Santa Fe before earning undergraduate and law degrees from the University of New Mexico,” according to the governor’s office website. “A 12th-generation New Mexican, she is the mother of two adult children and grandmother of three. She is the caretaker for her mother, Sonja.”

SENATE NUMERICAL LIST

- 1 WILLIAM SHARER
- 2 STEVEN NEVILLE
- 3 SHANNON D. PINTO
- 4 GEORGE MUNOZ
- 5 RICHARD MARTINEZ
- 6 ROBERTO "BOBBY" GONZALES
- 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 ANTOINETTE SEDILLO LOPEZ
- 17 MIMI STEWART
- 18 BILL G. TALLMAN
- 19 JAMES WHITE
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- 26 JACOB CANDELARIA
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- 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 GREGG FULFER
- 42 GAY KERNAN



SOUTHWEST NEW MEXICO

Senate

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Joseph Cervantes
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Ron Griggs
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DISTRICT 37
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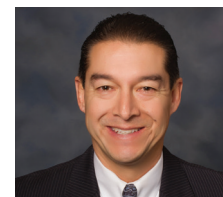
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DISTRICT 28

GABRIEL Ramos

Appointee ready for second session as senator of sprawling District 28

Silver City native Gabriel Ramos joined the New Mexico Senate on very short notice last year, after Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham tapped him to replace her incoming lieutenant governor.

Another Silver City native, Howie Morales, had occupied the District 28 senate seat for a decade when he was elected as lieutenant governor in November 2018.

Ramos grew up in nearby Hurley, and got involved in politics at an early age.

He served two terms as a Grant County commissioner and that commission, along with the county commissions in Socorro and Catron counties, voted to nominate Ramos to fill Morales' seat.

In his first session, Ramos was involved in a handful of committees, including the Senate Indian and Cultural Affairs Committee, on which he was vice chair, and the Senate Education Committee.

He was also co-chair of the interim committee on Tobacco Settlement Revenue Oversight.

Ramos served in an advisory capacity on the Legislative Council, the Legislative Education Study Committee and the Indian Affairs Committee.

Ramos, a graduate of Western New Mexico University, previously served with the New Mexico National Guard. He operates a Farmers Insurance agency in Silver City.

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: One

AGE: 49

BIRTHPLACE: Silver City, N.M.

PROFESSION: Insurance Agent

EDUCATION: BS, business, public administration, Western New Mexico University, 1990-93

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:

Former county commissioner, Grant County, N.M.

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District 28 is one of the largest districts in the state, geographically, encompassing all of Grant County, all of Catron County and most of Socorro County.



DISTRICT 32

CLIFF Pirtle

Despite youth, Pirtle now a seasoned veteran of the Senate

Cliff Pirtle, originally elected to the state Senate in 2012, and re-elected in 2016, is now a veteran of the chamber, going into his eighth session, despite being the youngest member of the Senate, at age 34.

Pirtle spends much of his days away from the legislature farming in Chaves County.

His District 32 covers southern Chaves County – including Roswell, where he makes his home – and a small portion of Eddy County.

He and State Rep. Javier Martinez are the two legislators who serve on the

20-member Governor's Working Group on Cannabis Legalization, established by Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham last year.

Regarding legalization, Pirtle told NM Political Report in July 2019, "This is something that is inevitable and we need to have a part in the framework in how it's done to ensure our concerns are met."

Last year, for the second time, Pirtle introduced legislation to institute permanent Daylight Saving Time. For the second time, it passed the Senate on a vote of 25-17 but didn't make it to a vote in the House.

Pirtle also regularly plays in the annual House vs. Senate charity basketball game,

COUNTIES SERVED: Chaves, Eddy

POLITICAL PARTY: Republican

YEARS IN OFFICE: Seven

AGE: 34

PROFESSION: Farmer

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which raises money for the University of New Mexico Comprehensive Cancer Center.

CLEMENTE Sanchez

Working for infrastructure, fair impact aid distribution, job creation

BY ELVA K. ÖSTERREICH

Sen. Clemente Sanchez said his district has a lot of infrastructure problems that need to be addressed.

“In Valencia county,” he said, “we need an interchange. A priority is getting money into my district to help with water systems. Alamo Navajo Reservation has some water issues he said.

“We want to be able to help them with their drilling wells, like we did for Magdalena several years ago. They are running out of water.”

Sanchez would also like to see education funding distributed in a more equitable way. The state receives federal impact aid dollars for the district, but New Mexico puts that money into the general education coffers where it can be distributed elsewhere.

Sanchez said impact aid is intended to help rural communities and forest areas where there is little property tax collected.

According to the U.S. Department of Education website, many local school districts across the United States include within their boundaries parcels of land that are owned by the federal government or that have been removed from the local tax rolls, including Indian lands. These school districts face special challenges — they must provide a quality education to the children living on the Indian and other federal lands and meet requirements, while sometimes operating with less local revenue than is available to other school districts because federal property is exempt from local property taxes.

While Sanchez’s district qualifies for impact aid funds, the state takes 75 percent and puts it into the funding formula and does not turn it back over to the district.

“The fix for it is the districts should be able to keep the monies in those communities, to fund above adequacy,” Sanchez said.

The impact aid issue is one of his top priorities for the upcoming legislative session, Sanchez said.

“The first thing we need to accomplish, is to get the budget passed responsibly,” he said. “We need to put money where it’s needed and keep a reserve to help us if we run into problems. That should be about 25 percent of the budget put away for shortfalls or problems down the years.”

Most critical, and by far the largest part of the budget, is education, Sanchez said.

“Early childhood is \$3.4 billion; K-12, is another half a billion; higher ed is about \$1 billion. It comes out to about \$7.8 billion,” he said.

The Public Education Department has a new secretary and Sanchez said he is encouraged by Sec. Ryan Stewart and thinks he will be able to fix some of the issues in the state.

In terms of capital outlay, Sanchez said there are a lot of needs in the state.

“I would like to see it go not only to state roads but also local roads,” he said.

“We have a lot of roads and bridges in bad shape, we have great needs, specifically the Alamo Navajo roads and bridges, other local municipalities.”

And, Sanchez said, in other parts of the state, there are dangerous roads that need to be fixed “so we don’t have accidents and deaths. We represent our districts and need to help the other districts in the state too,” he said.

Sanchez said as chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, he hasn’t had time to work toward sponsoring as many bills as he would like but he is sponsoring a fix to impact aid and will be looking at others for support.

He is working with Sen. George Munoz from Gallup on impact aid because it effects their two districts the most.

Rural job creation is always an issue for Sanchez, he said.



DISTRICT 30

COUNTIES SERVED: Cibola, Socorro, Valencia, McKinley

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: Seven

AGE: 61

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

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“There are some things in the rural communities that you can’t do in the municipalities,” he said. “In my district one thing is creating jobs in dairy, and the policies to support them. So job creation is always on the front burner, any session, any time.”

Sanchez said there is some migration from the smaller communities into metropolitan areas or to other states.

“I think we need to all look and do the right thing to advance our state and the citizens of our communities,” he said. “The district doesn’t belong to me, I am here representing the people of the district. They own this seat, I don’t.”



DISTRICT 31

COUNTIES SERVED: Doña Ana

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: Seven

AGE: 58

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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BY MIKE COOK

State Sen. Joseph Cervantes, D-Doña Ana, said he will work closely with Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham on gun safety legislation during the 2020 session of the New Mexico Legislature. Cervantes said he also will focus on water and natural resources and on education issues during the 30-day session that convenes Jan. 21 in Santa Fe.

Gun safety will be on the governor's call for the 2020 session, and will be especially relevant in

JOSEPH Cervantes

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

recognition of "some of the tragedies we've had this year" (2019), Cervantes said, including "the killing of innocent children and families" at an El Paso Walmart last August. "This is a tragedy that we share in," he said.

Cervantes said the decriminalization of marijuana that is also likely to be on the governor's call is important because it will help the state "make better use of our criminal justice system," making it "available for violent and serious crime" rather than having to deal with the possession of small, personal amounts of marijuana.

Adding additional days to the public school calendar "to avoid the loss of momentum during school breaks" is an important step the legislature took to improve public education during the 2019 session, Cervantes said. It increased funding for the state's K-5 Plus program, which added 25 (non mandatory) school days during the summer break for students in kindergarten through fifth grade. Adding additional instructional days gives students "more time on task," he said.

"We know that works," he said. "As a parent, I know that from my own experience."

At the same time, Cervantes said, legislators "have a responsibility to be smart about spending" taxpayer dollars no matter what they pay for. Albuquerque Public Schools was unable to spend millions it received in K-5 Plus program funding, he said. "We see examples of that throughout state government," when allocated funds "can't be put to efficient use right away."

The chair of both the Senate Conservation Committee and of the interim Water and Natural Resources Committee, Cervantes said "climate change should be on our minds," as the state looks for alternatives to carbon-based fuels as part of its "reliable and renew-

able energy future."

The legislature needs to provide additional revenue for water and natural resource issues, he said, to strike a balance with the revenue it regularly allocates to the state's oil and gas industry.

The interim Water and Natural Resources Committee was created in April 2019 to focus on water management, research, litigation and projects, and agriculture, land use, natural resources and game and fish issues, according to nmlegis.gov.

As all 112 legislators look to the allocation of millions of dollars in capital outlay for infrastructure and other capital projects across the state, the legislature needs to reform the way it allocates those funds, Cervantes said. The current system allows millions of dollars to remain unspent when "they could be providing jobs in our local economy," Cervantes said he will continue to push for a more efficient capital outlay system that provides funding to projects that are shovel ready so the money "can be put to use immediately. It's deplorable," he said, that any capital outlay funds are "sitting unused."

Cervantes said local legislators work well together to jointly fund important capital projects throughout Doña Ana County. Examples, he said, include the Regional Aquatic Center in Las Cruces and many infrastructure projects in Anthony, Sunland Park and the South Valley. Projects going forward will include paving and other road improvements, sewer and septic-tank systems that protect groundwater, police and fire service and public safety.

Capital outlay can also help drive economic development in the New Mexico communities that border Texas and Mexico, Cervantes said. With the right planning and leadership, he said, it "presents an opportunity for us unlike anywhere else in the state."



DISTRICT 33

WILLIAM 'BILL'
BurtEncouraging military retirees
to stay in New Mexico

BY RICHARD COLTHARP

Fueling part of a retail mini-boom in Alamogordo has been the temporary beddown of two F-16 squadrons at Holloman Air Force Base. A third squadron is in place now, and Sen. Bill Burt said the U.S. Air Force could remove the “temporary” tag as early as summer 2020. That would bring a fourth squadron and, importantly, a maintenance contractor.

“Aecom, a contractor that does aircraft mechanic maintenance, could bring up to 638 people, along with administrative staff,” Burt said. “That could be a real boon to our community, with regards to housing, population, services and additional retail.”

Since Holloman was established in 1947, and with White Sands Missile Range, less than an hour away, the military has long been critical to Alamogordo, as well as all of New Mexico.

Burt knows that importance, and would like to see those military members stick around, even in retirement.

“I’m going to run a bill again – which seems to be getting some traction from the new administration – that would take state

■ BURT CONTINUED ON PAGE 26

COUNTIES SERVED: Chaves, Lincoln, Otero

POLITICAL PARTY: Republican

YEARS IN OFFICE: Eight

AGE: 68

BIRTHPLACE: Deming, New Mexico

PROFESSION: Broadcaster

EDUCATION: Bachelor’s degree in mass communications, New Mexico State University.

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DISTRICT 34

RON
GriggsState needs to solidify
economic opportunities

BY RICHARD COLTHARP

Capital infrastructure projects are vital to Ron Griggs’ district, including Alamogordo, Carlsbad and the mountain communities.

“We need to improve roads, and Timberon needs a fire station, which would serve several communities,” Griggs said. “I hope we’ll have the means to address some of those infrastructure needs.”

A statewide project Griggs has worked on is liquor law reform. He has one bill this year to address a needed small change in the state’s liquor laws. But he believes broad, deep reform to the laws is a critical economic opportunity for New Mexico.

“It’s a difficult issue to get right, but we

need to start moving toward that answer,” Griggs said, especially if you simultaneously improve the laws while protecting business owners who’ve invested hundreds of thousands of dollars in licenses, he added. “We want to draw more tourists, and make our outdoor recreation department second to none. In doing all those things, and bringing people here, our liquor laws are a stumbling block. We need to find some solutions, and I’m hopeful under this governor and this administration, we can find some of those answers.”

All of the state’s programs, including the education system, rely heavily on the state’s petroleum industry.

COUNTIES SERVED: Otero, Eddy, Doña Ana

POLITICAL PARTY: Republican

YEARS IN OFFICE: Seven

AGE: 67

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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“Oil and gas is funding nearly 50 percent of our state’s revenue,” Griggs said. “That’s a pretty volatile source to be that much. We’ve done a good job providing for reserves, but we can’t say how long they’ll hold up in the event of a crash of oil and gas prices.”



DISTRICT 35

COUNTIES SERVED: Doña Ana, Hidalgo, Luna, Sierra

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: 31

AGE: 78

BIRTHPLACE: Las Vegas, Nevada

PROFESSION: Real estate appraiser

EDUCATION: University of New Mexico

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BY MIKE COOK

State Sen. John Arthur Smith, D-Luna, Sierra, Hidalgo and Doña Ana, isn't as optimistic about state revenues as some other lawmakers and is urging the legislature to move cautiously on major spending proposals in the 2020 session.

JOHN ARTHUR Smith

Move cautiously on major spending

The state saw revenues grow by about \$900 million in 2019 and there are projects for similar growth in 2020 because of an increase oil and gas revenues.

"I can see a slight dip in that forecast," said Smith, the long-time chair of the Senate Finance Committee who was first elected to the state Senate in 1988 and is second in seniority in the Senate to Sen. Stuart Ingle, R-Chaves, Curry, De Baca, Lea and Roosevelt.

"There's some troubling signs in the oil fields right now" about long-term production, he said. When all is said and done, Smith said, the state is likely to see about \$500 million new recurring revenue during the upcoming session.

"My job is to forecast something that is sustainable into the future," said Smith. "Most of the people that are not on the Finance Committee have forgotten what we went through just three years ago," during the last downturn in state oil and gas revenues, he said. As a result of those "hills and valleys," the state budget will continue to be "extremely volatile ... into the future," Smith said.

Smith said he is hopeful the 2020 legislature will set up a trust fund for early childhood education and begin to put money into it. Over time, he said, the fund should reach \$1 billion.

Smith said he does not know what Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham will have on her call for the 30-day session, but he plans to introduce legislation to

charge a registration fee for electric vehicles that will go into the state road fund. Within a decade or so, there likely will be more electric than gas combustible vehicles being produced, and "I want to get it on the books," he said.

Smith said he also wants to see additional money put into higher education, which he said has suffered serious funding cuts in past years, even as colleges and universities have been dealing with declining enrollments.

"How do we make those schools better?" Smith said. Higher education gets about 15 percent of its funding from the state general fund, and that amount "cannot cover all their bases," he said.

If the governor's proposal to provide free college tuition becomes law, he said, "how do you make it sustainable with the outlook of oil and gas?"

Smith said there likely will be about \$330 million for capital outlay projects in 2020, with the money coming from severance tax funds rather than the general fund, with one-third each going to the governor, the state House and the state Senate. Because he represents a four-county area, Smith said he will base his distribution of capital outlay on population, looking to help pay for infrastructure that will last at least a decade.

Smith said about 50 percent of his district is in Luna County (he lives in Deming), 20 percent is in Sierra County and 15 percent each is in Hidalgo and Doña Ana counties.

■ BURT CONTINUED FROM PAGE 25

income tax off of military retirees in New Mexico," Burt said. "We have hundreds who've retired, but about 95 percent leave because of this issue."

Most military retirees are young enough to start new careers, and most do. They also purchase homes and other big-ticket items

they didn't need while living in military housing. All of those things would help "make up the tax on the back end if we keep them in the state," Burt said, adding that the experience, expertise and training of these retirees could fill an important gap in New Mexico's work force.

"I also want everyone in this state to

be aware of, and participate in, the 2020 census," Burt said. "If we don't have a good count, a lot of taxes we pay that should come back, could go to other states. We want every dollar to come back for the betterment of New Mexico. Everybody must be counted, even if they're here temporarily, such as students, workers and the military."

JEFF Steinborn

Looking to address unfinished business

BY MIKE COOK

State Sen. Jeff Steinborn, D-Doña Ana, wants to address some important “unfinished business” during the 2020 legislative session.

He’s hopeful that lengthening the statute of limitations on sex crimes against children, reforming the way regents are selected for New Mexico universities and continuing ethics reform are among issues addressed during the session.

Steinborn said he will push for a new state rule requiring that air conditioners be installed in all new school buses.

“With extended school days starting in July in 100+Degree days, this is an important safety issue for our drivers and kids,” he said on Facebook.

Steinborn said SB 55, which would address the statute of limitations on sex crimes against children, was passed by the legislature but was vetoed by Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham because of a technical error in an amendment. It’s “really important” that a corrected version of the bill pass both houses of the legislature and be signed by the governor, Steinborn said.

Steinborn said it’s important the legislature codify what the governor is now doing voluntarily to choose regents across the state. A recent study showed all the nation’s top universities have regents selected through a committee-driven, merit-based vetting system, and the same needs to happen in New Mexico, he said.

Steinborn wants the legislature to pass a joint resolution to place the issue before voters on the November 2020 general election ballot as a proposed constitutional amendment.

Steinborn wants HB 151, Post-Session Lobbying Reports, to be revisited during the 2020 session. The bill, which he sponsored in the senate, would require all lobbyists or their employers

to file reports “listing the legislation on which the lobbyist or lobbyist’s employer lobbied” during a legislative session.

Another important reform will begin in 2020, he said, as interim committee meetings are webcast.

While serving in the New Mexico House in 2010, Steinborn sponsored a resolution that led to webcasting of in-session legislative committee meetings, and he led the charge to webcast interim meetings as well, working with other legislators and legislative staff to find funding to broadcast meetings held outside of Santa Fe.

Now that it has created an Early Childhood Education Department of state government, Steinborn said he hopes the legislature will pass adequate funding for it.

“Now what we need to do is put gas in that tank,” he said. Currently, only 10-40 percent of students in New Mexico are eligible for department services, he said.

“We need more providers and more funding to address long-term poverty that continues to hold back New Mexico,” Steinborn said.

If, as expected, the governor introduces a bill in 2020 to legalize recreational cannabis use, Steinborn said it should include funding for drug and alcohol treatment, which he said would “address a critical need in our state.”

Steinborn said he will direct capital outlay funds to a number of infrastructure issues, including flood control in northern Doña Ana County and street lighting and sidewalks in the community of Doña Ana. He also wants capital outlay funds to be spent to improve public safety and quality of life throughout the county.

The economic windfall New Mexico is currently experiencing needs to be focused on ways to “diversify the economy outside the oil patch,” Steinborn



DISTRICT 36

COUNTIES SERVED: Doña Ana

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: Three

AGE: 49

BIRTHPLACE: Las Cruces, N.M.

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: New Mexico House of Representatives, 2007-10 and 2013-16

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said, and “storing away for a rainy day.”

Reforming the state’s tax code also must be a priority for the legislature going forward, he said. The current tax code, which he called “the lobbyist full employment act,” contains about \$1 billion in handouts, including many “that aren’t creating jobs.”

“The legislature really needs to step up to that challenge,” Steinborn said. “Do it with a scalpel and not a sledgehammer.”



DISTRICT 37

COUNTIES SERVED: Doña Ana

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: Seven

AGE: 64

BIRTHPLACE: Las Cruces, N.M.

PROFESSION: Retired educator

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

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BY MIKE COOK

It was just the start," state Sen. Bill Soules, D-Doña Ana, said about the New Mexico Legislature's efforts to improve public education in 2019.

"There's so much more to do" to bring the state into compliance with the 2018 landmark ruling in the Yazzie-Martinez lawsuit that said New Mexico doesn't provide an adequate education for its students or sufficiently fund public education.

It's something that Soules has been saying for

WILLIAM 'BILL' Soules

'So much more to do' for education

years, citing the New Mexico Constitution, which says "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."

Soules is chair of the Senate Education Committee, a retired teacher and principal and former member of the Las Cruces Public Schools board of education and has a Ph.D. in education and psychology.

Soules said he's hopeful the legislature can boost public education funding to more than 50 percent of the state budget, where it used to be.

The Yazzie-Martinez ruling came as the oil and gas industry entered an unprecedented boom in New Mexico, increasing state revenues by about \$900 million in 2019 and likely about \$800 million in 2020.

The legislature approved salary increases for educators in 2019 and Soules said he expects another increase in 2020. And, while accountability is essential, he said it is also important to maintain local control of schools as state funding for education increases. Superintendents and boards of education know what's best for their districts and flexibility in managing funding should be maintained, he said.

Soules said he would like to see more career and technical education and vocational training built into public schools, with more licensed instructors available to teach courses. He is encouraged to see public education and higher education working together to improve dual credit opportunities for students, and he expects an increase of about \$10 million to the higher education budget to help pay for dual credit.

More "back filling" is needed for the higher education budget, Soules said. Public education has the Legislative Education Study Committee to monitor

its needs, he said, but higher education doesn't have an equivalent committee in the legislature.

Soules said he hopes some of the millions in capital outlay funds that will be available to Doña Ana County legislators in 2020 can help fund ongoing improvements at Las Cruces International Airport. The airport is "a huge economic driver for the community," said Soules, a licensed pilot.

He also plans to use capital outlay funds to benefit local schools, Doña Ana Community College and New Mexico State University.

Soules said he will seek \$10 million for the New Mexico Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) program's research closing fund. EPSCoR includes NMSU staff as team leads on its architecture, networking, decision-support, deployment and cyberinfrastructure teams as it builds "the state's capacity to conduct scientific research and (train) a diverse, well-qualified Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) workforce," according to www.nmepscor.org. NMSU is joined by seven other New Mexico universities and Los Alamos National Laboratory on the EPSCoR State Committee.

Soules said NMSU will become the fiscal agent for the Anna Age 8 Institute he helped create with 2019 funding. The institute has been located at Northern New Mexico Community College in Española since it opened last year. Soules said he hopes for additional legislative funding for the program in 2020. New Mexico is the first state to open the facility, which helps communities deal with adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) that affect children throughout their lifetimes, including abuse, neglect, and witnessing experiences like parental conflict and substance abuse.

MARY KAY Papen

Education funding is key to state

BY MIKE COOK

Education should be a high priority during the 2020 legislative session, the president pro-tem of the New Mexico Senate said.

“Education is always one of our biggest pieces,” state Sen. Mary Kay Papen, D-Doña Ana said. In 2020, she said, the legislature should focus on setting up a permanent fund for the state’s new Early Childhood Education Department, and on bringing the state into compliance with the Yazzie-Martinez lawsuit that mandates state government provide public schools with the resources necessary for educational sufficiency for all students.

The legislature needs to “make sure our children are safe, secure and able to learn,” Papen said. “It takes money, but it takes commitment too,” she said. “Money doesn’t solve it all. There is no reason for New Mexico to be 50th in national educational rankings,” Papen said, “especially when it ranks in the 30s among states in spending on education.”

Papen was elected in 2000 to represent Senate District 38, which includes part of Las Cruces and much of the southern part of Doña Ana County. She has been re-elected every four years since then and has announced

she will be candidate for re-election in 2020. Papen is chair of the Senate’s powerful Committee on Committees, which appoints Senate committee members, chairs, vice chairs and ranking members, and is the first president pro-tem of the Senate from Las Cruces.

Papen said she likely will continue her practice of dividing the capital outlay funding she receives during the session among the City of Las Cruces, Doña Ana County and New Mexico State University. All Doña Ana County legislators should “pull together so we can fully fund as many things as possible,” she said, including important water, sewer and other infrastructure projects in the county.

Even with the budget increase expected in 2020, the legislature must be careful not to overspend recurring revenue, Papen said.

“We’ve got to be careful because we know oil and gas is cyclical. We just came out of a bad patch and now we’re riding high,” she said. “We have to operate this as a mega-giant household. ‘Don’t overspend, don’t get into retirement or savings. Measure it.’”

Papen said Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham’s free college tuition proposal

■ PAPER CONTINUED ON PAGE 30



DISTRICT 38

COUNTIES SERVED: Doña Ana

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: 19

AGE: 87

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
NEW CAR FRANCHISE

Source: Urban Science 2019 year-to-date sales data for dealers in Las Cruces PMA.



DISTRICT 39

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

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: Four

AGE: 69

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; eight years on the Santa Fe County commission

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ELIZABETH 'LIZ' Stefanics

Looking for better program funding, youth, seniors, libraries, museums

BY MIKE COOK

What are the biggest concerns in your district? How do you plan to address them?

Many of the small communities, acequias, and land grants have water, roads, and infrastructure needs. I will continue to work on those issues. Youth programs, libraries, and small museums are also important to the small communities.

What are your top priorities in the legislative session?

Senior service funding for senior centers, fresh produce for seniors, and improved meals at the meal sites. School based clinics and a nurse in every school. Community solar, appropriate funding for health and human services as well as education.

What do you anticipate will be accomplished during the 2020 legislative session?

New and improved funding for senior services. The Governor will be sending down to the legislature her priorities and I will give those bills

every consideration. Better funding of state programs and services (public education, medicaid, corrections).

What budget items are most critical to you?

Better funding of state programs and services (public education, school-based clinics, school nurses, senior food programs, medicaid, corrections).

What capital outlay projects do you anticipate will be funded? Or what would you like to see happen with capital outlay funds?

Many of the small communities, acequias, and land grants have water, roads and infrastructure needs. I will continue to work on those issues. Youth programs, libraries, and small museums are also important to the small communities.

Anything else you'd like to add?

My district is very diverse, and I care about every part of the district. I try to be attentive and learn what is important to every community.

■ PAPAN CONTINUED FROM PAGE 29

"is a goal, but we need to figure out how we're going to pay for it."

"Education is the key," Papan said, and higher education can provide many important opportunities. But, she said, earning a four-year degree isn't right for everyone. "Plumbers and carpenters, those are also good jobs," she said. "Industrial arts are something we should be looking at as well STEM."

Before New Mexico legalizes marijuana, it needs to study what has worked and not worked in other states so pitfalls can be

avoided, said Papan.

"How do we make sure this is right for our state?" She said the legislature also needs to make sure laws are in place to deal with the consequences of legalization, including the equivalent of DWI laws that punish those who drive under the influence.

Papan said a recent state Legislative Finance Committee-sponsored tour of New Mexico's border with Mexico pointed out the need for the state to "have a good process" to deal with border security. Congress is not meeting its obligations, she said, so the

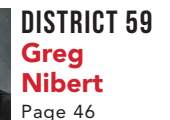
state has to do more. Many ranchers in that area want a border wall, Papan said. "Is that really the solution?" she asked. "More Border Patrol agents – more boots on the ground" is probably a better solution, she said.

Papan said water also continues to be a huge issue for New Mexico. "We don't have just an infinite supply," she said. The state needs to resolve its water dispute with Texas and continue to find ways to use water more wisely, including conservation and recycling. "We have to do it," Papan said, "if not for ourselves, for our children and our children's children."

-
- The map displays the following counties and their approximate locations:
- North:** SAN JUAN, RIO ARriba, TAOS, COLFAX, LOS ALAMOS, MORA, Sandoval, SANTA FE, SAN MIGUEL.
 - Central:** MCKINLEY, CIBOLA, BERNALILLO, VALENCIA, TORRANCE, GUADALUPE, DE BACA.
 - South:** CATRON, SOCORRO, LINCOLN, CHAVES, GRANT, SIERRA, OTERO, EDDY, LUNA, DOÑA ANA, HIDALGO.
- Major highways shown include:
- 49 (near CATRON)
 - 38 (near SIERRA)
 - 59 (near LINCOLN)
 - 56 (near SIERRA)
 - 51 (near OTERO)
 - 53 (near OTERO)
 - 54 (near OTERO)
 - 39 (near SIERRA)
 - 37 (near DOÑA ANA)
 - 36 (near DOÑA ANA)
 - 35 (near DOÑA ANA)
 - 33 (near DOÑA ANA)
 - 34 (near DOÑA ANA)
 - 52 (near DOÑA ANA)
 - 32 (near HIDALGO)
- A network of roads is highlighted in the south-central region, connecting various points of interest.

House

DISTRICT MAP



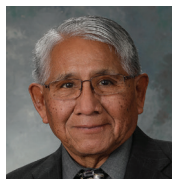
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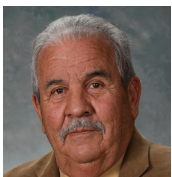
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MAJORITY FLOOR LEADER
Sheryl Williams Stapleton

MINORITY FLOOR LEADER
James G. Townsend

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.*





DISTRICT 32

COUNTIES SERVED: Luna, Hidalgo, Grant

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: Four

AGE: 57

BIRTHPLACE: Albuquerque, N.M.

PROFESSION: Managing partner at Luna County Broadcasting Company

EDUCATION: Bachelor's degree in radio/television broadcasting from Eastern New Mexico University, master's degree in communication studies from New Mexico State University

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CANDIE G. Sweetser

Representative plans to continue serving rural district

BY ALEXIA SEVERSON

State Rep. Candie Sweetser said the 2020 legislative session will be all about the budget.

"The 30-day session has that as its mandate and whatever else the gov places on her call," Sweetser said.

"There are rumors on what might be on the call. As a member of the House Appropriations Committee, I know my focus will be on the budget."

Sweetser, who represents House District 32 (Grant, Hidalgo and Luna counties), said the biggest concern in her district is high unemployment, but this will likely not be addressed in a 30-day session.

"Hopefully we'll be able to fund some economic development initiatives on the statewide level that will trickle down and help rural New Mexico," she said. "My district is completely rural, so my area of focus is what is going to help rural New Mexico bring in jobs, sustain jobs and help with quality of life."

One proposal that seems likely to make it to the governor's desk when the state Legislature convenes in January, is a bill authorizing recreational use and sales of marijuana.

A task force appointed by Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham published recommendations for cannabis use based on other states' experiences with regulating recreational marijuana markets, paving the way for a legalization bill.

Sweetser said as of now, she is neither for or against the legalization of recreational cannabis.

"My biggest problem is marijuana remains illegal federally, and in my

district, there is a huge presence of federal law enforcement officers, and I think it will be hard to reconcile having a narcotic be legal within the state and illegal federally, and that's my concern," she said.

"I haven't come to the terms of supporting or not supporting it because I don't see a pathway where it's going to work for the benefit of New Mexicans," she added.

Lujan Grisham has also expressed her support and hopes for working with the Legislature on a new scholarship program that would provide for 100 percent of undergraduate tuition and fees at New Mexico institutions of higher education for eligible in-state resident students.

But Sweetser said she has issue with "trying to create recurring debt out of non-recurring revenue."

"Just two years ago, we were sweeping budgets," she said. "To do something that would be a recurring expense is a red flag to me – and I have a child in college. I know how much college costs.

"I think it could be very harmful," she continued. "It sounds good, I just think there's some red flags and some things that we have to work out."

Sweetser, whose seat will be up for election, along with all 70 seats in the New Mexico House of Representatives in 2020, said she plans to run again.

"My one and only reason to run has been to replenish this rural, moderate district, and I have done that to the best of my ability, and I would like to continue serving," she said.

MICAELA LARA Cadena

Confident for sophomore session

What bills do you plan to introduce during the session?

I will introduce legislation to create a gross-receipts tax (GRT) deduction for taxpayers providing licensed childcare assistance programs through contracts with the state Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD).

I'm sponsoring this bill after many conversations with small business owners/operators of childcare centers in our district and across the state. Overwhelmingly, these childcare centers are owned and operated by women, and women of color specifically.

This legislation is designed to provide tax parity among various licensed childcare provider entities, all of whom are subject to the same state licensing standards. These centers are taking care of kids whose low-income families are receiving childcare subsidies from CYFD, and are providing a desperately needed service to some of New Mexico's most vulnerable families, yet they are paying GRT on the exact services others are not. This means these centers are working to provide high-quality childcare with usually 6 to 8 percent less in their operating budgets.

Working parents and families depend on these centers; when they go to school or their jobs, it's important their little ones have somewhere safe to be. If these kinds of tax deductions are the way to solidify investment from big business, it's only right that our small, women-owned businesses get a shot at this playing field.

What are your priorities for capital outlay funds?

I will work with state Senate President Pro-Tem Mary Kay Papan to complete the southwestern Doña Ana multi-purpose trail project which gives

people room to safely move around our community on bike or on foot.

I will also support the Casa de Peregrinos Emergency Food Program (CDP) to add a facility on the Mesilla Valley Community of Hope campus. This additional infrastructure will enable CDP to further address food insecurity.

I will advocate for New Mexico State University's statewide capital outlay requests/GO bond authorization and to fund the NMSU-Doña Ana Creative Campus media building project.

What might we see on the governor's call for 2020?

We expect to see Public Regulation Commission reform, recreational marijuana, early childhood education, Public Education Retirement Association (PERA) solvency and the Opportunity Scholarship. As a member of the House Judiciary Committee, I expect lively debate on PRC reform and recreational marijuana.

What are the top budget priorities for your district?

For District 33, I will advocate on behalf of NMSU's legislative priorities, including \$250,000 for NMSU's new Center of Excellence in sustainable agriculture, and \$400,000 for NMSU's Water Resources Research Institute.

I will also be supporting the Bridge of Southern New Mexico as they work to secure funding to pay higher education institutions for the dual-credit programs now available to thousands of high school students here at home and across the state.

Describe the 2019 session.

Going into my freshman term and first session, I carried a decade of experience as an issue-based lobbyist, state government employee and legis-



DISTRICT 33

COUNTIES SERVED: Doña Ana

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: One

AGE: 37

BIRTHPLACE: Mesilla, N.M.

PROFESSION: Research director at Young Women United nonprofit

EDUCATION: Bachelor's in international studies, Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut; master's in community and regional planning, University of New Mexico

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lative staffer. In many of the best ways, and the worst ways, being a legislator has been exactly as I expected. New Mexico's legislative process is incredibly accessible, and I am proud our constituents can be engaged in shaping policy and politics for the better. At the same time, as the country's only remaining completely unpaid legislature, doing this job well is an act of almost impossible service.



DISTRICT 34

COUNTIES SERVED: Doña Ana

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: One

AGE: 49

BIRTHPLACE: El Paso, Texas;
grew up in Anthony

PROFESSION: Coordinator of
Education, Gadsden Independent
School District

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

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RAYMUNDO Lara

'There's a lot of work to do'

BY MIKE COOK

State Rep. Raymundo "Ray" Lara, D-Doña Ana, said the 2019 session of the New Mexico Legislature – and his first session representing New Mexico House District 34 – "was a really positive experience. I learned a lot."

With support from other legislators, especially his House mentor, state Rep. Patricia Lundstrom, D-McKinley, San Juan of Gallup, who has been in the House since 2001, Lara said he learned about the legislative process, including getting bills drafted and committee work. He serves on the House Education, and Agriculture and Water Resources committees, and is also a member of two interim committees: the New Mexico Finance Authority Oversight Committee and the Legislative Education Study Committee.

During the short (30-day) 2020 session, Lara said Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham's agenda is likely to include cannabis legalization, free college tuition and a trust fund for early childhood education, among other issues. Lara said he wants to work with other members of the Doña Ana County legislative delegation to continue improving public education during the session.

"I'm really happy and excited about the possibility for public education," said Lara, who is an administrator for the Gadsden Independent School District. Early childhood education, he said, is "really near and dear to my heart."

"I feel very positive about the upcoming session," Lara said. "We are going to be able to get a lot done. I'm really excited about moving forward."

Lara said his capital outlay spending for his district will be directed mostly toward infrastructure needs as prioritized by the county and municipalities

within the county, including road-paving projects, improvements for a number of water associations that need to expand and add equipment and additional work at the county jetport in Santa Teresa so it can handle commercial fights and speed up the movement of freight.

Lara said there's also the need for an overpass in Santa Teresa to allow truck traffic to continue moving when trains are traveling through the area.

Lara said he and other members of the local delegation will meet to talk about capital outlay requests from all their districts and determine which ones to prioritize for joint funding.

"There are a lot of worthy projects" in Doña Ana County and all over the state that will compete for limited capital outlay funds," Lara said, and his priority for funding will be those highest priority projects in District 34.

"It's very rewarding working with people and helping people," Lara said, adding he is grateful for the opportunity to serve in the New Mexico House of Representatives.

For some constituents, Lara said, legislators are "the only resource they have to go to. They don't know how to navigate the system ... so they call on us to help."

After losing to then incumbent Bill Gomez in the 2016 Democratic primary for the District 34 House seat, Lara defeated Gomez in a rematch in the 2018 primary and was unopposed in the November general. Gomez had won the seat in the 2014 Democratic primary, defeating 17-year incumbent Mary Helen Garcia. Lara said he will be a candidate for re-election in 2020. "There's a lot of work to do," he said.

ANGELICA Rubio

Doing legislative work 'every single day'

BY MIKE COOK

She'll be taking a different route this year, but state Rep. Angelica Rubio, D-Doña Ana will again make the trek from Las Cruces to Santa Fe for the legislative session on a bicycle. For the 2019 session, she traveled close to Interstate 25. This year, Rubio and others will bike through Alamogordo and Cloudcroft, connecting with U.S. Route 285 through Roswell and Lake Arthur in Chaves County, where Rubio was born and grew up.

"It's like me going home," Rubio said. "90 percent of my family still lives there."

Rubio plans to meet and travel with New Mexico House of Representatives colleagues along the way.

Once she gets to Santa Fe, Rubio said she plans to continue working with state Rep. Bobby Gonzales, D-Taos, on a constitutional amendment to "modernize and diversify" the New Mexico Legislature. A joint resolution could place a question on the November 2020 ballot asking voters to approve the creation of a commission that would study other state legislatures and recommend ways New Mexico's could be improved, including paying legislators, making them full-time, providing staff and setting term limits.

"What does a modern legislature look like for New Mexico?" Rubio asked. "What fits us as a state?"

Rubio said she is getting "a lot of great, really positive feedback" on the proposal. New Mexico's current legislative structure makes it impossible for many people to serve because they can't afford the time off from their jobs that it requires, Rubio said, and it doesn't allow those who are elected to provide adequate service to their constituents.

"We're serving in a 1912 legislature and it's 2019," she said.

Rubio is the chair of the joint interim Radioactive and Hazardous

Materials Committee, vice chair of the House Energy, Environmental and Natural Resources Committee and a member of the House Consumer Affairs Committee and four additional interim committees overseeing water and natural resources, economic and rural development, transportation, revenue and tax policy. That means a lot of travel time back and forth to Santa Fe for legislative sessions and committee meetings, as well as dealing with emails, phone calls, conversations and meetings in her district and throughout the community.

"I do legislative work every single day," Rubio said.

Rubio said she expects a bill to decriminalize cannabis to be on the 2020 agenda. She co-sponsored the Cannabis Regulation Act in 2019, which passed the House but died in the Senate.

"I'm optimistic about it," she said. "Legalizing recreational marijuana is very, very popular across the state."

It's time for the state to "break from this narrative that cannabis is unsafe," Rubio said. But, as it meets the needs and wants of the public on the issue, Rubio said the legislature also must ensure that appropriate regulation and safety measures are in place.

Rubio said there are "so many needs in my district" for capital outlay funds. Priorities include wastewater treatment and "things that are going to support our young people," she said, including a skate park and biking and hiking trails.

She supports the concept behind Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham's call for free college tuition in New Mexico, noting that she (Rubio) still owes a significant amount on student loans and doesn't want others to have that same burden, especially if they stay in New Mexico to live and work after graduation.

To fund college tuition and other ini-



DISTRICT 35

COUNTIES SERVED: Doña Ana

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: Three

AGE: 40

BIRTHPLACE: Roswell, N.M.

(grew up in nearby Lake Arthur)

PROFESSION: Executive director, New Mexico CAFÉ (leaving end of 2019)

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

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tiatives, the legislature must diversify the state's economy, Rubio said. Recreational cannabis, outdoor recreation, renewable energy and film production offer opportunities, she said.

"How are we thinking bolding about what our future looks like here in New Mexico?" Rubio asked. "New Mexico has so much to offer. The possibilities are endless."



DISTRICT 36

COUNTIES SERVED: Doña Ana

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: Three

AGE: 37

BIRTHPLACE: Albuquerque, N.M.

PROFESSION: Conservationist

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

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BY MIKE COOK

A member of the powerful New Mexico House Appropriations Committee, state Rep. Nathan Small, D-Doña Ana, said he is proud of the work the legislature did in 2019 and especially of its historic investment in key capital outlay projects in the county.

With “a significant amount of leadership from Doña Ana County” representatives and senators, the legislature will continue to focus on the budget in 2020, Small said.

“I’m really excited,” he said. “I think we have a great deal to build on.”

NATHAN Small

Goal for session is to ‘keep it simple’

Capital outlay investment continued in the county on a number of important infrastructure projects, Small said, including flood control on the East Mesa and in the Hatch Valley. Continued investment is needed in roads and bridges, expanded broadband service and other 21st century technology. For example, an investment in wireless service at Hatch Public Library makes the facility more available after hours for people applying for jobs and citizenship, learning English and other needs, said Small, a former Las Cruces city councilor who was elected to the legislature in 2016 and re-elected in 2018.

Education will be “at the very forefront” during the 2020 session, Small said, and that’s essential because it “determines so many things, including future economic opportunities. The legislature is “on the right track” by continuing to focus on student services and education employees. In some cases, he said, New Mexico teachers have had to work at multiple jobs to get by and spend their own money on school supplies, placing “unsustainable stress” on a segment of the workforce that is critical to the state’s long-term success.

The legislature also has to “protect public health and safety for all New Mexicans,” said Small, who, in addition to Appropriations, serves on the House Energy, Environmental and Natural Resources Committee, as well as interim committees overseeing water and natural resources and economic and rural development, and the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC).

The 10 bills Small got passed during the 2019 legislation included the Energy Transition Act, which ensures “historically low energy costs” for the region, increases renewable energy requirements for utilities and benefits value-added agriculture. Another bill expanded regulatory jurisdiction over produced water used in the state’s oil

and gas industry, which Small said will save millions of gallons of fresh water.

The Healthy Soil Act Small sponsored creates a program at the New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA), based at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces, “to support land management that improves the health, yield and profitability of soils in the state,” according to an LFC analysis.

“New Mexico is so well positioned to be (an) energy leader in the 21st century,” Small said, using and exporting “reliable renewable energy and importing jobs and revenue.”

The state Public Regulation Commission (PRC) has “a critical role to play” in the state’s emerging energy future, Small said, and he hopes the 2020 budget includes funding to modernize the PRC, fill critical vacancies and enact structural changes to make it less political.

Small said he was proud to play a role in creating the state’s first Ethics Commission, which voters approved by passing a constitutional amendment placed on the 2018 ballot by a Small-sponsored bill. Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham and legislative leaders made “strong choices” in their appointments of commission members and staff in 2019, he said.

Small said he expects to “hear a great deal more” about the legalization of cannabis during the 2020 session, applying what’s already been learned, focusing on public safety and making sure the state’s medical marijuana program isn’t harmed. Cannabis and industrial hemp present “unique opportunities to support institutions like NMSU” and NMDA, he said. “We have so much expertise here in southern New Mexico in so many areas,” he said.

“We have to keep it simple,” Small said about 2020’s short (30-day) session, focusing on “key areas,” including education, health care, infrastructure, renewable energy, public safety and the economy.

JOANNE Ferrary

Looking at cannabis, vaping issues

BY MIKE COOK

State Rep. Joanne Ferrary, D-Doña Ana, expects to continue working to improve the quality of life for New Mexicans of all ages, from the very youngest to the very oldest.

Ferrary was elected in 2016 and re-elected in 2018. The 2020 session will be her fourth in the New Mexico House of Representatives, where she is a member of the Health and Human Services and the Energy, Environment and Natural Resources committees. Ferrary also chairs the interim Disabilities Concerns Committee and is a member of five other interim committees, including the Legislative Education Study Committee and the Ethics Committee.

In addition to making sure any cannabis legalization legislation that is passed includes marketing safeguards and enforcement provisions, vaping (electronic cigarettes) should be addressed because of its health risks, Ferrary said. For example, she said, vaping flavors should be eliminated so the practice is less attractive to young people. Ferrary co-sponsored a bill in the 2019 session that would have amended the state's Indoor Clean Air Act to include e-cigarettes.

Dealing with adverse childhood experiences is also critical, she said, because so many issues throughout an individual's life revolve around trauma he or she experienced as a child, including hunger, violence, abuse and neglect. That means helping communities around the state provide parents (including new parents and single mothers) with the resources and services they need, like healthcare, behavioral health care, childcare and job opportunities to provide for themselves and their children.

During the 2019 legislative session, Ferrary joined four other legislators in introducing a House memorial to address "the need for a single, statewide plan ... for ending hunger in New Mexico" and a "hunger caucus to support legislation aimed at ending hunger" in the state. The hunger rate in New Mexico is 17 percent including not only children but also senior citizens who sometimes must choose between paying bills and buying nutritious food or paying for a prescription, she said. Food insecurity is also a serious issue in some rural areas.

Rebuilding the state's behavioral health care system needs to be a priority, Ferrary said. That includes attracting more providers to the state and addressing mental health issues before they develop into drug dependency, she said.

Ferrary said she would like to see a vocational rehabilitation division in the state Public Education Department to provide more educational and job opportunities to the disabled and workers who are returning to work after suffering a work-related injury.

Ferrary said she is hopeful of reintroducing a bill to repeal certain provisions of state law that criminalize abortion. The bill she sponsored during the 2019 session passed the House but failed to pass in the Senate.

Ferrary said she will work with other local legislators to determine the most critical capital outlay needs in her district to address in 2020.

"We're all working together to come up with the most important things," she said.

Ferrary, who lost twice to former state Rep. Terry McMillian before defeating him in 2016 to represent



DISTRICT 37

COUNTIES SERVED: Doña Ana

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: Three

AGE: 66

BIRTHPLACE: Canton, Ohio

PROFESSION: Retired

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

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House District 37, said she is looking forward to the 2020 session of the legislature to continue work on "so many things we have initiated." Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham is "working really hard to lower the silos," Ferrary said, so she and members of her administration can work more cooperatively with legislators.



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

Making rural services a priority

BY RICHARD COLTHARP

Where nearly everyone sees the Republican/Democrat political divide, New Mexico Rep. Rebecca Dow and several of her colleagues see another divide, one very distinct in our state.

The divide is along the lines of rural and urban.

"I'm very optimistic about a rural caucus," said Dow, who represents District 38, which includes parts of Sierra, Grant and Hidalgo counties.

"We have 30 counties that are not metropolitan."

Some legislation can do harm to rural areas, Dow said.

"A bill that's good for New Mexico, has to be good for all," she said. "How do we balance and make good laws? The world view of my district is different from what's being pushed right now. I'm elected by Democrats who don't feel their values are being represented in Santa Fe right now."

Urban needs don't always factor in the needs of New Mexico's widespread rural areas, and Dow believes the bipartisan rural caucus can help address some of the disconnects.

Health and education are two areas that need a particular eye toward rural communities, Dow said.

Many times bills will pass, requiring actions and logistics that may be very easy to implement in urban settings with lots of resources. Those same actions and logistics can be next to impossible in a rural setting. Think of the size and scope of the Albuquerque Public Schools (15,000 employees) compared to, say, the Fort Sumner Municipal Schools (43 employees).

Dow used behavioral health as a specific example.

"When it comes to behavioral health,

the requirements around supervision make it nearly impossible to have anything other than independent, licensed people," Dow said. "So even though we say we're funding it, the rules and regulations make it practically impossible." It's much easier and far more practical to implement in the urban areas, where almost all of the behavioral health professionals live.

"And with education, \$120 million is being reverted from rural school districts," Dow said. "It was an education bill that harmed rural New Mexico."

District Needs

Within Dow's district, veterans, seniors and state parks are a priority.

There are still services for seniors and veterans unavailable in Dow's district, and much of rural New Mexico. Many have to travel out of state to El Paso or Tucson, or make the two- to three-hour trip to Albuquerque.

"We're asking for additional veterans service agents in my district," she said. "Right now, we have one person to serve 11 counties. Grant County alone has 3,500 veterans. It's absolutely impossible for one person to handle it all."

Annually in New Mexico, the 35 state parks draw 5 million visitors. A third of those come to Dow's district (1 million to Elephant Butte Lake State Park and 600,000 to Caballo Lake State Park).

Dow said Elephant Butte lacks some basic amenities such as a shade structure, fish-cleaning stations or a handicapped fishing ramp.

"We have state park plans that are 10 years old that haven't been implemented yet," she said. "When we've got this type of revenue we need to reinvest in our state parks. Especially if we're going to shift to an outdoor recreation economy."

RUDY Martinez

Building on the 'Education Moonshot'

What do you expect to see on the governor's call for the 2020 legislative session?

Besides the budget, no one is 100 percent positive what will be on the governor's call, so I don't want to speculate too much. Personally, in addition to my priority bills, I'm hoping to see further investments in our state's behavioral health system and additional programs to support our veterans. I think we'll see continued work on our education system from the governor, and I'm excited to look at proposals for early childhood education programs. I know the governor is also looking at continuing our state's build-out of renewable energy infrastructure and at cannabis legalization.

What major legislation do you plan to introduce in the session?

I want to build upon the success of the previous year. In this spirit, I am pushing to fund New Mexico's Big Brothers and Big Sisters program, fund an indigenous student exchange program as part of Western New Mexico University's partnership with indigenous universities in Mexico, and directing our congressional delegation to investigate the issue of U.S. military veterans being deported, as well as continue the highly successful pilot program of the Veteran's Transportation Task Force. Because the session is constitutionally obligated to focus on the budget, the governor will decide which non-budget-related bills go on the call. My hope is that all of these bills which I am proposing get placed before the legislature.

What, in general, are the biggest concerns in your district?

My biggest concern and number one priority is to safeguard the livelihoods of the people I represent. I fight every day so my constituents can earn a decent living and provide for their fami-

lies. This means keeping the Chino and Tyrone mines operating and growing – having worked in the mines for 30 years, I know how vital they are to the health and vitality of my district. It also means working with the community, environmental groups and industry leaders to ensure our local environment – that includes the Gila River and its tributaries – are preserved for future generations. My door is always open for those who have concerns and I invite all stakeholders to work with me.

What are the budget priorities for the session?

A big priority is continuing to build upon our education moonshot' from last session. Under the last administration, New Mexico's kids faced steep cuts, but with a new governor we are charting a new course by investing in our kids. Diversifying our economy is also a priority for House Democrats, and to do that we are going to be looking closely at GRT reforms so local businesses can be more competitive and keep growing.

How much capital outlay funding do you expect to have in 2020?

These numbers will change every year. Last year, we brought \$2,142,000 into the district for brick-and-mortar projects like \$250,000 to begin planning and constructing a much needed flood control system at Spring Canyon in Doña Ana County to protect the town of Hatch from flooding during heavy storms, as well as \$154,000 to plan, design and construct lighting improvements in the village of Doña Ana so residents are safer walking around a night. I am looking at a number of prospective projects throughout Sierra and Doña Ana counties related to: water infrastructure, public safety, healthcare, parks and recreation as well as animal welfare.



DISTRICT 39

COUNTIES SERVED: Doña Ana, Grant, Sierra

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: Eleven

AGE: 71

BIRTHPLACE: Santa Rita, N.M.

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

EDUCATION: Bachelor's in business, Western New Mexico University

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:

State representative, district 39, 2007-14; mayor and council member, Bayard, N.M.; member, chair, Grant County Commission

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DISTRICT 49

GAIL 'MISSY' Armstrong

Looking out for the rural citizens

BY RICHARD COLTHARP

Gail Armstrong had a conversation. "One of my constituents," Armstrong said, "Who lives in San Antonio (N.M.), said 'Missy,' – that's my nickname – 'Missy, we're just scraping by. Here we are paying tax on money we've already paid tax on.'"

He was talking about the state's tax on Social Security benefits. New Mexico's one of only a few states that does that.

"I ran a bill last year to raise the exemption on Social Security income tax," Armstrong said. "I think it's good for the state. This year, there are going to be similar bills, and the one I'm going to run is doing away with it altogether."

The revenue generated by the current taxing of Social Security brings the state \$78 million, Armstrong said.

"But if we can give the film industry \$250 million, surely we can give these folks 78," she said, adding that if we're more competitive with neighboring states on this issue – it's already exempt in Arizona, Texas and Oklahoma – more seniors might look to New Mexico as a place for retirement. And those who are already here might be less tempted to leave, she said. Attracting new retirees, and keeping existing ones here, could bring a lot of additional revenue, Armstrong adds.

She's also working on a bipartisan bill with Democratic Rep. Tomas Salazar to create a savings account for every New Mexican.

"Companies can opt into it, and offer to do the paperwork on payroll," Armstrong said. "It would be withheld by the state of New Mexico and would follow them.

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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"A big need in my more rural district is we're having a hard time recruiting and retaining firefighters and EMS workers," Armstrong said. "Rebecca Dow (who represents parts of Sierra, Hidalgo and Grant counties, south and west of Armstrong's district) and I plan to do legislation to fund a stipend for training and recruitment, to attract and retain those important workers."



DISTRICT 51

RACHEL Black

Blacks enters second legislative session

State Rep. Rachel Black, a Republican, represents New Mexico House District 51, which is located entirely within Otero County and includes Alamogordo. Black won the seat in 2018. She was unopposed in that year's Republican primary and defeated Democrat Jeff Swanson in the general election, earning more than 64 percent of the vote. The seat had previously been held by Yvette Harrell, who gave it up to run unsuccessfully for Congress in 2018.

Black is a member of the House Local Government, Land Grants and Cultural Affairs Committee; Labor, Veterans' and Military Affairs Committee; and Enrolling and Engrossing Committee, as well as these

interim committees: Military and Veterans Affairs, Land Grant, Legislative Health and Human Services and Mortgage Finance Authority Act Oversight; and these interim subcommittees: Disabilities Concerns and Transportation Infrastructure Revenue.

A bill Black introduced during the 2019 legislative session would have directed the state Workforce Solutions and Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources departments "to promote programs to support women in the oil and gas industry." The bill passed both houses of the legislature unanimously but was vetoed by Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham.

Black lives in Alamogordo and is the

COUNTIES SERVED: Otero

POLITICAL PARTY: Republican

YEARS IN OFFICE: Two

AGE: 47

BIRTHPLACE: Langley Air Force Base, Virginia

PROFESSION: Chief deputy county treasurer of Otero County

EDUCATION: High school graduate, some college

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE: Former secretary-treasurer of the Republican Women of Otero County

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chief deputy county treasurer for Otero County. She describes herself as a conservative Republican and is the former secretary-treasurer of the Republican Women of Otero County.

DOREEN Gallegos

Early childhood education trust fund supporter

BY MIKE COOK

State Rep. Doreen Gallegos, D-Doña Ana, said she will continue the fight during the 2020 legislative session to set up an early childhood education trust fund.

On Jan. 1, 2020, she filed HB83, which would create the trust fund. The bill is supported by Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham.

"It would be foolish not to do this," Gallegos said. "The time is now because there is so much money."

Creating the fund, she said, would help address "immediate needs" in the state.

"This is the time to iron out the details and get it passed," Gallegos said, to make sure "our kids are still protected" in times when the state's economy is not robust.

"We really need to focus on the budget and we only have four weeks to do it," said Gallegos, the House majority whip and the only member of the county legislative delegation in the House leadership.

"It's a money year," she said, but legislators must "make good decisions ... just be good stewards of that money." State funds, Gallegos said, should be spent "wisely and adequately" and in a way that show positive results.

Gallegos said she plans to introduce legislation that will continue the law that provides a deduction from gross receipts tax for retail sales made in the state on the Saturday after Thanksgiving. The bill she introduced in 2018 that created the tax-free shopping day will sunset July 1, 2020.

The law benefits mom and pop businesses, Gallegos said.

"Those are the people I'm worried about," she said. "As a Democrat, I value business and small business owners."

Gallegos said the governor's call for the 30-day session may include a bill to legalize cannabis in the state. "Everybody sees dollar signs," she said. "It's a good concept" but legislators have to "make sure it's a good bill." That means a lot of discussion about the potential impacts of legalization like addiction and its effects on young brains that are still forming. If a legalization bill is passed, it must have a strong educational component, Gallegos said.

Gallegos said she will again work with the governor and the other members of the county legislative delegation to allocate capital outlay funds for projects throughout the county. In particular she is looking at funding for infrastructure improvements for colonias and sewage and water projects in southern Doña Ana County, additional funding for the jetport in Santa Teresa and possibly beginning the phased conversion of the former Dos Lagos Golf Course in Anthony into a recreational center with recreational opportunities for children and "a hub for the city."

Gallegos said she wants to continue support for La Clinica de Familia, a nonprofit which operates health centers and provides medical, dental and behavioral health services throughout the county.

She also wants to address the lack of internet service in parts of southern Doña Ana County, where sometimes children can't even complete their homework assignments because they can't access the web.

"It's a big thing," Gallegos said.

Legislators must deal with both rural and urban issues, Gallegos said. "Because I represent both, I think I can speak to both," she said.



DISTRICT 52

COUNTIES SERVED: Doña Ana

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: Seven

AGE: 51

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

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DISTRICT 53

COUNTIES SERVED: Doña Ana, Otero

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: One

AGE: 49

BIRTHPLACE: El Paso, Texas

PROFESSION: Public schools education support staff, Gadsden Independent School District

EDUCATION: BA, University of Phoenix

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What do you expect to see on the Governor's call for the 2020 legislative session?

Besides the budget, I expect to see continued work on our education system from the governor, including early childhood education programs. I know the governor is also looking at continuing our state's build-out of renewable energy infrastructure.

What major legislation (if any) do you plan to introduce in the session?

WILLIE Madrid

Looking to connect communities to essential services

In the upcoming session I will propose legislation supporting school service staff health insurance commensurate with other school employees. I will also propose legislation to deal with restorative justice for at-risk students that focuses on reducing racial disparities and public costs associated with high rates of incarceration, suspension and expulsion. The upcoming legislative session is constitutionally obligated to focus on the budget, so the governor will decide which non-budget-related bills go on the call. Hopefully these proposals and others will be included in the session.

What, in general are the biggest concerns in your district?

The top concerns in my district are infrastructure, education, economic opportunity and jobs. In the past year we have begun to make progress in all three areas, as well as to improve the quality of life in our communities. These priorities must be addressed if we are to continue growing and ensure that our families have a safe and prosperous future.

Working toward these goals I have obtained funding to address roads and streets, flooding, public safety, schools and quality of life issues facing our communities. Working with my colleagues I have obtained \$38 million to convert Highway 404 into a four-lane highway over Anthony Gap, including the Highway 213 connector going into El Paso. This is a major economic development initiative which will help our entire region. I have also obtained funding for feasibility studies to address long-neglected quality of life issues in our neighborhoods, including parks and recreation.

I have, and will, continue to reach out and work with everyone who lives, works, and who owns a business here, and those who wish to choose our

communities in District 53 to do so.

What do you think are the budget priorities for the session?

The biggest priority for this next session is continuing to build on the education priority from last session. Under the last administration education faced steep cuts which jeopardized our future and led to stagnation in outcomes and a future where generations of New Mexico families were forced to watch their children leave for other states to work. In the New Mexico House of Representatives, working our new governor, we are charting a different course by investing in our kids. We are also looking to diversify our economy into one less tied simply to oil and gas to end the cycles of "boom and bust" that have long defined our state. We will also be looking at gross receipts tax reforms so local businesses can be more competitive and keep growing here in New Mexico.

How much capital outlay funding do you expect to have in 2020? What are the capital outlay projects in your district, and elsewhere if you combine funds with other legislators?

Capital outlay numbers change every year. Last year, we brought just over \$2.5 million into the district for projects like roads, streets, and flood control initiatives. We hope to begin rolling out sanitation connections in 2020. I obtained funding for water infrastructure, public safety, health-care, parks and recreation last session. This included \$500,000 to improve parks and \$360,000 to begin planning and constructing a public library for Chaparral. I am looking at a number of prospective projects in both Doña Ana and Otero counties related to infrastructure, flood control, public safety, water, gas and waste treatment and quality of life issues.

JAMES Townsend

Capital outlay, highways and education at top of list

BY ELVA K. ÖSTERREICH

James Townsend said his biggest concerns for his district vary between a desperate need for infrastructure, including the roads and bridges, and that the legislature act fiscally responsible, and not create any new taxes or indebtedness.

"I will be voting on those issues and leading the debate for those," he said.

Townsend said last year the district was awarded quite a bit of money for roads but "at the same time we have a tremendous amount of traffic around oil and gas production, we have more to do this year."

A 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. Unopposed in both the primary and general election in 2018, he would like to see the economy in the southeastern part of the state continue to boom.

"Our corner of the state is producing 90 percent of the new revenue coming into the state, over a billion dollars," he said. "Things are going very good. We have a booming economy and lots of jobs. We desperately need more qualified employees."

Budget items most critical to Townsend include capital outlay, education and the state highway improvement plan.

"We are spending a tremendous amount on education and not performing," Townsend said. "We had a new Public Education Department secretary that I was very supportive of, and now I don't know what the new one is going to do, but we have to do better than 50th right now. Our children are terribly undereducated. I don't think it's

all how much we spend."

He said the state is losing its young people because they don't have the same opportunities here as they do in other places.

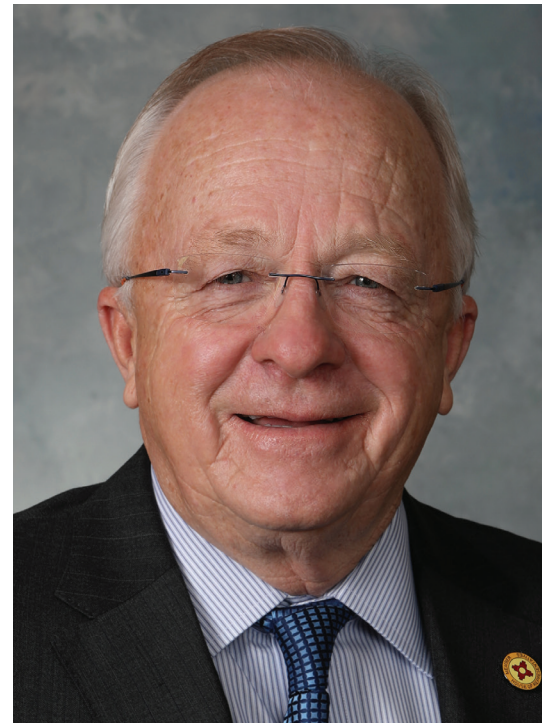
"We have to get our regulatory system in line with other states," he said. "We have to become more competitive in tax structure so more people have more disposable income. There have to be less regulations and more opportunities."

All the counties and districts propose capital outlay projects and each municipality ranks its top three to five projects, Townsend said. In his district, Carlsbad is looking to improve roads and infrastructure; water and schools are priorities in Cloudcroft and Lake Arthur; Artesia needs more money for infrastructure and schools.

Townsend said the way capital outlay works is proposed projects go to the Department of Finance and Administration, which investigates to see which projects are applicable. They authorize those that are and those are sent back to legislators.

"In the first couple of weeks of the session, once HB 2, known as the Feed Bill, comes out, we will know how much capital outlay we will have," he said. "Typically, we in southeastern New Mexico get together and look at priorities and make sure the big issues are funded. Sometimes they [the other area legislators] help me and sometimes I help them, and we aggregate funds to get things done. If each has a million dollars, we can put some good projects together."

Townsend said he knows the caucus he is part of wants to "make sure that New Mexico is a better state at the end of the session and that's what we will work to."



DISTRICT 54

COUNTIES SERVED: Chaves, Eddy, Otero

POLITICAL PARTY: Republican

YEARS IN OFFICE: Five

AGE: 65

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.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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EMAIL: townsend@pvt.net

**DISTRICT 56**

ZACHARY Cook

Focus on economy, business, opposes tax increases, reducing burdens

Entering his 11th year in the state legislature, Rep. Zach Cook said the biggest concerns in his district are “the same ones I am concerned about for our state as a whole: a) the economy and its effects on employment, business opportunities and growth in Otero and Lincoln counties; and b) our educational system and its role in preparing Lincoln and Otero kids for higher education or for entry into the workforce.”

Cook said the governor’s spikes in revenues, which he cautions could be temporary, to raise spending to “unprecedented levels” could result in tax increases, which in turn would harm investment, stifle growth and reduce employment.

“I will work to hold government spending to sustainable levels, oppose all tax increases, and support measures that reduce the costs, intrusions and burdens of government,” Cook said.

“Regarding education, I am concerned that Gov. (Michelle) Lujan Grisham does not want to have any accountability measures in place and has instead gone back to relying only on advice from labor union bosses instead of listening to classroom teachers and focusing on what parents and students want,” he said.

“My top priority is working with Republican and Democrat colleagues to try to ensure that Gov. Lujan Grisham

COUNTIES SERVED: Lincoln, Otero

POLITICAL PARTY: Republican

YEARS IN OFFICE: Ten

AGE: 47

BIRTHPLACE: Denver, Colorado

PROFESSION: Attorney

EDUCATION: UNM law school

CONTACT INFORMATION

ADDRESS: 1703 Sudderth # 425, Ruidoso, NM 88345

PHONE: 575-937-7644

EMAIL: zachjcook@gmail.com

does not continue on the spending spree she pushed through last year. We must do all we can to ensure that we don’t adopt even more programs and taxes that end up crushing our economy.”

Cook also worries about distractions during the 2020 session.

“Because it’s an election year there will probably be a lot of purely political maneuvering, posturing, and grandstanding,” he said.

In his district, Cook believes funding the hospital in Ruidoso is a major priority.

**DISTRICT 59**

GREGORY Nibert

Nibert enters fourth year in legislature

State Rep. Greg Nibert, a Republican, represents District 59, which includes portions of Chavez and Lincoln counties. He has held the seat since 2017, succeeding former state Rep. Nora Espinoza. Republicans have held the seat since 1990.

Nibert, an attorney, is a member of the House Judiciary Committee and the House State Government, Elections and Indian Affairs Committees, as well as the interim Ethics Committee and Water and Natural Resources Committee.

Nibert served eight years on the Chaves County Commission before being elected to the state House and is a former chair

of the Chaves County Republican Party. Nibert was named Lawyer of the Year in 2015 by the State Bar Section on Natural Resources, Energy and Environmental Law.

Nibert received more than 70 percent of the vote when he won the District 59 seat in 2016. He received almost 77 percent of the vote when he was re-elected in 2018. He is a candidate for re-election in 2020.

While earning his juris doctorate at Pepperdine University, Nibert served as editor in chief of the Pepperdine Law Review.

Nibert and his wife, Carolyn, have two sons and live in Roswell, which is Nibert’s home town.

COUNTIES SERVED: Chaves, Lincoln

POLITICAL PARTY: Republican

YEARS IN OFFICE: Three

AGE: 62

BIRTHPLACE: Roswell, N.M.

PROFESSION: Attorney

EDUCATION: B.A. from the University of New Mexico, 1980; law degree from Pepperdine University, 1983

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:

Member (including service as chair) of the Chavez County Commission; former chair of the Chavez County Republican Party

CONTACT INFORMATION

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PHONE: Office: 575-622-6510; home, 575-317-1050; legislative office: 505-986-4211

EMAIL: greg.nibert@nmlegis.gov



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Catron County

Elk, roads, infrastructure priorities in Catron County

BY ELVA K. ÖSTERREICH

In Catron County, officials are always looking for senior center money and pushing for road improvements said County Commissioner John Snyder.

“It seems like our biggest issue is that our road department doesn’t have enough material,” Snyder said. “We were talking about a crusher for road materials, but we just don’t have the means to buy it. Most of our roads are gravel roads. We need to keep from being so muddy. In the wintertime they get really muddy and we get a lot of complaints from people. Our guys go fix them after they dry out, then it just happens again.”

Snyder said he loves his county because it is not in a rat race. A recent trip to Carlsbad convinced him he doesn’t need the noise and traffic.

“It’s quiet here,” he said.

Unfortunately, he said, the 3,500 people who live in Catron County don’t have much of a say when faced with the populations of other parts of the state, like Albuquerque, and the county’s economy suffers. With protections in place for wolves, owls and the Gila designated as wild and scenic, the ranchers, foresters and even tourism suffer.

“They’ve pretty much destroyed our economy with logging and the spotted owl,” he said. “Then they brought the wolf when the only other industry is cattle ranching. Tourism doesn’t happen. Now they are telling us we will get tourism from wild and scenic rivers and that’s not going to happen.”

When elk season hits, that’s when Catron county gets a much needed boost, Snyder said.

“When they hunt elk, that brings money to our county especially the out-of-staters,” he said. “It’s a shot in the arm for the motels and businesses.”

Catron County is New Mexico’s largest county at nearly 7,000 square miles, larger than four states, and its population hovers around 3,500, according to the latest U.S. Census. It has 900-plus miles of dirt roads and an elk population of about 12,000.

According to Catron County’s Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan FY 2021-2025, the county priority to is to do



improvements to the courthouse with heating and cooling. They continue to work on the improvements to the areas that suffered damage due to the flooding that occurred because of a burn scar and are focusing on replacing levies to protect properties and infrastructure in the county.

Southern New Mexico Council of Governments Executive director Priscilla Lucero added there would be a request on behalf of the Quemado Lakes Water Association for water system improvements.

The village of Reserve, county seat, has an overarching goal to complete much needed street and drainage improvements which is progressing in phases as funding permits. However, the village’s immediate goal is to make corrections and abate environmental hazards to the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Reserve also needs to complete a secondary well as the village has only one well and one water source for the entire community. Should something happen to this well or water source, the village would be without water for drinking and fire protection. Another priority for reserve is to complete a master drainage plan for the village.

Reserve has not had much population growth, but it is known for its outdoor recreation, an economic driver for the community.

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Catron County supports the 2020 Legislative Priorities for New Mexico Counties: Increase funding under the County Detention Facility Reimbursement Act, reimburse costs for sheriff’s offices to transport state prisoners, increase EMS and Law Enforcement Protection Fund funding, expansion of behavioral health funding for incarcerated individuals and opposition to local governments increasing Public Employees Retirement Association contributions as a solvency solution.

CATRON COUNTY CAPITAL PROJECTS FOR 2020

- Quemado Road Department: Improvements
- Reserve Maintenance Department: Improvements
- Public Safety: Radio communications system improvements
- Livestock facilities: Improvements
- Catron County: Equipment purchase

QUICK FACTS

PEOPLE

Population: 3,578 (2019 estimate)

Households: 1,381 (2014-2018)

Median household income: \$42,480 (2018)

Persons below poverty level: 23.3 percent (2018)

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)

PUBLIC OFFICIALS

BILL GREEN

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575-533-6433 Fax
575-519-2064 Cell

LINDA COOKE

County Manager Assistant
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Commission Chairman
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catroncountynm.gov
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Home: 575-533-6633

VAN J. "BUCKY"

ALLRED
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catroncountynm.gov
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575-519-0404 Cell

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M. KEITH RIDDLE

Catron County Clerk
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Reserve, NM 87830
575-533-6400

CONNIE SUE SHIPLEY

Treasurer
P.O. Box 407
Reserve, NM 87830
575-533-6384

IAN FLETCHER

Sheriff
P.O. Box 467
Reserve, NM 87830
575-533-6222



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24 Mountaineer Road,
Reserve, NM 87830
575-533-6242
reserve.schoolblocks.com

CATRON COUNTY COMMUNITIES

APACHE CREEK

Census-designated place
Population: 67

ARAGON

Census-designated place
Population: 94

CRUZVILLE

Census-designated place
Population: 72

DATIL

Census-designated place
Population: 54

GLENWOOD

Census-designated place
Population: 143

LUNA

Census-designated place
Population: 158

PIE TOWN

Census-designated place
Population: 186

QUEMADO

Census-designated place
Population: 228

RESERVE

Census-designated place
Population: 289

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Doña Ana County

Fire, medical, detention services need attention

BY MIKE COOK

In a memo to Doña Ana County commissioners, County Manager Fernando Macias said 2019-20 “priority action items” include determining the future of the Crisis Triage Center, dealing with county detention center issues, continuing to improve fire service countywide and maintaining county partnerships with the City of Las Cruces.

The county commission approved \$2 million to build the triage center in 2012, and construction was completed the following year. It received medical clearance in 2016 but has never opened. In both local and national searches in the past few years, the county has sought providers to operate the facility.

Macias said the county expects results soon from a study on how best to utilize the facility, including the development of a blueprint for it to provide behavioral health services to “enhance services for detention center detainees suffering from behavioral health conditions” and provide transition services and oversight “to ensure a continuity of community-based services” for individuals taken into protective custody who are released from hospital care.

“Times have changed” since the triage center was built, Macias said. In rethinking its future, he said, there should be less focus on the building itself and more on “how to help these individuals maintain stability in the community.”

It may be appropriate to seek a 2020 ballot initiative to devote a portion of county gross receipts tax to provide a “long-term stable revenue source” for the triage center, Macias said. The key, he said, is to ensure the long-range success of the facility.

Those plans could include use of the nearby Wooten Building, which is a former public health building now owned by the county, he said. The building is now used for storage, Macias said, but could be retrofitted as a medical clinic.

County Detention Center issues “remain substantial,” Macias also said in the memo, including operating costs, employee turnover, improvements to the physical plant



and “efforts to enhance the effectiveness of the overall detention center campus.”

In an Oct. 25 interview, Macias said fire service is being strengthened throughout the county, including full-time volunteers now at county fire stations in Anthony and Doña Ana. Through a “monumental effort” in 2019 that has included aggressive recruitment of new firefighters, Macias said the county has seen “dramatically improved” ISO (Insurance Services Organization) ratings, which are part of the measure of a fire department’s ability to protect the community it serves. Previously, he said, six of the county’s 16 fire districts had received very poor ISO ratings. The improved ratings, Macias said, are “a relief to residents” because they mean improved safety and lower insurance rates. 28 new county firefighters were sworn in last November after an 84-hour academy that included classroom instruction and skills practice.

Macias said he would like to see the county continue to work with the City of Las Cruces “on future strategic planning on multiple issues,” including the triage center, animal services, ambulance services and the Mesilla Valley Regional Dispatch Authority.

Macias said he also wants the county to improve its community outreach by creating a media and public communications center that combines public information and community and constituent services “to improve communications with the public on what services and individual assistance can be

provided by the county.”

The county manager said he would also like to see more community-based county meetings, enhanced spay-neuter services to reduce the number of unwanted animals in the county and an effort to encourage better use of the county’s 15 community centers. Macias said his office is putting together a county-wide cleanup and beautification plan.

“We are in a very strong position to be providing greater services,” Macias said.

DOÑA ANA QUICK FACTS

PEOPLE

Population: 217,522 (2018), Grew four percent, April 2010-July 2018

Households: 89,049 (2018)

Median household income: \$39,114 (2013-17; 2017 dollars)

Persons below poverty level: 26.3 percent

BUSINESS

Total employer establishments: 3,615 (2016)

Non-employer establishments: 12,895 (2017)

Total firms: 16,298 (2012)

GEOGRAPHY

Land Area (square miles): 3,807

Persons per square mile: 55 (2010)

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



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Address: P.O. Box 568, Hatch, NM 87937

Phone: 575-519-4723

Email: hatchchamber@gmail.com

Website: www.villageofhatch.org/links/chamber_of_commerce

GREATER LAS CRUCES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Mission: Since 1952 the GLCCC has provided area businesses a unique mix of products, services and advocacy to help them grow their businesses and build a better and stronger community.

Address: 150 E. Lohman Ave.,
Las Cruces, NM 88001

Phone: 575-524-1968 Fax: 575-527-5546

Email: chamber@lascruces.org

Website: www.lascruces.org

LAS CRUCES GREEN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Mission: To promote socially and environmentally responsible businesses and to build a vibrant and successful local economy based on the Triple Bottom Line.

Address: 221 N. Main St.,
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88001

Phone: 575-323-1575

Website: locallascrucres.com

LAS CRUCES HISPANIC CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Mission: The Las Cruces Hispanic Chamber of Commerce provides leadership for the advancement of economic prosperity for our region and our diverse membership.

Address: 277 E. Amador Ave, Suite 305,
Las Cruces, NM 88001

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

Website: lascrucreshispanicchamber.com

ELECTED OFFICIALS

DOÑA ANA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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Mayor pro-tem

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DISTRICT 4

Johana Bencomo

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DISTRICT 5

Gill Sorg

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DISTRICT 6

Yvonne Flores

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yflores@las-cruces.org

DOÑA ANA COUNTY COMMUNITIES

ANTHONY

City Population: 9,339
(2017 estimate)

Mayor:
Diana Murillo-Trujillo

BERINO

**Census-designated Place
Population:** 1,441 (2010)

CHAMBERINO

**Census-designated Place
Population:** 919 (2010)

CHAPARRAL

**Census-designated Place
Population:** 14,631
(6,965 in Doña Ana County)

DOÑA ANA

**Census-designated Place
Population:** 1,211 (2010)

FAIRACRES

**Census-designated Place
Population:** 824 (2010)

GARFIELD

**Census-designated
Place Population:** 137 (2010)

HATCH

Population: 1,601
(2014 estimate)
Village Mayor:
Andy Nuñez

LA MESA

**Census-designated Place
Population:** 737 (2016
estimate)

LA UNION

**Census-designated Place
Population:** 1,124
(2016 estimate)

LAS CRUCES

City Population: 101,712
(2017 estimate)

Mayor: Ken Miyagishima

MESILLA

Town Population: 1,880
(2014 estimate)
Mayor: Nora L. Barraza

MESQUITE

**Census-designated Place
Population:** 1,112 (2010)

ORGAN

**Census-designated Place
Population:** 323 (2010)

PLACITAS

**Census-designated Place
Population:** 576 (2010)

RADIUM SPRINGS

**Census-designated Place
Population:** 1,888
(2016 estimate)

RINCON

**Census-designated Place
Population:** 271 (2010)

RODEY

**Census-designated Place
Population:** 388

SALEM

**Census-designated Place
Population:** 942

SAN MIGUEL

**Census-designated Place
Population:** 1,153 (2010)

SAN PABLO

**Census-designated Place
Population:** 836 (2016
estimate)

SAN YSIDRO

**Census-designated Place
Population:** 194 (2014
estimate)

SANTA TERESA

**Census-designated Place
Population:** 4,258 (2010)

SUNLAND PARK

City Population: 17,061
(2017 estimate)
Mayor: Javier Perea

UNIVERSITY PARK

**Census-designated Place
Population:** 4,192 (2010)

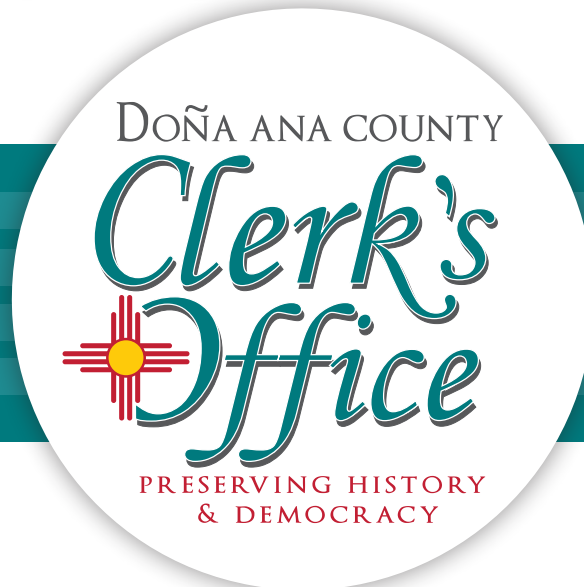
VADO

**Census-designated Place
Population:** 3,194 (2010)

WHITE SANDS

**Census-designated Place
Population:** 1,651 (2010)

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The Office of the County Clerk keeps records such as resolutions, ordinances, deeds and marriage licenses. The office also issues several types of permits and licenses, such as permits for parties, licenses for liquor establishments, etc.

The Doña Ana County Clerk's Office also receives nominations and petitions related to elections. In addition, the office supervises and prepares ballots and voting machines and trains poll workers. The clerk's office also supports the Office of the Probate Judge in handling informal proceedings.

The County Clerk is also responsible for serving as the Clerk of the Probate Court in handling informational proceedings only.

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- We believe in handling the election process with transparency & integrity to ensure public trust.
- We believe that all qualified voters have an opportunity to vote free of intimidation and obstruction.
- We believe exceptional customer service is critical to the success of our duties and responsibilities.



Should you have any questions
please visit our office or give us a call.

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



845 N. Motel Blvd., Las Cruces, NM 88007
(575) 647-7428 www.donaanacounty.org/clerk



Las Cruces' legislative priorities

BY MIKE COOK

Members of the Las Cruces City Council were at work on capital outlay requests in November, paring down a total of about \$56 million in city needs presented to the council in late October by city lobbyist Larry Horan. In early December, the council unanimously adopted a priority list totaling almost \$31.5 million and including 14 major and seven small capital projects. That list of priorities will be presented to state legislators for funding consideration during the 2020 session.

Horan said there likely will be about a \$900 million increase in general fund revenue in 2020, which is about the same level as the 2019 funding increase. The state's annual budget is currently about \$7 billion.

Also similar to the 2019 session, Horan said each state senator likely will have about \$3.2 million in capital outlay funds to spend in 2020, while each New Mexico House member likely will have about \$2 million. (Eight members of the New Mexico House of Representatives and five state senators represent all or part of Las Cruces and Doña Ana County.)

Horan said the city will also target state-wide capital outlay funds and those allocated to Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham to help pay for local projects.

The City of Las Cruces received \$12 million in capital outlay funding in 2019, Horan said.

City funding priorities for the 2020 session include (in no particular order of priority):

- More than \$5.3 million to acquire land, build and equip a mental health facility in Las Cruces;
- \$4.5 million to build and equip a Road-runner Transit facility;
- \$3.5 million for an East Mesa recreation-



al complex road;

- \$3 million to build a new skate park and renovate the old one;
- \$2.65 million for Southfork-Moreno drainage improvements and flood control;
- \$2.3 million for public safety equipment, including emergency response tactical vehicles and a communications system for the Las Cruces police and fire departments;
- \$2 million for historic Amador Hotel renovations;
- \$1.75 million to renovate existing soccer fields in the city;
- \$1.5 million for East Mesa road and drainage construction;
- \$1.425 million for improvements at Las Cruces International Airport, including a

runway extension and taxiway improvements;

- \$1 million for Villa Mora Dam improvements, including trails, parking and lights;
- \$1 million for septic system replacements and improvements in Hacienda Acres and other parts of the city;
- A \$250,000 joint submission with the Town of Mesilla and Doña Ana County to construct a loop in the city's trail system to connect the city, town and county. Another \$75,000 was included in a separate joint submission with the county to improve Tortugas Trail.
- An additional \$1.2 million for other "small capital projects," including police smart technology equipment (\$200,000), downtown security cameras (\$300,000), improvements to the main police station (\$225,000), the installation of solar heat panels at the Regional Aquatic Center (\$100,000), installation of a new gym floor at Meerscheidt Recreation Center (\$78,000) and the purchase of extrication and other emergency response equipment for the Las Cruces Fire Department (\$300,000).

Mayor of Hatch Andrew Nuñez and his staff welcomes you to the Village of Hatch!



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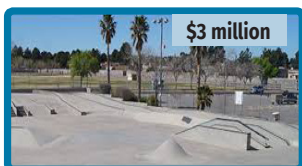
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HERE'S TO A GREAT 2020! "As mayor of Las Cruces, my fellow members of City Council and I look forward to working with Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, our southern New Mexico delegation and lawmakers from across the state this legislative session. 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 2020 NEW MEXICO LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

LARGE CAPITAL PROJECTS



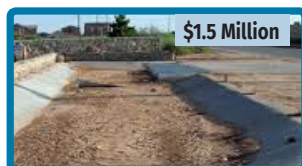
Skate Parks

Renovate the existing skate park and construct a new skate park within the city, to include acquiring property.



Amador Hotel Restoration

Plan, design, construct, equip, install, and furnish the historic Amador Hotel.



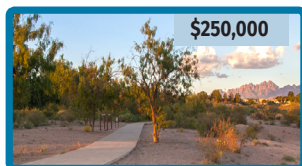
East Mesa Roads & Drainage

Acquire rights of way, and plan, design, and construct roadways to include utilities and flood control.



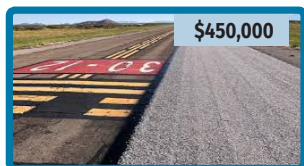
Transit Facility Construction

Plan, design, construct, equip, install, and furnish the RoadRUNNER Transit Maintenance/Operations Facility.



Southwest Loop Trail Project

Plan, design, and construct a loop in the city's trail system to connect with the Town of Mesilla and Doña Ana County. Joint submission with Mesilla and Doña Ana County.



Runway 12-30 Plan/Design

Plan and design an extension to Runway 12-30 at the Las Cruces International Airport, to include environmental and other property studies, to support the development of commercial flights.



Mental Health Facility

Acquire land or property, plan, design, construct, and equip, an in-patient/out-patient mental health facility within the city.



Soccer Field Improvements – Bruins Fields/High Noon Soccer Complex

Plan, design, construct, equip, install, and purchase to renovate soccer fields, to include parking lot and bathroom renovations.



Taxilane Design & Construction

Plan, design, and construct taxilane improvements at the Las Cruces International Airport to support the development of additional airplane hangers.



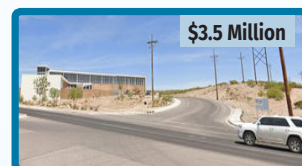
Villa Mora Dam Improvements

Plan, design, construct, equip and install improvements to the Villa Mora Dam property to include trails, parking, and lighting.



Southfork-Moreno Drainage Improvements

Acquire rights of way, plan, design and construct drainage improvements and flood control in Las Cruces.



East Mesa Recreational Complex Road

Acquire rights of way, plan, design and construct roadways in Las Cruces including utilities and flood control.



Septic System Replacement – Hacienda Acres Phase III

Plan, design and construct septic system replacements and improvements in Hacienda Acres subdivision and other areas of Las Cruces.



Regional Public Safety Equipment

Plan, design, construct, purchase, equip, and install improvements to the Public Safety Equipment in Las Cruces to include emergency response tactical vehicles and the P-25 interconnectivity communication system for Las Cruces Police and Fire.

SMALL CAPITAL PROJECTS

- **Police Smart Technologies Equipment: \$200,000** - Purchase, equip and install police department equipment to include vehicle trailers and license plate readers, including related software, lighting, audio equipment, and a generator.
- **Police Building Improvements: \$225,000** - Plan, design, construct, equip, furnish and install improvements to the main police station.
- **Security Camera System Downtown: \$300,000** - Plan, design, construct, equip, furnish and install additional security measures for the Downtown area, which may include security cameras, related software and hardware, as well as lighting and other safety equipment.
- **Solar Installation at Aquatic Center: \$100,000** - Plan, design, purchase, equip, install and construct solar heat panels at the Las Cruces Regional Aquatic Center.
- **Wood Gym Floor-Meerscheidt: \$78,000** - Plan, design, construct, equip, furnish and install new wood flooring in the Meerscheidt Recreation Center.
- **Fire Equipment: \$300,000** - Purchase, equip and install emergency response equipment for the fire department to include extrication equipment and other emergency response equipment.
- **Tortugas Trail Development: \$75,000** - Plan, design, and construct a section in the city's trail system to connect with Doña Ana County (DAC). Joint submission with DAC.

POLICY REQUEST

Social Security Tax Resolution: The Las Cruces City Council is urging the State Legislature to repeal the state tax on Social Security benefits for New Mexico seniors. New Mexico is just one of 13 states in the country that levies an income tax on Social Security payments, and has the second highest tax on Social Security benefits in the nation. This tax on Social Security benefits costs the average Social Security recipient nearly \$700 a year, and by taxing these benefits it undermines the purpose of the Social Security Act, which was designed to lift seniors out of poverty, not fund state government.

[f /CityofLasCruces](https://www.facebook.com/CityofLasCruces) [CLCGOV](https://twitter.com/CLCGOV) [CLC TV.com](https://www.clc-tv.com) las-cruces.org

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: William F. Studer, Jr., Interim City Manager • 575/541-2076 • wstuder@las-cruces.org • Lawrence Horan, Lobbyist • 505/859-2895



HELPFUL TIPS FOR PROPERTY OWNERS

A GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING YOUR PROPERTY ASSESSMENT.

1 YOUR NOTICE OF VALUE IS THE KEY TO UNDERSTANDING YOUR PROPERTY TAX PROCESS. LOOK FOR IT IN THE MAIL IN APRIL 2020.

Each year the Assessor mails each property owner a "Notice of Value." This form serves to inform the owner of the total assessed value, the property description and exemptions applied to the property. Doña Ana County will mail notices on or around April 1st of each year. This form is an important step in the property tax process. Please read it carefully and follow the instructions on the back. You have 30 days from the official mail date to apply for exemptions and benefits, or to appeal your valuation.

DISAGREE WITH YOUR VALUATION?

Property owners may appeal the value or classification determined for their property by filing a petition of protest with the County Assessor within 30 days of the official mail date of the notice of value. Doña Ana County will mail notices on or around April 1st of each year. Protest forms are available on our website or in our office.

2 TAXPAYER BENEFITS & EXEMPTIONS DO YOU QUALIFY FOR A TAX PAYER BENEFIT? WHEN IS THE DEADLINE TO APPLY?

The deadline for claiming the head of family, veterans, 100 percent disabled veteran's exemptions, as well as the valuation freeze is 30 days after the official date of mailing as indicated yearly on the Assessor's official "Notice of Value." Doña Ana County will mail notices on or around April 1st of each year. You can apply in person or by mail. Veteran Exemptions must be claimed in person. For more information regarding each of these exemptions log on to www.donaanacounty.org/assessor and view our helpful tips or call the Assessor's office at (575) 647-7400.

3 DISCLOSURE OF SALES PRICE

New Mexico law requires the disclosure of residential sales information to the County Assessor's Office. This must be accomplished by filing a notarized affidavit at the Assessor's office within thirty days of the date of filing a deed, real estate contract or memorandum of real estate contract with the County Clerk. There are some exceptions for having to comply with the disclosure. The exceptions are listed on the back of the required form, and the form can be viewed on our website. All information collected is required to be kept confidential with the Assessor's office, and will not be made available as public information. Failure to comply with the law could result in a conviction of a misdemeanor and punishable by the imposition of a fine of not more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000). Free notary service is available in our office for this purpose.



QUESTIONS? Please contact our office.
Doña Ana County Assessor
845 N. Motel Blvd., Las Cruces, NM 88007
Phone: 575-647-7400 Fax: 575-525-5538

www.donaanacounty.org/assessor

Leticia Duarte-Benavidez
County Assessor

DOÑA ANA COUNTY ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

The state of New Mexico State University

BY MIKE COOK

New Mexico State University Chancellor Dan Arvizu said the university's new signature logo, "Be bold. Shape the Future," is "really about setting the tone, setting the direction, setting our own mindset, our own future."

Speaking at NMSU's State of the University presentation on the main campus in October, Arvizu said the slogan helps the entire university establish its identity and "where we're going."

"What we're building on is our land grant, our space grant designation," Arvizu said. "We're Hispanic serving, we have world class faculty, we have a diverse, very welcom-

ing community. One of the best kept secrets around is that NMSU has the best value at the lowest cost in our entire region," he said.

Arvizu and NMSU President John Floros discussed the university's new mission statement, which focuses on goals for excellence in student success and mobility, research and community outreach, along with improving NMSU's research status and community outreach, enhancing student success and social mobility, elevating research and creativity, amplifying extension and outreach and building a robust university system.

■ NMSU CONTINUED ON PAGE 61



EDUCATION

PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS
GADSDEN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
 4950 McNutt Road,
 Sunland Park, NM 88063
 575-882-6200
www.gisd.k12.nm.us

HATCH VALLEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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 P.O. Box 790, Hatch, NM 87937
 575-267-8200
www.hatchschools.net

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 Las Cruces, NM 88001
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 575-527-9085

COMMUNITY COLLEGES
DOÑA ANA COMMUNITY COLLEGE (DACC) – CENTRAL CAMPUS
 3400 S. Espina St.,
 Las Cruces, NM 88003
 575-527-7500
dacc.nmsu.edu

DACC – EAST MESA CAMPUS
 2800 N. Sonoma Ranch Blvd.,
 Las Cruces, NM 88011
 575-528-7000

DACC – GADSDEN CENTER
 1700 E. O'Hara Rd., Anthony,
 NM 88021
 575-882-3939

DACC – SUNLAND PARK CENTER
 3365 McNutt Road, Sunland
 Park, NM 88063
 575-874-7780

DACC – WORKFORCE CENTER
 2345 E. Nevada Ave.
 Las Cruces, NM 88001
 575-527-7776

DACC – CHAPARRAL CENTER
 755 Prescott Anthony Drive
 Chaparral, NM 88081
 575-824-2000

UNIVERSITIES
NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY (NMSU)
 1780 E. University Ave.,
 Las Cruces, NM 88003
 575-646-0111
nmsu.edu

Doña Ana County Is OPEN FOR BUSINESS ON THE BORDER



Doña Ana County International Jetport main runway reconstruction is expected to be completed by May 2020.

Moving into 2020, things are coming into focus for Doña Ana County. We are starting to see a thriving business climate come to fruition with the expansion of international industry in Santa Teresa and multimillion-dollar upgrades to the runway at the Doña Ana County International Jetport. To the north, successful launches in 2019 at Spaceport America continue to pave the way for business development at the first purpose-built commercial spaceport in the world.

Back on solid ground, we are moving forward with infrastructure initiatives and quality of life projects in many of our communities and neighborhoods. Doña Ana will see the construction of sidewalks and street lighting, while Chaparral will soon see the construction of a multi-use trail, among other projects. Areas in the county's sprawling East Mesa received more paved roads in 2019 to address connectivity issues and drainage concerns. Colonias in south central Doña Ana County will see improvements to the county's wastewater system. In mitigating mental health issues, Doña Ana County has taken the lead on a variety of initiatives that help the public identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illness and substance abuse disorders. In the face of a national opioid epidemic, we instituted an overdose prevention program that continues to reduce the number of prescription drug opioid overdose-related deaths.



The Board of County Commissioners: Ramón Gonzalez, Lynn Ellins, Isabella Solis, Shannon Reynolds, and Manuel A. Sanchez.

We're also strengthening our partnerships with neighboring governments to provide more responsive resources, like the design and construction of a much-needed flood control dam in Hatch that was in development through Doña Ana County and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Further south, the county identified opportunities to provide greater fire protection and established the first two 24/7 operational stations in Doña Ana and Anthony, which serve thousands of people in the region.

Together with our staff, elected officials and community partners, Doña Ana County has positioned itself as part of a regional team to provide the best business environment on the border, and the investments we have made so far will have a ripple effect throughout all of southern New Mexico. It is our hope that the 2020 legislative session will continue that momentum forward.

For a calendar of events, please visit www.donaanacounty.org/communityoutreach

Questions or concerns? Drop us a line to input@donaanacounty.org

Doña Ana County is on social media:



Board of County Commissioners

Lynn Ellins, District 1
lellins@donaanacounty.org
(575) 525-5808

Ramón Gonzalez, District 2
rgonzalez@donaanacounty.org
(575) 525-5804

Shannon Reynolds, District 3
sreynolds@donaanacounty.org
(575) 525-5807

Isabella Solis, District 4
isolis@donaanacounty.org
(575) 525-5810

Manuel A. Sanchez, District 5
msanchez@donaanacounty.org
(575) 525-5809

Southern Doña Ana County

Santa Teresa leads southern Doña Ana county boom

BY MIKE COOK

We are jamming here in Santa Teresa,” said Jerry Pacheco, president of the Santa Teresa-based Border Industrial Association.

Santa Teresa is seeing increased industrial development and residential growth, said Doña Ana County Manager Fernando Macias. He said the county is working to improve infrastructure in Santa Teresa and to streamline the permitting process for new and existing businesses and be more proactive in creating economic development opportunities.



The growth in Santa Teresa is “absolutely mind boggling,” said New Mexico President Pro-Tem Mary Kay Papen, D-Doña Ana.

“I used to ride my horse in those sand hills,” she said, “there was nobody there.”

Papen said she’s hopeful money can be found to help build a bridge over the train tracks so trucks coming into or passing through Santa Teresa don’t have to stop for trains. “Time is money,” Papen said.

Southern New Mexico is “a huge economic driver” for the state said state Rep. Ray Lara, D-Doña Ana.

“The only thing holding them back is lack of space,” he said. “If there were more buildings that were available and ready to be leased out, we would have more companies.”

Legislators are working with developers to build large warehouses to accommodate more companies, Lara said.

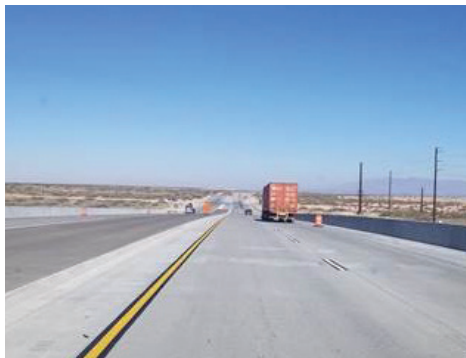
For more information, visit www.nmbia.org.



800 feet of new track has been added to the Santa Teresa Gateway Rail Park and another 2,400 will go into the new development.



The Santa Teresa Jetport drew \$9.88 million in new funding for the runway, taxiways and lighting. \$1 million of this amount will be used to design the cross-runway, which will allow cargo jets to land.



\$46 million is being spent to overlay the Pete Domenici Highway from the Mexican border to the Texas border.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF JERRY PACHECO

■ NMSU CONTINUED FROM PAGE 59

As it kicks off LEADS 2025, Arvizu and Floros said NMSU has seen its first increase in enrollment in almost a decade. That includes a 19 percent increase in graduate student enrollment that Arvizu called “really phenomenal,” and growth at Doña Ana and Carlsbad community colleges. Arvizu said NMSU’s Aggie Pathway program doubled the number of students transferring from Doña Ana Community College to the main campus from fall 2016 to spring 2019.

The enrollment increase is especially significant because most other major universities across the country are suffering enrollment declines, Floros said. The University of New Mexico had a 6.5 percent drop in student enrollment in fall 2019, he said.

“When you account for what the student has to pay and what the student gets, the net price (at NMSU) is actually lower today than it was 10 years ago,” Floros said. NMSU

wants student enrollment to grow by about 15 percent by 2025.

“We also want to close the gap between poor kids and rich kids,” Floros said, through retention, improved graduation rates, overall student success and post-graduation employment.

Arvizu said NMSU is working to improve its national research rating, especially in science, education, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields, and is seeking more and bigger grants from the U.S. departments of Defense, Agriculture, Energy and Education, the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health and other major institutions.

Arvizu said NMSU’s nonprofit Arrowhead Park will drive economic development through community partnerships with Virgin Galactic, Electronic Caregiver and national laboratories. To boost economic opportunities in New Mexico, Arvizu said

NMSU will focus on logistics and manufacturing, commercial space flight, national security, creative media and health sciences and agriculture.

“We’re going to be addressing the global challenges,” Floros said. “They all have local implications.”

In terms of outreach, he said, NMSU has a presence in all 33 New Mexico counties through its Cooperative Extension Service. But, “there’s a lot more we can do” to connect the university with the City of Las Cruces, Doña Ana County, state government and communities across the state, and let that connection shape the type of education and research NMSU does.

Floros said the four percent salary increase NMSU gave its faculty and staff this year is the largest they’ve had “for a long, long time” and is part of the university’s effort to be more competitive and more attractive as an institution.



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SUNLAND PARK



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destination of
choice where people
want to live, work,
play and invest.



Javier Perea
Mayor



City of Sunland Park

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...have been voted one of the fastest growing cities in New Mexico with a population of 17,639 and growing

...have the oldest continuously operating casino in New Mexico, Sunland Park Racetrack and Casino

...are home to several renowned dining destinations in the region

Sunland Proud!

Grant County

Planning for the future in trails and trucks

BY ELVA K. ÖSTERREICH

Grant County is home to the Gila National Forest encompassing some of the wildest and most beautiful land and darkest skies in New Mexico. Silver City, the county seat, provides a jumping off point for exploring the Gila and the Continental Divide Trail and is home to Western New Mexico University, which houses the world's largest permanent collection of Mimbres pottery, is renowned for its arts culture and has hosted the Tour of the Gila road cycling event for more than 30 years.

County Commissioner Harry Browne calls the environs of Grant County a spectrum of cultures.

"The people that live here are an extremely friendly group of folks," he said. "We tend to be outdoors people. We look out for each other. We make do with the resources we have. People are very creative, and everybody appreciates doing what we can with what we have."

Browne loves the outdoors, in fact it was the "enormous access to beautiful public lands that brought me here in 1996."

According to Browne, the county is primarily looking to diversify its economic base. The copper mining industry is still the primary industry and, he said, "everyone knows that won't last forever."

To that end, the county is looking to create a trails master plan and that is on the top of its legislative priority list. The plan will physically tie the county's communities

together so people can walk and bike from one place to another, Browne said. It will also tie in the Gila.

"Right now, it's unsafe to walk or bike from the mining district," he said. "I think this would benefit our residents as well as be an attractive feature for tourists."

Other county priorities include improvements at the airport and of the roads.

"All counties in rural New Mexico always need roadwork," Browne said. "I believe I've got one of the worst in my district – Ridge Road."

He said Grant County has endorsed the legislative priorities, of the New Mexico counties group which includes one to get the state to fully fund housing and transporting state prisoners.

"Currently they only reimburse about 40 percent and that's an enormous drain on our resources," Browne said. "Even though they have extra money, they don't even pay half for their own state detainees."

County Commissioner Alecia Key Edwards said she loves everything about Grant County and especially the access to the outdoor activities. As a hiker and a road cyclist, after 15 years, she doesn't plan to ever leave.

She said and the other commissioners are committed to creating a trails and open space master plan for the county. Other legislative priorities include upgrading Bataan Park ADA and drainage. Also, she said, the county is working toward a consistent plan



for fleet replacement. If there is no plan for replacing emergency, law enforcement and other county vehicles, there is no money available when the replacements are needed.

"We are really committed to the trails piece, but we also have to deal with things like fleet replacement that are really hard," she said.

According to Grant County's Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan, the county is actively engaged in community and economic development, using those two elements as an overarching guideline. By improving infrastructure as well as providing for small business and potential industrial based businesses Grant County will not only provide for their residents but also increase opportunities to stabilize the local economy as well as the local governments. Examples of these efforts include improvements to Business and Conference Center, transportation infrastructure, asset management plan, comprehensive land use plan and recreational facilities.

QUICK FACTS

PEOPLE

Population: 27,687 (2017)

Households: (2013-2017) 11,879

Median household income: (2013-2017) \$40,470

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 Legislative Priorities

Grant County supports the 2020 Legislative Priorities for New Mexico Counties:

Increase funding under the County Detention Facility Reimbursement Act, reimburse costs for Sheriff's offices to transport state prisoners, increase EMS and Law Enforcement Protection Fund funding, expansion of behavioral health funding for incarcerated individuals and opposition to local governments increasing Public Employees Retirement Association contributions as a solvency solution.

The county also requests consideration of recurring funding for behavioral health services in county detention centers. Grant County is a participant of the intervention

Demonstration Pilot Project funded in the 2019 Legislative session.

Grant County capital projects for 2020:

- Grant County Comprehensive Trails and Outdoor Recreation: Plan to produce a county wide trails and open space master plan for the county
- Bataan Memorial Park: ADA/Drainage improvements
- County Fleet Replacement: To purchase and equip vehicles
- County Fair Facility: Construct new ADA bleachers
- Emergency Dispatch: Purchase and equip Bay Station radios and computer aided dispatch.

ELECTED OFFICIALS

GRANT COUNTY COMMISSION

Grant County Administration Center
1400 Highway 180 E,
Silver City, NM 88061
P.O. Box 898, Silver City, NM 88062
575-574-0000

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DISTRICT 3

Alicia Kay Edwards

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aedwards@grantcountynm.com

DISTRICT 4

Billy Billings

575-574-0092
bbillings@grantcountynm.com

DISTRICT 5

Harry Francis Browne

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SILVER CITY TOWN COUNCIL

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MAYOR

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DISTRICT 2

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DISTRICT 3

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DISTRICT 4

Guadalupe "Lupe" Cano

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EDUCATION

PUBLIC SCHOOLS SILVER CONSOLIDATED SCHOOLS

2810 N. Swan St.,
Silver City, NM 88061
575-956-2000
www.silverschools.org

COBRE CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT

900A Central Ave.,
Bayard, NM 88023
P.O. Box 1000, Bayard, NM 88023
575-537-4010
www.cobre.k12.nm.us

CHARTER SCHOOLS ALDO LEOPOLD CHARTER SCHOOL

1422 U.S. Highway 180 East,
Silver City NM 88061
575-538-2547

PRIVATE SCHOOLS GUADALUPE MONTESSORI SCHOOL

1731 N. Alabama St.,
Silver City, NM 88061
575-388-3343
www.guadalupeмонтессори.org

UNIVERSITIES/ COLLEGES

WESTERN NEW MEXICO UNIVERSITY

1000 W. College Ave.,
Silver City, NM 88062
P.O. Box 680, Silver City, NM 88062
800-872-9668, 575-538-6011
wnmu.edu



WESTERN
NEW MEXICO UNIVERSITY
Silver City, New Mexico

GRANT COUNTY COMMUNITIES

BAYARD

City Population: 2,185

CLIFF

Census-designated place
Population: 293

HURLEY

Census-designated place
Population: 1,210

PINOS ALTOS

Census-designated place
Population: 198

SANTA CLARA

Village Population: 1,800

SAN LORENZO

Census-designated place
Population: 97

SILVER CITY

Town, County Seat
Population: 9,647



Hidalgo County

Though slow, the Bootheel sees infrastructure growth

BY JASON WATKINS

Hidalgo County is a colorful palette of characters and problems, beautiful landscapes and stark realities. It's an intersection between two states and two countries, five major highways, and a number of unique cultures.

Today, it faces global scrutiny as one of the fronts in the battle for immigration in this country, with hundreds of active-duty military service members serving temporary duty assignments here, several hundred members of the U.S. Border Patrol working here, countless state police, sheriff personnel, customs, local police forces.

"This legislative session our priorities are to obtain funding for a residential treatment center and assisted-living units for seniors," said Hidalgo County manager Tisha Green.

A major source of spending in 2020 will be road improvements throughout Hidalgo County, according to numerous officials. Highway paving has begun on parts of Motel Drive in Lordsburg, parts of Interstate 10, on Mountain View Road and south of town.

More road construction will bring dollars, delays, laborers, equipment and improvements.

"Road department trucks are also being requested," Green said, "as our fleet is not in good shape at all. Our road fund isn't healthy, not allowing us to purchase new vehicles on our own. Some employees have

had to use their personal vehicles to get to and from job sites because of transmission or motor failure.

"Another request on our list this year is solar shelters for county buildings to help reduce the cost of electricity bills and to provide cover for detention and ambulance vehicles," Green said.

Hidalgo County has benefitted from the government's program called "Stonegarden," a federal immigration effort to beef up border security using existing law enforcement manpower. In 2018, Hidalgo County was in the headlines as the scene of the death of a toddler girl who crossed the border near Antelope Wells in the southern portion of the county along the Mexican border.

An innovative energy project called Lightning Dock has begun operations in Cotton City, utilizing a natural hot spring to generate electricity. The geothermal vent was previously used to grow roses in the Animas Valley.

Lordsburg, the county seat, is home to just over 2,700 people. Its school district oversees three schools, RVT Elementary, Dugan-Tarango Middle School (which houses the former Central Elementary) and Lordsburg High School.

The newly active Lordsburg Economic Advancement Plan (LEAP) has set out to address beautification of the city's down-



town area, which has already seen a small Renaissance in new businesses setting up shop in the past decade, including a newspaper, a bakery, a flower shop, a hardware store, a physical therapist and a business office.

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

- Address staggering suicide statistics
- Establish treatment center for substance abuse
- Provide care to elderly population
- Improve roads and infrastructure

QUICK FACTS

PEOPLE

Population: 4,240 (2018 estimate)

Households: 1,761 (July 1, 2018)

Median household income:

\$31,829 (2015-18 survey)

Persons below poverty level, percent: 24.8 percent (2018)

BUSINESS

Total employer establishments: 110 (2018)

Non-employer establishments: 225 (2018)

Total number of firms: 250 (2018)

GEOGRAPHY

Land area (square miles): 3,436.86

Persons per square mile: 1.4 (2018)

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

Hidalgo County History

Lordsburg has played host to history on several occasions, notably in 1927 when Capt. Charles A. Lindbergh made a much-publicized visit to the local airport to celebrate his transatlantic flight. Western screen legend Tom Mix was leaving Lordsburg when he was killed in an auto accident in Arizona. Lordsburg is also the setting of the John Ford Western classic "Stagecoach," starring John Wayne.

Major points of interest include Shakespeare Ghost Town south of Lordsburg, Steins Ghost Town west of town near the Arizona border, the nearby Gila wilderness, thousands of acres of public land dotted with 100-year-old mine shafts or ancient

Native American ruins, even a training ground used by the Department of Homeland Security fashioned out of a former industrial company town, Playas.

In the early 2000s, the Phelps Dodge Playas operation ceased business, laying off more than 500 local employees and setting the county economy into a headspin it hasn't fully recovered from. Despite the loss, the government's security and defense apparatus made use of the former townsite to train American soldiers and contractors in the art of urban warfare, explosives, and desert combat, among other things.

Today, 4,894 citizens call Hidalgo County home.

ELECTED OFFICIALS

HIDALGO COUNTY COMMISSION

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Lordsburg, NM, 88045
575-542-9428

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Johnny Hatch
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Joel Edwards
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SHERIFF
Warren D. Walter
575-542-3833

COUNTY CLERK
Melissa De La Garza
575-542-9213

COUNTY MANAGER
Tisha Green
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tisha.green@hidalgocounty.com

LORDSBURG CITY COUNCIL

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Lordsburg, NM 88045
575-542-3259

Susie Cole

Ernest Gallegos
575-542-9710

Irene Galvan

Eddie Lopez

Rodney Plowman
(re-elected) 575-542-3259

Caesar Alvarez
(newly elected)

Alfredo Morelos, Jr.
(newly elected) 575-538-1128

MAYOR
Robert Barrera
575-542-3421

CHIEF OF POLICE
Art De La Garza
575-542-3505

HIDALGO COUNTY COURTHOUSE
300 Shakespeare St.,
Lordsburg, NM 88045
(575) 542-9428

EDUCATION

LORDSBURG SCHOOL DISTRICT

401 W. 4th St.,
Lordsburg, NM 88045
(575) 542-9361
www.lmsed.org

SCHOOL BOARD
Afredo Morelos, Jr., President
(575) 538-1128
Susie Cole, Vice president
Edgar Gomez, Secretary
Alyssa Esquivel
Ruben Gomez

SUPERINTENDENT
Stephen Lucas

PRINCIPALS
Scott Roberson, Lordsburg HS
Ralph Almanzar, Dugan-Tarango Middle School
Adam Amador, R.V. T aylor Elementary School

ANIMAS INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

#1 Panther Blvd.,
Animas, NM 88020
(575) 548-2299

SCHOOL BOARD
William Hurt, President
William "Bunch" Swift, Vice President
Jared Fral ie, Secretary
Trina Kellogg
Levi Klump

SUPERINTENDENT
Loren Cushman

PRINCIPAL
Jeff Gephart

HIDALGO COUNTY COMMUNITIES

ANIMAS
Census-designated place
Population: 237

COTTON CITY
Census-designated place
Population: 388

GLEN ACRES
Census-designated place
Population: 225

LORDSBURG
City, County Seat
Population: 2,797

RODEO
Census-designated place
Population: 101

VIRDEN
Population: 131

Source: U.S. Census population estimates, 2018



Lincoln County

Medical Center nears completion; infrastructure coming back

BY RICHARD COLTHARP

With one last capital outlay fund payment of \$361,000, the Lincoln County Medical Center replacement hospital is nearing the finish line in Ruidoso.

"We hope it's all complete by the end of summer," said Nita Taylor, Lincoln County Manager.

After several years, and nearly \$35 million, the project is in its final phase, which includes demolition of the old hospital and construction of the new parking lot.

The \$3 million physical therapy center and \$5 million physician's office building are complete, both funded solely by Lincoln County. A big chunk of the funding came through a \$25 million General Obligation Bond, and there was also an \$8.8 million pledge from Presbyterian Healthcare Services, which has managed the hospital since 1972.

The facility will feature a 25-bed critical access hospital, more options for cardiac care and provide valuable services for the entire region.

That's why the county made that final \$361,000 its top capital outlay request.

The Village of Ruidoso and the adjacent City of Ruidoso Downs have long been a tourist getaway, especially for those in Texas and Mexico, but fires and floods and other calamities in recent years have done a number on the infrastructure in both communities, which is reflected in their capital outlay requests.

In Ruidoso, requests include \$6 million toward bridge replacements, \$2.7 million for the Alto water treatment plant upgrade, and \$10.4 million for sewer line relocation. In Ruidoso Downs, the Riverside waterline and spring tank replacement projects are needing \$3.3 million.

Ruidoso is requesting \$7.4 million for its Horton Complex and judicial and village office consolidation project, and Ruidoso Downs is requesting \$3.1 million for a new city hall.

Other requests for Ruidoso:

- \$500,000 for broadband fiber connectivity
- \$2.3 million for 911 addressing/consolidated dispatch

- \$1 million for workforce housing, a project designed to increase housing inventory, both single- and multi-family

Other requests for Ruidoso Downs:

- \$52,500 for the City of Ruidoso Downs comprehensive plan
- \$500,000 for renovations at the Hubbard Museum of the West

COUNTIES JOIN FORCES

Last October, Lincoln County's commissioners joined other counties in backing five key legislative priorities established by the state's association of counties.

Many of New Mexico's 33 counties, particularly the rural ones, have common concerns and issues.

Those priorities are:

Detention Reimbursement Fund – Restore funding for the County Detention Facilities Reimbursement Act to the original appropriation level of \$5 million.

Prisoner Transport and Extradition – Create a line item in the state Department of Finance and Administration budget and appropriate \$750,000 to reimburse sheriffs' offices for transportation of state prisoners according to state statute.

EMS Funding – Create a line item in the state Department of Health budget and appropriate \$5 million annual to the Emergency Medical Services Fund.

Behavioral Health – Renew and expand funding for the New Mexico Human Services Department to provide behavioral health services to adult and juvenile offenders housed in county detention centers who have a serious mental illness, including co-occurring substance abuse disorders.

PERA Reform – Oppose legislation that would increase local government contributions to the Public Employees Retirement Association.

LOCAL COUNTY PROJECTS

Compared to a new hospital, Lincoln County's other capital requests are more routine. They include:

- \$500,000 for improvements at Capitan's Lincoln County Fairgrounds, which hosts

QUICK FACTS

PEOPLE

Population: 19,395 (2017 estimate)

Households: 7,902 (2013-2017)

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 number of firms: 2,794 (2012)

GEOGRAPHY

Land area (square miles): 4,831

Population per square mile: 4.2 (2010)

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

many events, including the county fair and the Smokey Bear Stampede, which is still considered the largest open rodeo in the nation. There will be several improvements, most critically, the replacement of the grandstands.

- \$100,000 for renovation and drainage improvements at the Lincoln County Courthouse courtyard in Carrizozo.

- \$90,000 for ADA improvements to the county courthouse.

- \$500,000 to plan, design and construct 3 miles of repavement of county roads.

Another big project coming down the line, Taylor said, is a pair of wind farms that will be built on private lands in the county.

Lincoln County has passed two inducement resolutions to affect the issuance of Industrial Revenue Bonds in an aggregate principal amount of \$1.4 billion (for each farm)," Taylor said. "The result will be Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILT) revenues for the county and the impacted school districts."

The first one, called Corona Winds, will be installed north of Corona and should be up and running within two years. The PILT generated by the farm is scheduled to be \$2.8 million a year for 30 years. The county receives two-thirds of that \$1.876 million), and the remaining third will be split between the two school districts in the affected area, Corona Schools (\$882,554) and to a lesser degree, Carrizozo Schools (\$41,586).

EDUCATION

PUBLIC SCHOOLS CAPITAN MUNICIPAL SCHOOLS

519 Smokey Bear Blvd.,
Capitan, NM 88316
P.O. Box 278, Capitan, NM 88316
505-354-8500
www.capitantigers.org

CARRIZOZO MUNICIPAL SCHOOLS

800 D Ave., Carrizozo, NM 88301
P.O. Box 99, Carrizozo, NM 88301
575-648-2346
cms-k12-mt.schoolloop.com

CORONA MUNICIPAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

531 Franklin St.,
Corona, NM 88318
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
www.ruidososchools.org

UNIVERSITIES/ COLLEGES EASTERN NEW MEXICO UNIVERSITY-RUIDOSO

709 Mechem Drive,
Ruidoso, NM 88345
575-257-2120
www.ruidoso.enmu.edu

LINCOLN COUNTY COMMUNITIES

ALTO

Census-designated place
Population: 1,213

CAPITAN

Village
Population: 1,413

CARRIZOZO

Town, County seat
Population: 936

CORONA

Village
Population: 160

FORT STANTON

State historical site
Population: 41

HONDO

Census-designated place
Population: 341

LINCOLN

State historical site
Population: 51

RUIDOSO

Village
Population: 7,756

RUIDOSO DOWNS

City
Population: 2,583

SAN PATRICIO

Town
Population: 564

WHITE OAKS

Ghost town Population:
Undetermined

ELECTED OFFICIALS

LINCOLN COUNTY COMMISSION

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Carrizozo, NM 88301
Phone: 574-648-2394

DISTRICT 1

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Dallas Draper, Vice Chair

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DISTRICT 5

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Judith Miller, Mayor Pro-Tem

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Shane Walker

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Jimmy Romero

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Sabrina Lundquist

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Joseph W. Eby

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Susan Lutterman

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John Cornelius

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Luna County

Community exemplifies compassion

BY RICHARD COLTHARP

Deming made national headlines last summer, housing a refugee processing center in the middle of town to house illegal asylum-seekers from Mexico and Central America (the facility closed in October, 2019).

The town of 14,000 was not equipped to handle the massive influx, but citizens and officials put politics, logistics and expenses aside and just took care of the migrants. The flow slowed after the institution of the “Remain in Mexico” immigration protocol.

The Deming response was typical of this border county, which has always lived with the reality of its proximity to Mexico, for good, bad or indifferent.

New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham, recognized the community’s efforts, and declared Sept. 19, 2019, “Deming/Luna County Day of Compassion.”

She presented commemorative awards to Deming Mayor Benny Jasso, Deming Fire Chief Raul Mercado, Luna County’s then-Detention Center Manager Chris Brice (who is now County Manager) and Luna County Commissioner Barbara Reedy.

And while the city and county’s efforts in dealing with the migrant crisis were extraordinary, the day-to-day business of governing and serving citizens goes on.



City of Deming

As with the rest of the county and the state, infrastructure needs are pressing for the City of Deming, especially to fix crumbling and aging streets.

The top capital outlay requests this year for Deming are as follows.

- \$50,000 to begin a \$1 million project for street and utility upgrades for Solana Road
- \$250,000 to begin work on a \$750,000 a training facility for the Deming Police Department
- \$50,000 toward a \$250,000 renovation of the Deming Children’s Museum

Another measure Deming recently took could help with beautification, the city recently banned the use of plastic bags in retail.

“This action was taken to reduce the number of discarded bags that litter our desert, trees, and fences,” Jasso said, “not to mention the negative effects they have on local wildlife.”

Village of Columbus

The Village of Columbus will be seeking \$750,000 for improvements to Albert’s Field, including an aquatic pool, walking track, basketball court, benches and soccer fields to enhance recreational opportunities. To purchase a new landfill truck, the village is requesting \$150,000. The village is requesting \$1.1 million to finish funding a \$2.9 million berm project for flood and drainage control at the Columbus Port of Entry to Mexico. The state funded \$1.8 million of the project last year.

In another big project, the village is expanding, restoring and improving its historic school building for community use. The ask this year on the \$3million project is \$1.1 million; \$800,000 was funded last year.

Luna County

Luna County currently houses its dispatch and IT center in the old jail, and the facility is in dire need of improvements and modernized equipment, from basics such as air conditioning and lighting to upgraded computers and radios. The county is requesting \$850,000 for this.

Road improvements for several streets combine for a \$1 million request.

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

- Handling the emergent migrant crisis
- Addressing continuing budget shortages
- Attracting corporate investment through incentives

QUICK FACTS

PEOPLE

Population: 23,963 (July 2018 estimate)

Households: 9,088 (July 2018)

Median household income: \$27,602 (2013-2017 survey)

Persons below poverty level: 28.3 percent (July 2018)

BUSINESS

Total employer establishments: 386 (2017)

Total employment: 4,414 (2017)

Total non-employer establishments: 972 (2017)

Total number of firms: 1,353 (2012)

GEOGRAPHY

Land area (square miles): 2,965

Population per square mile: 8.5 (2010, last available)

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

Unchanging amenities

With or without the infrastructure upgrades, much of Luna County has remained the same for generations, and in some cases, centuries.

Local attractions include the City of Rocks State Park, a spectacular landscape formation with giant boulders and a nearby hot spring; the 1,100-acre Rockhound State Park in the Florida Mountains, a world-renowned geological wonderland with geodes, jaspers, opals, agates, and other crystals forming naturally in the surrounding areas; and the historic Village of Columbus, which includes Pancho Villa State Park, and the Mexican port city of Palomas, featuring the famous Pink Store and other shopping opportunities.

ELECTED OFFICIALS

LUNA COUNTY COMMISSION

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Linda Smrkovsky

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DISTRICT 3

John Sweetser

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DEMING CITY COUNCIL

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MAYOR

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DISTRICT 1

David L. Sanchez

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dsanchez505@q.com

DISTRICT 2

Irmisela "Irma" Rodriguez

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DISTRICT 3

Joe "Butter" Milo,

Mayor Pro-Tem

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DISTRICT 4

Victor Cruz

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EDUCATION

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DEMING

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

1001 S. Diamond Ave.,

Deming, NM 88030

575-546-8841

www.demingps.org

UNIVERSITIES

MIMBRES VALLEY

LEARNING CENTER (WNMU)

2300 E. Pine St.,

Deming, NM 88030

575-546-6556

wnmu.edu/ExtUniv/deming



WESTERN

NEW MEXICO UNIVERSITY

Deming, New Mexico

LUNA COUNTY COMMUNITIES

COLUMBUS

Population: 1,609

(July 2018 estimate)

DEMING

County Seat

Population: 14,099

(July 2018 estimate)



Otero County

New retail, new park designation could bring new benefits

BY RICHARD COLTHARP

Alamogordo has seen a retail bump in the past 18 months, with new retail food shops, a new hotel, the arrival of Ross, Melrose and Hobby Lobby (with Marshall's on the way), additional retail shops and craft beer outlets. The Rocket City Family Fun Center features a bowling alley, laser tag, a restaurant and bar and meeting rooms.

That activity is energized by current and anticipated F-16 operations at Holloman Air Force Base, which has long been Otero County's economic engine.

The engine could kick into a higher gear in 2020 if the Air Force stations a fourth squadron at Holloman. That could also bring a crew of contracted mechanic workers, as many as 638.

"That could be a real boon to our community," said State Sen. Bill Burt, whose district 33 includes Alamogordo.

Results of an Environmental Impact Statement regarding extended training air space for the F-16 should be available in early summer 2020. Once that is complete, the Air Force will make the final decision regarding the operations at Holloman.

Another possible boon could come from a name change.

In December 2019, the National Park Service changed White Sands National Monument to White Sands National Park.

"That's a deal that's taken a little over nine years to get done," said Alamogordo's other state senator, Ron Griggs of District 34. "It provides lots of opportunity to our region, and hopefully we will take advantage of

those and improve tourism here, and grow gross receipts tax and lodger's tax in this whole part of the world. Instead of being one of hundreds of monuments, we're now one of just 62 national parks. It's a well-deserved honor for White Sands."

Capital improvements to benefit public safety

Priority projects for the City of Alamogordo in the state's Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP) are geared toward public safety.

The city is requesting \$200,000 to purchase and equip a new brush truck for the Alamogordo Fire Department.

The Alamogordo Police Department is requesting up to \$465,000 for the purchase, installation and training for 65 Panasonic Toughbooks, along with supporting materials and software. These will be installed in police cars to improve response and information access.

The third priority is to purchase and equip vehicles for the police department. These may include Ford Explorers, motorcycles, animal control vehicles and a vehicle/trailer for the mobile crime unit. The request there is \$250,000.

For Otero County, the top priority also regards public safety, another \$750,000 for the Timberon Fire Station. This would combine with \$759,000 from last year to create a modern facility to provide fire and EMS services to the Sacramento Mountain areas of the county, replacing a 1950s building so outdated and in such bad shape it faces condemnation.



Other priorities are for road and bridge projects, the largest of which is at Riata Road in Tularosa, a \$3.5 million project. The Otero County Sheriff's Department is also in need of new vehicles and emergency equipment, and \$373,704 is requested for six of those.

Making it count

The 2020 Census is also on the minds of many citizens in Otero County.

"We dramatically undercount New Mexico sometimes," Burt said. "We need to make sure we count all the new members in our community and state, and even 'off-the-gridders.' If they're there, they need to be counted, because if not, we all lose. It's important to the whole state to understand the information is not used for anything else. People will hopefully participate, and we will get our share of the taxes that should come back to us."

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 establishments: 3,298 (2016)

Total number of firms: 3,918 (2012)

GEOGRAPHY

Land area (square miles): 6,613.21

Population per square mile: 9.6 (2010)

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

ELECTED OFFICIALS

OTERO COUNTY COMMISSION

1101 New York Ave.,
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575-437-7427
www.co.otero.nm.us

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Gerald Ray Matherly
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DISTRICT 2
Couy Dale Griffin
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DISTRICT 3
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ALAMOGORDO CITY COMMISSION

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Richard A. Boss, Mayor
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rboss@ci.alamogordo.nm.us

■ OTERO CONTINUED ON PAGE 73

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

PRIVATE SCHOOLS

ST. FRANCES CABRINI CATHOLIC SCHOOL

(Formerly known as 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
Grades 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,
Alamogordo, NM 88310
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

BENT

Unincorporated
community
Population: 119 (2010)

BOLES ACRES

Census-designated place
Population: 1,638 (2010)

CHAPARRAL

Unincorporated
community
Population: 14,631

CLOUDCROFT

Village Population: 688
(2017)
Mayor: Dave Venable

HIGH ROLLS- MOUNTAIN PARK

Unincorporated
Community
Population: 834 (2010)

HOLLOMAN AFB

Census-designated place
Population: 21,000 Active

LA LUZ

Census-designated place
Population: 1,615

MAYHILL

Unincorporated
community
Population: 80

MESCALERO

Census-designated place
Population: 1,338

NEWMAN

Unincorporated
community
Population: Unavailable

OROGRANDE

Unincorporated
community
Population: 52

PIÑON

Unincorporated
community
Population: 71

SUNSPOT

Unincorporated
community
Population: 674

THREE RIVERS

Unincorporated
community
Population: 119

TIMBERON

Census-designated place
Population: 348

TULAROSA

Village Population:
2,930 (2017)
Mayor: Margaret Trujillo

WEED

Unincorporated
community
Population: 63

ELECTED OFFICIALS CONT.

■ OTERO CONTINUED FROM PAGE 72

DISTRICT 1

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TULAROSA VILLAGE COUNCIL

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Tularosa, NM 88352
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Janie Portillo, Mayor pro-tem
575-585-2771

Jeni "Bebe" Flores, Trustee
575-585-2771

Patrick Garcia, Trustee
575-585-2771

Robert Sainz, Trustee
575-585-2771

CLOUDCROFT VILLAGE COUNCIL

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Cloudcroft, NM 88317
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575-682-2411

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villageofcloudcroft@
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Bill Denney, Mayor Pro-tem
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Cindy Voight, Trustee
craigcindyvoight@
gmail.com

John Tieman, Trustee
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tularosa.net

George Mitchell, Trustee
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tularosa.net

Sierra County

Progress bending Sierra's way

BY RICHARD COLTHARP

The folks who visit Truth or Consequences for a soak in the hot springs, or go downtown for a beverage at TorC Brewing Co., or go to Elephant Butte or Caballo lakes for a day on the water, see one side of Sierra County.

There's another side not as visible if you're just driving down Broadway Street.

For example, within Sierra County, there are 80 people working full-time jobs for Virgin Galactic, moving closer to the day when the company is launching private citizens into space.

Sierra Hospital, with a \$5 million boost from 2019 capital outlay money, is coming up to speed, better serving the entire region.

And there's a preliminary commitment from a company that would bring 50-70 jobs. Amerigreen Organics, based in Atlanta, grows and produces hemp, and processes fiber and oils.

These things, together with the tourism created by the hot springs, Spaceport America and the lakes, may help Sierra County turn the corner.

"The last five years, we've had a loss in population, a loss in jobs and a loss in businesses," said Truth or Consequences City Manager Morris Madrid. "We're stopping the bleeding."

Sierra County Manager Bruce Swingle is optimistic.

"Spaceport America is continuing to grow and produce revenue, and it's moving in a real positive direction," Swingle said.

"Off the fringes of the operations of the

Spaceport, we're seeing some spin-off jobs, and a positive effect on tourism," Madrid said. "Plus, our construction numbers and housing inquiries are up."

Other efforts

The City of Truth of Consequences has a big need for infrastructure improvements.

"We need water lines, mainly," Madrid said, "Water systems in the ground, streets and sidewalks. We have funding for work under the ground, but we need \$1 to \$2 million a year for a few years to take care of the above-the-ground needs."

For the county, Swingle is working with other counties on several projects that have statewide impact. Those include detention reimbursement, prisoner transportation reimbursement, emergency medical services, law enforcement protection fund and behavioral health for prisoners.

For years, counties have absorbed the cost of housing state inmates, but the reimbursements have been insufficient, Swingle said. A few years ago, the funding was up to \$5 million, but was cut back. The counties will be asking for \$8.4 million in 2020, which is more realistic, Swingle said.

The counties are asking for \$5 million for an EMS fund to pay for basic needs, such as services, bandages and equipment.

Last year, the legislature gave \$2.5 million for counties in rural New Mexico, to address behavioral health issues for inmates.

"That's been very successful for us," Swingle said. "Too often, inmates are incarcerated until they're released, and the recidivism rate is tremendous. The funding is helping create an infrastructure so we can provide treatment and services to help while they're incarcerated. It's a win-win for everybody. They implemented it in five counties and we happened to be one. We had extremely limited behavioral health services available. It's unfortunate where we've gone with behavioral health as a state, and as a county, and taxpayers are paying for that direction. We need to pay for those services so we can help them become productive members of society, instead of being incarcerated again and again. The state has taken a step forward and needs to be applauded. But it needs to continue and expand the program."



ICIP PROJECTS

Several Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan projects could help the region.

The top five make a diverse list.

1. **Funding The Shuttle** for \$150,000. This is to purchase two vans that run during the summer to take people to and from Elephant Butte Lake into Truth or Consequences or the City of Elephant Butte for events, shopping and dining. The Shuttle also provides Safe Ride services year round.
2. **Two ambulances for Sierra Vista Hospital**, \$360,000. The hospital has five ambulances, and this will replace two that are outdated.
3. **Arrey baseball complex**, \$200,000. By adding grass and a sprinkler system to the dirt fields, this will create a park area and enable the complex to expand for soccer fields, opening the facility for multi-purpose uses.
4. **Hillsboro Community Center Kitchen**, \$150,000. This will fund a renovation for the center's kitchen to improve use, safety and functionality.
5. **Sierra County road department equipment**, \$150,000. This will purchase a blade for road grading. The county currently operates with three blades, so the addition will increase production by a third.



ELECTED OFFICIALS

SIERRA COUNTY COMMISSION

855 Van Patten St.,
Truth or Consequences, NM 87901
575-894-6215
www.sierraco.org

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Travis Day, District 2
tday@sierraco.org

Frances Luna, District 3, Vice chair
fluna@sierraco.org

TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES CITY COMMISSION

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Truth or Consequences, NM 87901
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www.torcnm.org

Sandra Whitehead, Mayor
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Kathy Clark, Mayor pro-tem
kathy.clark@torcnm.org

Rolf Hechler, Commissioner
rolf.hechler@torcnm.org

Paul Baca, Commissioner
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George Szigeti, Commissioner
gszigeti@torcnm.org

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



**WESTERN
NEW MEXICO UNIVERSITY**

Truth or Consequences, New Mexico

ELEPHANT BUTTE CITY COUNCIL

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Kim Skinner, Mayor pro-tem
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Gerald LaFont, Councilor
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Michael Williams, Councilor
575-744-4892

Travis Atwell, Councilor
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VILLAGE OF WILLIAMSBURG BOARD OF TRUSTEES

309 Veater Road, Williamsburg, NM 87942
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www.villageofwilliamsburg.com

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mayor@villageofwilliamsburg.com

Majorie Powey, Mayor Pro-tem
mpowey@villageofwilliamsburg.com

Guillermo Hernandez, Trustee
ghernandez@villageofwilliamsburg.com

QUICK FACTS

PEOPLE

Population: 11,116 (2017)
Households: 5,0400 (2013-2017, 5-year survey)
Median household income: \$29,690 (2017)
Persons below poverty level: 26.6 percent

BUSINESS

Total employer establishments: 217 (2016)
Total non-employer establishments: 713 (2016)
Total number of firms: 837 (2010)

GEOGRAPHY

Land area (square miles): 4,178
Population per square mile: 2.9 (2010)

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

SIERRA COUNTY COMMUNITIES

ARREY

Census-designated place
Population: 232

CHLORIDE

Ghost town Population: 11

CUCHILLO

Census-designated place
Population: 35

CUTTER

Census-designated place
Population: Unavailable

DERRY

Census-designated place
Population: 49

ELEPHANT BUTTE

City Population: 1,341

ENGLE

Census-designated place
Population: Unavailable

HILLSBORO

Census-designated place
Population: 124 (2010)

KINGSTON

Census-designated place
Population: 32

LAKE VALLEY

Census-designated place
Population: 63 (2016 estimate)

LAS PLACITAS

Census-designated place
Population: 576

MONTICELLO

Census-designated place
Population: 135

TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES

City Population: 6,103

UPHAM

Unincorporated community
Population: Unavailable

WILLIAMSBURG

Village Population: 437

WINSTON

Census-designated place
Population: 59 (2016 estimate)

Socorro County

Socorro working to keep things on track

BY RICHARD COLTHARP

Socorro County has a lot of things to entertain locals and attract visitors.

There are the cranes and wildlife at the Bosque del Apache refuge, the annual Socorrofest on the Plaza in October, the San Miguel Church Fiesta in September, events at the Socorro Rodeo and Sports Complex, concerts and events at New Mexico Tech and, don't forget, some of the world's best green chile cheeseburgers.

To get to all of those things, though, you need roads.

And many in the county are crumbling.

"When you have a very rural area with a lot of ranchers, when you have 16 storms, roads get washed out," said Socorro County Manager Michael Hawkes. "When a mile of grading costs \$225 an hour, how do you grade a road 18 times? We don't have enough manpower and equipment to handle our road issues. And we've got 1,400 miles of roads."

Hawkes said the county used to have seven graders, and 27 people in the highway department, and that's down to four graders and 13 people. The commission has identified \$740,000 in need in a request to the New Mexico Department of Transportation. And they've applied for funds from Homeland Security and FEMA, since many of the road issues have been caused by snow and rainstorms.

The City of Socorro also needs road repair. The city's No. 2 capital outlay request for Fiscal Year 2021 is \$1.3 million for roads and bridges.

"Bullock Avenue is the biggest one," said Socorro's Tourism Office Manager Felipe Romero. "It's the one that leads to the college."

The city's No. 2 request is for \$250,000 to finish remodeling the community center, which was the old armory building and sits next to the Rodeo and Sports Complex.

"It should open in the fall, and will house some city offices, and have a spot for the Rio Grande Heritage Museum which closed," Romero said. "And it will be a place to hold gun shows, arts and crafts fairs and other things."

Its proximity to the Rodeo and Soccer Complex make it a natural fit for indoor elements to complement rodeos, soccer

tournaments and other events.

The first responder training programs at New Mexico Tech continue to draw trainees from all over the nation.

"They keep our lodger's tax going," Romero said. "They're here all the time, and help keep our economy going."

Key needs in the county

Like most counties in the state, Socorro County has issues with its detention center.

"We're trying to enter into contract with health services center, so our inmates that have Medicaid can use it to pay for indigent services," Hawkes said. "We're a very poor county. We gave issues with inmate, not only with mental health, but people with other ailments. You see recidivism because they get out and can't afford medical care for their ailments."

And county detention centers become de facto health clinics, costing the counties lots of money.

"We're not mandated to require senior care, but running them takes about \$600,000 year (\$300,000 from the general fund)," Hawkes said.

The county pays for a lot of things at its three senior that should be covered by reimbursements but are not, Hawkes said.

Those reimbursements would go a long way toward helping with long-term services, meals on wheels and other things needed to truly serve seniors.

Hawkes, who spent nearly 12 years as CEO of the Alamo Reservation in northern Socorro County, helped the county identify a way to grow income.

"Our commission agreed to reinstitute our Advisory Investment Commitment, which is a local government investment plan, with bylaws to follow state statutes," he said.

Modifying investments enabled the county to improve its return from 0.7 percent, to 1.68 percent, increasing the monthly amount from about \$1,700 a month, to \$5-6,000 a month.

"If we can continue with the AIC, we can get some help with seniors, and some help on health services with Medicaid," he said.



NM Tech brings cyber skills to Air Force

New Mexico Tech has long been a vital part of life in Socorro.

The university recently got a shot in the arm economically, and will be using its internationally acclaimed expertise to help national security.

In 2019, Air Force Research Laboratory contracted NMT to explore cyber-related initiatives. The project will involve research, development, evaluation, testing, training and deployment support services for electronic and cyber technology problems.

The seven-year contract is worth \$93 million.

"This award reflects recognition of the intellectual capability of our university's faculty and researchers, and New Mexico Tech is proud to have the opportunity to apply our science in the service of our country," said New Mexico Tech President Stephen G. Wells.

The focus will be to protect U.S. systems by understanding how sensors embedded into devices that are connected via the "Internet of Things" might be manipulated by U.S. adversaries.

"We've been working on this project for a number of years and it's wonderful that it's finally come to fruition," New Mexico Tech Vice President for Research Van Romero said. "A lot of people have put forth a lot of effort into this and it's because of this team effort that we were successful in winning one of the biggest contracts in the history of New Mexico Tech."

ELECTED OFFICIALS

SOCORRO COUNTY COMMISSION

Socorro County Annex, 198
Neel Avenue,
Socorro NM 87801
575-835-0589
www.socorrocounty.net

DISTRICT 1

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jgonzales@co.socorro.nm.us

DISTRICT 2

Martha Salas
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DISTRICT 3

Manuel Anaya
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manaya@co.socorro.nm.us

DISTRICT 4

Glen Duggins
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DISTRICT 5

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SOCORRO CITY COUNCIL

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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)

Total employment:
4,414 (2017)

**Total non-employer
establishments:**
746 (2016)

Total number of firms:
961 (2012)

GEOGRAPHY

Land area (square miles):
6,646.68

**Population
per square mile:**
2.7 (2010)

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

SOCORRO COUNTY COMMUNITIES

ABEYTAS

Census-designated place
Population: 63 (2016
estimate)

ALAMO

Census-designated place
Population: 1,085

BINGHAM

Census-designated place
Population: Unavailable

CHAMIZAL

Census-designated place
Population: 100 (2016)

CLAUNCH

Census-designated place
Population: Unavailable

ESCONDIDA

Census-designated place
Population: 47 (2016
estimate)

LEMITAR

Census-designated place
Population: 327 (2016
estimate)

LUIS LOPEZ

Census-designated place
Population: 265

MAGDALENA

Village
Population: 913 (2014
estimate)

POLVADERA

Census-designated place
Population: 414

SAN ACACIA

Census-designated place
Population: 44

SAN ANTONIO

Census-designated place
Population: 165

SAN ANTONITO

Census-designated place
Population: 94

SOCORRO

City
Population: 8,751 (2014
estimate)

VEGUITA

Census-designated place
Population: 263
(2016 estimate)

EDUCATION

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**SOCORRO
CONSOLIDATED SCHOOLS**
700 Franklin St.,
Socorro, NM 87801
575-835-0300
www.socorro.k12.nm.us

MAGDALENA

MUNICIPAL SCHOOLS
201 Duggins Drive,
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www.magdalena.k12.nm.us

PRIVATE SCHOOLS

**ALAMO NAVAJO
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www.ansbi.org

CHARTER SCHOOLS

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CHARTER SCHOOL**
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www.cottonwoodvalley.org

UNIVERSITIES/ COLLEGES

**NEW MEXICO TECH
INSTITUTE OF MINING
AND TECHNOLOGY**
801 Leroy Place,
Socorro, NM 87801
575-835-5620
www.nmt.edu



Gaining Momentum

Expanding into space in New Mexico

BY ELVA K. ÖSTERREICH

Spaceport America CEO Dan Hicks said the U.S. is currently leading the world in space exploration and the commercial industry is growing tremendously during a space industry update held in November.

"The southwest part of the nation is ideally suited to grow this sector," he said.

Hicks said he attended the International Astronautical Congress, representing the United States

in the spaceport area. The US is focused on going to the moon and then Mars very quickly and other nations are leading in other areas, he said.

"We (the US) now have 12

FAA commercial licensed spaceports," Hicks said. "Spaceport America is one of three that are actually launching into space. The other two are in Florida and West Virginia. Other states trying to get in the game, and we have a short window of opportunity to go forward."

Spaceport America is the only commercial spaceport with both vertical and horizontal launch capabilities, he said. The spaceport has three basic areas. One for vertical launch, one for horizontal launch and an advanced technology area.

Hicks said the spaceport has three key budget requests coming up in the 2020 legislative session: \$3.6 million in general appropriations, \$900,000 in supplemental and \$57 million in Capital Outlay requests. He said the Spaceport Authority staff is still considered temporary and the request would make them permanent.

The \$19 million capital outlay planned for FY20 includes implementation of various projects critically required to support ongoing operations, including upgrades and utilities to the Vertical Launch Area, parking lots and hangars, to name a few. Plans for FY21 (capital outlay estimated at \$57 million) include construction of the IT

building, payload processing and vehicle assembly facilities, an on-site visitor center, access control improvements and the Spaceway Taxiway.

"New Mexico has the opportunity to grow the industry," he said. "Spaceport activities have generated more than \$33 million direct, positive economic impact to our economy."

Jason Lazich, Virgin American director of

infrastructure and ground services, said there are currently more than 140 Virgin Galactic teammates working in the state now. More than half of those are local hires.

"We are having teammates

moving to the community and we actually have a plane that flies from spaceport to Mojavi that takes teammates back and that is all part of the transition," he said.

There are still more coming to live in the area with their families (about 30 and the company continues to hire for a variety of positions.

"It's important to know we are not just hiring rocket scientists," he said. "A lot of other kinds of jobs, from engineers to baristas, are available. We are very excited as we are doing our hiring."

He said there are currently more than 20 open positions involving the various aspects of support that comes with running spaceport and operations. Application can be found at www.virgingalactic.com.

Lazich said Virgin Galactic is now a publicly traded company which lends a sense of assurance from a funding perspective. He said it is a time of transition.

"We are coming out of a manufacturing environment," he said. "We are going from building White Knight and the spacecraft and operating it in New Mexico and operating at Spaceport America. As we look at it, it's such an opportunity to showcase what we have here in New Mexico."



SPACEPORT AMERICA RECENT /CURRENT WORKLOAD:

- **Up Aerospace** – 13 flights total, works with NASA Flight Opportunities and rocket motors from SA. Up/Cesaroni facility.
- **EXOS Aerospace** – Fourth flight, 26 Oct. 2019, the SARGE Pathfinder.
- **New Mexico Tech** – Fifth mission on April 13, 2019.
- **University of Southern California** launch – April 20, 2019.
- **Princeton University** launch – May 27, 2019.
- **Boeing** – Tested their Crew Space Transportation (CST) -1000 Starliner spacecraft.
- **SpinLaunch** – A new spaceflight technology development company broke ground on research facility May 7, 2019 and are building a \$10 million test facility to conduct mass acceleration to move payloads to space.
- **Spaceport America Cup** – 1,300 student competitors completed 93 vertical launches.
- **Virgin Galactic** – Moving workforce from Mojave, California to Spaceport America and hiring locally for additional employees.



New Mexico Oil and Gas Association

A stronger economy and a brighter future

BY MIKE COOK

Even though the production of oil and natural gas is limited to a few counties in southeast and northwest New Mexico, its impact is felt in Las Cruces and every other part of the state, and the New Mexico Oil and Gas Association (NMOGA) wants people to know that.

NMOGA has hired Hatch native and New Mexico State University graduate Fayth Franzoy as its first ever community liaison in Las Cruces as part of the nonprofit, nonpartisan association's efforts to be more transparent and more engaged in communities all along the Interstate 25 corridor, Franzoy said.

For many people in the state, oil and gas production tends to be "out of sight, out of mind," Franzoy said. But, considering its enormous impact on state revenues especially during the boom that's now in its fourth consecutive year, NMOGA wants to do more to "highlight the benefit we're able to give back," Franzoy said.

For example:

- New Mexico ranks third in the nation in oil production and ninth among all states in the production of natural gas.
- Oil and gas production have contributed \$13 billion, or more than 14 percent, to New Mexico's gross domestic product.
- Oil and gas production support nearly 89,000 jobs statewide.
- In 2017, oil and gas production contributed a whopping one third – more than any other industry of the state's funding for schools, infrastructure, health care and public safety. And the expenditure of those funds is not limited to oil-and-gas-producing counties like Lea, Eddy and San Juan. It reaches public schools and hospitals, cities and counties, police departments and sheriff's offices in Las Cruces and Doña Ana County and in every community and county in New Mexico.

- New Mexico's general fund and public schools benefited from \$2.2 billion in oil and natural gas taxes and revenues in fiscal year 2018, an all-time high and an increase of \$465 million from fiscal year 2017, according to a report from the New Mexico Tax Research Institute as quoted on the



New Mexico Oil and Gas Association's booth at the New Mexico Department of Agriculture's Ag Day Tailgate.

NMOGA website.

Because of booming oil and gas production, New Mexico's budget grew from \$6.2 to \$7 billion in 2019 and is expected to add about \$800 million more in 2020.

- "Oil and natural gas revenue pumped \$1.06 billion in funding for education in fiscal year 2018, supporting nearly \$822 million for primary and secondary education, and \$241 million for the state's universities, colleges, and other higher education institutions," according to the NMOGA website. "That's an increase of \$128 million over 2017 funding levels, or enough to hire more than 2,300 new teachers."

- Oil and natural gas revenue supplied Albuquerque Public Schools with \$205 million, while Las Cruces Public Schools brought in \$59 million, the NMOGA website said. The University of New Mexico led higher education institutions with \$60 million, followed by NMSU with \$50 million. Total contributions to education in Doña Ana County top \$154 million, according to NMOGA.

Franzoy said better technology and improved fracking (horizontal drilling) are largely responsible for the surge in oil and gas production in the state for a record fourth consecutive year.

By 2030, oil and gas operators in the state could be extracting 106 percent more natural gas, 136 percent more natural gas liquids and 358 percent more crude oil than they currently are, according to NMOGA. That would increase outputs from \$17.1 billion in 2017 to \$72.6 billion in 2030, NMOGA said.

In September, NMOGA announced a partnership with the Albuquerque Community Foundation to launch the Community Impact Fund, which will award grants to nonprofit and educational organizations in the state focused on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), economic opportunity and the alleviation of child hunger, NMOGA said in a news release.

NMOGA Executive Director Ryan Flynn applauded Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham's plan to make college tuition free to all New

Mexico students, leveraging "increased oil and natural gas production to the benefit of all New Mexicans."

Franzoy said she and other NMOGA officials are assessing what Las Cruces and Doña Ana County needs and how NMOGA can be of the most help. Already, it has helped pay for the remodeling of the teachers' center at Central Elementary School, provided backpacks filled with school supplies to students at Mesilla Park Elementary School and given one of three "ultimate backpacks" awarded to statewide to a student at Picacho Middle School.

"Come 2020, Las Cruces is going to know NMOGA," Franzoy said.

For more information, contact Franzoy at 505-982-2568 and faythf@nmoga.org. Visit www.nmoga.org.



New Mexico Oil and Gas Association Executive Director Ryan Flynn at NMOGA's Brighter Future Fund.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF FAYTH FRANZOY

New Mexico growers harvest first legal hemp crop

BY ALEXIA SEVERSON

Industrial hemp, the *Cannabis sativa* plant species grown for fiber and other non-narcotic products, is taking off in New Mexico, as state growers harvest their first legal crop.

The New Mexico Department of Agriculture began issuing hemp-growing licenses after state and federal laws legalized the cultivation of the plant in late 2018.

"We have about 8,000 (licensed) acres in the state now, so that's pretty significant for our first year out," said New Mexico Department of Agriculture Division Director Brad Lewis in an October 2019 interview.

However, as of fall 2019, the number of acres grown the first year that will be successfully harvested is yet to be seen, as producers learn best practices for growing the new crop through trial and error, Lewis said.

"The challenge for hemp growers is that it's not a simple plant to grow," said Agriculture Secretary Jeff Witte. "It hasn't been grown here since the 20s and 30s and the varieties have all changed. And so, we didn't know until this year (2019) the effects of our soil, our climate, our water on that plant... Most (growers) have been successful, but it's a high labor crop too and a lot of people didn't realize that."

Because hemp is a new crop in the U.S., there are no approved herbicides or pesticides to control weeds or pests, causing issues for growers, Witte said.

Another challenge is that genetics for the crop are not standardized, Lewis said.

"You can buy seed from somebody and it (may not be) representative of what you thought you were buying," he said. "It may be very low CBD and so it may not be worth harvesting because it's just too low to extract, or the THC levels may be too high. And so, all these risks are involved with it."

In addition, many growers may not understand the hemp markets, such as where to sell it and where to get it processed. "So, you can grow it and may not have any place to go with it," Lewis said.

Along with being used to make rope, textiles and clothing, today, hemp's primary markets are Cannabidiol (CBD) products, such as lotions and balms, and hemp cigarettes, or smokables.

"...Probably 90 percent of it is for the CBD or the bud and flower, or smokables," Lewis said.



NMDA Division Director
Brad Lewis

NMDA and the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) have been working with producers and processors seeking security in the development of the extracting, processing and

manufacturing components of the hemp industry, according to a NMDA news release.

During the 2019 legislative session, House Bill 581 Hemp Manufacturing Act was passed and signed into law. The legislation grants NMDA and NMED the regulatory authority over manufacturers, processors, labs, researchers and plant breeders, according to the release.

In September 2019, the New Mexico State University Board of Regents approved the NMDA's proposed hemp manufacturing rule.

The rule accompanies statutory language that provides NMDA specific administrative authorities related to the licensing and inspection of laboratories testing raw hemp for regulatory purposes, as well as the licensing and inspection of persons breeding hemp that may possess plants greater than .3 percent and less than 5 percent THC, according to the NMDA news release.

While the plants look similar, Witte said the difference between hemp and marijuana is the level of THC, the main psychoactive compound in marijuana.

"By definition it has to be .3 percent THC or less," Witte said. "And if it goes over .3 percent, then it has to be destroyed, if you're growing it under a hemp license."

While people have become more accepting of the production of hemp over the years, Lewis said there are still many misconceptions about the crop – the most common one being that it is a psychoactive plant.

"When the state first got into it, that was part of the concern....is that (producers) are growing marijuana, and they're not," he said. "There's a lot of safe guards put in place to ensure that what is being grown in the state is legal and it's not psychoactive."

The move toward reintroducing hemp as



PHOTOS COURTESY NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Hemp Plants: The New Mexico State University Board of Regents approved the New Mexico Department of Agriculture's proposed hemp manufacturing rule at its regular meeting in September. The rule accompanies statutory language that provides NMDA specific administration authorities related to the licensing and inspection of laboratories testing raw hemp for regulatory purposes, as well as the licensing and inspection of persons breeding hemp that may possess plants greater than .3 percent and less than 5 percent THC.

a cash crop began with the 2014 farm bill, "which first opened it up so states could legally grow hemp under a research pilot program," Lewis said.

The 2018 farm bill, signed in December that year, removed hemp from the federal controlled substances act, providing a framework for the growing of hemp and opening it up for commercial application, once the USDA promulgates those rules, Lewis said.

Lewis said the extent of hemp's economic impact in the state is yet to be determined.

"If the demand stays high and the price continues to stay or escalate a little bit with demand, and with the other states producing it, we'll see if we can compete in that market," he said. "That's the big gamble, the big guess, is that the demand continues to increase and we're still in the game in five years."

NMDA is currently licensing hemp producers. Applications for hemp cultivation licenses are available at nmda.nmsu.edu.

On the 2020 election ballot in New Mexico

BY MIKE COOK

The race to succeed retiring incumbent U.S. Sen. Tom Udall will be at the top of the Tuesday, Nov. 3, 2020 election ballot in New Mexico. Udall, 71, served eight years as New Mexico attorney general and 10 years in the U.S. House of Representatives representing New Mexico's Third Congressional District before being elected to the U.S. Senate in 2009 to succeed the retiring Pete Domenici.

Declared candidates in the race to date include Democrats U.S. Rep. Ben Ray Lujan – who has been endorsed by both Udall and U.S. Sen. Martin Heinrich, D-N.M. – and five Republicans: Gavin Clarkson (who ran for New Mexico's U.S. House Second District in the 2018 primary, and for New Mexico Secretary of State in the 2018 general election), Elisa Martinez (a Latina, member of the Navajo Nation and founder of New Mexico Alliance for Life, an anti-abortion advocacy group), Mick Rich (who ran for U.S. Senate in 2018), Albuquerque television weatherman Mark Ronchetti, and Albuquerque business man and shooting range owner Louie Sanchez.

New Mexico 2020 primary elections will be held Tuesday, June 2.

Also on the ballot will be all three New Mexico seats in the U.S. House of Representatives. Incumbents will seek re-election in District 1: Debra Haaland of Albuquerque and District 2: Xochitl Torres-Small of Las Cruces. Both are Democrats first elected in 2018. Incumbent Ben Ray Lujan of Nambé (about 15 miles north of Santa Fe) is giving up the District 3 seat to run for the U.S. Senate.

All 112 members of the New Mexico Legislature will be on the ballot in 2020, including 42 members of the New Mexico Senate and 70 members of the New Mexico House of Representatives. Democrats currently control both chambers: 26-16 in the Senate and 46-24 in the House.

Two of the five-member of the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission (PRC) will be on the 2020 ballot: District 1 (Democrat Cynthia Hall of Albuquerque is the incumbent) and District 3 (Democrat Valerie Espinoza of Santa Fe is the incumbent).

Two of the seven-member New Mex-

IMAGE BY FREEPIK.COM



ico Public Education Commission will be on the 2020 ballot: District 1 (Richard Caballero of Albuquerque is the incumbent), District 4 (Karyl Ann Armbruster of Los Alamos is the incumbent), District 8 (Sonia Rafferty of Roswell is the incumbent), District 9 (Trish Ruiz of Hobbs is the incumbent) and District 10 (Tim Crone of Española is the incumbent). All five incumbents are Democrats.

Gospel artist records 'Land of Enchantment' video

BY MIKE COOK

Gospel artist, music producer and former Las Cruces resident Jesse Cann has written and recorded a music video called "Land of Enchantment."

He calls the video "A dreamy and beautiful Latin jazz-flavored reminiscence of New Mexico, the Land of Enchantment."

The song, which is the second track of his 2019 album release, "A New Song," features lead vocals, piano and flugelhorn by Cann, and includes video footage and photos of Mesilla, the Organ Mountains, White Sands National Monument and many other southern New Mexico and statewide locations.

Also featured are Pete Medina on Latin percussion and Brian Mesko on guitar and bass. The featured choir is comprised of Sherry Green, Pam Carroll, Judy Miron, Mary Smith, Deborah Ginger, Lillian Cook, LaDonna Jones, Keith Jones, Tom Tankersley, Roger Graham, Bill Lewison and Terry Carroll.

In 2019, Cann received the instrumen-

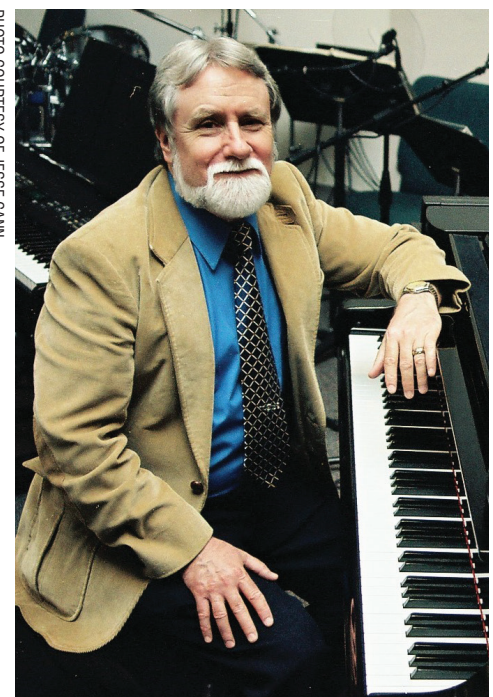
talist of the year award at the 11th annual Rhythm of Gospel Awards (RG). He received the 2017 and 2018 Artists Music Guild Heritage (AMG) award for instrumentalist of the year. Cann has multiple nominations for other RG and AMG awards.

Cann is a 1963 graduate of Las Cruces High School and has a bachelor's degree in music from the University of New Mexico. He grew up in Las Cruces, with his father working at White Sands Missile Range. Cann now lives with his wife in Salem, Virginia.

To see the video and purchase the album, visit www.jessecann.com. Find him on Facebook at Jesse Cann and at Jesse Cann - Gospel Artist - Business Page.

The video has also been included on the New Mexico Music Commission and EverythingNM.com websites. Visit them at www.newmexicomusic.org/2019/10/07/land-of-enchantment and www.everything-nm.com/land-of-enchantment-by-jesse-cann-jordan-line-music-ascap.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JESSE CANN




Jesse Cann

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