

## 17 strategic business pivots to make in the time of Covid-19

BY SUSAN FRIESEN

The coronavirus epidemic has created many challenges for businesses. This means your business needs a plan so you can prepare for future growth and success. Here is a Covid-19 checklist of 17 strategic business pivots you can follow and implement right now to help your business.

### Your Coronavirus Essentials Checklist

Just like that we woke up in a different world, the coronavirus epidemic has completely changed our lives and transformed the way we do business.

For many, this can be an incredibly frightening time to be a business owner.

You worry about the health of your employees and the business, the bills that keep coming, your income and family obligations.

But rather than let worries overwhelm them, smart

small business owners can use this opportunity to plan and prepare for future growth and success.

That's why we've created a Covid-19 checklist to help you make the most of this uncertain time:

#### 1) Announce changes in business hours.

Are you an essential business that is staying open? You may have shorter business hours to allow more time for cleaning, or senior hours where high-risk and elderly customers can come and safely shop with fewer customers.

Post any new business hours on the front of your physical location and share them on the home page of your website.

Don't forget to update your hours on your social media profiles too as well as your Google Business listing so everyone can stay up to date.



#### 2) Pivot to meet the current needs of your customers.

Find creative ways to do business with customers who are at home on quarantine. Are you offering pickup or delivery? Let customers know what you are doing to accommodate them during this new, and hopefully temporary, normal.

For example, amid shutdowns and shelter-in-place orders, most car dealerships

will deliver your new car to you. Similarly, service-based businesses can pivot their offerings to meet the demands of customers who are staying home.

One example is the landing page we designed for Barbara Katnich, an interior designer with Fresh Approach Designs.

She acknowledges that with all this time on your hands you are probably ready for a design change.

Then she walks you through the process of how she can work with you virtually while you are at home.

The advantage of a landing page is that it's quick, easy, and allows you to speak to the specific needs of customers at this time without having to redesign your whole website.

#### 3) Provide ways customers can still support you.

If you operate a service-based business like a restaurant or a salon and have been forced to close your doors, you may want to consider offering online sales of gift certificates.

Encourage your customers to buy a certificate now so they can treat themselves and redeem it when the virus outbreak has slowed, and their self-quarantine period is over.

This can help maintain sales for you, while giving your customers something

fun and exciting to look forward to.

#### 4) Communicate with your customers.

People want to know if and how your business has changed in light of the pandemic. Assure them their health and safety are your #1 concern and tell them what you're doing to ensure a safe shopping experience.

Explain any extra precautions you're taking to disinfect and clean and let them know how you're promoting social distancing as a small business owner.

#### 5) Announce any new services you're offering.

Whether you sell food or fashion, are you offering pickup or delivery? The more ways you can accommodate your customers during this new normal, the better for them and fewer financial losses you'll experience.

SEE 17 PIVOTS, PAGE 2

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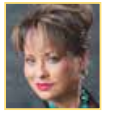
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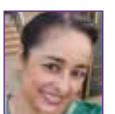
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### 17 PIVOTS, FROM PAGE 1

Share the news on your website and on your social media accounts like what Lorie Brown did. She saw a huge need to support nurses and healthcare practitioners during this crisis and created the Covid-19 Survival Guide.

She asked us to help her create a multi-guest interview series that delivers daily videos to subscribers, all for free.

#### 6) Ditch out-of-date information and broken links.

It's the perfect time to step back and take a long hard look at your website.

Are there any typos? Did a team member featured on the About Us page quit? Are certain articles no longer relevant?

Maybe your site is too far outdated and needs a complete overhaul. Don't try to go it alone, it's best to hire a professional web development firm who can assist in ensuring your site is professionally done to give your business the best exposure once this crisis is over.

#### 7) Lighten the (remote) workload.

Give your staff easy ways to track their hours like the free time-tracking tool Toggl that we use. Encourage team communication with tools like Zoom, Slack or Discord. Look into team collaboration tools like Monday and Asana to manage project workflows.

You can see more team

tools in our article: Tips on Managing Your Workforce Remotely.

#### 8) Get lean and mean.

You're going to have to accept that things may be tight for a while. Are there some non-essentials you could cut from your small business budget?

Reevaluate the services you use to make sure you have the best value for your money, but don't tighten your belt so much that you miss out on marketing or business opportunities.

#### 9) Plan your editorial calendar.

You want to provide your customers with informative, valuable content that inspires them and builds your expertise and credibility in their eyes.

If you have some downtime now, invest it in your future content. Look at what products and services you'll want to promote down the road and plan some engaging content and marketing materials to support your efforts.

#### 10) Learn a new skill.

Do you want to learn to use Instagram more effectively? Maybe you want to master your video marketing skills or learn a new language to better communicate with your customers.

If you can slow down a bit, grab the chance to read, learn and grow! This might be a good time to check out our AMPLiFY! Business

Academy where members get instant access to a large library of training videos from social media marketing to lead generation and content marketing.

#### 11) Make your employees feel safe.

Always communicate your Covid-19 plans to workers around sick days and compensation. If your employees have to come into work, assure them how you're keeping their area clean and safe.

They are looking to you to feel taken care of during this scary time. That said, don't lie or withhold negative information; if you can't give bonuses or have to lay off staff, let them know as soon as possible and support them as best you can.

#### 12) Attract more traffic to your site.

It's always a great idea to add fresh, useful content to your website. Your visitors will appreciate solution-focused content that honestly speaks to why they need your product or service.

Focus on writing some keyword-rich articles to boost your search engine rankings.

#### 13) Grow your social media following.

You may be self-isolating, but you can connect online. Message people who liked or commented on your social media posts to start a conversation.

Be active in the Facebook

Groups where your ideal clients hang out. Be visible and helpful (not salesy and annoying) while you are making new connections and offering people a human connection.

#### 14) Segment your email list.

Over time, email lists can get messy. Small business owners may lack the resources to write targeted messages for each group of potential clients (e.g., hot prospects, warm leads, new prospects, business colleagues).

Focus on segmenting your email list to make people feel like you're speaking directly to them and offering them unique content.

#### 15) Develop a new product or service.

Maybe you have a business idea that's been on the back burner these past few years. Or, maybe you've identified a product or service that would really help people during or after the Covid-19 pandemic.

Check out what Heather Wilson has done to meet today's demand of using Facebook Groups to a businesses advantage. She quickly created an online course called Create, Fill, and Engage Your Facebook Group.

#### 16) Perform competitive research.

Staying on top of what your competitors are doing gives you an incredible

advantage, whether you run an established small business or are developing a new product or service.

Invest some time now in better understanding your competitors. How is their messaging different from yours? What are their strengths and weaknesses? How do they engage with their social media followers?

#### 17) Share the love.

Don't miss the chance to strengthen your most important relationships. Think about the people who are important to you (family, friends, customers, vendors, mentors, partners) and tell them what you most appreciate about them.

Stay Engaged with Customers and Keep Sales Alive During Covid-19.

While the Covid-19 pandemic is unprecedented and uncertain, let's try to see these slow times for small businesses as an opportunity to think, review and plan for future growth and success.

If you need assistance, we can help you design a landing page to help you transition through and support your customers effectively at this time. Together we'll find ways to boost dwindling sales due to this unforeseen economic crisis.

We wish everyone health and safety during this unusual time.

*To your success,  
Susan*



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FROM OUR U.S. SENATOR

# Investing in Southern New Mexico

## BY U.S. SENATOR MARTIN HEINRICH

As we begin a new year, we still have plenty of work ahead of us to help New Mexico communities recover and to rebuild our economy. But I'm confident that the historic, new investments that we passed last year and the transformative policies we're still advancing will help us meet the moment with real solutions to the challenges we face. I have done everything in my power to steer resources to our state so we can rebuild our economy and come back stronger than ever before.

The American Rescue Plan that we passed in March delivered over \$1 billion to help New Mexico's schools reopen for in-person instruction. It included \$1,400 in direct payments to eligible New Mexicans, millions of dollars in critical economic relief for local

restaurants and small business owners across our state, and a historic working class tax cut. Nearly every child in New Mexico has benefited from the expanded Child Tax Credit and its new monthly payments that helped families keep food on the table and cover the costs of raising children.

New Mexico has long been held back by a systemic lack of investment in our infrastructure. That's why I worked to pass the historic Bipartisan Infrastructure Law that will deliver more than \$3.7 billion in funding to New Mexico over the next five years to build new roads and bridges, improve our clean water infrastructure, install a new electric vehicle charging network, and connect many more



**HEINRICH**

New Mexicans to affordable, high-speed internet. These infrastructure investments are on a scale not seen in our state since the construction of I-10, I-25, and I-40, and they will set a strong foundation for long-term economic competitiveness and success.

Before the onset of the pandemic, outdoor recreation activities—from hunting and fishing to wildlife photography—were fueling some of New Mexico's fastest economic growth. I am focused on advancing key protections, opening up more public access, and steering new investments to our public lands so we can build our outdoor recreation industry back better than ever before.

Last year alone, the newly

established National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund that I fought to establish as part of the bipartisan Great American Outdoors Act delivered \$60 million to New Mexico's national parks, monuments, forests, and wildlife refuges. That includes more than \$15 million for the Bosque del Apache to make repairs to its roads and trails and finally take on long-needed major renovations to its main office and visitor center. New Mexico's national forests—including the Gila and the Lincoln—received \$12 million to replace roads and bridges, restore trail networks, and rebuild campgrounds.

Last year, I also welcomed a new expanded hiking access route into Achenbach Canyon in the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument. I reintroduced the M.H. Dutch Salmon Greater Gila Wild

and Scenic Rivers Act to provide southwestern New Mexico's greater Gila River watershed with our nation's highest form of protection and stewardship. And I also partnered with Republican colleagues in the Senate to introduce bipartisan bills to invest in wildlife conservation and species recovery and to make it easier to navigate the permitting process to access our public lands.

Finally, I was proud to support New Mexico's military installations and national security missions by securing critical investments in the annual National Defense Authorization Act. That includes \$2 million in funding to speed the construction of a new radar detection technology testing facility at Holloman Air Force Base, \$5 million to conduct additional hypersonic test and evaluation at White Sands Missile Range, and \$29 million

to accelerate construction of the Missile Assembly Support Facility at WSMR. These provisions, among many others, will benefit New Mexico's economy and advance our state's position as a leader in national security for years to come.

My office also continues to help constituents on a one-on-one basis with federal agencies, including keeping our promise to our veterans and service members so they can access their VA benefits, helping small business owners navigate economic relief programs, and assisting seniors with their Social Security benefits. This past year, my staff processed over 3,000 individual cases that resulted in over \$870,000 recovered for New Mexicans. If you or your family needs help, contact my Las Cruces office at 575-535-6561 or visit my website at Heinrich.Senate.Gov.

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# The pros and cons of a flexible work schedule post-Covid

BY BRIAN MEERT

Now, as more people get vaccinated and the world reopens, many businesses are trying to learn from all of the changes they had to make during 2020. The future of work post-pandemic is unique, with many businesses remaining 100% remote or adopting a more hybrid approach than they had at the beginning of last year

The Covid-19 pandemic impacted work in ways that nobody saw coming. Millions of people lost their jobs either temporarily or permanently as companies closed for good, shut down for the time being or trimmed back their workforce. Other employees were forced to create at-home work setups without advance warning, figuring out how to work full-time while the rest of the family, kids and pets included, were also stuck in the house. And many had to continue going into work, performing on the front lines as grocery store clerks and medical professionals, constantly exposing themselves to the threat of the virus.

As with anything, there are pros and cons to these changes. Let's explore them.

**Pro: Employees Have More Options to Take Care of Themselves**

Post-COVID, employers are setting up support to better protect employees, especially as the health crisis continues to impact us all. This support strives to help and improve all areas of an employee's health, including mental, physical and financial well-being. Examples of enhanced support offered by employers include:

- Child care help
- Community relief funds
- Financial aid
- Flexible hours of operation
- Improved sick leave
- No-cost community services

A big part of this involves creating schedules and systems that allow employees to be flexible so they can care for themselves and their families while still taking care of their job responsibilities and being productive.

**Con: You (Probably) Can't Hire Employees From Just Anywhere**

If you've decided that your company is still going to have in-person meetings or other types of work gatherings, you can't have employees who are dispersed around the country or world...or even the state, probably. If employees are required to attend live meetings, breakout groups or other types of business gatherings, they have to live within a reasonable



distance to travel there.

However, if you're set on hiring remote workers from farther away – which is a great way to dip into a larger pool of talent – you can consider letting them virtually attend meetings. You can also set up satellite groups if there are a number of remote workers in the same geographic area.

**Pro: Gig Work is More Popular Than Ever**

During the pandemic, all sorts of workers lost their jobs, and contractors were no different. Furthermore, some of those who lost traditional jobs opted to go the gig industry work, becoming contractors and freelancers who offered the skills they honed during their time as traditional workers.

While a number of organizations reduced their

between three and five days a week without a loss of productivity. While this is around five times more remote work than pre-pandemic and about the same as remote work during the pandemic, it's possibly much less than people assume. For job seekers who feel that any and every industry, company and brand is now adopting full-time remote work, they'll be sorely disappointed as they begin hunting for their next opportunity.

Furthermore, some types of jobs that can technically be handled remotely are still more effective when done in person. For example, brainstorming with the rest of the team, making critical decisions for the company and providing difficult-to-deliver feedback in a sensitive way are all best when done in person.

**Pro: Flexible Work is More Enjoyable for Employees**

It's pretty obvious why flexible work is more enjoyable for most employees. They can do things like set their own schedule, attend to personal and family matters and run out for errands when they want to (assuming that type of flexibility is okay with the employer). When employees are given deliverables to work for instead of strict schedules to adhere to,

many of them will be able to turn in excellent work without risking burnout or getting complacent at their job.

For some companies, the idea of having employees work simply to work, regardless of their actual workload or level of efficiency, is an antiquated idea. And when employees can run their life while remaining dedicated to their job, they're happier overall, which means higher-quality work is turned in.

**Cons: The Boundaries Can Get Fuzzy**

Of course, there's an equal and opposite issue to the benefit described above: All of that flexibility can leave the lines between professionalism and flexibility blurry. If you require employees to clock in, clock out and be present during specific work hours, you'll have to find a way to ensure they're doing just that – otherwise, some may take advantage of their supposed freedom. And setting deliverables instead of work hours means that employees actually have to deliver quality work on time, checking in as the project progresses to report the work they've done. This can require a lot of work on the part of the business to create, set up and explain the flexible rules, what they don't mean and how everything will be tracked.

# Covid anxiety and 6 ways to heal

**C**ovid has hit us hard. It has taken a drastic toll on the well-being of people leading to surge in Covid anxiety cases.

How is Covid-19 taking a toll on the mental health of people?

Everything seems to be normal from the surface. People are managing their businesses as and when the curfews open, corporate employees are working from home, from the comfort of their houses, and students are attending online lectures and classes.

Everyone is feeling anxious and stuck because of not being able to meet their friends, excessive workloads, or uncertain careers.

People are also finding it difficult to practice mindfulness or pursue their hobbies in their free time. Financial and economic instability and widespread

consumption of negative news are prominent factors adding to anxiety.

The uncertainty is causing various fears among populations and it is completely okay if they are unable to handle it. Everyone is worried about what is going to happen in the next hour.

Is feeling anxious okay?

Considering that we are in the middle of a worldwide pandemic, it's okay to not feel great every morning.

Feeling anxious is an expected reaction to the pandemic. But feeling anxious and stressed daily can take a harmful toll on one's mental well-being.

The first step is to acknowledge that you are feeling stressed and fearful. This is something that helps a great deal. Even during these tough times, we have to be true to



ourselves.

How to deal with Covid Anxiety?

We can practice a few healthy ways to cope with all the panic and stress due to the uncertainty. Here's a list of 6 effective ways to cope up with Covid anxiety.

## 1. De Clutter

Our minds can feel full and messed at times. Decluttering our surround-

ings can help one to feel fresh and new. This may sometimes help to think positively about situations.

## 2. Social Media Breaks

News and other information are the only way to keep ourselves informed of the situation going on but it is okay to take periodic breaks. Social media detox is very important. Our mind needs a break from processing the bulk of

information.

## 3. Self Management

This can be done in numerous ways such as meditating, exercising, taking deep breaths, eating healthy food, avoiding alcohol, and adequate amounts of sleep.

## 4. Unwind

Invest your time listening to your favorite playlists, making your favorite

dish, practising your old hobbies. Give yourself a break from your daily schedules.

## 5. Connect with Friends

Some people find it easier to vent out to any of their close ones in these anxiety-provoking times. Don't bottle up your emotions and worries. But before talking to a friend or close one, asking about their situation is also very important.

## 6. Connect with Organizations

Due to increasing awareness about Covid anxiety since this pandemic, people have started recognizing organizations and reaching out to them for help. Asking for help when you are not able to figure out emotions is completely okay. Acknowledge and reach out.

## The USHCC Educational Fund joins forces with Grubhub to support Hispanic-owned restaurants impacted by Covid

**T**he United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Education Fund, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization affiliated with the United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (USHCC), and Grubhub, a leading U.S. food-ordering and delivery marketplace, have opened applications for the USHCC & Grubhub Restaurant Small Busi-

ness Grant Program. The program is supported by proceeds from Grubhub's Donate the Change Program, and grants will range from \$5,000 to \$10,000.

Nearly 300 grants will be given to eligible Hispanic-owned restaurants across the country, including in Philadelphia, Boston, New York, Los Angeles, Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, Chicago, El Paso, Phoenix,



San Diego and San Jose.

"As our restaurant industries work to re-open their doors and look towards recovering, they'll need access to the resources and tools offered by the USHCC national network, now



more than ever before," said Ramiro A. Cavazos, President & CEO, USHCC. "Many of the Hispanic-owned restaurants who managed to stay open and not completely shut down, are looking for guidance

and support as we work to jumpstart the economy and get people back to work. We are excited to partner with Grubhub on this important initiative and applaud these efforts to support minority-owned

restaurants who are struggling so much during the pandemic."

"Small businesses have faced a disproportionately difficult 18 months, and it's crucial that we support them to ensure they remain part of the fabric in our communities," said Kevin Kearns, senior vice president of restaurants at Grubhub.

SEE GRUBHUB, PAGE 7

## FROM THE LOS AMIGOS CHAIR

# United Way of Southwest New Mexico provides technological support to local nonprofits

**G**rant funding opens the door to new opportunities for nonprofit organizations which is why United Way of Southwest New Mexico recently provided a new grant opportunity with the 2021 Technology Fund. The goal for this funding opportunity was to assist with digital equity to address challenges in underserved communities in Southwest New Mexico focused on basic needs, education, and financial stability.

Technology grants are useful for developing or enhancing an organization's technological infrastructure. In today's technology-driven environment, nonprofits rely on data to drive everything from fundrais-



**AMANDA MORALES**

ing campaigns to policy decisions. That's why technology plays such an important role in an organization's mission. With technology-focused grants, a nonprofit can build or improve upon an existing technological infrastructure.

"As technology continues to impact every aspect of our lives, there's a real danger of more people get-

ting left behind. We cannot allow that to happen," stated Amanda Morales, Chief Executive Officer. "By providing this funding opportunity, United Way of Southwest New Mexico is assisting to break down the digital divide that can prevent so many from accessing the basic needs, education and financial stability services they need to live a quality life." Morales continued.

Requirements for this funding opportunity included: organizations must be recognized by the IRS as tax-exempt under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3) and must be located in and directly serving the communities of Dona Ana, Grant, Hidalgo,



Luna, Otero, and Sierra Counties. All applications were submitted using the online application form on the United Way of Southwest New Mexico website. Highest priority was given to proposals that clearly articulated the planned impact of their efforts, as well as the metrics by which the impact is measured.

Eligible expenses included computer equipment, internet access expenses, printers/supplies, cameras, software subscriptions,

etc. needed to successfully provide services to organization's clientele.

This funding opportunity was received very warmly with an unexpected return of over 25 applications from nonprofit organizations, churches, and coalitions. Just one example of an application that was submitted included a request for an organization to start a new program focused on at-risk youth in their community.

The youth would have access to a studio where they could express their creativity by creating videos. By creating together, the youth will be empowered, learn to work together and be provided the space access to technology that would not be found

at home. The technology will also be utilized to assist with accessing homework, information on scholarships, workforce positions, and college applications.

The 2021 Technology fund will contribute to the United Way of Southwest New Mexico's goal of helping bridge needs with resources and solutions—specifically related to, basic needs, education, and financial stability for under-served communities in Southwest New Mexico.

*For more information regarding the Technology Fund, please contact Amanda Morales at [impact@uwswnm.org](mailto:impact@uwswnm.org) or call the United Way office at 575-524-7561.*

## GRUBHUB, FROM PAGE 6

"We are proud to work with the USHCC and provide this much-needed support to Hispanic-owned restaurants in their recovery efforts."

Throughout Hispanic Heritage Month, the USHCC was named the official partner of Grubhub's Donate the Change program, which has raised tens of millions of dollars for organizations in need since launching in late 2018. The partnership welcomed Grubhub and Seamless diners to opt-in,

round up their order total and donate the difference, with the company matching eligible donations from Grubhub+ members.

Through January 26, the USHCC & Grubhub Restaurant Small Business Grant Program will accept applications from eligible Hispanic-owned restaurants. To qualify for a grant, Hispanic-owned restaurants must satisfy the following requirements: The restaurant must be majority Hispanic-owned and have an active EIN number, have less than 20

full-time employees and have been in operation for at least nine months from the date that they complete the application form. All U.S. markets are eligible to apply including Puerto Rico. Questions about the application and program should be sent to [press@ushcc.com](mailto:press@ushcc.com).

Applications are now open. Apply before Jan. 26, 2022, to see if your restaurant qualifies. Use this link online to apply 2022 USHCC & Grubhub Restaurant Small Business Grant Application - Formstack.



# Let's keep it local, New Mexico

**G**ood ideas often start in your own backyard. Almost two decades before our legislature passed a statewide clean indoor air law, the City of Albuquerque implemented smoke-free air policies to protect residents from secondhand smoke in all workplaces. The importance of local leadership is still clear: many cities moved more quickly than states to prevent the spread of Covid-19 by implementing stay-at-home orders, closing non-essential businesses and public parks.

"Local governments are uniquely positioned to meet the needs of the people in their communities. They should be

able to pass laws proven to promote good health, well-being and equity, and New Mexicans agree," says Dr. Robert Taylor, President of the American Heart Association board of directors in Albuquerque. The American Heart Association (AHA) believes the ongoing epidemic of e-cigarette use by teenagers can be effectively addressed by cities and counties. This is a serious public health crisis that has spread to every high and middle school in New Mexico. "Big Vape" and "Big Tobacco" have addicted a new generation of youth to nicotine and continue to do so unabated as the country is focused on the Covid-19 pandemic.



The tobacco industry spends almost \$37 million annually on advertising in New Mexico, resulting in \$844 million in annual spending from smoking-related illnesses (\$222.8 million through Medicaid). Corporate lobbyists have spent millions more

to convince state legislators to stop communities from passing policies that protect the health of their residents.

A 2020 American Heart Association-commissioned public opinion poll found 63 percent of New Mexico voters support communi-

ties being able to regulate tobacco locally. This poll was conducted by Brian Sanderoff of Research and Polling Inc. The American Heart Association wants everyone to benefit from smart and effective policies. But when corporate lobbyists convince state legislators to block local governments from passing laws, it can hurt communities most where the need is greatest.

Nearly 25 percent of New Mexico high school students use e-cigarettes and 700 youth become new daily smokers each year. Each year, 2,600 New Mexican adults die from smoking and 40,000 kids now under 18 in New

Mexico will ultimately die prematurely from smoking. A new research conducted by AHA shows using E-cigarettes damage arteries and blood vessels among young adults. To learn more about the study, go online and use this link:

<https://newsroom.heart.org/news/e-cigarette-users-experience-vascular-damage-similar-to-that-of-smokers-of-combustible-cigarettes?preview=9f28>

This epidemic could be reversed if cities and counties are given the opportunity to make decisions that best serve the health of their communities.

To sign up and learn more, simply text NM to 46839.

## Who speaks for you? What do they say?

### Get your guide to the 2022 NM Legislative Session

The Las Cruces Bulletin's annual Southwest New Mexico Legislative Guide will be available in January 2022. The guide features profiles of state senators and representatives in our region, and gives their expectations of this year's legislative session.

You'll find information about the nine counties in our southwest region and rosters for all 70 representatives and 42 senators. There are many new faces and names this year. Our award-winning publication is a great way to get to know who they are.



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