



SOUTHWEST NEW MEXICO 2018 Legislative Guide

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SENATE ROSTER
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REPRESENTATIVE
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THE LAS CRUCES
Bulletin



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WHERE TO BEGIN THE TRANSITION? CARING IS A GOOD PLACE TO START



This 2018 Legislative Session will be one of transition.

Gov. Susana Martinez will preside over her eighth and final session. It will also be the last session for several legislators, some who will leave by choice and some who may be replaced by successful challengers in elections later this year.

The even-year, 30-day sessions always focus primarily on budget, but often contain a few surprises.

Most of the legislators we've visited with this year are hoping to get down to business, work together and get the budget taken care of efficiently.

Something about the water in Santa Fe, however, or maybe there's something about working in a round building with circular hallway, means the unexpected frequently arises.

Regardless, our citizen legislators – as they have for 105 years previously – will gather from every corner and outpost of the Land of Enchantment to do the people's bidding.

It's a uniquely talented and interesting bunch of folks who have made the bold step forward to, first, run for office, and, second, deal with hundreds of different, competing interests. We always hope they can sort through distractions and discern the best decisions for their constituents.

With constituents who have backgrounds and needs

even more diverse than the legislators, those decisions can be terribly difficult.

Last fall, I spent time visiting with a couple of legislators who, on the surface, could not be more different.

Bill O'Neill, a senator from Albuquerque who previously served in the state House of Representatives, is an urban Democrat who went to Cornell.

Gail Armstrong, a second-year representative from Magdalena, spent 30 years raising children and building a successful business with her husband, Dale. She is a rural Republican who went to Quemado High School.

While O'Neill and Armstrong will frequently have ideological differences, they have one important thing in common. They genuinely care.

They care about their family and their neighbors. They care about their districts. And they care about New Mexico.

Just like our citizens, our citizen lawmakers are human and flawed. From my observations, though, they care about their communities and their constituents, and they take their work at the Roundhouse seriously.

That's a good place to start.



RICHARD COLTHARP

Publisher, Las Cruces Bulletin



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ABOUT THE 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 www.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 Secretary of State.

The rotunda is in the center of the main Capitol building, rising three stories from the New Mexico travertine marble floor, embedded with a turquoise and brass state seal, up to a ceiling skylight of stained glass that is patterned after an American Indian basket weave that symbolizes sky and earth.

CAPITOL ART FOUNDATION

Established in 1991, the Capitol Art Foundation features contemporary pieces by a variety of artists who live and work in New Mexico. Artwork 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. A parking garage is located 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 the tables in the East Lobby at the ground level.
3. Be patient. Expect meetings to begin later than their 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.

HELP US COWBOY UP AGAINST CANCER



Since 1982, Cowboys for Cancer Research has been raising funds for cancer research specifically in New Mexico. Through the efforts of C4CR and caring people like you, endowments and ongoing cancer research projects have been established at both New Mexico State University and the University of New Mexico Cancer Center.

Our annual fundraisers in Las Cruces include an August golf tournament, a September team roping and an October dinner/dance. We also now have purple-themed merchandise, as purple represents ALL cancers, in honor of ALL survivors, ALL caregivers, ALL who have lost their battle.

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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

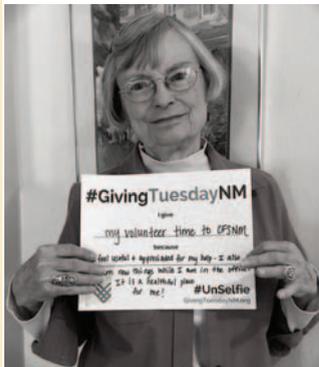
outlined above. Both houses must agree on the final form of a bill. If either house fails to concur with an amendment, the differences must be reconciled by a conference committee representing both the House and Senate. A compromise worked out in a conference committee is subject to approval by both 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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I ♥ CaregiversSM

Learn more about our priorities for the 2018 Legislative Session and what we do right here in New Mexico at www.aarp.org/nm.

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STATE CABINETS AND DEPARTMENTS

OFFICE OF AFRICAN AMERICAN AFFAIRS

Executive Director: Yvette Kaufman-Bell
 Phone: 505-222-9405
 Address: 310 San Pedro, Suite 230, Albuquerque, NM 87108
 Website: www.oaaa.state.nm.us
 The African American Affairs Office sets out to positively affect the perception, education, health and development of African-Americans in New Mexico.

AGING AND LONG-TERM SERVICES

Secretary: KyKy Knowles
 Phone: 505-476-4799
 Address: 2550 Cerrillos Road, Santa Fe, NM 87505
 Mailing address: P.O. Box 27118, Santa Fe, NM 87502-7118
 Website: www.nmaging.state.nm.us
 Aging and Long-Term Services is dedicated to helping New Mexico lead the nation in healthy aging, and supporting older adults and adults with disabilities.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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

CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES DEPARTMENT

Secretary: Monique Jacobson
 Phone: 505-827-7606
 Mailing address: P.O. Drawer 5160, Santa Fe, NM 87502-5160
 Website: www.cyfd.org
 The New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department provides an array of prevention, intervention, rehabilitative and after-care services to New Mexico children and their families.

CORRECTIONS DEPARTMENT

Secretary: David Jablonski
 Phone: 505-827-8645
 Address: 4337 NM 14, Santa Fe, NM 87508
 Mailing address: P.O. Box 27116, Santa Fe NM 87502-0116
 Website: www.cd.nm.gov
 The New Mexico Corrections Department oversees the incarceration of inmates in six state-owned and operated prisons and five private facilities. It also monitors parole and probation, assisting in an offender's release into society.

CULTURAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

Secretary: Veronica Gonzales
 Phone: 505-827-6364
 Address: Bataan Memorial Building, 407 Galisteo St., Suite 260, Santa Fe, NM 87501
 Website: www.newmexicoculture.org
 The Department of Cultural Affairs represents New Mexico's dedication to preserving and celebrating the cultural integrity and diversity of the state. The department oversees a broad range of New Mexico's arts and cultural heritage agencies.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Secretary: Matt Geisel
 Phone: 505-827-0300
 Address: Joseph M. Montoya Building, 1100 S. St. Francis Drive, Santa Fe, NM 87505
 Mailing address: P.O. Box 20003, Santa Fe, NM 87504-5003
 Website: www.gonm.biz
 The New Mexico Economic Development Department is the state's main agency for recruiting businesses and improving the state's economy. The department also provides assistance to New Mexico businesses.

ENERGY, MINERALS & NATURAL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

Secretary: Ken McQueen
 Phone: 505-476-3200
 Address: 1220 S. St. Francis Drive, Santa Fe, NM 87505
 Website: www.emnrd.state.nm.us
 The Energy, Minerals & Natural Resources Department oversees the state's energy conservation, forestry, mining and minerals, oil conservation, state parks and the Youth Conservation Corps.

OFFICE OF THE STATE ENGINEER

Secretary: Tom Blaine
 Phone: 505-827-6091
 Address: Concha Ortiz y Pino Building, 130 S. Capitol St., Santa Fe, NM 87504
 Website: www.ose.state.nm.us
 The Office of the State Engineer is 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: Butch Tongate
 Phone: 800-219-6157
 Address: Harold L. Runnels Building, 1190 St. Francis Drive, Suite N4050, Santa Fe, NM 87505
 Website: www.nmenv.state.nm.us
 The New Mexico Environment Department is tasked with the responsibility of safeguarding the state's air and other natural resources as well as overseeing food, medical and workplace safety through inspections and enforcement. The department also monitors groundwater quality and waste disposal, including hazardous and nuclear waste.

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

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

GENERAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Secretary: Ed Burckle
 Phone: 505-827-2000
 Address: Joseph Montoya Building, P.O. Box 6850, Santa Fe, NM 87502
 Website: www.generalservices.state.nm.us
 The New Mexico General Services Department 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: Lynn Gallagher
 Phone: 505-827-2613
 Address: Harold Runnels Building, 1190 S. St. Francis Drive, Santa Fe, NM 87505
 Website: www.health.state.nm.us
 The mission of the New Mexico Department of Health is to promote health and sound health policy, prevent disease and disability, improve health services systems and ensure that essential public health functions and safety net services are available to New Mexicans.

HIGHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Secretary: Dr. Barbara Damron
 Phone: 505-476-8400
 Address: 2044 Galisteo St., Suite 4, Santa Fe, NM 87505
 Website: www.hed.state.nm.us
 The Higher Education Department provides New Mexicans with the support and advocacy needed to succeed in reaching their full potential through higher education. This is done through policies, programs and services.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Secretary: M. Jay Mitchell
 Phone: 505-476-9600
 Address: 3 Bataan Blvd., Santa Fe, NM 87508
 Website: www.nmdhsem.org

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

HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Secretary: Brent Earnest
 Phone: 505-827-7750
 Mailing address: P.O. Box 2348, Santa Fe, NM 87504
 Website: www.hsd.state.nm.us

The Human Services Department 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: Suzette Shije
 Phone: 505-476-1600
 Address: Wendell Chino Building, 1220 S. St. Francis Drive, Santa Fe, NM 87505
 Website: www.iad.state.nm.us

The Indian Affairs Department 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: Darryl Ackley
 Phone: 505-827-0000
 Address: 715 Alta Vista St., Santa Fe, NM 87505
 Mailing address: P.O. Box 22550, Santa Fe, NM 87502
 Website: www.doit.state.nm.us

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

MILITARY AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT / NEW MEXICO NATIONAL GUARD

Adjutant general: Ken Nava
 Phone: 505-474-1210
 Mailing address: Joint Forces Headquarters, 47 Bataan Blvd., Santa Fe, NM 87508
 Website: nm.ng.mil

STATE PERSONNEL OFFICE

Director: Justin Najaka
 Phone: 505-476-7759
 Address: 2600 Cerrillos Road, Santa Fe, NM 87505
 Website: www.spo.state.nm.us

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

LAW OFFICES OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER, STATE OF NEW MEXICO

Chief Public Defender: Bennett J. Baur
 Phone: 505-395-2888
 Address: 301 N. Guadalupe St., Santa Fe, NM 87501
 Website: www.lopdnm.us

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

PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Secretary Designate: Christopher Ruskowski
 Phone: 505-827-5800
 Address: Jerry Apodaca Education Building, 300 Don Gaspar Ave., Santa Fe, NM 87501
 Website: www.ped.state.nm.us

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

PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENT

Secretary Designate: Scott Weaver
 Phone: 505-827-9000
 Address: 4491 Cerrillos Road, Santa Fe, NM 87507
 Mailing address: P.O. Box 1628, Santa Fe, NM 87504-1628
 Website: www.dps.state.nm.us

The New Mexico Department of Public Safety (NM DPS) protects human life and property through the detection and prevention of criminal activity and enforcement of state laws and regulations. It provides leadership, training, technical and operational support to the communities it serves.

REGULATION AND LICENSING DEPARTMENT

Superintendent: Mike Unthank
 Phone: 505-476-4500
 Address: Toney Anaya Building, 2550 Cerrillos Road, Santa Fe, NM 87505
 Website: www.rld.state.nm.us

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

TAXATION AND REVENUE DEPARTMENT

Acting Secretary: John Monforte
 Phone: 505-827-0700
 Address: 1100 S. St. Francis Dr., Santa Fe, NM 87504
 Website: www.tax.newmexico.gov

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

TOURISM DEPARTMENT

Secretary: Rebecca Latham
 Phone: 505-827-7400
 Address: 491 Old Santa Fe Trail, Santa Fe, NM 87501
 Website: www.newmexico.org

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

TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

Secretary: Tom Church
 Phone: 505-827-5100
 Address: 1120 Cerrillos Road, Santa Fe, NM 87504-1149
 Mailing address: P.O. Box 1149, Santa Fe, NM 87504-1149
 Website: www.dot.state.nm.us

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

VETERAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Secretary: Gen. Jack R. Fox
 Phone: 866-433-8387
 Address: 407 Galisteo St., Room 132, Santa Fe, NM 87504
 Website: www.dvs.state.nm.us

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

WORKERS' COMPENSATION ADMINISTRATION

Director: Darin Childers
 Phone: 505-841-6000
 Address: 2410 Centre Ave. SE, Albuquerque, NM 87125-7198
 Website: www.workerscomp.state.nm.us

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

DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS

Secretary: Celina Bussey
 Phone: 505-841-8405
 Address: 401 Broadway NE, Albuquerque, NM 87102
 Mailing address: P.O. Box 1928, Albuquerque, NM 87103
 Website: www.dws.state.nm.us

The department provides services to help people find jobs and achieve their career goals. The statewide workforce system also connects businesses

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with a
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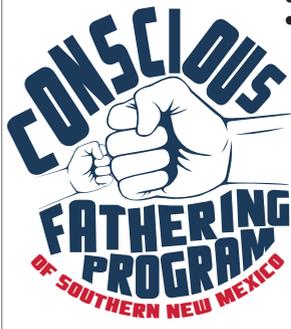
Helping Fathers Grow

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

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

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

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






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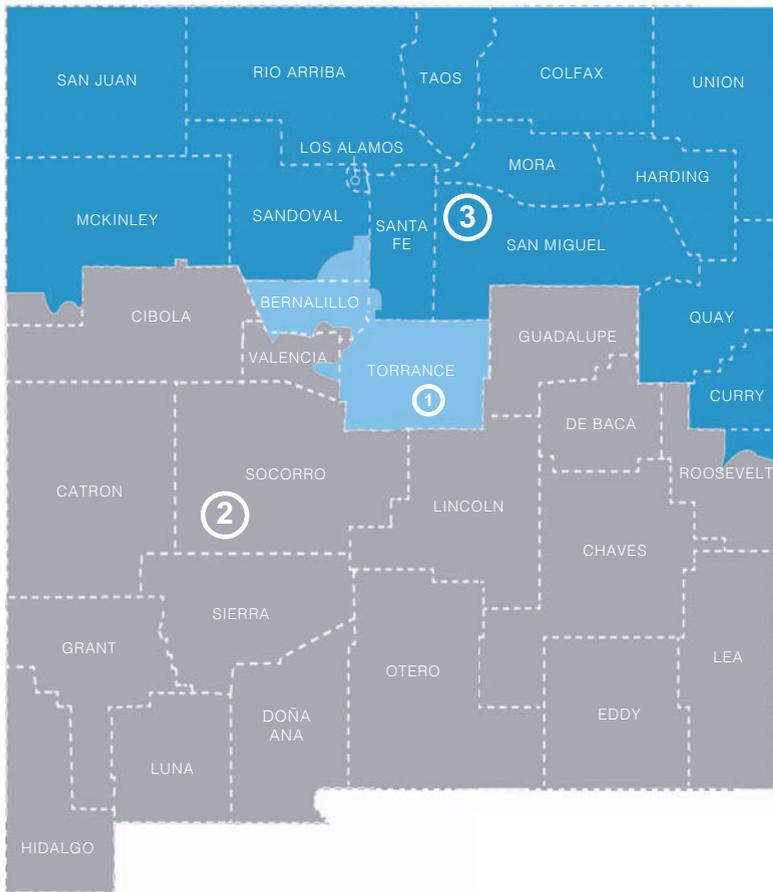


SEN. TOM UDALL
Democrat
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BUDGET IS THE FOCUS OF SHORT SESSION GOVERNOR, EVERY HOUSE SEAT UP FOR ELECTION IN 2018

BY MIKE COOK

The New Mexico Legislature will meet in a 30-day session in 2018, beginning Tuesday, Jan. 16, which will be the last session for Gov. Susana Martinez, who will be completing eight years as governor and cannot run for reelection in 2018.

During the short session, the legislature may only consider issues that relate to revenue and appropriations, messages from the governor and bills previously vetoed by the governor, said City of Las Cruces lobbyist Larry Horan during a September presentation to the Las Cruces City Council.

In odd-numbered years, the legislature meets for 60 days, during which legislators can introduce any bills they wish. Shorter, 30-day, budget-focused sessions take place in even-numbered years.

New Mexico has still not recovered from the Great Recession of 2008-09, with current state revenues at 2007 levels, Horan said. But, the state saw an upswing in 2017, with a forecast of \$25 million in new money in FY 2018.

The state's total budget is about \$6.2 billion, he said.

Tax reform is likely to be a particularly important topic at the 2018 session, Horan said, including the continued phase-out of hold harmless payments to Las Cruces and other New Mexico cities that the legislature initiated after ending the tax on food and some medical services in 2004.

Because state revenues are improving, Horan said, the legislature is "less likely to see an independent bill to eliminate (hold harmless) payments" introduced in 2018.

Funding for capital outlay projects will likely be about \$116 million next year, Horan said. Those funds are divided among the governor, the state Senate and the House of Representatives to spend on capital projects.

There were no capital outlay funds in 2017.

General obligation bond funding for senior citizen programs, higher education and libraries around the state is estimated at \$160-200 million in 2018, Horan said.

Other issues Horan said he will be tracking for Las Cruces during the 2018 session include seizures by law enforcement, protecting local authority, procurement, condemnation, water issues, tax increment development districts and the state Public Employees Retirement Association.

Horan said the governor's race will also be a hot topic in 2018. U.S. Rep. Steve Pearce of Hobbs is the only announced Republican in the race. U.S. Rep. Michele Lujan Grisham of Albuquerque, State Sen. Joseph Cervantes of Las Cruces, Albuquerque businessman Jeff Apodaca and Santa Fe alcohol-prevention teacher Peter DeBenedittis have announced in the Democratic primary.

The Democratic and Republican primaries will be Tuesday, June 5. The general election will be Tuesday, Nov. 6.

All 70 members of the New Mexico House of Representatives will be on the 2018 ballot. The New Mexico House currently has 38 Democrats and 32 Republicans.

State senators serve four-year terms. All 42 were elected or re-elected in 2016, so no state Senate seats will be up for election in 2018. There are 26 Democrats and 16 Republicans in the state Senate.

State legislators receive no salary for their service, but do receive per diem of \$164 for each day they serve. Legislators also receive mileage reimbursement. There are no term limits for legislators elected to either the House or Senate.

Each New Mexico House district includes about 26,000 people. Each Senate district includes about 43,000 people.



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SUSANA Martinez

Governor enters final legislative session

BY MIKE COOK

EDITOR'S NOTE: For more on the 2018 governor's race, see pages 15 and 95.

Susana Martinez is beginning her final year as New Mexico's 31st governor. The 2018 session of the New Mexico Legislature will be her last as governor.

The session's agenda is limited to the governor's call, budget bills and bills vetoed by the governor in the previous session.

Martinez, a Republican, was elected in 2010. She received more than 50 percent of the vote in a five-candidate Republican primary, and defeated then Lt. Gov. Diane Denish, a Democrat, by more than 26,000 votes in the general election, earning more than 53 percent of the vote and winning 25 of the state's 33 counties.

Martinez was re-elected in 2014, defeating then-New Mexico Attorney General Gary King, a Democrat, by almost 74,000 votes. Martinez received more than 57 percent of the vote in her re-election bid, the highest percentage for a Republican candidate for governor in New Mexico history. She won 28 of 33 counties statewide.

Martinez was the first Hispanic woman ever nominated for or elected governor of New Mexico or any other U.S. state. She was named one of the 100 Most Influential People in the World in 2013 by Time Magazine.

Martinez served 14 years as Third Judicial District Attorney (Doña Ana County) before being elected governor. She was elected DA in 1996, defeating incumbent Democrat Greg Valdez, and re-elected in 2000, 2004 and 2008 before resigning to serve as governor.

Martinez also served as an assistant district

attorney in Las Cruces and has 25 years' experience as a prosecutor.

The governor's office website lists three ongoing priorities for Martinez: "educating our children, insuring transparency and ethics in government and keeping New Mexicans safe."

"I firmly believe that every New Mexico child can learn, and I'm committed to ending the acceptance of mediocrity in our education system," Martinez said on the website.

"According to a recent Quality Counts report," the website continues, "New Mexico's education system received a grade of 'F' on K-12 achievement. History has every right to judge us harshly if we fail to improve our schools and present our students with the knowledge and skills necessary to compete for the jobs of tomorrow."

"We must operate state government in an open and transparent manner," the website continues. "That is why I have opened up the books of state government by making it easier to access public information. As public servants, we are accountable to New Mexicans and they should know exactly what their government is doing on their behalf."

"Ensuring public safety is a key role of government," the website continues. "If New Mexico is a safe place to live, business owners will want to locate here, and visitors will want to take advantage of all that our state has to offer. Keeping our families safe requires vigilance and a commitment to bringing justice to those who break the law."

For information, visit www.governor.state.nm.us.



GOVERNOR SUSANA MARTINEZ

POLITICAL PARTY: Republican

YEARS IN OFFICE: 7

AGE: 58

BIRTHPLACE: El Paso, Texas

PROFESSION: Attorney

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

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:

Third Judicial District (Doña Ana County) Attorney, 1997-2011

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LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR JOHN SANCHEZ

POLITICAL PARTY: Republican

YEARS IN OFFICE: 7

AGE: 55

BIRTHPLACE: Albuquerque, New Mexico

PROFESSION: Lt. governor since 2011

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:

Village of Los Ranchos Council member, 1997-2000; New Mexico House of Representatives, 2001-03

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JOHN Sanchez

Lieutenant governor says balanced budget is top priority

BY MIKE COOK

The priority for the 2018 legislature should be to “craft a budget that’s fiscally responsible,” said New Mexico Lt. Gov. John Sanchez. “I’m hoping for the best, but prepared for the worst.”

The legislature will have to “do more with less, like people are doing in their personal lives,” he said.

Spending priorities, Sanchez said, should be education, public safety and infrastructure needs like roads, highways, bridges and water projects.

Sanchez, elected on the Republican ticket with Gov. Susana Martinez in 2010 and re-elected in 2014, said tax reform is a personal priority, along with education reform to better prepare New Mexico students for higher education or to enter the workforce.

Job creation in the state is also very important, he said.

More than 1,000 high-paying jobs could be created in Alamogordo if the state’s effort to make permanent an F-16 squadron relocation to Holloman Air Force Base is successful, Sanchez said.

Sanchez said expanding New Mexico’s economy to overseas markets can also create “thousands of new jobs.”

Sanchez led a trade mission to China during the summer of 2012 which showed that nation’s “hunger for American goods and services,” he said.

New Mexico’s international appeal, the lieutenant governor said, includes its beef and high-tech industries, along with tourism and cultural exchanges.

In addition to being on point for New Mexico’s international relations, Sanchez serves as the state’s ombudsman, referring complaints and requests to the appropriate state agency to be addressed, according to www.ltgov.state.nm.us.

One of Sanchez’s constitutional duties is to serve as president of the state Senate.

Sanchez said he and Martinez “have a

different approach with different results” in their relations with state legislators.

“I served in the House of Representatives,” Sanchez said. “I know how it works.”

Even during hyper-partisan politics, Sanchez said, elected officials should come together and do their best for the people of our state.

Sanchez was a trustee for the Village of Los Ranchos before being elected to the New Mexico House in 2000, defeating 30-year incumbent Democrat and then House Speaker Raymond Sanchez.

A native of Albuquerque’s North Valley, Sanchez has deep roots in the state legislature. His great, great grandfather served as a territorial legislator in 1860 and his grandfather was a state representative in 1930.

After graduating from Hope Christian High School in Albuquerque, Sanchez started Right Way Roofing, Inc. in 1983. It was named “Small Business of the Year” by the Albuquerque Hispano Chamber of Commerce in 1993 and by the Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce in 2000.

Sanchez, who serves as treasurer of the National Lieutenant Governors Association, was recognized as one of the Top 40 most influential Hispanics in the country in 2005 and received the 2014 New Mexico Business Coalition’s “Hero of the Year” award.

Sanchez, the Republican nominee for governor in 2002, lost to Democrat Bill Richardson, said he will not run for governor or for any other political office in 2018.

“I’m not a career politician,” Sanchez said. “I don’t have to hold office.”

Sanchez said he looks forward to future possibilities and will continue helping pro-business and reform-minded candidates at all levels.

MAGGIE Toulouse Oliver

Secretary of state updates campaign finance rules

BY MIKE COOK

New Mexico Secretary of State Maggie Toulouse Oliver recently adopted a new rule to provide additional guidance regarding the state Campaign Reporting Act (CRA) and to bring the act into compliance with state law.

Oliver also was recently named as a member of the national Elections Government Sector Coordinating Council (GCC).

The campaign finance rule went into effect last Oct. 10, the first day of a new campaign finance reporting period for candidates in the 2018 election.

Toulouse Oliver introduced a draft version of the rule last year.

Toulouse Oliver, along with members of her staff and officials from the state attorney general's office held three public hearings on the proposed rule last summer in Las Cruces, Albuquerque and Santa Fe.

Following the hearings and a review of official written comments, Toulouse Oliver released a revised version of the rule last July.

"For too long our campaign finance disclosure laws have been vague and confusing, and this rule will provide much needed guidance and clarity," Toulouse Oliver said in a news release.

"The rule will also help to shine a light on the dark money that has been plaguing our state's campaigns."

Read the adopted version of the rule at www.sos.state.nm.us/Elections_Data/2017-campaign-finance-rulemaking.aspx.

Toulouse Oliver was appointed to the GCC at its inaugural meeting last October in Atlanta, Georgia.

The 27-member council is composed of state and local election officials from around the country.

Membership includes representatives of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, which designed U.S. election systems as a critical infrastructure, according to a news release from Toulouse Oliver's office.

"GCC members are now charged with

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- Mandatory campaign finance information system
- Network security to prevent cyber threats for a mandatory campaign finance information system
- Rebuild the state election fund to help pay for publicly financed judicial and Public Regulation Commission races
- Consolidate local elections
- Constitutional amendment to allow automatic voter registration in the state

improving communication between states and the federal government on issues like cyber threats and improving the overall security of local voting systems," the news release said.

Toulouse Oliver also maintains her commitment to increasing voter turnout in New Mexico.

"Only 62 percent of eligible voters in New Mexico cast a ballot in the 2016 general election," Toulouse Oliver said in a September news release. "That number also does not count the thousands of eligible New Mexican voters who aren't registered."

"Our democracy is at its best when we all do our part in the voting booth," she said. "All New Mexicans must commit to going to the polls and voting in every single election."

Toulouse Oliver has announced that she will be a candidate for re-election in 2018. If reelected, she also is eligible to seek reelection in 2022. She won the office in a special election on Dec. 9, 2016 after former secretary Dianna Duran resigned.

To learn more, call 505-627-3600, email maggieToliver@state.nm.us. Visit sos.state.nm.us.



SECRETARY OF STATE MAGGIE TOULOUSE OLIVER

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: 1

AGE: 41

BIRTHPLACE: Albuquerque, New Mexico

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

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE: Bernalillo County clerk, 2007-16

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SECRETARY-DESIGNATE OF EDUCATION CHRISTOPHER RUSKOWSKI

YEARS IN OFFICE: First year

AGE: 37

BIRTHPLACE: Chicago, Illinois

EDUCATION: Bachelor's degree in political science, University of Minnesota; Master's degree in education policy, Stanford University; three years in Miami-Dade area as Teach for America teacher; Education Pioneers fellow, 2010

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE: Six years at Delaware Department of Education, most recently as Associate Secretary of the Teacher & Leader Effectiveness Branch

CHRISTOPHER Ruskowski

New state education director pushes assessment

BY ELVA K. ÖSTERREICH

Christopher Ruskowski told an auditorium full of sixth graders that he misses teaching. He was in Deming celebrating educators in general and in particular, one teacher, Melonie Alfaro, who had just won a national award.

"We do amazing work," he said to the students. "I've worked for some incredible people, including President Barack Obama. Do you know who I work for? Really I work for you."

In June 2017, Ruskowski took the reins of the New Mexico Public Education Department (PED) and hit the ground running, vowing to continue the work of his predecessor, Hanna Skandera.

During an interview following the assembly, Ruskowski said again he misses teaching and misses working with parents and families to bring the students success.

Chicago-born Ruskowski spent three years teaching in Miami and Boston schools through the Teach for America program. He then received a master's degree in education policy from Stanford University. He came to PED from his job with the Delaware Department of Education.

Ruskowski said he was inspired by working with immigrant parents. The families' efforts to understand and get their children educated fueled his desire to do all he could to help them.

"In New Mexico," he said, "parents love the idea of grading schools."

The state has numerous assets in terms of education, he said.

"We need to move away from the negative," he said.

The state programs and institutions are working for the students, he said. New Mexico school districts are seeing results. There are no more "F" schools in districts like Farmington, Alamogordo and Belen. In bigger districts across the state, like Albuquerque, "F" schools have gone up from 11 percent to 34 percent. This, he said, is because those districts are more resistant to change.

But going back to a time when there was little assessment, Ruskowski said, is like going to the doctor with no thermometer, scale or blood pressure cuff. Assessment is a tool to be used to determine how things are working and to help make them better.

"We now have better tools, data," he said. "There is no reason for any of our districts to be going it alone. We need to get best practices online."

Ruskowski's goals for PED are to sustain and accelerate things proven to work, he said. There are challenges in the charter school sector and early literacy. He wants to get parents and families involved in a different way.

Teacher compensation and advancement should change as well, he said. The way teachers are compensated partially relies on levels of education they have achieved. He said a teacher who has achieved excellence and worked successfully in the system for many years, still cannot reach a level where he or she is compensated at the same rate as a teacher who has a master's degree. Compensation should be about performance and not about education level, he said.

The federal government has changed the way AP (advanced placement) classes are funded and Ruskowski said it is unacceptable for parents to have to pay more than \$100 for those classes. The state needs to find a way to make that up.

"They (legislators) need to find a way to keep funding AP," he said. "We need to keep supporting the programs that are working like Teachers Pursuing Excellence, Principals Pursuing Excellence and NM TEACH."

The New Mexico Senate will need to confirm his appointment before he can be considered secretary of education, though as designate, he has all the same powers.

The Senate may take up Ruskowski's confirmation during its next session, and if not, Ruskowski would finish out Martinez's last year and a half in office as the secretary-designate.

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JEFF Witte

The future is bright for ag in New Mexico

BY ELKA K. ÖSTERREICH

As New Mexico Secretary of Agriculture, Jeff Witte spends a lot of time at the legislative session whether or not there is a bill pending or any direct legislation with issues of agriculture in the state.

“It’s good to be up there and answer questions and concerns that they might have,” he said. “A lot of things that get introduced, they (legislators) might not realize that they have an effect on agriculture.”

Some of those issues include worker’s compensation and minimum wage. Legislators also ask about statistics, water policy, conservation measures and more. For example, if a bill is introduced that impacts municipalities, Witte said, “we point out some of the challenges or look at opportunities to include the ag sector in those kinds of things.”

Legislative budget sessions always impact state agencies, he said, and the fact that the budget is flat this year is good news, after three years of declining budget.

One of the big issues for Witte is the future of agriculture in New Mexico and who is going to be the producer. He said this is the second oldest state in terms of the mean age of producers.

“The (U.S.) Census in 2012 found the average age of a New Mexico producer is 60.5 years of age,” Witte said. “As that continues to grow, who is coming in behind them? Who is going to continue the custom and culture?”

He said the state holds an AgriFuture conference every other year to connect 20- to 40-year-olds with ideas and

opportunities. The next conference will be in 2018.

Witte said an interesting aspect about the 2016 conference was the over-40-year-olds who attended. People in their 50s are leaving their long-time careers in order to get back to agricultural roots, he said.

“There is a great future in New Mexico in ag production,” he said. “When I see the youth and their interest in getting involved, it makes me feel like there is a strong future for agriculture in this state.”

In New Mexico, Witte said, those who work in agriculture are good at adapting to new technologies while not giving up traditional ways and values.

Regarding the upcoming race for the governor’s seat, Witte said every governor’s election brings opportunities, new ideas, regeneration and optimism. Every new administration moves the state to the next level.

“I think there has been a lot of progress made in every administration,” he said. “That’s what you look forward to, maybe the restructuring of infrastructure, taxes, new business — you get a new energy level.”

Witte is excited about the future of agriculture in New Mexico.

“Great strides have been made opening up the state’s produce to international markets,” he said. “People who come in from other countries are impressed. It is a unique and culturally diverse state we have. I feel like the luckiest person in the world to be sitting in this position right now.”



SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE JEFF WITTE

YEARS IN OFFICE: 6 ½

AGE: 54

BIRTHPLACE: Santa Fe, New Mexico

EDUCATION: Bachelor’s degree in agriculture business management and a master’s degree in agriculture economics and economics, New Mexico State University

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:

Director of Government Affairs for Farm & Livestock Bureau

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HECTOR Balderas

Attorney General seat up for election in 2018

ATTORNEY GENERAL HECTOR BALDERAS

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: 3

AGE: 44

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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BULLETIN REPORT

Attorney General Hector Balderas enters his fourth year in the seat, which will be up for election in 2018. He announced in May 2017 that he will seek re-election.

Balderas' priorities include monitoring criminal justice legislation, fighting the exploitation of children, protecting law enforcement officers from crimes against them and preventing abuses of public trust. At Balderas's lead, the Special Prosecutions Division of the New Mexico Attorney General's office has targeted violent criminals statewide in prosecuting homicides, rape cases and crimes against children.

Raised by a single mother in the small village of Wagon Mound, Balderas grew up in public housing, where he learned the importance of compassion and respect, according to his biography on the Attorney General website.

"There are multiple policy areas in which the legislature can engage proactively to push forward positive change," James Hallinan, Balderas' public information officer, wrote in an email in response to inquiries. "Among the most pressing issues facing our state are the need to protect students from abuse at the hands of teachers and school administration, continued reform to encourage government officials to be more accountable and transparent in their dealings, and the need to protect and educate New Mexico consumers in an increasingly digital world."

Hallinan went on to say targeted legislative changes to close loopholes, and strengthen transparency, are key to moving New Mexico forward.

"New Mexico deserves elected officials who are truly invested in acting in the best interest of all New Mexicans, and who demonstrate the highest levels of ethics and service," Hallinan responded for Balderas in regard to the upcoming governor's race. "A renewed commitment to investing in the future of our children, and using government resources responsibly in order to make meaningful change must be at the forefront of our collective work."

Balderas earned two degrees and became an attorney. After graduation, he passed over private sector jobs and went directly into a public service role as a Bernalillo County Assistant District Attorney. He was elected to the House in 2003, but won election as state auditor before completing his first year in the Legislature. Balderas ran for U.S. Senate in 2012, but lost in the primary. He was elected for a four-year term as attorney general in 2014.

He resides in Albuquerque, is licensed to practice law in New Mexico and is a certified fraud examiner. He promotes financial literacy for at-risk youth and advocates for the special needs community.

The Office of the Attorney General works with the legislature to support the overall success of the legislative process, according to the OAG website.

LAND COMMISSIONER AUBREY DUNN JR.



POLITICAL PARTY: Republican

YEARS IN OFFICE: 3

AGE: 61

BIRTHPLACE: Alamogordo

PROFESSION: Rancher

EDUCATION: Colorado State University

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE: 2012 Republican candidate, Senate District 39

Republican candidate, Senate District 39

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AUBREY Dunn JR.

Land commissioner aims to protect permanent fund, education, jobs

BULLETIN REPORT

State Land Commissioner Aubrey Dunn Jr. said he anticipates playing a bigger role in defending the Land Grant Permanent Fund against attempts to raid it, so it remains solvent and can support public education for generations to come.

Dunn said his biggest concerns for the state involve education, jobs/economic stability and crime.

"I believe the best way to keep kids in school and engaged is to give them the option of pursuing a vocational education or an academic education," Dunn said. "Not every student is on the college track, but nevertheless should be empowered to reach their full potential."

Business and industry won't come to New Mexico without strong education systems that are responsive to the communities they serve, he said.

"Educational participation and achievement lead to a strong economy and skilled workforce,"

he said. "Plus, business and industry shouldn't be overregulated."

In terms of crime, he said the state needs a well-funded criminal justice system so judges have the resources to enforce the law. And he thinks we should decriminalize minor drug offenses.

Critical budget items include putting more money in the classroom and making wise use of those dollars.

"We must offer competitive teacher salaries and appropriate less money to administration," he said "We, not teachers and parents, should pay for supplies and books. And we must cut waste in state government."

Heading into 2018, with the governor's seat up for election, Dunn said, "Everything is at stake."

"Now is the time to support a leader who will make tough decisions, not popular ones," he said. "We need a leader who isn't tied to D.C. and the bureaucracy that comes with it."

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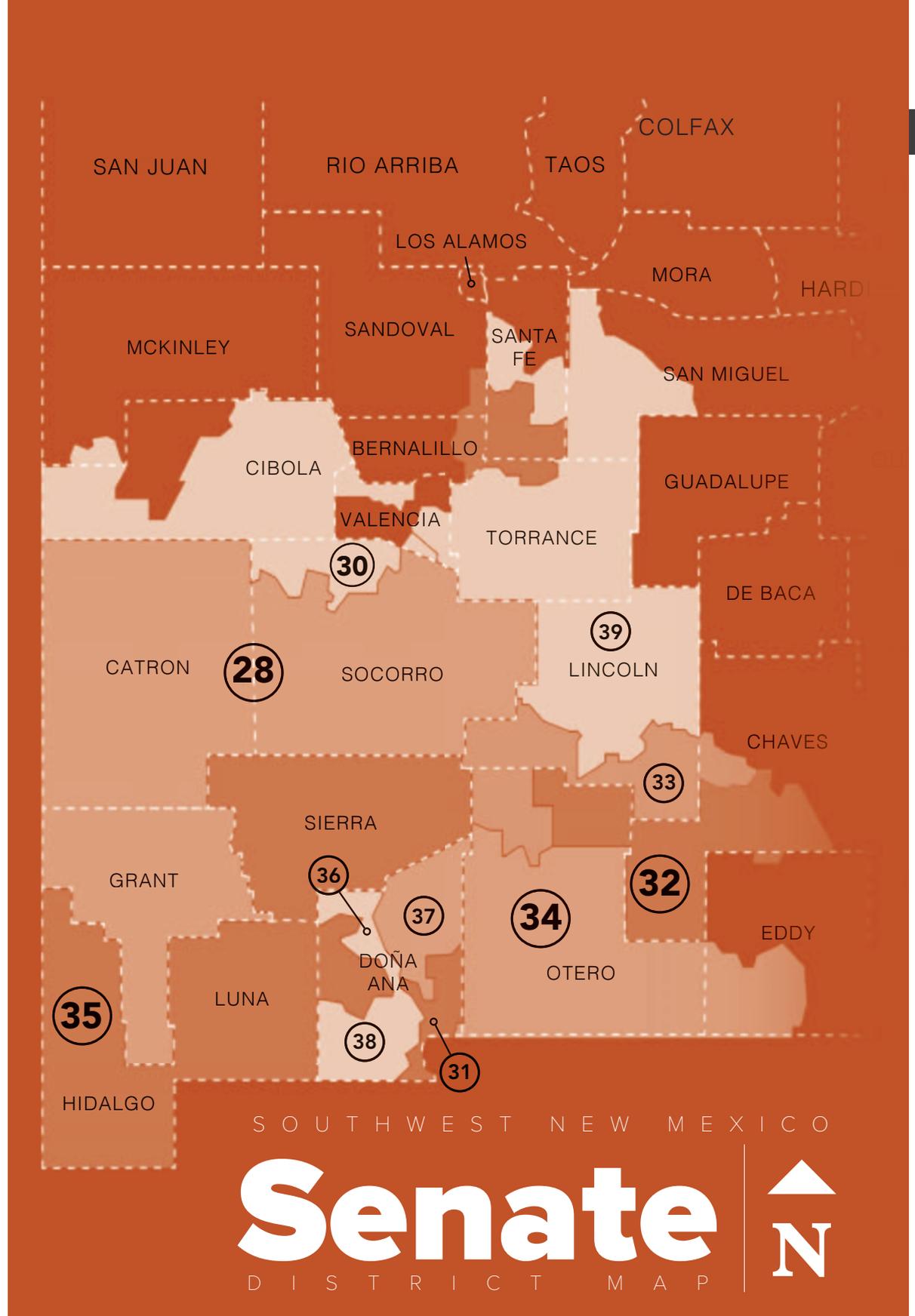


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MAJORITY FLOOR LEADER - Peter Wirth
MINORITY FLOOR LEADER - Stuart Ingle
MAJORITY WHIP - Michael Padilla
MINORITY WHIP - William Payne
House leaders to be voted in during the session. This list subject to change. To reach your legislator during the session, call 505-986-4300.

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- 2 STEVEN NEVILLE
- 3 JOHN PINTO
- 4 GEORGE MUÑOZ
- 5 RICHARD MARTINEZ
- 6 CARLOS CISNEROS
- 7 PAT WOODS
- 8 PETE CAMPOS
- 9 JOHN SAPIEN
- 10 CANDACE RUTH GOULD
- 11 LINDA LOPEZ
- 12 JERRY ORTIZ Y PINO
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HOWIE Morales

Education a primary focus for veteran senator

BY MICHAEL SCANLON

State Sen. Howie Morales is bracing for what could be a battle over Medicaid benefits, the health care coverage on which almost half of New Mexicans depend.

"We can't come in here and think we can hit the people who need those Medicaid benefits," Morales said, noting that many of the program's beneficiaries are working poor. "To make changes that would erode our work force, I think, would be a mistake."

The federal-state Medicaid program that provides care for low-income residents and people with disabilities is becoming increasingly expensive at a time when state coffers are running low. Considering such changes as adding premiums for the coverage and co-pays for office visits and prescription drugs, the administration of Gov. Susana Martinez is looking for ways to cut the program's costs, and federal funding also comes under threat.

"I actually think we need to invest more into Medicaid," Morales said. "We get \$4 back for every dollar we put into Medicaid."

That could be a tough sell as the state struggles with a multi-year downturn in revenue related to low energy prices and state reliance on money from oil and gas production.

"In the last eight years, we've been at the mercy of having to balance our budget against declining revenues," Morales said. "I think it's time we think big and bold."

For 2018, he wants to focus on funding the state's education, he said.

"We cannot even think of cutting the higher education budget. If we send a message out there that we even want to do that, we're going to continue to have problems," he said.

Morales has held membership and leadership positions on numerous legislative committees and has won many awards for his work in the legislature, including the Bruce King Legacy Award, the District Attorneys Association Legislator of the Year Award and the New Mexico Senate Milagro Award for Outstanding Senator for the 2016 session.

Morales was not optimistic about the availability of capital outlay funding for local projects, but added that some projects might be able to find funding elsewhere.

"Unfortunately, we borrowed from the future to balance last year's budget," he said. "I believe there will be some (money for projects), but it will be very minimal. I think we can leverage those from other sources."

An unsuccessful candidate for the Democratic gubernatorial nomination in 2014, Morales said he's not made a commitment to support a candidate in 2018 as Martinez finishes her second and final term.

"Last time, I ran because I saw the damage that was being done to our education system," he said. "I want to make sure the governor I choose to support would put people and need over politics."



HENRY "HOWIE" MORALES, DISTRICT 28

COUNTIES SERVED:

Socorro, Grant, Catron

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: 10

AGE: 44

BIRTHPLACE: Silver City, New Mexico

PROFESSION: Educator

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

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:

Grant County Clerk, 2005-2007

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CLEMENTE Sanchez

Health care, education need funding first

BY MICHAEL SCANLON

State Sen. Clemente Sanchez said the 2018 Legislature will face some big challenges – most of them related to money.

"I think the priority here is always going to be budget and making sure that education and health care are adequately funded," he said. "Those are going to be the big things."

And legislators might not have all the information they need to make those decisions, Sanchez said. Medicaid, the federal-state program that provides health care coverage for more than 40 percent of the state's population, is an example. The federal share, which is the bulk of Medicaid funding, has been targeted for sharp cuts in the U.S. Congress.

"The big problem is that we don't know what the feds are going to do," Sanchez said.

"We're going to have to deal with that."

Faced with a shortfall in funding, the state must find a way to close the gap, he said.

"Medical care is so expensive. I don't feel medical care is a privilege," Sanchez said. "It's a right."

Aside from making sure health care, public K-12 education and higher education get the money they need, Sanchez remained hopeful that he could get funding for some badly needed repair work in his district.

"We're going to have to look at some infrastructure in Socorro County," he said. "We had a lot of damage last summer with the monsoons and all the flooding in Socorro and Valencia counties."

A late-summer storm pounded that area,

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CLEMENTE SANCHEZ, DISTRICT 30

COUNTIES SERVED:

Cibola and Socorro

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: Five

AGE: 59

BIRTHPLACE: Cubero, New Mexico

PROFESSION: President and CEO, Bank of New Mexico

EDUCATION: Master's degree in business administration, Eastern New Mexico University and New Mexico Highlands University

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE: None

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BILL BURT, DISTRICT 33

COUNTIES SERVED: Chaves, Lincoln, Otero

POLITICAL PARTY: Republican

YEARS IN OFFICE: 6

AGE: 66

BIRTHPLACE: Deming, New Mexico

PROFESSION: Broadcaster

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

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE: None

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BILL Burt

Increased state matches for Medicaid a concern

BY ELVA K. ÖSTERREICH

Republican William “Bill” Burt was first appointed to the District 33 position in 2011 and was reelected after running unopposed in 2016. He serves the counties of Chaves, Lincoln and Otero.

Burt has been on the Legislative Finance Committee for the past several years and his number one priority is working on the budget, building the budget and attending to the needs of the state.

Burt said 30 to 35 percent of the state’s budget comes from taxes on oil and gas, and while recuperating now from low oil prices, that progress is not yet reflected in New Mexico’s finances. Going into the 2018 session, the state needs to be cognizant that we have not recovered from that dip in revenue, he said.

Burt said he is concerned because the state will be required to start matching more and more Medicaid payments with the federal government, making for \$90-\$100 million in additional obligations.

“As the federal government backs out and requires the state to pick up the slack, we can’t wait until that time to deal with it, we have to do some preparations and planning for it before it happens,” Burt said.

As his district includes three counties, Burt’s concerns are different for each.

“In Otero County I am always concerned about making sure the Department of Defense, U.S. Air Force, Holloman (Air Force Base), and White Sands Missile Range are taken care of as best we can,” he said.

“For Lincoln County I’m hoping it’s a wet season, tourism is big, and we always are

concerned about forest health and forest fires.

For Chaves County, agriculture and oil are the issues in that area.”

For the 2018 session, Burt said money may have to be shuffled around from one area to another to accommodate for potential emergencies.

“If we can get a working budget, we will have accomplished a lot,” He said. “Most funding is going to be flat. I don’t anticipate any cuts.”

The state needs to see to make sure the children are educated, people receive the health care they need and that the judiciary and public safety are taken care of, Burt said. The priority is making sure there is enough money and how the money is spent.

In terms of capital outlay, requests had not been made at the time of this report but, Burt said, “I can guarantee somewhere in there will be a water issue or two.”

For the future, with the upcoming governor’s race, he said there should be balance

“We need balance; working on both sides of the fence for New Mexico is the proper way to go.”

in the government.

“I think any time you have a legislature dominated by a party, the governor should be another party so there are checks and balances,” he said. “If it’s all Republicans or all Democrats, it’s not good. We need balance — working on both sides of the fence for New Mexico is the proper way to go.”

The thing that keeps Burt in the whole process, he said, is that he completely believes in New Mexico.

“I will work hard to make sure New Mexico is counted and we provide everything we can for the citizens of New Mexico,” he said.

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 28

leaving swaths of northern Socorro and Valencia counties with power outages, widespread hail damage, mudslides and the overnight closure of Interstate 25.

Sanchez hopes for capital outlay money to repair some of the damage.

“There should be some money,” he said. “We don’t know much. We’ll have to wait and see.

Also on Sanchez’s wait-and-see list is who will emerge to run for governor in the 2018 election.

Gov. Susana Martinez, a Republican, will finish her second four-year term — a tenure that often has been marked by contention between her and the Democrat-controlled legislature. Democrats have historically made up the majority of both houses, except in 2015 and 2016, when Republicans held control of the House of Representatives. Democrats regained the chamber in the 2016 election.

“I think we will need someone who is fiscally responsible and who will work in a bipartisan way with both chambers to get things done for the people of New Mexico,” Sanchez said.

He said he’s not ready to make any endorsements, and awaits the results of the primary election this summer.

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

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CLIFF Pirtle

Senator heads into fifth session

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

Pirtle is heading into his fifth legislative session, a 30-day budget-focused session. Pirtle ran unopposed in the 2016 primary and general election. He defeated longtime incumbent Democrat Tim Jennings to take the seat in 2012.

Pirtle proposed a bill in 2017 to keep New Mexico on Daylight Savings Time year-round. It did not pass. Other sponsored legislation includes a memorial requesting a study of the costs of preparing and implementing memorials, a Freedom from Unwanted Surveillance Act, an act requiring traffic citations be filed in the county in which the violation occurred, a memorial declaring Feb. 7 “4-H Day” in the Senate and “FFA Day” on Feb. 22, among others.

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

CLIFF PIRTLE DISTRICT 32

COUNTIES SERVED: Chaves, Eddy

POLITICAL PARTY: Republican

YEARS IN OFFICE: 5

AGE: 32

PROFESSION: Farmer

EDUCATION: Roswell High School with honors

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE: None

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JOSEPH Cervantes

17 years in legislature key to gubernatorial campaign

BY MIKE COOK

State Sen. Joseph Cervantes has been a member of the New Mexico Legislature since 2001, serving the past five years in the state Senate, and 12 years before that as a state house of representatives. He also served four years on the Doña Ana County Commission.

The Las Cruces Democrat is chair of the Senate Conservation Committee and a Senate Judiciary Committee member. He represents state Senate District 31, which includes southern Doña Ana County and the communities of Anthony, Santa Teresa and Sunland Park.

Cervantes announced his candidacy for the Democratic nomination for governor of New Mexico in July.

During his announcement in Las Cruces, Cervantes said incumbent Republican Gov. Susana Martinez has “cut into funding for our schools,” which resulted in a six percent tuition increase and 700 jobs lost at NMSU.

“The business of passing the buck (onto colleges and universities and local governments) has got to stop,” he said. In the past eight years, Cervantes said 27,000 people have left New Mexico, the state’s bond rating has been reduced and its formerly strong cash reserves are near zero, he said.

“New Mexico’s crisis is not in its budget,” Cervantes said, but rather “in its lack of courageous leadership to address it.”

Waiting for oil and gas prices to rise to boost the state budget doesn’t work, he said.

“That solution is not fooling anybody,” Cervantes said.

The state has \$1 billion in stranded capital outlay funding that needs to be put to work to help restore confidence in stable state revenues (among) employers outside and inside New Mexico, Cervantes said.

He said the state should make the same level of investment for students who don’t go on to college after high school as it does for those who choose higher education.

“I’m pleased to say I serve in a strong legislature,” Cervantes said. “It’s a good, diverse group of people.”

Cervantes said he’s disappointed that the three governors he has served with have used the governorship as a stepping stone to higher office, and have focused on short-term successes instead of long-term investments.

“The fundamental problem with politics,” Cervantes said, is that “the priority is getting elected and re-elected. Special interests dominate the political process (and politicians) sacrifice judgement and principles to insure re-election.”

The single most important quality for the next governor, he said, is that he or she be able to bring people together.

Getting along with others is something Cervantes said he learned working on the family farm and working both sides of the aisle in both houses of the legislature to get important bills passed.

Transparency is another important issue in state government, Cervantes said, and that’s why he led the fight to open all legislative committee meetings to the public and the press as part of his agenda in the state Senate.



JOSEPH CERVANTES, DISTRICT 31

COUNTIES SERVED: Doña Ana

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: 5

AGE: 56

BIRTHPLACE: Las Cruces, New Mexico

PROFESSION: Attorney

EDUCATION: Bachelor’s in architecture, University of New Mexico (UNM); master’s in architecture, California Polytechnic State University; juris doctorate, UNM

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RON Griggs

Senator keeps a keen eye on his district's needs

BY ELVA K. ÖSTERREICH

Sen. Ron Griggs represents District 34, which encompasses parts of Doña Ana, Eddy and Otero counties.

While acknowledging that the 2018 session is primarily focused on budget, Griggs said he will push for legislation that provides a gross receipts tax exemption for Holloman Air Force Base construction projects, which he said could help convince the Air Force that F-16 jets should be stationed there permanently. Currently, the fleet is scheduled to stay for two years.

“Cannon (Air Force Base) got the mission and the special ops exempt from gross receipts,” he said. “That opens the door for us to do that, too. This is really important to us.”

If the gross receipts tax issue is a player in the Air Force's decision to make the F-16s a permanent mission for Holloman, we stand to lose something of value if not addressed, Griggs said.

“Any bill that involves money can be introduced during a budget session,” he said. “And I think we can count on the governor to give us a message to allow the bill.”

Another concern of Griggs' heading into the session is tax legislation.

Griggs' district spans three counties, with distinct populations and needs.

“The mountains have different concerns than Carlsbad,” he said. “They (around Carlsbad) have tremendous issues on state highways. Figuring out ways to generate funds for those roads is really important.”

In the Alamogordo/Otero County area, Griggs said anything to help Holloman would be important.

Issues that need to be addressed but are not

likely to arise during this session include the tax code, liquor laws and right to work.

“We need to work together to make changes to the tax code that would benefit all of New Mexico,” he said.

Griggs said he introduced a bill last session to exempt dividend and interest income from income taxes to attract people over the age of 60 to the state. The retired population brings jobs, and some are buying businesses, he said. He thinks the state should look at other ways of making a move to New Mexico attractive, which helps drive economic development in the state.

Overall, Griggs said, the state will have a balanced budget at the closing of this session.

“I don't know the impact that is going to have,” he said. “Education, higher education, the lottery scholarship – we are not at a point to know what recommendations we will have.”

If Steve Pearce is elected governor, Griggs said, there will be different approaches to legislative possibilities in 2019 and beyond.

Since the Senate is controlled by Democrats 26-16, and the House is also controlled by the Democrats, Griggs said it only makes sense for the governor to be Republican.

“People need to work together,” he said. “If you have a Democrat for governor, you will see more bills they favor passed and signed. If you have a Republican governor, he would have to work with both Democrats and Republicans. Pearce works with both. When one party is in control, I'm not sure New Mexico is best served by that.”

RON GRIGGS, DISTRICT 34

COUNTIES SERVED: Otero, Eddy, Doña Ana Counties

POLITICAL PARTY: Republican

YEARS IN OFFICE: 5

AGE: 65

BIRTHPLACE: Portales, New Mexico

PROFESSION: Businessman: ATC, Inc. and 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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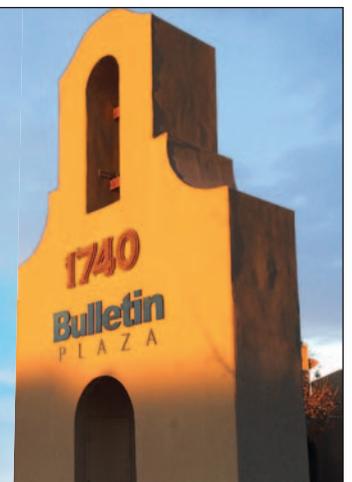
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JOHN ARTHUR Smith

Senate Finance Chair says new revenue needed to increase state budget

BY MIKE COOK

“My priority is to pay the state’s bills and get out of there,” state Sen. John Arthur Smith said about the upcoming 30-day session of the New Mexico Legislature.

Because of a likely increase in the state’s share of Medicaid payments for indigent health care, Smith said the legislature probably won’t see an increase in revenues for the new year. And, he said, there may not be any capital outlay funds for legislators to spend on special projects in their home districts.

“Don’t get your hopes up” is his message to officials in the four counties he represents (Luna, Sierra, Hidalgo and Doña Ana) about their wish lists for state funding to help pay for capital projects like roads, parks and sewer systems.

Smith said he does expect about \$160 million in general obligation bonds to be put on the November 2018 ballot to pay for libraries, senior centers and higher education projects around the state. He said funding for roads could also be added to General Obligation (GO) bond spending.

Smith, 76, begins his 30th year in the state Senate in January, and is the powerful chair of the Senate Finance Committee. A Democrat, Smith lives in Deming. He and predecessor I.M. “Ike” Smalley (1904-98) have held the district 35 seat for the past 60 years.

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

“We need some new revenue,” Smith said, to continue to rebuild state budget reserves and to pay for other state services.

The state’s approximately \$6 billion annual budget includes about \$1 billion for Medicaid, Smith said, while the federal government pays about \$6 billion in state Medicaid expenses. A change in federal Medicaid allocations from matching rates to block grants could sharply

increase the state’s share of the program’s cost, he said.

Federal and state funding for Medicaid and other health care costs in New Mexico total more than the state spends on education, Smith said.

In terms of state dollars alone, New Mexico spends about 57 percent of its general fund budget on public and higher education, Smith said, and about 25 percent on health and human services. About seven percent of the budget pays for prisons and law enforcement and about three percent for courts.

The 2018 session will be Gov. Susana Martinez’s “last hurrah to try and leave a legacy,” Smith said.

He said he expects the Republican governor, who is barred from seeking a third four-year term in 2018, to again introduce crime-related legislation, driven largely by the high crime rate in Bernalillo County.

“Albuquerque is driving the bus on that issue,” Smith said.

Martinez, he said, has reversed positions on some major issues and is the only governor he has served with who “never walked on the (state) Senate floor.”

“This (new) governor needs to get along with the legislature better than she does,” Smith said.

That, he said, should be a top priority for New Mexico’s next governor, who takes office in January 2019, along with building a reliable revenue stream that protects the state’s permanent fund, builds state reserves and stops cuts to education.

Asked if he would be a candidate for reelection to his eighth term in the state Senate in 2020, Smith said “everything depends on health.”

Smith said he is something of “an endangered species” in the Democratic Party because he is “a stronger disciple of Harry Truman than others.”



JOHN ARTHUR SMITH, DISTRICT 35

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JEFF STEINBORN DISTRICT 36

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JEFF Steinborn

'New Mexico can't afford to take a year off in policy making'

BY MIKE COOK

"We're not seeing much of a policy agenda out of the governor," said state Sen. Jeff Steinborn, D-Doña Ana, of the 2018 session. "I'm certainly going to bring an agenda. New Mexico can't afford to take a year off in policy making."

Steinborn, a Las Cruces Democrat, was elected to the state Senate in 2016 after eight years of service in state House of Representatives.

Steinborn said he plans to reintroduce legislation in the 2018 session that Gov. Susana Martinez vetoed in 2017, including a bill to create a pharmaceutical purchasing council, which Steinborn said would be "a huge opportunity to reform the way we purchase drugs and get a better deal for New Mexico taxpayers," ultimately saving the state millions of dollars.

Steinborn also wants the legislature to expand the use of renewable energy at state facilities, including the more than 750 state-owned buildings throughout New Mexico. Currently, Steinborn said, solar power is used on only two of them.

In addition to creating more state jobs, Steinborn said, renewable energy creates economic development because New Mexico can sell surplus power to other states. It could establish New Mexico as "a solar leader in the country," he said.

In December, Steinborn filed two memorials that he will introduce during the 2018 legislative session.

The first, Senate Joint Memorial 1, would create a statewide task force to study the issue of veterans' suicides in New Mexico.

The state has one of the highest rates of veterans' suicides in the country, Steinborn said.

New Mexico, he said, should provide "behavioral health services and job opportunities to its veterans, and "not forget those who sacrificed so much for the country."

The task force would include staff from both the state Veterans Services and Workforce Solutions departments and would reach out to veterans' organizations and individual veterans around the state, Steinborn said. He is sponsoring the joint memorial with State Rep. Rudy Martinez, Doña Ana, who is a Vietnam veteran, Steinborn said.

Steinborn said he has filed Senate Joint Resolution 1, co-sponsored by state Sen. Mark Moores, R-Bernalillo, that calls for a 2018 constitutional amendment to create a nominating commission to aid in the selection of regents for the state's universities.

Regents – including the seven at the University of New Mexico and the five at New Mexico State University and all other universities in the state, are currently selected by the governor. Having a nominating commission that would interview candidates and make recommendations to the governor would "insure we are

picking our best and brightest to run our universities and not just political supporters of the governor or people without qualifications or ideas," Steinborn said. "It's not a job for yes men."

New Mexico already has nonpartisan nominating commissions for judges, Steinborn said, and it would be appropriate to follow the model for selecting regents.

If the constitutional amendment isn't on the ballot in 2018, Steinborn said, the next general election ballot it could go on would be in 2020, which means it wouldn't take effect until 2021.

The state, he said, needs the new selection process to be in effect for the new governor in 2019.

Steinborn said he plans to introduce a bill to create greater transparency in state government by making bills introduced in each session of the legislature easier to follow for legislators and state residents.

Currently, he said, there is no mechanism to update bills pending before the legislature to include amendments that have been added. His bill would create a "rolling current version" of each bill by adding amendments online for everyone to read instead of having to look at the original bill and all amended versions separately.

In addition to his service on the state Senate Public Affairs Committee and as vice chair of the Senate Rules interim committee, Steinborn is chair of the joint Senate-House Radioactive and Hazardous Materials Committee.

That committee, created in 1979, has oversight of Los Alamos National Laboratory, the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant and the state Environment Department, among other functions.

The committee will press the White House to keep intact the independent Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board, Steinborn said.

Steinborn said he doesn't anticipate there will be capital outlay funds for legislators to spend in their home districts in 2018.

"We essentially have a flat budget," he said. "We have no new money."

Steinborn said he is looking at needs across his district, in case capital outlay funds are available. Priorities include school buses for Hatch, road improvements and park needs, he said.

Steinborn is chair of Film Las Cruces, a nonprofit created to bring film and television production to Las Cruces.

Film production generated \$505 million in direct spending statewide last year, Steinborn said, up \$100 million from the year before. Las Cruces, he said, can earn a greater share of that money.

Growing union crew who can work on films and TV shows in southern New Mexico is a key goal, Steinborn said, along with opening a soundstage in Las Cruces.

WILLIAM 'BILL' Soules

Senator hopes for quiet session, expects no new money

BY MIKE COOK

State Sen. Bill Soules, D-Doña Ana, is hoping for a quiet 2018 legislative session.

"When there's no money to fight over, everybody tends to get along," Soules said.

For the 2018 session, he said, "the current estimates are that any new monies are probably going to be spent on changes in Medicaid."

There will likely be almost no money to increase spending for education or social services, he said.

The retired educator and former Las Cruces school board member was elected to the state Senate in 2012 and re-elected in 2016. Soules is a rarity in the New Mexico Legislature because he has a Ph.D.

Soules, chair of the Senate Education Committee, said the legislature continues to underfund education in New Mexico, but the groundwork is being laid for changes over the next four or five years, he said, that will move the state "toward more of a world-class education system as money becomes more available."

Soules said he will introduce legislation in 2018 "to return New Mexico to a state board of education that hires a state superintendent rather than have it as a cabinet-level position that is appointed by the governor."

That change, he said, would help to depoliticize education.

Any money available for capital outlay projects in 2018 in legislators' home districts is likely to be swept up in other spending, Soules said.

"I'm not expecting much this year," he said. "There is never enough to do everything needed."

If there is money, Soules said capital improvement projects he's looking at in his district include improving roads on the East Mesa

and moving more people off septic tanks and onto sewer systems.

Rather than specific projects, he said, capital outlay funds should be spent on infrastructure that will be long-term assets.

Soules said the 2018 governor's race will likely have more of an impact in the state House of Representatives than the Senate during the legislative session because all 70 House seats are up for election in 2018, while no state Senate seats are up for election until 2020.

On the House side during the session, he said, there is likely to be "lots of 'gotcha' politics."

"The Senate tends to be much more stable," Soules said. "It looks more at the long-term benefits for the state, and gives us a bit of a broader view." There will be "lots of posturing on both sides, particularly in the House," Soules said.

Because incumbent Gov. Susana Martinez, a Republican, is a lame duck, there will be people working to distance themselves from her policies, he said.

Martinez, he said, will have less power and control over legislation in the 2018 session.

"I don't see her as having much control over what will happen in the future," Soules said.

That's a positive for Democrats, he said.

Democrats, he said, are also fired up because of the negative politics coming out of Washington.

"I think that's going to play all the way down the ticket," he said. "Such vitriol (is) much more difficult for Republicans."

The overarching goal for the 2018 session, Soules said, will be to hold the line until the state has a better budget and a different administration.



WILLIAM "BILL" SOULES

COUNTIES SERVED: Doña Ana

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: 5

AGE: 62

BIRTHPLACE: Las Cruces, New

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PROFESSION: Retired teacher

EDUCATION: Bachelor's and master's degrees in psychology; PhD in education and psychology, New Mexico

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE: Las Cruces Public Schools board of education.

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MARY KAY Papen

Senator puts education initiatives at top of priority list

BY MIKE COOK

Sen. Mary Kay Papen, D-Doña Ana, said she expects Gov. Susana Martinez to put her so-called “Crime All the Time” legislation, including reinstating the death penalty, back on the agenda during the 2018 New Mexico legislative session.

“I’m not for the death penalty,” Papen said. “I’m going to vote ‘no.’ I voted ‘no’ before.”

Papen, elected in 2000, is president pro tem of the state Senate. She presides over the Senate when the lieutenant governor is absent and is chair of the Senate’s Committee’s Committee, which makes committee assignments and determines if proposed bills are germane.

In addition to crime bills, Papen said she expects Martinez to include other items on her call for the 30-day session that the legislature has not previously passed. “She’s looking for her legacy,” Papen said.

Papen said she hopes the legislature and governor will spend the necessary amount of time on the budget during the session.

“We’re in a hole and we need to get out of that hole,” Papen said.

“We don’t know what’s coming down from the federal government and how it’s going to affect it,” she said. “Medicaid is going to be a big player.”

Papen said she has never supported taking money from the state’s permanent fund, but that the state needs to get a better return on its investment of those funds.

Papen said she would support additional funding for early childhood and pre-kindergarten education to get children better equipped for public school.

As the legislature considers funding for public education during the session, Papen said, it may also look at the state Public Education Department’s proposal to change public school science standards.

State government, she said, must work with Doña Ana Community College and other institutions of higher learning to rebuild vocational training and create

a qualified workforce – including more electricians, plumbers, welders and computer technicians – to attract more business to New Mexico.

Not everyone needs or wants to attend a four-year university, Papen said. DACC and other community colleges teach students skills that qualify them for good-paying jobs that the state needs.

“We’ve got to fix our economy,” she said.

“What is it that we need to fix in order for New Mexico to be on the financial path?” Papen asked.

The legislature also must keep an eye on the state’s 2013 water settlement with four Pueblo tribes and its pending lawsuit with the state of Texas about Rio Grande water rights, she said.

“That’s big money,” she said.

Papen said she anticipates that both the Public Education Retirement Association of New Mexico and Education Retirement Board will be safe.

Tax reform may also be on the session agenda, she said. If it is, Papen said, the legislature should get it passed.

With a tight state budget, there may be no capital outlay funds again this year, Papen said. If those funds are available, she said, funding for the airport at Santa Teresa should be a top priority for Doña Ana County legislators.

Papen said she and the other members of the county delegation will continue to work with city and county officials as well as NMSU and Las Cruces Public Schools to help fund local needs, if capital outlay funds are available.

That could include finding local housing – perhaps converting a motel property – for people with disabilities, and especially mental health issues. A mental health hospital for southern New Mexico should also be a high priority, Papen said.

“Let’s get big things done,” she said.

MARY KAY PAPEN DISTRICT 38

COUNTIES SERVED: Doña Ana

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: 17

AGE: 85

BIRTHPLACE: El Paso, Texas

PROFESSION: Retired business owner

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ELIZABETH 'LIZ' Stefanics

Health care spending, rural economic development
are senator's top concerns

BY MICHAEL SCANLON

Sen. Liz Stefanics says she'll enter the Legislature's 30-day 2018 session with an eye on maintaining Medicaid coverage and promoting economic development in rural communities, among other things.

"I think health care and economic development are up there equally in my district," Stefanics said. "And I would like to see rural communities receive support for economic development."

Stefanics's concern over Medicaid – the state-federal program that covers more than 40 percent of New Mexicans, providing services to low-income residents and people with disabilities – comes amid efforts at both the state and federal level to reduce the program's costs. Most states, including New Mexico, expanded Medicaid eligibility under the Affordable Care Act, or Obamacare. The expansion added about 265,000 adults to the Medicaid rolls, bringing New Mexico's uninsured population to a historic low of about 10 percent.

Although the 2018 session will be a 30-day session limited to budgetary issues and anything Gov. Susana Martinez deems relevant to the budget, Stefanics expects Medicaid to be on the agenda.

"I believe the governor is interested in health care, so I think it will be," Stefanics said. "I really want to make sure that I watch out for that. Half our state is on Medicaid. I held several appointed positions under (former Gov. Bill) Richardson, and all of them were in health care."

The state has proposed several Medicaid cost-cutting measures, such as charging premiums and introducing co-pays for office visits and prescriptions under the program.

On economic development, Stefanics wants to find ways to help the rural communities in her district.

"I would like rural communities to receive more support," she said, adding that she recently met with representatives from New Mexico State University's Arrowhead Center, which was established to link researchers and entrepreneurs to promote sustainable

development across the state.

"A lot of small communities just need some technical assistance," she said.

She also wants to renew New Mexico's reciprocal agreement with other states that allows out-of-state nurses to practice in New Mexico if they are licensed in their own states.

"The interstate compact on nurses expires in January," she said.

Stefanics said it remains to be seen what legislation she will sponsor or support, but noted the biggest topic of the session will be the state budget, and continuing Medicaid and adequate funding for education.

Among ideas Martinez has proposed for the session is tax reform, something Stefanics said the state is not ready to tackle.

New Mexico's public revenue has fallen sharply in the last few years, due mostly to "the largest oil and gas price crash in recent history," according to the state Department of Finance and Administration. The state has a revenue shortfall for the current fiscal year of almost \$67 million.

The Martinez administration has asked for general fund spending in the 2018 fiscal year of just more than \$6 billion. The budget proposal maintains spending cuts made in prior years.

Stefanics said she's not hopeful about landing any major capital outlay projects for her district.

"I am listening to the communities' requests," she said, "But I don't think we have enough money to pay for any big capital outlay projects."

As Martinez, a Republican, enters her final year as governor, Stefanics, a Democrat, will be watching the 2018 campaign unfold.

"I think we have several good candidates running on the Democratic ballot," she said, "and I will whole-heartedly support the candidate who gets the nomination."

Stefanics previously served in the state Senate from 1993 to 1996. She served on the Santa Fe County Commission from 2009 to 2016.



ELIZABETH T. "LIZ" STEFANICS, DISTRICT 39

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

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: Second year of current term.

AGE: 67

BIRTHPLACE: Dayton, Ohio

PROFESSION: Retired

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

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE: Four years in the New Mexico state Senate; eight years on the Santa Fe county commission.

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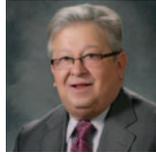
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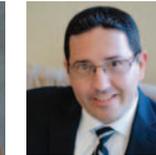
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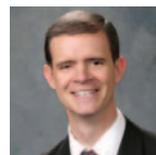
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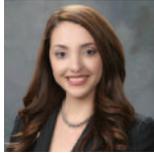
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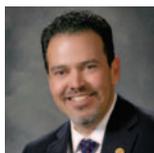
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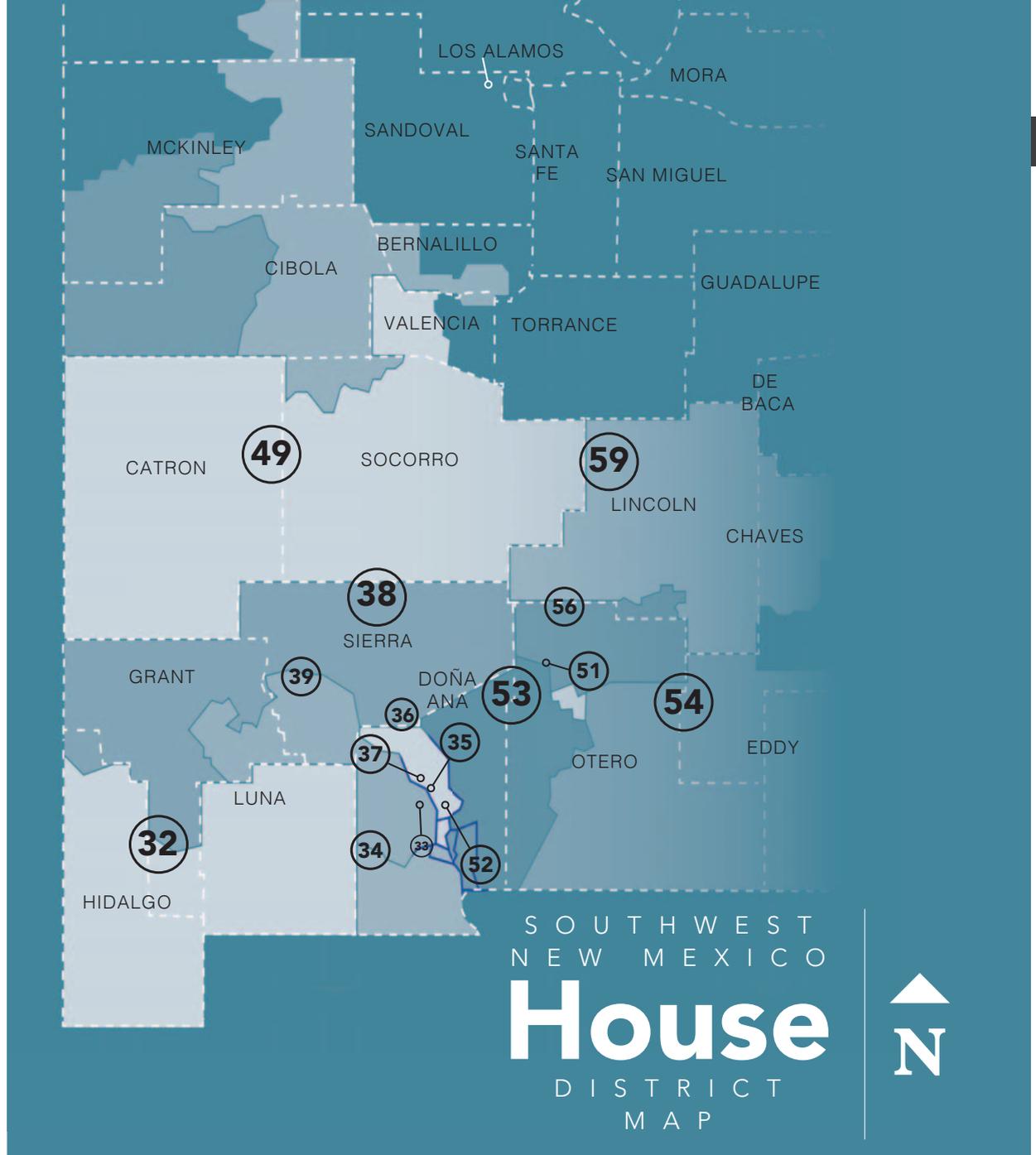
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MINORITY FLOOR LEADER – Nate Gentry

MAJORITY WHIP – Doreen Gallegos
MINORITY WHIP – Rodney D. Montoya
House leaders to be voted in during the session. This list subject to change. To reach your legislator during the session, call 505-986-4300.

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- 5 JOHNSON, D. WONDA
- 6 ALCON, ELISEO LEE
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CANDIE Sweetser

Rep expects tax reform, Medicaid changes to be on the docket

BY MICHAEL SCANLON

For southwestern New Mexico state Rep Candie Sweetser, the state budget, tax reform and health care will take center stage when the state legislature opens its 2018 session.

“It’s a budget year, so I think the priority is the state budget. And we do need tax reform,” she said, adding that previous efforts to revamp the state’s tax laws proved complicated and was met with considerable pushback.

“We were looking at lowering the overall tax burden by eliminating tax exemptions across the board,” she said.

Agriculture, nonprofits and hospitals, however, should retain the exemptions.

Sweetser’s family farms and ranches in Luna, Hidalgo and Grant counties, so she knows first-hand the demands being put on the industry.

“Every entity that has an exemption has a lobbyist,” she said. “You can only lower the overall tax rate if it balances out. It’s not easy.”

State officials have been working on a tax reform proposal for the session.

“The governor has mentioned it, but we haven’t seen it yet. It will be interesting to see what they worked on during the interim,” Sweetser said.

Other proposals she finds noteworthy include one that would have the state legislate what portion of school budgets would pay for classroom instruction and what portion could be used for administration and transportation.

“Every district is unique,” she said. “Is one-size-fits-all really going to benefit New Mexico schools? I don’t know. There are certainly arguable points against that.”

The legislature is expected to consider revamping the state’s system of Medicaid, which provides health care for almost half of New Mexicans – those who are low-income and disabled. The state has proposed implementing a co-pay system for office visits and prescriptions to be paid by those Medicaid

beneficiaries whose incomes are above the poverty line.

Medicaid is a state-federal program to which the federal government contributes most of funding. The White House has proposed a federal budget that also targets cuts in Medicaid, further complicating states’ struggles to keep the program solvent.

Sweetser said she’s doubtful about any capital outlay being available for local projects in 2018, though she could list about 15 projects that are needed in Luna and Hidalgo counties.

“I don’t know that any of them are pressing, but they are all real and important,” she said. “The last I heard was that there was a very fine margin of revenue for capital outlay.”

Sweetser said she would support consolidating local capital outlay money to fund larger, statewide projects, allowing local projects to wait until the state’s revenue outlook – hard hit in recent years by declining oil and gas revenues – improves.

Looking ahead to the gubernatorial election in 2018, Sweetser said she would like to see a governor who has a vision for the state and who is committed to making

decisions that will move New Mexico forward.

She hopes for a governor who will be able to create and expand employment opportunities in the state.

“It all starts with education,” she said. “I certainly have not approved of everything coming out of our Public Education Department.”

Still, Sweetser said, even with all the state’s problems, she remains optimistic about the future.

“I think for all the challenges we face in the state, New Mexico is still the Land of Enchantment, and I look forward to meeting the challenges of moving the state forward,” she said.

“I think for all the challenges we face in the state, New Mexico is still the Land of Enchantment, and I look forward to meeting the challenges of moving the state forward.”



CANDIE G. SWEETSER DISTRICT 32

COUNTIES SERVED: Luna, Hidalgo, Grant

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: 1

AGE: 55

BIRTHPLACE: Albuquerque, New Mexico

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.

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE: None

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**BILL
MCCAMLEY
DISTRICT 33**

COUNTIES SERVED: Doña Ana

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: 5

AGE: 39

BIRTHPLACE: Busan, South Korea

PROFESSION: Consultant

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

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**BILL
McCamley**
Rep wants to stop cuts to vital services

BY MIKE COOK

"We have to find ways to stop cuts to vital services," State Rep. Bill McCamley, D-Doña Ana, said.

"We're not cutting the fat anymore; we're not cutting the bone," McCamley said. "We're cutting off limbs."

Cuts have impacted people, McCamley said, including teachers, social workers, plumbers, janitors and police officers; they have also impacted services, like moving Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park near Las Cruces from the state Parks Department to the state Department of Game and Fish because State Parks doesn't have the money to operate the park.

New Mexico has the highest childhood poverty in the country and the second highest unemployment, he said, and it ranks first in the region for the most people moving out of the state.

"We have to do better," said McCamley, who is chair of the House Labor and Economic Development Committee.

Higher education reform is an important step, he said. New Mexico has 17 boards governing its colleges and universities, while other states have two or three.

New Mexico needs a more systematic approach to higher education, McCamley said. The state spends 13 percent of its general fund on higher education, but he believes it must be more efficient.

During the 2017 legislative session, McCamley co-sponsored a memorial calling for the state Higher Education Department to compare New Mexico's college and university system to those in other states.

Gov. Susana Martinez's veto of higher education funding during the last session "set schools back a decade," McCamley said.

McCamley said the legislature also needs to pass an internet sales tax.

"Local businesses are at a disadvantage," he said, and are "losing revenue with an online punch."

New Mexico also needs to revise its capital gains tax, McCamley said, because it has "zero effect on job creation" and allows the wealthy to pay "one-half the tax of someone who's working."

"Seventy percent of the benefit goes to the top one percent in New Mexico," he said. "That's wrong."

Legalizing cannabis is another step the state needs to take, McCamley said. It would generate \$50-60 million in new revenue in the first year, he said.

Making cannabis more widely available would also reduce opioid dependence and deaths in the state, he said.

A bill that McCamley introduced in the 2017 session to legalize cannabis died in a House committee.

New Mexico also needs to look at how it invests the billions of dollars in its permanent fund, McCamley said. Other states don't pay out-of-state stockbrokers to make investments as New Mexico does, he said.

"There are ways to invest without handing the money over to Wall Street bankers," McCamley said.

McCamley co-sponsored a bill that will put a constitutional amendment on the 2018 general election ballot calling for an independent statewide ethics commission.

McCamley predicted the governor's vetoes without messages of 10 bills passed by the 2017 legislature will be overturned. The vetoed bills include allowing industrial hemp research and adding computer science as a high school graduation requirement.

While some bills that were vetoed by the governor will be reintroduced in 2018, McCamley said many legislators will "wait out" the final year of Martinez's term and "hold the line" until a new governor is elected.

Important legislation is ready to go, he said, once the state has a new governor.

If capital outlay funds are available in 2018, McCamley said his priorities will include new cars for the Doña Ana County Sheriff's Department and equipment for the Las Cruces Fire Department, as well as replacing septic tanks with sewer systems throughout the county.

McCamley said he would also like to use funds to support Mesilla Valley Community of Hope in Las Cruces.

McCamley has announced his bid for state auditor, up for election in 2018.

BEALQUIN "BILL" Gomez

Representative hopeful for capital outlay funds

BY MICHAEL SCANLON

Working inside and outside the legislature, state Rep. Bealquin "Bill" Gomez relishes his role as the go-to guy for infrastructure and public works in southern Doña Ana County.

"Because I worked at NMSU a long time, I just know who to call to get things done," said Gomez, a retired New Mexico State University agricultural economist. "I know what to do when we have problems or issues."

Sometimes that's as simple as getting stop signs installed at a railroad crossing as a temporary measure during a two-year wait to get warning lights installed.

"We've been working on improving the sewer system in the Sunland Park area. We just broke ground for a \$12 million sewage treatment plant in the Santa Teresa area," he said, adding that 100 percent of the sewer system money came from federal funding and a grant from the state Environment department.

"It pays to live along the border because we get all the funds for border communities," he said.

Gomez is quick to point out other south valley improvements he's had a hand in, like \$100,000 being used to renovate a state-owned park in Mesquite. And there was the funding the City of Sunland Park sought to buy one new fire truck, but it ended up being enough to buy three new fire trucks.

"You've got 20,000 people, and the fire trucks were breaking down on the way to fires," he said.

Gomez said he still looks forward to seeing the state conduct research in industrial hemp as a cash crop. He sponsored a bill for that in the 2017 legislature, and it passed. But it was one of 10 bills vetoed without explanation by

Gov. Susana Martinez.

Legislators sued, and a state district judge agreed that the state constitution requires the governor to explain her vetoes. The bills became law, but Martinez vowed to appeal the ruling.

"Now it's in the courts," Gomez said.

In a 30-day budget session, such as 2018, it's not possible to get a lot done, he said.

"The first week, you're not doing anything because you're waiting for bills to be printed," he said. "In the 30-day session, if you've got more than one committee, you're in trouble."

“We’ve been working on improving the sewer system in the Sunland Park area. We just broke ground for a \$12 million sewage treatment plant in the Santa Teresa area.”

It remains to be seen, he said, how much, if any, capital outlay money he'll be able to bring to the district after the 2018 legislative session. Last year, Martinez line-item vetoed 150 projects and \$8.2 million in capital outlay funds.

"I sort of feel like we'll get some capital outlay money this time," Gomez said. "Not a lot because there's just not much money."

Gomez, house Taxation and Revenue Committee designee, said the Legislature also could take up a Martinez administration proposal to reform the state's tax laws.

"Tax reform, we looked at it last year and there were too many questions," he said. "It needed further study."

He said he's not supporting any potential candidates to succeed Martinez when her second term is completed this year.

"You really can't in the primaries," he said. "I'll support the Democrat - whoever gets the nomination."



BEALQUIN "BILL" GOMEZ DISTRICT 34

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POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: 3

AGE: 72

BIRTHPLACE: Roswell, New Mexico

PROFESSION: Retired agricultural economist, New Mexico State University

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POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: 1

AGE: 38

BIRTHPLACE: Lake Arthur, New Mexico

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

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ANGELICA Rubio

Representative wants to focus on real change

BY TRACY ROY

Rep. Angelica Rubio won the House District 35 seat in 2016. The 2017 legislative session was her first, replacing Jeff Steinborn, who had represented the district since 2012. She heads into her second session hoping to eventually see government reform and public policy that focuses on the root causes of social issues.

“The biggest thing (I learned) certainly is that our foundation isn’t as solid as I’d hoped,” Rubio said. “I’m surprised we’ve gone this far without the changing the process.”

After spending the last 10 months observing, she thinks New Mexico is stuck on the idea that “we have to do things this way.”

She’d like to focus efforts on environmental and economic justice, government reform and transparency, education, and the needs of the vulnerable sects of the state’s population – children and seniors.

She said there is a fundamental problem with the session cycles, and that having staggered 30-day and 60-day sessions limits the amount of time to create policy.

“We propose legislation one year and by the next 60-day session, it is obsolete or not relevant anymore,” she said. “That is a big hindrance on our current system. Historically, it has been a challenge because there is never enough time to do certain things.”

She hopes that a combination of fresh ideas and the wisdom of long-serving colleagues will result in legislation that benefits the greater good.

“We have an ability to really understand our community and learn what our needs are down here. I think sometimes it does get lost in what’s happening up north. I always knew it was this way, but it is very apparent in the legislature,” Rubio said.

Rubio isn’t sure how productive the session will be outside of the budget. She said the governor’s call will likely focus on law and order, but believes the focus should be on root causes and social issues.

“We talk a lot about law and order, but nobody wants to ever touch what causes issues around crime,” she said. “In this case, a lot of it has to do with poverty and the fact that we are investing so much in things that do not serve our community.”

With a flat budget expected, Rubio isn’t expecting much in the way of capital outlay funding for projects, but noted that Doña Ana County has some infrastructure needs.

“Capital outlay is certainly an issue I’d like to tackle with reforming government, because it’s something that

only the state of New Mexico does,” she said.

She’d also like to ensure that each person has their constitutional rights met in the justice system.

“Last year, one of the biggest challenges was that our justice system was struggling with courts having to stop actually seeing people because there wasn’t any money for public defenders.”

Rubio believes the state’s structural processes have suffered from past decisions.

“Unfortunately, it’s always on the backs of our people, our community, so children are suffering because they have no access to quality education or even childcare. Even access to quality healthcare - same for our elderly communities.”

She worries about the elderly people in her district.

“I get frequent phone calls saying that they don’t have somebody taking care of them because they can’t afford it or because the costs are so high,” she said. “I think my district represents a statewide situation where there are so many issues facing our community, that not one thing can solve it.”

She wants city, county and state leaders to put aside politics and look to the future in terms of investing in quality of life for the state’s residents. With a new governor in 2019, Rubio looks to shift the mindset.

“My analysis is that we historically have operated from a place of scarcity – that there is never enough – from the avenue of public policy all the way down to our parenting,” Rubio said. “There’s just never enough. I don’t know if this is a New Mexican thing, or if it something our country is currently facing and has been facing. But I want to believe that we have enough for everyone, plus more, and that it’s just a matter of how we make the investments.”

She wants a governor willing to be a visionary and think through new ideas, someone with a multi-faceted approach to problem solving.

“I think we have so much potential as a state, so much talent in our state. Having young people as our biggest export is problematic. That should be our number 1 priority – how do we not only educate our kids here with the best quality of education, but how do offer opportunities for them to stay,” she said. “If there are things we can’t do at the state level, I don’t see why we can’t start from here.”

She wants to stress that her constituents may contact her as often as they need to, and if she can’t help, she’ll find a person or a resource that can.

NATHAN Small

Rep looks to strengthen economy and prevent cuts

BY MIKE COOK

State Rep. Nathan Small kept a campaign promise during the 2017 legislative session when he joined House and Senate colleagues from Las Cruces in successfully sponsoring legislation to create an independent ethics commission.

Small joined state Sen. Jeff Steinborn, a fellow Las Cruces Democrat, on the House-Senate conference committee to work through final details of the bill, which was finished about 30 hours before the session ended, Small said.

Both houses passed the bill, placing a constitutional amendment on the 2018 general election ballot to create a seven-member state ethics commission to “investigate, adjudicate and issue advisory opinions concerning civil violations of laws governing ethics, standards of conduct and reporting requirements as provided by law,” according to House Joint Resolution 8.

It would investigate alleged violations by state officials, executive- and legislative-branch state employees, candidates, lobbyists, government contractors and others.

If passed, the amendment will create a more ethical, transparent state government, Small said, reaching from “the doors of District 36 to the halls of the New Mexico Legislature.”

The legislature ran out of time before it could address the “revolving door” that allows a former state legislator to become a paid lobbyist with no time in between, he said.

But, the constitutional amendment is a big foundational step that offers momentum, Small said.

Small said he will work hard to get the amendment passed next November, and thinks it will have strong support statewide.

At age 35, Small already has nine years of experience as an elected official.

He served eight years on the Las Cruces City Council before being elected to the New Mexico House in 2016, defeating incumbent Andy Nuñez.

Small said he will be a candidate for re-election in 2018.

Priorities during the 2018 session, Small

said, will include strengthening the state’s economy, creating jobs and preventing “further destructive cuts in education, health care and other parts of our economy.”

“We can’t afford some of the things that have happened in the past,” he said, including Gov. Susana Martinez’s veto of the higher-education funding bill in 2017 and her “still very hurtful, harmful legacy” of forcing behavioral health providers to leave the state in 2013.

The state also must keep robust conversations about early childhood education alive, he said.

The higher-education veto and the governor’s support for changes in public education science standards, Small said, do not benefit New Mexicans.

The state, Small said, would do well to see health care as a necessity for New Mexicans.

In House District 36, which includes part of Las Cruces and Hatch, Small said he wants to explore new funding sources for value-added agriculture.

Renewable energy is part of building a stronger state economy, Small said, because energy costs impact everything. A good starting point, he said, would be making state-owned buildings more energy efficient.

Even if the topic doesn’t come up in 2018, he believes it will play a large role in the future.

A countywide road maintenance agreement is also very important, Small said.

Small said he will also support economic development opportunities in Santa Teresa, which he feels link to District 36 and the rest of the state and could put southern New Mexico in a leadership position.

Small said he wants to see more acres in the county planted with chile as well as stronger support for the Hatch Chile brand known worldwide.

If capital outlay funds are available in 2018, Small said priorities should include flood control in the northern part of Doña Ana County and on Las Cruces’ East Mesa, along with other county infrastructure needs.

Legislators should prioritize capital outlay money to make large improvements that help the most number of people, he said.



NATHAN SMALL DISTRICT 36

COUNTIES SERVED: Doña Ana

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: 1

AGE: 35

BIRTHPLACE: Albuquerque, New Mexico

PROFESSION: Conservationist

EDUCATION: Bachelor’s degrees in English and philosophy from the College of Wooster in Wooster, Ohio

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE: Las Cruces City Council, 2007-15

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JOANNE Ferrary

Women's health, limits on school testing days are priorities

BY MIKE COOK

A high priority for State Rep. Joanne Ferrary, D-Doña Ana, in the 2018 session of the state legislature will be getting New Mexico into a compact that will allow cross-state certification of nurses to help address the state's nursing deficit, especially in border areas.

"We have a need to be a part of that," said Ferrary, who said state Sen. Gay G. Kernan, R-Chaves, Eddy and Lea, will carry the bill in the Senate, while she will sponsor it in the House.

Ferrary was among three Democrats who took Doña Ana County state House of Representatives seats held by Republicans in the 2016 general election. In her third try, Ferrary defeated incumbent Republican State Rep. Terry McMillian in the House District 37 race.

Ferrary said she will be a candidate for reelection to House District 37 in 2018.

Ferrary said she also hopes to reintroduce the DWI blood test requirements bills she proposed in 2017 to bring the state into compliance with federal regulations. The session adjourned before the bill could be heard in the Senate.

And, she will again press for a limit to statewide school testing days, a bill she co-sponsored in 2017 that was vetoed by Gov. Susana Martinez.

Ferrary said women's health issues will also be high on her agenda for the 2018 session, and she also wants the legislature to consider a tax on animal products imported into the state to help fund spay and neuter clinics. That funding, she said, should be tied to New Mexico Board of Veterinary Medicine oversight of animal shelters.

"We can't ignore some of the critical issues that could make a difference if there's any chance we could work with the current administration to get them passed," Ferrary said.

Ferrary said there may be no capital outlay funds available for legislators to spend on local projects again in 2018. But, if there is money, she will work with other local legislators to determine priorities that will fund programs and projects for children, for animals, for jobs.

"All of these things are so central for making things better for southern New Mexico," Ferrary said.

It will also be important during the 2018 session to lay groundwork for 2019, she said, when the state will have a new governor.

"We need a governor who will be a great leader," Ferrary said. "We need someone who understands the critical issues that will make a difference for New Mexico. We need someone who sees the big picture."

New Mexico, Ferrary said, needs to stop "settling for not being the best, for not having happier, healthier families and communities."

Ferrary is a member of three standing state House of Representatives committees: Health and Human Services, Energy, Environment and Natural Resources and Enrolling and Engrossing. She also serves as vice chair of the House interim Disabilities Concerns Subcommittee, and is a member of five other interim committees, including the Legislative Education Study Committee.

JOANNE FERRARY DISTRICT 37

COUNTIES SERVED: Doña Ana

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: 1

AGE: 64

BIRTHPLACE: Canton, Ohio

PROFESSION: Retired

EDUCATION: Bachelor's degree in individualized studies and master's degree in business administration, New Mexico State University

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE: None

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REBECCA Dow

Optimism, opportunity guide second-year representative

BY RICHARD COLTHARP

Everyone tells Rebecca Dow the 2017 legislative session was a crazy one. Since it was her first one, she doesn't have another frame of reference.

"I've only experienced one 60-day session, and it was pretty difficult," Dow said. "But I'm optimistic, because I get to represent my constituents 365 days a year. Lots of things can be improved outside of the session."

Dow believes the focus of the short session should be lasered on the essentials.

"In years of feast, we grow government more than necessary," she said. "Now that we're in a year of famine, the priorities have got to be public safety, education, basic infrastructure and early childhood and families."

Her district needs economic development, a stronger education system and a sustaining higher education system, she said.

Philosophy by Geography

Each of the counties has issues that represent some of Dow's philosophies.

HIDALGO COUNTY: Tiny Virden sits a half mile from Duncan, Arizona. When people move into a residence, it must be inspected, but only by New Mexico inspectors – despite ample availability in Duncan. Residents have waited up to three months for New Mexico inspectors to arrive, having to run their household on propane and flashlights.

"Overburdensome regulations prevent small businesses from growing, or even starting," Dow said. "And in the case of Virden, the barriers make it even hard for people to live their day-to-day lives."

GRANT COUNTY: "The restoration of Fort Bayard is a historical and economic opportunity," Dow said of the historical military and medical facility founded in 1866 at what is now Santa Clara in Grant County.

A proposed use includes preserving parts of the facility as a museum, and restore other parts for current day use, such as an assisted living center and a five-star restaurant.

"A lot of groups want to see Fort Bayard restored and operational, and a good way to do it is through public private partnerships," Dow said. "A perfect example is Taos Ski Valley, which built needed roads and broadband. Now the city will be paying them back through bonds."

SIERRA COUNTY: In the desert, no commodity is more precious than water.

"We've done a lot of watershed restoration in the northern part of the state, but not the south," Dow said. "We need to get more engaged and promote it. It would benefit all of District 38. With forest restoration, thinning the forest to increase the watershed will help to avoid catastrophic fires. The New Mexico Nature Conservatory and the Sierra Club support this. And there are some unusual allies supporting watershed restoration and thinning the forest."

"It is a bipartisan issue and has economic impact on multiple levels: tourism, hunting, fishing, hiking, avoiding catastrophic fires. And if we're able to generate a marketable byproduct, all the better."

Dow and other officials in Sierra County are working on a project that would create a minimum pool of water in Elephant Butte Reservoir.

"The lower the lake gets, the higher the evaporation rate," Dow said of the water source that has a \$20 million economic impact on New Mexico from fishing alone. "87 percent of the State Parks' budget comes from Elephant Butte. This year we had 1 million visits, historically it's been as many as 2 million."

The 30-day session and beyond

"I hope we get down to business. I'm hopeful we can put aside partisan politics," Dow said.

She sees hope in her own community of Truth or Consequences.

"The State Veterans Home has expanded with a beautiful new building," she said. "There's an algae farm opening that will bring a couple dozen jobs. The new brewery (T or C Brewing Co.) has created an evening and weekend life in downtown that has stimulated a new sense of things in the community."

Sierra is home to Spaceport America. Dow believes there is great opportunity there, as well as other benefits.

"We're full of copper, silver, gold, a forest with the largest elk and wildlife and the largest lake in the state. And yet we're the second poorest county in the state."

In that disconnect between what is and what isn't, Dow sees opportunity. "That's why I ran."



REBECCA DOW DISTRICT 38

COUNTIES SERVED: Grant, Sierra, Hidalgo

POLITICAL PARTY: Republican

YEARS IN OFFICE: 1

AGE: 44

BIRTHPLACE: Truth or Consequences

PROFESSION: Early childhood educator, Founder and CEO, AppleTree Educational Center, Truth or Consequences

EDUCATION: Bachelor's in business administration, Oral Roberts University; associate's in early childhood education, Tulsa Community College

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE: None

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RODOLPHO "RUDY" Martinez

Increasing reserves, balancing budget
focus of session

BY MICHAEL SCANLON

Rep. Rodolpho "Rudy" Martinez has a lot on his mind, looking ahead to the 2018 Legislature: the state budget, health care, jobs for New Mexico, broadband internet infrastructure, services for seniors, alternative energy and the state's perennial need for more water.

He's also quick to acknowledge all those things won't get done in a 30-day budget session.

"What this session is supposed to be about is the budget," he said. "It all depends on what the governor puts on the call. We need to come up with a balanced budget. I haven't received the updated numbers yet, but certainly, increasing our reserves is going to be a top priority."

The risk management company Moody's Analytics warned that New Mexico's dangerously low budget reserves – which it estimated at 1.1 percent of the state budget – are too meager to see the state through a recession that could cause revenues to fall and Medicaid spending to increase. Reserves provide a cushion for unexpectedly lower revenue or higher expenses. The company said reserves should be in the range of 10 percent for the state to weather a moderate recession.

State revenues are heavily dependent on taxes levied on oil and gas production in the state. Energy prices have been low in recent years, far below the peak prices before the 2007 recession.

"We need to fund education, health care and early childhood education," Martinez said, adding that legislators likely will consider using money in the state's permanent school fund, something that also was considered during last year's session.

Two of the state's permanent funds – Land Grant Permanent Fund and Severance Tax Permanent Fund – together are worth about \$20 billion, and returns on their investments contributed nearly \$900 million to state revenues last year.

"I think that's something that will be considered this year," he said.

Martinez said he's concerned about a proposal by the state Health and Human

Services Department to shore up Medicaid funding by making low-income New Mexicans – but those who are above the federal poverty line – pay premiums for their coverage and co-pays for office visits and prescription drugs.

"That could be a big impact on our low-income families," he said.

In addition to Medicaid, the federal and state program that provides health care coverage for more than 40 percent of New Mexicans, Martinez wants to be sure military veterans have better access to behavioral health care.

He also will look for opportunities to promote broadband internet access.

"I think we need to support broadband statewide so our businesses as well as individuals have access to internet resources," Martinez said. "Some of our smaller communities cannot really grow without access to broadband."

He's also concerned about the well-being of older New Mexicans.

"We need to see where we can increase the funding that goes to senior services," he said. "We have a lot of seniors who are in the lower-income bracket, and we need to make sure they have food and health care."

Martinez, who serves on the House Water and Natural Resources Interim Committee, thinks there are opportunities to help the state meet its future water needs.

"As far back as I can remember, there's been a concern about how we conserve water," Martinez, a native New Mexican, said, adding that there might be opportunities for water legislation. "It could be a variety of things, such as funding ongoing research at the Water Resources Research institute at New Mexico State University. We'll have to see what the budget looks like."

Martinez also said he's looking forward to seeing who might be next to seek the governor's office in New Mexico, when Gov. Susana Martinez's second term is up this year.

"We'll see who comes out of the primary," he said. "It would be a good thing to have a governor who wants to work with the House and Senate to move New Mexico forward."

RODOLPHO "RUDY" MARTINEZ DISTRICT 39

COUNTIES SERVED: Doña Ana, Grant, Sierra

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: 2

AGE: 69

BIRTHPLACE: Santa Rita, New Mexico

PROFESSION: Employed by Chino Mines for 33 years. New Mexico licensed journeyman and member of IBEW Local 611

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

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE: State representative, District 39, 2007-2014; mayor and councilor in Bayard, N.M.; chairman, Grant County Commission

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GAIL Armstrong

Rural issues are New Mexico's issues

BY RICHARD COLTHARP

Gail Armstrong knows a thing or two about wrangling. She grew up on a ranch.

She and her husband, Dale, have four grown children — and, now, nine grandchildren.

They started a business when she was 19 and he was 21. That company, now known as TLC Plumbing, has more than 530 employees 30 years later.

If all that wasn't enough, she started working in the Roundhouse in 2015, as liaison for then-Speaker of the House Don Tripp. Some would say she jumped from the frying pan into the fire when she was appointed to Tripp's District 49 State Representative seat last year after his retirement. To Armstrong, however, it's another wrangling duty.

"I'm loving it," Armstrong said of the work she's doing in Santa Fe. "I'm energized by the process."

Armstrong's geographically massive, but lightly populated, District 49 encompasses all of Catron County, almost all of Socorro County and a segment of Valencia County.

"I have the largest district with the least amount of people," Armstrong said. "Our top priorities will always be water, farming and ranching, education and public safety, and, of course, economic development."

When it comes to water, one of the biggest concerns for Armstrong and many others is the San Agustin Plains issue in Catron County.

In a fight that's been going on for a decade, Armstrong said, a landowner wants to drill 57 wells 2,500 feet deep, pipe the water out and sell it. The owner has had two applications rejected, she said, but continues to seek approval.

The Very Large Array sits atop the Plains, and many have expressed concern removing the water could greatly damage the VLA's functions. Some say the heavy telescopes could even collapse if the land were unsteadied by drastic underground water removal.

Armstrong carried legislation last session to tighten the laws so one person could not make such a large impact on so many. The state engineer will have the final say.

"I personally think in New Mexico, this is going to be a huge issue, probably bigger than oil and gas," Armstrong said, adding that if such a precedent were set, it could have far-reaching effects.

"Water in New Mexico is a challenge anyway," she said. "We live in the desert."

On a different note, Armstrong said the new rodeo and soccer sports complex in Socorro

has been a great success bringing events and economic impact.

Another economic driver is the ongoing First Responder training at New Mexico Firefighters Training Academy.

"They had allocated \$2 million for a new burn building. They swept that last year," Armstrong said. "I had an amendment to try to keep it, but we really need that. We get people from all over the country that come for this training, and that's a lot of our economic development in Socorro. They fill the hotels and restaurants."

With the 30-day session focusing primarily on the budget, Armstrong said perhaps the most critical budget item is education.

With money as tight as it's been the past few years, there are always questions with capital outlay projects.

Armstrong said she will present her district's priority projects, which include infrastructure in Magdalena, where all the water lines need replacing. She's also seeking funding for all of the senior centers in Socorro County.

Along with fellow representative Rebecca Dow, Armstrong is working on an analysis of senior center allocations in the state.

Statewide, New Mexico is poised for a change in 2018, with all of the representative seats up for reelection and the race for a new governor.

"We are the perfect climate, we have lots of land and open space," Armstrong said. "We really should be doing better than we are. I'm hoping that under new leadership we can really expand on how great the state of New Mexico really is. Not that Gov. (Susana) Martinez didn't try to do that, but she hit a lot of barriers."

In a new leader, Armstrong said she would like to see someone with a business background.

"Someone who has made a payroll, created a business, and knows what it takes to run a state," she said. "Between regulation and barriers put up, we're having a hard time getting companies to start up in New Mexico or to come to New Mexico."

"I also think that with the leadership on the federal level, it's going to be a real interesting election," Armstrong said. "People are fed up with both parties, including myself. We need to stop worrying about Democrat or Republican, and let's just do what's right for New Mexico."

In other words, Armstrong is ready to put her wrangling skills to use.



GAIL ARMSTRONG DISTRICT 49

COUNTIES SERVED: Catron, Socorro, Valencia

POLITICAL PARTY: Republican

YEARS IN OFFICE: 1

AGE: 51

BIRTHPLACE: Socorro, New Mexico

PROFESSION: Rancher and small business owner

EDUCATION: Quemado High School

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE: Magdalena School Board, 10 years

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YVETTE Herrell

Outside of budget, Herrell hopes to focus on priorities

BY ELVA K. ÖSTERREICH

Rep. Yvette Herrell, Dist. 51, said the budget is the priority for the 2018 legislative session.

“We are all concerned about the budget,” she said. “We’ve really taken a lot of money from wherever we could get it. We’ve seen a slight uptick in gas and oil prices, but we really haven’t been able to see the influence of that yet. That will come in time.”

Herrell said she hopes to see tax reform and right-to-work legislation addressed during the session as well.

“I hope we can work collectively as a legislative body to get a good budget passed,” Herrell said. “There are bills that would be helpful to all the communities. I do think in an election year we can see working across the aisle for the state. Without that, it’s the state that loses out. We have got to get over those lines in the sand.”

Herrell would like to see legislators look at return-to-work policies for police officers. Herrell said legislation would allow retired officers to continue working without losing their pensions.

“It’s huge for New Mexico, but we haven’t been able to get that done,” she said. “You have men and women who have served the state police for many years, and maybe want to move to Cloudcroft and work part-time. That’s been really important to some of our sheriff’s deputies here.”

She also wants to see a retirement-pay exemption for veterans, which could draw more of them to New Mexico.

Herrell is hopeful that the governor’s call for this session, particularly since it is the governor’s last, includes agenda items outside of the budget.

“This could be really beneficial,” she said. “It could be good for the state of New Mexico to not wait for next year, for the 60-day session.”

District concerns are the same as they always are, she said. They need to continue working on economic development and creating jobs.

“We are all concentrating on meeting our housing needs and the education piece,” she said. “We want to make sure that we’re doing everything we can to ensure that the mission of the F-16s is a permanent mission here.”

Convincing the Air Force to keep the F-16s in the county permanently means maintaining a qualified workforce, she said. The county needs to work with the school system and higher

education so students can work on dual-credit courses that complement projects at Holloman Air Force Base.

Herrell identified a few critical budget items: education, prison funding, fully funding capital outlay projects.

While she feels New Mexico schools are funded at an equivalent rate to the median of other states, money should be used to provide for teachers.

“If I was able to pick a budget item that I could really wave as a banner, I would say let’s ensure the schools have enough in their budgets to fill the vacancies we have in our school districts,” she said. “There are a ton of vacancies in our school districts and, to me, they ought to be priority. It’s hard on the kids with different substitutes coming in and out. We could be more competitive in salaries. It’s hard to recruit and retain instructors in the classroom.”

We must ensure we are funding the state corrections department, she said, citing many needs in state-funded prisons, such as medication.

The most important thing in terms of capital outlay funding right now, Herrell said, is getting projects fully funded.

“I don’t think any of the legislators right now are interested in partially funding projects,” she said. “We want to make sure it’s a project we can complete from start to finish with those dollars.”

For Herrell, everything is at stake with the governor’s election coming up in 2018.

“We need somebody with the leadership skills and capability because I fear that the entire business environment as a whole will diminish,” she said.

Herrell said the state needs someone who can negotiate and help support industry, and diversify from just gas and oil.

“We need to take a hard look at the regulatory environment and make New Mexico more appealing in ways that are really meaningful,” she said. “If we don’t get Steve Pearce in, we are going to see things go into a very progressive environment.”

The people of the state have more in common than not, Herrell said. But if Pearce does not win, social issues will take the front and center in New Mexico.

“That would be very damaging to us as a state,” she said.

YVETTE HERRELL, DISTRICT 51

COUNTIES SERVED: Otero County

POLITICAL PARTY: Republican

YEARS IN OFFICE: 7

AGE: 53

BIRTHPLACE: Ruidoso, New Mexico

PROFESSION: Self-employed in real estate

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

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:

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

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DOREEN Gallegos

Rep looks to learn more about proposed tax reform

BY MICHAEL SCANLON

Armed with a House leadership position and a dose of fiscal optimism, Rep. Doreen Gallegos hasn't given up hope for capital outlay money to fund some infrastructure projects in rural parts of her district.

"We need to invest there," said Gallegos, whose district includes the south valley communities of Vado, Berino and Anthony, N.M. "People get landlocked there if it gets flooded. There are some areas that don't have clean drinking water."

Despite a looming battle with Gov. Susana Martinez over spending and a skeletal budget proposal, Gallegos plans to seek funding for some projects.

"All those areas do have problems with infrastructure," she said, adding that her job as House majority whip has put her in a stronger position to advocate for improvements.

"I hope there is some money available," she said. "And if there is, I will be advocating for the needs in that area."

Although they might not agree on specific ideas, Gallegos said she's eager to discuss Martinez's proposals for state tax reform.

"We're going to really need to work on taxes to help working families," she said. "People with middle-class incomes and people in that tax bracket are the ones who need help. We need to make sure they don't carry that tax burden for the rich."

Gallegos also has her sights set on public education.

"We're spending a lot of money on education K-12. We need to look at how that money is being spent," she said, adding that New Mexico's high school graduates too often end up leaving the state to launch their careers.

Another topic sure to generate much discussion – and likely, contention – will be a state proposal to revamp Medicaid, the state-federal program that provides health insurance to more than 40 percent of New Mexicans.

The Martinez administration is eyeing a

plan to implement premiums and co-pays for office visits and prescription medications for people whose incomes are above the federal poverty line. New Mexico expanded Medicaid eligibility under the federal Affordable Care Act, and now the federal government is talking about slashing its contributions to the program.

"When they talk about that, so far the proposals have been in the minimal range," Gallegos said. "There's got to be a balancing act."

She wouldn't commit to supporting or opposing the changes until she sees what is actually proposed.

"When we start talking about \$20 or \$30, some people might not be able to get medication for their children," she said. "To me, that's not acceptable."

The 2018 legislative session is the final one for Martinez, who has butted heads with Democratic majorities in both houses of the Legislature since taking office. Martinez will be in the final year of her second four-year term, and cannot seek re-election in 2018.

Gallegos said having a new governor to work with will be "like a breath of fresh air."

"As far as having a true plan to make some changes to benefit New Mexicans, it's not out there," Gallegos said of Martinez's legislative agenda. "I thought she would do more for children. She is starving every government agency. She has not been someone who is easy to work with."

"When you're not giving teachers what they need, that's not governing," she said. "The people of New Mexico deserve better."

Gallegos said she's not supporting any particular candidate for governor.

"I'm eager to work with whoever gets in office to get back on the right path," Gallegos said. "We want someone who is able to work with the House and the Senate for the benefit of the people of New Mexico. Until then, it's a stalemate."



DOREEN GALLEGOS DISTRICT 52

COUNTIES SERVED: Doña Ana

POLITICAL PARTY: Democrat

YEARS IN OFFICE: 5

AGE: 48

BIRTHPLACE: El Paso

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

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

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

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**RICKY "RICK"
LITTLE,
DISTRICT 53**

COUNTIES SERVED: Doña Ana, Otero

POLITICAL PARTY: Republican

YEARS IN OFFICE: 5

AGE: 62

BIRTHPLACE: Fort Bliss, Texas

PROFESSION: Structural mover, general contractor, small business owner

EDUCATION: Howard Payne University at El Paso

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE: None

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RICK
Little

Rep has concerns over tax reform, budget and infrastructure needs

BY ELVA K. ÖSTERREICH

Rep. Rick Little said the 2018 short session is mainly about money. He said he would like to see tax reform in the works.

"I would like to see us at least balance the budget," he said. "We are mandated; we have to balance it. I think it would help the people of New Mexico if we get tax reform done this session. We are one of the last states that has gross receipts tax and pyramiding. I'm for a flat tax. Incentives and rebates have gotten out of control."

Little said the budget did not get quite balanced last session and that is going to be the priority in 2018. Unless the governor puts other items on her call, the budget is all that will be addressed, he said.

His biggest concern for his district is infrastructure. There is a lot of rural area covered from the East Mesa in Las Cruces to Chaparral and southern Otero County.

In Chaparral, a third of the sewer system is completed, and the rest needs to be addressed.

"Flood control, water drainage and East Mesa roads are a public safety issue for me," Little said. When there is flooding on the roads, help can't get in. That's something that we are working on with the county now."

There are also big drainage issues in the Alamogordo Boles Acres area that create public safety issues as well, he said.

Little believes the system of distributing capital outlay dollars is wrong. He feels state priorities must be looked at rather than individuals' districts. When there are human safety issues in some communities and other areas are using those dollars for "doggie poopoo bags" and "pretty walking paths," there is a problem.

"We need to look at priorities in the state," he said. "When you need to fix infrastructure just to live, I think we need to work with the basics first. In Chaparral, we are trying to get the sewer system fixed. We need to find the money somewhere to get the rest of the sewage system done. Things are just as critical in Otero and Doña Ana counties."

From his seat on the House Education

Committee, Little said he is not sure pouring more money into education is the answer.

"We are trying to change the system up," he said. "We are looking at what the top 10 countries in the world (in education) are doing."

Only 30 percent of New Mexico's children are going to college, but the system has a goal of 95 percent, he said. As a result, Little said the balance is off.

"There is fault on all sides," he said. "That's one of the things the Education Committee is working on. It just seems we couldn't get both sides together."

In the area of capital outlay, Little said each representative and senator funds whatever they want in their own district but he would like to see it done differently.

"I would take all the capital outlay and put it in roads at least for one time," Little said. "We are 17 percent debt service (the money the state borrowed from the federal government and still has to pay back). With the \$886 million transportation budget, I will have a bill in to take vehicle excise tax and put it straight into roads. The Railrunner alone is close to \$240 million debt service."

Looking forward to the 2018 election of a governor, Little said the state is already too much in debt to elect Michelle Lujan Grisham. Steve Pearce is a business man and, hopefully, can turn things around.

"We have been making some economic development progress, but we could make more," he said. "We need business."

Little also is a proponent of smaller government. He would like to see departments combined. For example, he said tourism should be under economic development and all the health-related departments should be together.

"I think what we need to be doing is the betterment for the majority of the people of New Mexico," he said. "We have got to make some changes to make those differences happen. We have a lot of poverty. We need more folks to work and be as productive as they can."

JAMES Townsend

Government efficiency, job creation are critical to health of the state

BY ELVA K. ÖSTERREICH

For Sen. James Townsend, District 54, top legislative session priorities include government effectiveness, including spending and operations for both frequency and implementation.

“New Mexico has a prevailing wage law which increases the cost of building roads and buildings,” he said. “I would like to see us repeal the prevailing wage law and reduce capital costs across the board.”

The prevailing wage law, Townsend said, keeps the government from getting competitive bids from contractors because it requires the employers to pay union wages plus four percent, and this prevents the system from allowing competitive forces to work.

“We could save 10 to 15 percent if we competitize building projects,” he said.

The biggest concern in his district, Townsend said, is to allow free enterprise to work.

“We need lots of jobs, lots of things for people to do,” he said.

Townsend is in favor of curbing the influx of the federal government. For example, he said, it takes almost a year to get permission to drill a well for oil or gas on BLM property.

If you are on the state property, it takes only a couple of weeks,” he said. “Getting permitting processes streamlined is really important. Fundamental rights are very important; people should be able to have a job, work within rules and have regulations that are not overbearing, and they should be able to do expeditiously.”

Townsend said the session will complete the budget.

“I am convinced we will get that done,” he said. “This is the short session and, by law, proscribed to be where we deal with budget and taxes. I think we will get a lot of those done.”

Townsend said he doesn’t expect there to be as much capital outlay money available as communities are used to having.

He said there are several projects in his district that have been completed now, including major projects with Cloudcroft

Municipal Schools, at the higher education campuses and the senior center in High Rolls. His district includes Artesia, Carlsbad to the state line, to the edges of Tularosa and Alamogordo.

For the future leadership of the state, Townsend said New Mexico needs someone who will focus on efficiency.

“We need leadership that will work with the other two branches of government,” he said. “We need leadership that will cause our state to be more efficient, grow and for jobs to be created. Probably the most important thing we need is good-paying jobs.”

Because of New Mexico’s diversity, Townsend believes more of the decisions should be made by local school boards and said it’s hard for the Public Education Department to enforce the same rules in small versus large communities.

“Charter school funding needs to be revisited,” he said. “Small school funding needs to be bolstered. Small rural schools do not have the ability to be as efficient, to be as populated, as the big-town schools.”

Overall Townsend said he thinks the most important thing for the state right now is the creation of jobs and a platform that causes companies to grow and prosper. He would require agencies to revisit their regulations, be protective of the environment and people while getting decisions out quickly, being transparent to business principles.

“I think it’s gotten worse over the last few administrations,” he said. “We have made some poor choices. Built projects have been very costly and did not expand like we thought they would. Those burdens have weighed heavily on our infrastructure. I think our failure to address right-to-work and our failure to address prevailing wage laws are also indicative to that problem.

“We have to address jobs. You can’t force opportunity, you have to instill opportunities, so business can grow.”



JAMES TOWNSEND DISTRICT 54

COUNTIES SERVED: Chaves, Eddy, Otero

POLITICAL PARTY: Republican

YEARS IN OFFICE: 3

AGE: 62

BIRTHPLACE: Carlsbad, New Mexico

PROFESSION: Retired senior vice president of Holly Corporation

EDUCATION: New Mexico State University

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:

Lobbied in Santa Fe and Washington, D.C. for 15 years

CONTACT INFORMATION

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EMAIL: townsend@pvt.nm.net



ZACHARY COOK DISTRICT 56

COUNTIES SERVED: Lincoln, Otero

POLITICAL PARTY: Republican

YEARS IN OFFICE: 9

AGE: 45

BIRTHPLACE: Denver, Colorado

PROFESSION: Attorney

EDUCATION: Bachelor's degree in English and Spanish, University of New Mexico; master's degree in international management, Thunderbird School of Global Management; juris doctorate, University of New Mexico

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE: None

CONTACT INFORMATION

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ZACHARY Cook

Fiscal challenges, education to shape limited session

BY MARTY RACINE

Rep. Zachary Cook epitomizes the political demographics of his district, which includes most of Lincoln County and the northern tier of Otero County.

Both are solidly Republican, with ranching and tourism the dominant industries. The two largest cities, Ruidoso and Alamogordo, are vastly different in personality, and their economies are shaped by differing forces, but they are equally conservative.

Entering his 10th season in the Legislature, Cook knows that the 2018 session is mandated to be limited to a handful of actions.

“During 30-day sessions, legislators may only present bills relating to the state’s budget, taxation, bills vetoed in the prior session, or policy proposals the governor chooses to place on the legislative agenda,” he said.

The budget will receive plenty of attention, both from the cost-saving and revenue-generating aspects. And the challenges are plenty.

“We will spend a significant amount of time developing the state’s budget,” Cook said. “While I expect a slight increase in state revenues this year, it will likely not be enough to sustain the projected growth in Medicaid or address pressing concerns such as reducing crime, protecting New Mexico’s children, and improving education.

“As a result, I anticipate some legislators will propose tax increases in addition to priority budgeting and sweeps of capital outlay dollars or other nonrecurring funds. Instead of raising taxes, I would like to see our state generate additional revenues through economic development,” he said.

Cook wants to enhance tools such as the Local Economic Development Act and the Jobs Training Incentive Program, which, he

said can develop new industries and help existing businesses grow.

Mirroring the tax reform movement in Washington, D.C., the representative also wants to simplify the state’s tax code.

“I support comprehensive tax reform to make New Mexico’s taxes simple and fair for everyone,” he said.

Cook says he hasn’t yet seen the agenda from the office of Gov. Susana Martinez, but he suspects that, “as crime continues to plague our state’s largest cities, she will request several pieces of legislation aimed

at stopping the criminal justice revolving door for repeat offenders.

“These bills may include enhanced penalties for felons in possession of firearms and an overhaul of the state’s ‘three strikes’ law. We will work to provide more financial support for law enforcement, too.”

Cook is a member of the Courts, Corrections & Justice Committee and the Criminal Justice

Reform Subcommittee. In the 2016 regular session he sponsored HB 261, the “Additional Court Funding” bill.

New Mexico’s education system will also receive top billing in Santa Fe, Cook said. As with the budget, there are no easy fixes, and there will no doubt be contentious debate on funding priorities.

“We will continue efforts to improve our education system,” Cook said. “Spending for K-12 education is at an all-time high, yet outcomes are still not where we would like them to be. We will continue to invest in early childhood education programs such as pre-K education and K-3 Plus, as well as provide targeted assistance for struggling students and schools.”

“ I support comprehensive tax reform to make New Mexico’s taxes simple and fair for everyone. ”

GREGORY Nibert

Rep hopes to secure funds for district's municipalities

BY MARTY RACINE

Heading into his second year in the House of Representatives, Greg Nibert knows that important issues facing his district will not get an airing during 2018's short session unless they are put on the call by Gov. Susana Martinez.

"I am working with John Sugg, Twelfth Judicial District Attorney (Otero and Lincoln counties), and Dianna Luce, Fifth Judicial District Attorney (Chaves, Eddy and Lea counties), to encourage the governor to place on the call and allow the introduction of legislation to deal with the revolving criminal door created by the recent constitutional amendment providing for the release of persons arrested for a crime without posting a bond," Nibert said.

"As we see ... every day, people are released by the courts and then immediately return to their criminal activity without any additional consequences," he said. "District attorneys want to have some tools to deal with the repetitive criminal behavior of those who are taking advantage of their release from custody pending their trial. I want to keep our streets safe and to provide real consequences for those in our society who steal from, hurt or kill people in our communities."

Nibert sits on the House Judiciary Committee.

On the fiscal front, Nibert hopes to find money for his district's municipalities.

"Carrizozo has a real ongoing issue with clean drinking water," Nibert said. "The state has been trucking potable water into the community, but that cannot be a permanent situation. We must allocate resources to secure adequate clean potable water resources for the citizens of Carrizozo."

To the east, Hondo also has a water problem, said Nibert, a member of the House Water & Natural Resources Committee.

"The entire system needs to be replaced, from the storage tank to the lines to the

Hondo schools. We have been working on grants to finance this project."

Corona, in the far northern part of Lincoln County, is facing a "potential onslaught of construction workers moving to the community temporarily," to work on several projects, Nibert said. "With no grocery store and limited housing, the community resources will be stretched."

Corona construction projects involve major transmission lines and a large wind-energy facility.

Also in Corona, the Department of Transportation is currently meeting with citizens regarding additional work on U.S. Highway 54.

In Capitan, a new high school building was completed in 2016, but money is needed to "either refurbish or tear down the old classrooms and buildings that are no longer used and serviceable," Nibert said.

In the revived ghost town of White Oaks, Lincoln County has need for a new fire station, Nibert said.

In the historic town of Lincoln, the news is good.

"We just saw the completion of a sidewalk project that had been in the planning stage for the past several years," Nibert said. "The State Department of Transportation is working with the local community and the county commission wanted the sidewalks to complement the historic nature of Lincoln and provide a safe surface for the many visitors who come to Lincoln."

"The project consisted of installing sidewalks on both sides of U.S. 380 in the historic district that would conform to the history of the town and complement the buildings, he said. The finished project looks like dirt paths, but is built with a new product that imparts the correct look and is an all-weather surface."



GREGORY NIBERT DISTRICT 59

COUNTIES SERVED: Chaves, Lincoln

POLITICAL PARTY: Republican

YEARS IN OFFICE: 1

AGE: 60

BIRTHPLACE: Roswell, New Mexico

PROFESSION: Attorney, specializing in oil and gas law

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

OTHER POLITICAL EXPERIENCE: Former Chaves County Commissioner, eight years; Former chair of the Chaves County Republican Party

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Catron

Maintaining roads, airport work are county priorities

BY ELVA K. ÖSTERREICH

Catron County is the largest county in New Mexico, covering 70,000 square miles. It is also, however, a county with a low population, a little more than 3,500 people. The county is basically a single spread out community, said County Manager Kate Fletcher.

"Everybody knows one another," she said. "When the community needs to unite, everybody unites."

One of the most pressing current concerns, she said, is maintaining the county's 900-plus miles of dirt roads.

"We lost our SRS (Secure Rural Schools) funding," Fletcher said. "We used \$1.2 million of that to maintain our roads. Now, we are holding our breath."

Catron County relies on tourism and hunting as its main sources of income, she said. There are lots of hiking and wildland exploration available.

"Hunting is the big thing," she said.

There are two entities for star gazing in the county, the Cosmic Campground near Glenwood and Rising Stars in Pie Town. In fact, Fletcher said, Catron County is known for some of the best stargazing opportunities in the country.

The county has 12 volunteer fire stations and eight EMS locations. All emergency services in Catron County are voluntary except the sheriff's department.

Fletcher said the county has two schools, both kindergarten through 12th grade, in Re-

serve and Quemado; and one satellite school house in Datil.

Recently, the county's airport is adding a fuel system to encourage more pilots to make the area a destination. Currently, the closest fuel is sold at the Grant County airport in Silver City, more than 50 nautical miles away.

The airport recently added an automated weather observation station. The changes, Fletcher said, are to encourage more sportsmen to visit the county and to support the county's emergency services. The U.S. armed services also use the airport during annual training exercises, as well as the New Mexico National Guard.

They are also hoping to provide aircraft storage (hangar space) and facilities such as restrooms, utilities and shelter for pilots in the future.

With capital outlay dollars, the county is looking for a new Pie Town community center and renovation of the county courthouse in Reserve with new tile and carpet. Also planned is a new road to Mineral Creek.

"We're very busy," Fletcher said.

Three senior centers in the county are run by the New Mexico Commission on Aging.

To save on expenses, in May 2017 Catron County renovated its trash services, transmuting eight trash locations to four convenience centers and making the system support itself rather than having the county paying for the collection, she said.

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Catron County legislative priorities for 2018 are the same as the official priorities named by the New Mexico Association of Counties:

- Forfeiture Act Reform
- Protecting County Funding of Healthcare
- Tax Reform
- Local Election Act which would align the dates for local, nonpartisan elections with taxation authority
- Extend 2014 HB16 Liquor Tax Distribution Sunset

Quick Facts

PEOPLE

Population: 3,508 (2016 estimated)
 Total housing units: 3,785 (2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate)
 Median household income: \$42,973 (2011-2015 5-Year Estimate)
 Persons below poverty level: 17.2 percent (2011-2015 5-Year Estimate)

BUSINESS

Total employer establishments: 59 (2015)
 Total employment: 431 (2015)
 Non-employer establishments: 345 (2015)
 Total firms: 340 (2012)

GEOGRAPHY

Land area (square miles): 6,923.69
 Persons per square mile: 0.5

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

Catron County, wild haven

BY ELVA K. ÖSTERREICH

In Catron County, opportunities for exploration are numerous. One can explore vast dark skies from across the county.

The Apache and Gila national forests combine in Catron to embrace much of the county. The Continental Divide follows the mountain tops of Catron and the trail provides plenty of trout fishing and big game hunting.

There are several ranches and outfitters headquartered in Catron to help find the critters.

There are many dirt roads throughout the

National Forest in the County, but the Forest Service warns that they should be considered dry-weather roads and should not be attempted during wet weather without first checking with the local Forest Service ranger station. A good rule to remember is that any unpaved road in Catron County is a dry-weather road.

All Forest Service ranger stations have maps of their forest districts, listing the camping areas and their facilities.

The ghost town of Mogollon, developed in the 1890s in the Gila National Forest, is quaint

and hospitable. Also in the Gila, the Catwalk National Recreation Trail offers an easy hike over Whitewater Canyon and into another ghost town's history.

Campgrounds, including Willow Creek and Datil Well, provide places to stay in the midst of wilderness. And the Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument, found at the very southern edge of the county, is home to two ruin sites full of Mimbres culture echoes, bringing the past into the future for exploration.

Catron County Communities

APACHE CREEK

Population: 67
Seven miles south of Aragon is the village of Apache Creek where the creek of the same name joins the Tularosa River. This is also the junction of State Highway 12 and State Highway 32.

ARAGON

Population: 94
Aragon is an old Spanish settlement with about 20 ranch and farm homes scattered along State Highway 12 that continues along the Tularosa Valley.

CRUZVILLE

Population: 72
Visitors may notice a curious thing about the fence posts near Cruzville, located in the Apache National Forest. Some posts have a piece of wood about an inch thick and six inches square nailed flat on top of the posts. These are used to support luminarias during Christmas or other special celebrations.

DATIL

Population: 54
This picturesque little town was named for the yucca seedpods resembling dates ("datil" is the Spanish word for "date"), and was established in 1884. Today, life centers on the Eagle Guest Ranch, a café, motel, general store, gas station and RV park that acts as the general meeting place for the community and surrounding area.

GLENWOOD

Population: 143
Glenwood is a quaint village located in southern Catron County on U.S. Highway 180. Glenwood has motels, restaurants and other services and is the jumping-off place for several Catron County features.

LUNA

Population: 158
Luna is a sleepy historical village near the Arizona border that was settled in the 19th century by a sheep rancher

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

PIE TOWN

Population: 186
In the 1900s, a day's ride by horseback west of Datil along what is now U.S. Highway 60 led to a small unincorporated community on the Continental Divide (elevation 7,979 feet) originally known as Norman's Place. Clyde Norman owned the town's only gas station and café, and when he began selling pies in the 1920s the community became known as Pie Town. An annual pie festival is held the second Saturday of September.

QUEMADO

Population: 228
Quemado is the Spanish work for "burned." In 1880 a settler by the name of Jose Antonio Padilla noticed the brush had been burned by the local Indians and named the settlement Rito Quemado.

RESERVE

County seat
Population: 289
The first settlements around Reserve, which sets along the San Francisco River, were called Upper Frisco Plaza, Middle Frisco Plaza and Lower Frisco Plaza. Sometime during the 1870s, Milligan's Plaza was established just north of Upper Frisco Plaza. Then, when forest lands were set aside as national forest reserves, the name of Milligan's Plaza was changed to Reserve.

Source: Population estimates for census-designated places from U.S. Census 2010, U.S. Census Bureau. There are no incorporated areas in the county.



Elected Officials

CATRON COUNTY COMMISSION

Address: P.O. Box 507, 100 Main St., Reserve, NM 87830
575-533-6423

Anita A. Hand

District 1
P.O. Box 546, Datil, NM 87821
575-519-2502 Cell
anita.hand@catroncountynm.gov

Glyn Griffin

District 2, Commission Chairman
P.O. Box 786, Reserve, NM 87830
575-533-6360 Home
575-956-3716 Cell
glyn.griffin@catroncountynm.gov

Van J. "Bucky" Allred

District 3
P.O. Box 166, Glenwood, NM 88039
575-539-2324 Home
575-519-0404 Cell
bucky.allred@catroncountynm.gov

EDUCATION

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Quemado Independent Schools
P.O. Box 128, Quemado, NM
87829-0128
575-773-4700
575-773-4645
www.quemadoschools.org

Reserve Independent Schools

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



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2018 Legislative Priorities

CAPITAL	<p>GLCCC/Spaceport America – 5 Yr Infrastructure Planning NMSU – Modernization of Ag Educational Facilities DACC-NMSU – Infrastructure Upgrades / Replacement CLC – City Wide Investments & Interchange Improvements DAC – Santa Teresa – Crosswind Runway Planning & 10-28 Upgrade / Reconstruction</p>
OPERATIONAL	<p>MVEDA – Regional Economic Development Initiatives DAC – Proper Funding Levels for Spaceport America The Bridge – Increasing Investment in Dual Credit for Higher Ed</p>
LEGISLATIVE	<p>Spaceport America – Commercial Space Protection Act DAC – Enhanced Nurse Licensure Compact Las Cruces Public School District (LCPS) – Public School Funding & Controls</p>

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Doña Ana

Capital outlay funds, tax reform on county's legislative agenda

BY MIKE COOK

Capital outlay will be an important issue for Doña Ana County legislators during the 2018 session.

The session is a short one – 30 days – with the agenda restricted to the budget, the governor's call and bills vetoed by the governor in 2017.

Capital outlay funds are typically divided among the governor, the state Senate and the state House.

Last session, no capital outlay funds were available because of the state's budget shortfall.

City of Las Cruces lobbyist Larry Horan said there likely will be about \$116 million in capital outlay this year. The exact amount, if any, will be determined by the budget passed during the session.

Local legislators have often combined some of the capital outlay money they receive to fund local projects as requested principally by Doña Ana County, Las Cruces and the other communities they represent.

During a work session in October, city staff outlined the following capital outlay requests for the 2018 session for the City of Las Cruces:

- \$260,000 for improvements to the intersection at Telshor Boulevard and Spruce Street;
- \$140,000 for public safety, including a squad vehicle that would include EMT and firefighting equipment;
- \$105,000 for mobile data terminals for Las

Cruces Police Department vehicles;

- \$40,000 for additional police body cameras;
- \$100,000 to replace the parking lot at Fire Station #2, 1199 E. Foster Road. The parking lot was built in 1967;
- \$100,000 for asbestos abatement and ceiling-tile replacement at Branigan Cultural Center downtown;
- \$100,000 for playground equipment in city parks;
- \$850,000 for landscaping at the Interstate-25/Interstate-10 interchange near University Avenue. This was the only new item added to the list of requests, which was also presented to legislators in 2017. The landscaping, including native plants, would create a more attractive gateway into the city, city officials said.

At the meeting, city councilors also requested funding for a feasibility study for a mental health hospital to serve southern New Mexico (\$100,000) and funding for a master plan for Pioneer Park (\$21,000).

The county's priorities for legislative funding are memorialized each year in the Infrastructure Capital Improvements Plan (ICIP), County Public Information Director Jess Williams said. "Generally, the top 10 projects are those that our lobbyist and elected officials work the hardest to bring home."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 59 ■

Quick Facts

PEOPLE

Population: 214,207 (2016)
Households (2011-2015 5-year survey): 74,762
Median Household Income: \$38,853 (2011-2015)
Persons below poverty level: 25.7 percent (2011-2015)

BUSINESS

Total employer establishments: 3,570 (2015)
Non-employer establishments: 12,253 (2015)
Total firms: 16,298 (2012)

GEOGRAPHY

Land Area (square miles): 3,807 (2010)
Persons per square mile: 55 (2010)

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



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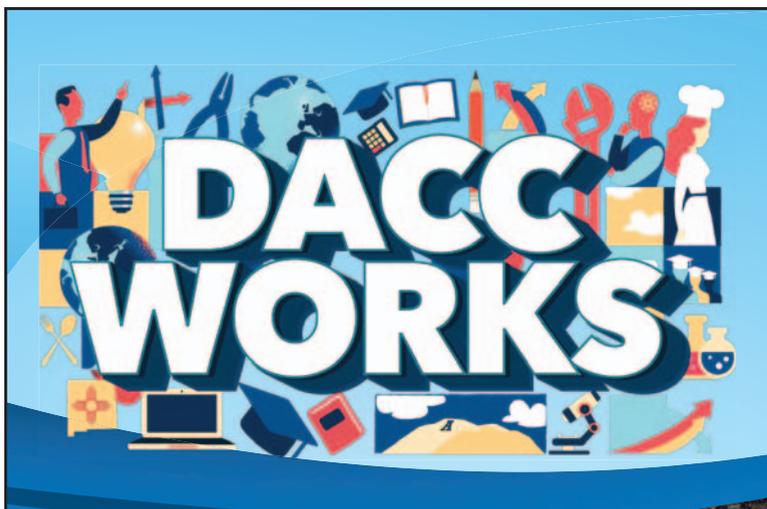
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One Voice

Coalition aims to prioritize Doña Ana county initiatives for legislative session

BY TRACY ROY

Created in 2007, the Doña Ana County Legislative Coalition (DACLC) aims to unite local entities to create a voice of solidarity each year about the needs of the county heading into the New Mexico legislative session. The group identifies and promotes significant legislative initiatives that it determines will best serve Doña Ana County as a whole. It meets with various entities across the region to identify the greatest needs.

The coalition meets monthly to discuss issues and initiatives, and in December, prepares a list of legislative priorities on which to focus during the legislative session each January.

“The nice part about having done this for so many years is that all the different partners, now, when they start bringing issues to us to talk about, already have in their mindset that it is not just about what is good for me, but also what is good for the community as a whole,” said Bill Connor, CEO/president of United Way Southwest New Mexico and chairman of DACLC, who spoke at a Dec. 5, 2017, luncheon hosted by the Mesilla Valley Economic Development Alliance (MVEDA), to outline the 11 priorities the group plans to take to Santa Fe during the 2018 session.

“People are coming forth with

better ideas that are more inclusive,” Connor said.

The focus of the priorities is in three areas: Capital appropriation items (investment in infrastructure, for example), operational funding and how to make it more equitable (public and higher education, and dual-credit programs, for example) and legislative policy (what changes to policy are needed for the greater good of Doña Ana County).

The DACLC is a partnership of the Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce, MVEDA, the City of Las Cruces, Doña Ana County, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces Public Schools, Gadsden Independent School District, Hatch Valley Public Schools, the Hispano Chamber of Commerce de Las Cruces and The Bridge of Southern New Mexico.

The DACLC consolidates support from public and private sectors to ensure the best legislative outcomes.

Las Cruces Day in Santa Fe will be held Jan. 27-29 at the capitol. The annual event focuses on the legislative issues of southern New Mexico and Las Cruces, hosted by the Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce and the Council of the Conquistadores. It is an opportunity for individuals, businesses and organizations to show support and lobby legislators. Learn more at www.las-cruces.org.

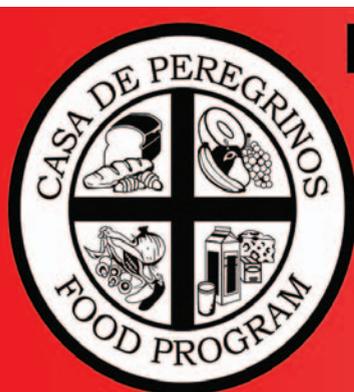
DACLC LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

DOÑA ANA COUNTY LEGISLATIVE COALITION 2018 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

- Interstate 10/Interstate 25 interchange landscaping (\$850,000);
- Intersection improvements on Telshor Boulevard and Spruce Avenue (\$260,000);
- Las Cruces public safety improvements (\$140,000);
- Asbestos abatement and ceiling replacement at Branigan Cultural Center (\$100,000);
- Parking lot improvements for Las Cruces Fire Department fire station #2 (\$100,000);
- Las Cruces Police Department mobile data terminal replacements (\$105,000);
- A master plan for Pioneer Women’s Park (\$29,000);
- A feasibility study for an acute behavioral health hospital in southern New Mexico (\$100,000);
- Playground improvements in city parks (\$100,000).

DACLC ALSO SUPPORTS

- Increased investment in dual-credit courses (\$5 million);
- Legislation that would keep school district reserve funds in place and strengthen local school districts;
- Modernization of ag and educational facilities at New Mexico State University (\$25 million);
- Regional economic development initiatives like broadband network deployment and state support for the Local Economic Development Act (LEDA) and the Job Training Incentive Program;
- A crosswind runway and runway upgrades at the Santa Teresa International Jetport (\$800,000);
- The Enhanced Nurse Licensure Compact;
- Operations, critical infrastructure and facilities upgrades for Spaceport America (\$20.5 million);
- Passage of the Commercial Space Protection Act.



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2345 E. Nevada Ave., Suite 101,
Las Cruces, NM 88001
575-527-7676
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277 E. Amador, Suite 304,
Las Cruces, NM, 88001
575-525-2852 or 800-523-6833
mveda.com

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505 S. Main St.,
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221 N. Main St., #104A,
Las Cruces, NM, 88001
575-541-1583
wesst.org

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 55

The 10 projects prioritized by the county are:

- Two projects at Doña Ana County International Jetport at Santa Teresa: adding a crosswind runway (total cost of \$31 million, phased in over the five years of the ICIP) and runway 10-28 upgrade and reconstruction (total cost of \$14.55 million over two years);
- An emergency and HAZMAT response facility, which has a total cost of \$5.24 million, of which \$3.8 million has not yet been funded. This also is a phased project;
- Four storm- and surface-water control projects, including Dragonfly Channel (total cost of \$8.4 million over five years), Brown Farm (total cost of \$5.1 million over five years), Brahman Dam (total cost of \$3.625 million over four years) and Hatch flood control (total cost of \$6.2 million, of which \$5.7 million has not yet been funded, over five years);
- Livestock pens and administrative/service facilities at the Southern New Mexico fairgrounds. The project needs an additional \$50,000 to reach its full budget of \$285,000;
- Phase II of the Doña Ana County Sheriff's Department Regional Law Enforcement Academy, which has a total cost of \$3.3 million, of which \$60,000 has already been funded. This project also would be phased in over four years;
- Remodeling and expanding the Doña Ana Fire Station, with a total cost of \$500,000.

Top issues for local legislators are likely to include statewide tax reform and the hold-harmless gross receipts tax payments to local governments the state has made since the tax on food and some medical services ended Jan. 1, 2005.

Because state revenues have improved since the 2017 legislative session, Horan said it is less likely that legislation will be introduced in 2018 to eliminate the hold-harmless payments.

Horan said \$160 to \$200 million in general obligation bonds for senior citizen programs, higher education and libraries locally and around the state likely will be approved during the 2018 session.

During the session, he said the city also will be watching issues like seizures by law enforcement, protecting local government authority, the open meetings act and water issues.



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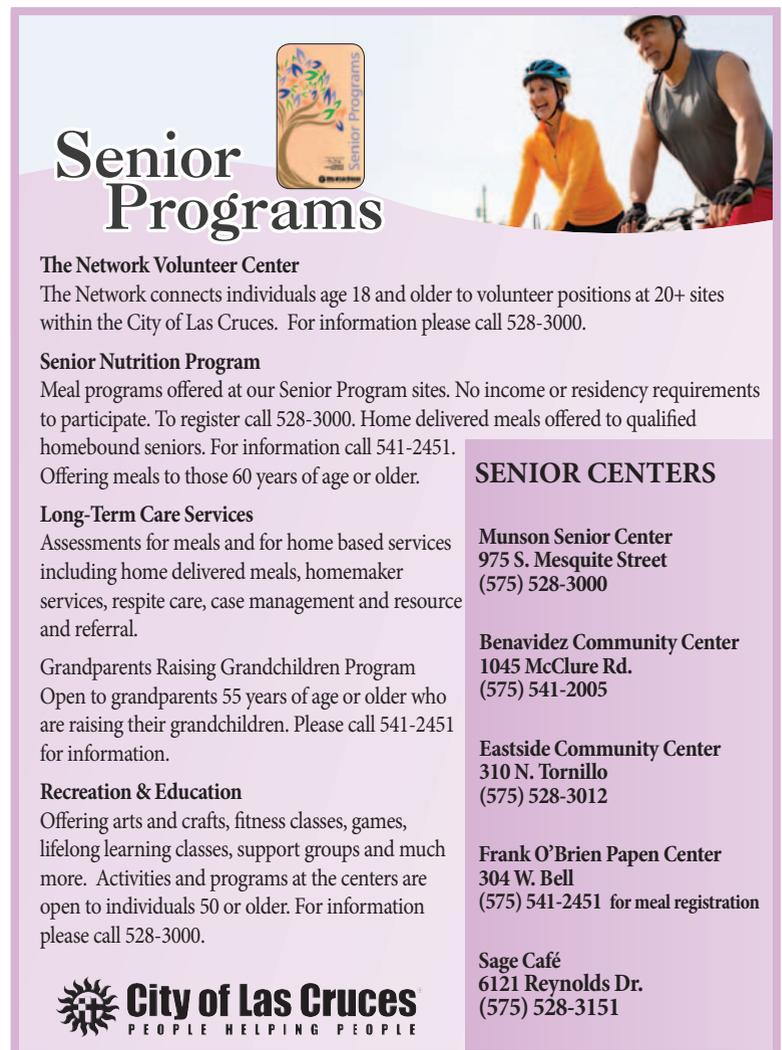
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Senior Nutrition Program
Meal programs offered at our Senior Program sites. No income or residency requirements to participate. To register call 528-3000. Home delivered meals offered to qualified homebound seniors. For information call 541-2451. Offering meals to those 60 years of age or older.

Long-Term Care Services
Assessments for meals and for home based services including home delivered meals, homemaker services, respite care, case management and resource and referral.

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Program
Open to grandparents 55 years of age or older who are raising their grandchildren. Please call 541-2451 for information.

Recreation & Education
Offering arts and crafts, fitness classes, games, lifelong learning classes, support groups and much more. Activities and programs at the centers are open to individuals 50 or older. For information please call 528-3000.

SENIOR CENTERS

Munson Senior Center
975 S. Mesquite Street
(575) 528-3000

Benavidez Community Center
1045 McClure Rd.
(575) 541-2005

Eastside Community Center
310 N. Tornillo
(575) 528-3012

Frank O'Brien Papen Center
304 W. Bell
(575) 541-2451 for meal registration

Sage Café
6121 Reynolds Dr.
(575) 528-3151

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Freshmen boost NMSU enrollment amid budget cuts

BY MIKE COOK

They don't hand out beanies anymore, but its growing freshmen class is a major bright spot for New Mexico State University in the difficult financial times that continue to impact all institutions of higher learning in the state.

NMSU added more than 2,000 freshmen in fall 2017, to bring total fall 2017 enrollment to 24,580, at all campuses: Las Cruces (including Doña Ana Community College), Alamogordo, Carlsbad and Grants.

That figure is down 2.9 percent from a year ago.

NMSU has seen a steady decline in student enrollment since fiscal year 2011, according to university statistics.

The graduate and undergraduate student count at the Las Cruces campus is 14,432 this fall, down 2.8 percent from last fall. The count at DACC is 7,917, down 2.9 percent from last year.

The median age of students on NMSU's main campus in Las Cruces is 22, 54 percent are Hispanic, 70 percent are New Mexico residents, 77 percent are full-time, 83 percent live off campus and 81 percent are undergraduate students, according to NMSU statistics.

NMSU has students enrolled from all 33 New Mexico counties. Not surprisingly, the most, 4,856, come from Las Cruces and Doña Ana County. 699 students come from Bernalillo County, 312 from Eddy County, 211 from Luna County and 202 from Santa Fe County.

Among its eight colleges, Arts and Sciences has the highest enrollment, at just over 5,000 students. The College of Engineering has more than 2,400, the College of Education has just over 2,000 and the Business college has more than 1,700 students enrolled.

In fall 2016, NMSU had 1,170 graduate

and undergraduate students from 82 foreign countries.

Even with this semester's six percent tuition increase, NMSU remains 12th in tuition among 16 peer institutions in New Mexico and 12 other states.

Despite a six percent tuition increase approved by its regents last June, NMSU's budget has declined about \$46 million during the past four years.

NMSU's 2017-18 budget of \$561 million is about \$24 million less than the previous year.

About 34 percent of NMSU's funding comes from the state, which has suffered from declining oil and gas revenues over the past several years.

Almost 20 percent of NMSU's funding comes from tuition and fees – the six percent tuition fee will raise about \$6 million. Government grants and contracts account for another almost 29 percent of the budget, while private gifts and contracts contribute 3.3 percent and sales and services add 5.2 percent.

More than 44 percent of NMSU's current funds will go to instruction and general services, while almost 18 percent will go to research, just over 14 percent to student aid, almost 10 percent to public service and three percent to athletics.

Faculty salaries are expected to be about \$55 million in 2017-18, with about \$109 million spent on all NMSU salaries.

NMSU had 1,089 faculty last November, 2,491 staff, 993 graduate assistants and employed 1,933 students for a total employment of 6,506, including regular, temporary and occasional employees.

The university has lost more than 700 full-time positions in the past seven years.

NMSU HIGHLIGHTS

- NMSU's four-year graduation rates have grown from 13 percent to 22 percent in the past four years. Its five-year graduation rate is 40 percent, the highest since 2000, and the six-year rate is now 46 percent, the highest since 2001;
- The fall-to-spring retention rate is the highest in a decade;
- Last year, NMSU raised \$2 million more in cash and pledges than at any time in its history;
- NMSU is saving nearly \$10 million a year because of its Transforming NMSU into a 21st Century University initiative;
- NMSU is No. 1 in the nation for science and engineering funding for minority-serving institutions;
- The Brookings Institution ranks NMSU No. 2 in the nation for being a leader in research and social mobility;
- For the past decade, Forbes has ranked NMSU as one of America's Top Colleges;
- For five of the last six years, NMSU has been recognized as a Top Tier university by U.S. News & World Report.

Source: Fall 2017 edition of "Panorama," the university's alumni magazine



Division of Career Readiness and Economic Development

DACC Workforce Center - 2345 Nevada Ave.
Las Cruces, NM 88001

575-527-7776 ctp@nmsu.edu

Workforce Development and Career Readiness

The Workforce Development Center and Career Readiness Department provides opportunities for short non-credit training programs, on-line and classroom-based professional skill development, lifelong learning, and career exploration to the community of Doña Ana County. We specialize in offering programs with industry certifications and continuing education units. We strive to connect employers with new employees through work-based learning and internships.

Other Programs & Services: Commercial Drivers Licensing, Academy for Learning in Retirement, and Youth STEAM Spring Break and Summer Camps.

Small Business Development Center
dacc.nmsu.edu/sbdc

Workforce Development and Career Readiness
dacc.nmsu.edu/ctp

Adult Education
dacc.nmsu.edu/abe

Chambers of Commerce

ANTHONY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Mission: To serve members not only in Anthony, New Mexico and Anthony, Texas, but all the communities between El Paso and Las Cruces that do not have their own Chamber of Commerce. It currently serves both Anthonys, the Village of Vinton, Chaparral, Canutillo, Vado, Berino and others.

Address: P.O. Box 1086, Anthony, NM 88021
Website: anthonychamberofcommerce.com

HATCH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Mission: To advance the economic, industrial, educational, professional, cultural and civic conditions and standards for the Hatch Valley through networking, creating dialogue and capturing goals which individual members support, and the organization pursues.

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: The mission of GLCCC is to provide services for its members, enhance and sustain the economy, promote the community and serve as the leading voice and public policy advocate for business in the Greater Las Cruces region.

Address: 150 E. Lohman Ave., Las Cruces, NM 88001
Phone: 575-524-1968
Fax: 575-527-5546
Email: relo@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. Members believe in the power of the Triple Bottom Line – that investing in people; protecting our air, land and water; and promoting profit through sustainable business practices will build a thriving community for today and for generations to come.

Address: 221 N. Main St.,
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88001
Phone: 575-323-1575
Website: locallascruceres.com

LAS CRUCES HISPANIC CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Mission: LCHCC provides leadership for the advancement of economic prosperity for our region and our diverse membership by providing business programs and services that will expand and mature investments, job opportunities, education, community service, wellness and activity in Las Cruces.

Address: 277 E. Amador Ave, Suite 305,
Las Cruces, NM 88001
Phone: 575-524-8900
Fax: 575-532-9255
Website: lascruceshispanicchamber.com

Elected Officials

DOÑA ANA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

845 N. Motel Blvd.,
Las Cruces, NM 88007
Phone: 575-647-7201
Website: www.donaanacounty.org

District 1

Billy G. Garrett
575-525-5808
575-915-5755 (cell)
bgarrett@donaanacounty.org

District 2

Ramon Gonzalez
575-525-5800
575-635-5212 (cell)
rgonzalez@donanacounty.org

District 3

Benjamin L. Rawson
575-525-5807
575-649-4153 (cell)
brawson@donaanacounty.org

District 4

Isabella Solis, Chair
575-525-5807
575-635-2479 (cell)
isolis@donaanacounty.org

District 5

John Vasquez
575-525-5809
575-635-5146 (cell)
jvasquez@donanacounty.org

LAS CRUCES CITY COUNCIL

700 N. Main St., Las Cruces,
NM 88001
Phone: 575-541-2066
Fax: 575-541-2183

Mayor

Ken Miyagishima
kmiyagishima@las-cruces.org

District 1

Kasandra Gandara
kgandara@las-cruces.org

District 2

Greg Smith
gsmith@las-cruces.org

District 3

Gabe Vasquez
gvasquez@las-cruces.org

District 4

Jack Eakman
jeakman@las-cruces.org

District 5

Gill Sorg, Mayor pro-tem
gsorg@las-cruces.org

District 6

Yvonne Flores
yflores@las-cruces.org



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

204 Hill St., Hatch, NM 87937
P.O. Box 790, Hatch, NM 87937
575-267-8200
www.hatchschools.net

Las Cruces Public Schools

505 S. Main St. Ste. 249
Las Cruces, NM 88001
575-527-5800
lcps.k12.nm.us

PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Acton Academy
1730 Tierra de Mesilla
Las Cruces, NM 88046
575-449-4796
www.actonlascruces.com

Cornerstone Christian Academy

5301 Cortez Drive
Las Cruces, NM 88012
575-532-0902
www.cornerstn.org

Desert Springs Christian Academy

210 S. Nevarez St.
Las Cruces, NM 88001
575-571-7709
desertspringschristianacademy.org

Las Cruces Academy

1755 Avenida de Mercado
Mesilla, NM 88046
575-521-9384
lascrucesacademy.org

Las Cruces Catholic Schools (Holy Cross School and St. Mary's High School)

1331 N. Miranda St.
Las Cruces, NM 88005
575-526-2517
www.lascrucescatholicsschool.com

Mesilla Valley Christian Schools

3850 Stern Drive
Las Cruces, NM 88001
575-525-8515
mvschools.com

Mission Lutheran School

2752 N. Roadrunner Pkwy.
Las Cruces, NM 88011
575-532-5489
www.mlschool.net

CHARTER SCHOOLS

Alma d'arte Charter High School

402 W. Court Ave.
Las Cruces, NM 88001
575-541-0145
www.almadarte.org

La Academia Dolores Huerta

1480 N. Main St.
Las Cruces, NM 88001
575-526-2984
www.academianm.org

J. Paul Taylor Academy

402 W. Court Ave., Building 2,
Las Cruces, NM 88012
575-652-4621
www.jpaultayloracademy.org

Las Montañas Charter High School

1405 S. Solano Drive
Las Cruces, NM 88001
575-636-2110

www.lasmontanashigh.com

New America School

207 S. Main St.
Las Cruces, NM 88001
575-527-9085
newamericaschool.org

COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Doña Ana Community College – Central Campus

3400 S. Espina St.
Las Cruces, NM 88003
575-527-7500
dacc.nmsu.edu

Doña Ana Community College – East Mesa Campus

2800 N. Sonoma Ranch Blvd.,
Las Cruces, NM 88011
575-528-7500

Doña Ana Community College – Gadsden Center

1700 E. O'Hara Road
Anthony, NM 88021
575-882-3939

Doña Ana Community College – Sunland Park Center

3365 McNutt Road
Sunland Park, NM 88063
575-874-7780

Doña Ana Community College
Workforce Center
2345 Nevada Ave.
Las Cruces, NM 88001

UNIVERSITIES

New Mexico State University

1780 E. University Ave.
Las Cruces, NM 88003
575-646-0111
nmsu.edu

Doña Ana Communities

ANTHONY

City

Population: 9,318 (2014 estimate)

Mayor: Diana Murillo-Trujillo

Incorporated in July 2010, Anthony straddles the New Mexico-Texas border, approximately 27 miles south of Las Cruces and 24 miles north of El Paso.

BERINO

Census-designated Place

Population: 1,441 (2010)

Established in the early 1900s and comprised of a land area of only .93 square miles, Berino lies 22 miles south of Las Cruces.

CHAMBERINO

Census-designated Place

Population: 919

Located 26 miles south of Las Cruces, Chamberino is an unincorporated community that was established with the installation of a post office in 1880.

CHAPARRAL

Census-designated Place

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

Chaparral is uniquely located as it shares its southern border with the Texas state line, and straddles Doña Ana and Otero counties. It is considered a bedroom community for nearby El Paso, Ft. Bliss and White Sands Missile Range.

DOÑA ANA

Census-designated Place

Population: 1,211 (2010)

The first county seat and the oldest permanent settlement in the Mesilla Valley, Doña Ana was founded in 1843. The community lent its name to Doña Ana County upon its establishment in 1852.

FAIRACRES

Census-designated Place

Population: 824 (2010)

Considered a suburb of Las Cruces, Fairacres has a land area of 2.11 square miles and lies on the west bank of the Rio Grande.

GARFIELD

Census-designated Place

Population: 137 (2010)

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

HATCH

Village

Mayor: Andy Nuñez

Population: 1,601 (2014 estimate)

Originally settled as Santa Barbara in 1851, the Village of Hatch was incorporated in 1928. Hatch is known as the Chile Capital of the World, and holds an annual Chile Festival. It is located 40 miles northeast of Las Cruces on I-25.

LA MESA

Census-designated Place

Population: 737 (2016 estimate)

Located approximately 17 miles south of Las Cruces, on state road 28, La Mesa is believed to be named after a nearby lava flow, known as Black Mesa. It is home to local favorites Chope's Town Café and Bar, and Stahmann Farms.

LA UNION

Census-designated Place

Population: 1,124 (2016 estimate)

Created by and named for the combining of two early settlements, Los Ojitos and Los Amoles, La Union is located 34 miles south of Las Cruces on state highway 28. It is home to New Mexico's oldest winery, La Viña.

LAS CRUCES

City

Population: 101,643 (2015 estimate)

Mayor: Ken Miyagishima

The second largest city in the state, and the Doña Ana county seat, Las Cruces is home to New Mexico State University, Virgin Galactic headquarters, and Spaceport America's corporate offices. It sits at the center of the Mesilla Valley, both geographically and economically.

MESILLA

Town

Population: 1,880 (2014 estimate)

Mayor: Nora L. Barraza

With its rich history, Mesilla was once the economic and social center of the Mesilla Valley. It was an important stop for both the Butterfield Stage line and El Camino Real. Mesilla was also the capital of the short-lived Confederate territory of Arizona during the Civil War and the site of Billy the Kid's trial in 1881. The historic plaza, with its quaint shops and restaurants, is a major tourist attraction.

MESQUITE

Census-designated Place

Population: 1,112 (2010)

Located 13 miles south of Las Cruces, on state road 478, Mesquite is a small farming community established in 1882. It was named by railroad executives for the many mesquite bushes that grow there.

ORGAN

Census-designated Place

Population: 323 (2010)

Originally established as a mining camp, Organ is an unincorporated community 14 miles northeast of Las Cruces. It is an active community housing residents who work in Las Cruces and at White Sands Missile Range.

PLACITAS

Census-designated Place

Population: 576 (2010)

Considered a colonia, or suburb, of Hatch, Placitas has a land area of .14 square miles. It lies 1.5 miles west of Hatch on state road 26.

RADIUM SPRINGS

Census-designated Place

Population: 1,888 (2016 estimate)

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

RINCON

Census-designated Place

Population: 271 (2010)

Briefly known as Thorn following the establishment of its first post office in 1881, Rincon was a major business and trading center due to the railroad switching station located there. It is now a colonia of Hatch, which lies five miles to the east.

RODEY

Census-designated Place

Population: 388

Located on the southeast border of Hatch, Rodey has a land area of .56 square miles. It has been credited as the oldest village in the area and was once walled as a defense against Apache raids.

SALEM

Census-designated Place

Population: 942

Originally known as Plaza, Salem is a small farming community located 5 miles northwest of Hatch. In 1908 a group of New Englanders from Salem, Mass., established a post office, renaming the community after their home.

SAN MIGUEL

Census-designated Place

Population: 1,153 (2010)

Established in 1850, San Miguel lies 10 miles south of Mesilla on state road 28. It hosts an annual festival in September in honor of St. Michael to raise funds for the town's Catholic church.

SAN PABLO

Census-designated Place

Population: 836 (2016 estimate)

With 1.22 square miles of land area containing slightly more than 800 citizens, the small community of San Pablo ranks in the upper quartile for population density for the state of New Mexico. It lies nearly three miles southeast of Mesilla.

SAN YSIDRO

Census-designated Place

Population: 194 (2014 estimate)

A popular name in rural New Mexico, San Ysidro shares its name with at least three other communities in the state. It is located four miles northwest of Las Cruces.

SANTA TERESA

Census-designated Place

Population: 4,258 (2010)

Recent growth, brought about by a Union Pacific rail facility and its proximity to the New Mexico Port of Entry, has placed Santa Teresa center stage for economic development. The community is currently seeking incorporation.

SUNLAND PARK

City

Population: 15,400 (2014 estimate)

Mayor: Javier Perea

Located on the southernmost end of Doña Ana county, Sunland Park was named for the Sunland Park Racetrack and Casino.

UNIVERSITY PARK

Census-designated Place

Population: 4,192 (2010)

Part of Las Cruces, University Park owes its existence to New Mexico State University. Its land area is 1.55 square miles bounded by University Avenue, I-10, and I-25.

VADO

Census-designated Place

Population: 3,194 (2010)

Located 19 miles south of Las Cruces, on I-10, Vado was once New Mexico's only predominantly African-American community.

WHITE SANDS

Census-designated Place

Population: 1,651 (2010)

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

Agriculture roots go deep in Doña Ana County

New Mexico's residents are resilient, and nowhere is it seen more clearly than in the agriculture of the state. Drought has long affected Doña Ana County, but farmers are diversifying, using technology, finding higher-value crops to offset the water losses, and creating a wider outreach in the sale of produce. Interestingly, the county is identified as the oldest commercial wine-growing region in the United States, with grapes being brought in by Spanish colonists as early as 1580.

Doña Ana also ranks in the top four counties in the nation in chile acreage, and the top county in pecan acreage, at 28,729 acres. New Mexico as a whole is third in the nation for total pecan acreage.

AGRICULTURE FACTS

- Value of agricultural products in Doña Ana County: \$351,032,000.
- Agricultural products are produced on 2,184 farms.
- Average size of a Doña Ana County farm: 302 acres.
- Doña Ana County ranked fourth and fifth, respectively, in New Mexico for the number of milk cows, cattle and calves. As of Jan. 1, 2015, the county reported 83,000 head of cattle and calves, and 37,000 milk cows. The county also had 800 head of sheep and lamb.
- Major commodities of Doña Ana County: beef and dairy cattle, chile, corn, onions, pecans, upland and pima cotton and alfalfa.
- In 2014, Doña Ana County ranked second in the state for production of chile, upland cotton and alfalfa.

Source: USDA, U.S. Census Bureau, National Agricultural Statistics Service "2015 New Mexico Annual Bulletin," Doña County Historical Society





Doña Ana County Your Partner in Progress



Doña Ana County Board of Commissioners



Billy G. Garrett
District 1



Ramon S. Gonzalez
District 2



Benjamin L. Rawson
District 3



Isabella Solis
District 4



John L. Vasquez
District 5

RECOMMITTED: The Colonias Initiative

Back in 2005, the Doña Ana County Board of Commissioners formally announced an initiative designed to build up the 37 federally designated colonias that are located within the county's borders. In 2011, the New Mexico Legislature under Former New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson created a Colonias Trust Fund through which counties could apply for funding related to infrastructure development within colonias.

In 2017, Doña Ana County Commission Chairwoman Isabella Solis led a push to recommit to The Colonias Initiative, declaring that Doña Ana County and the Legislative Delegation must double down in working together to identify, prioritize and fund critical infrastructure projects that advance public safety, job creation and quality of life for the residents of Doña Ana County.

As the 2018 New Mexico Legislature gets underway, county officials will work closely with our legislators to identify projects that move Doña Ana County's colonias forward. On a broader level, Doña Ana County's elected officials and staff will work diligently with the Martinez Administration and the Doña Ana County Legislative Delegation to serve the diverse needs of all of Doña Ana County's residents.

Judging from the state's budget projections, this looks to be a challenging year at the state and local levels. We will rise to those challenges in our ongoing commitment to providing top-quality services across each commission district and through the coordinated efforts of the departments headed up by those officials to whom you have entrusted the responsibilities of leadership.

Working with the New Mexico Association of Counties, we will partner with other local governments to improve public safety, community parks and other issues that directly affect our residents.

As you read this, your elected officials are in Santa Fe lobbying on your behalf at the state level. As the Legislature's work continues, your commissioners and elected officials will continue to press for substantive and meaningful progress for our state, our county and each of our local communities.

From both sides of the political aisle, your elected officials are working within the system to make lives better in New Mexico in general and in Doña Ana County, in particular. Your voice is important to this process. Let us hear from you by e-mail at Input@donaanacounty.org or by phone at (575) 525-5801!

Visit our Award-Winning Website at www.donaanacounty.org or Contact Us at (575) 525-5801

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 2018.

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 THE BIG QUESTION? WHY DID MY PROPERTY VALUE GO UP 3% THIS YEAR, WHEN THE MARKET IS DECLINING?

Most likely the value on your residential property assessment increased 3% because the assessor's valuation has been capped in prior years while the market was increasing by much more than 3%. It may have been capped between one and ten years, depending on how long you have owned your home. The law went into effect in 2001. The assessor's capped value may be very low relative to the real time market value and therefore may not reflect the current market value, thus it must be re-appraised and may be increased by up to 3% per year. For more information log on to www.donaanacounty.org/assessor and view our helpful tips or call the Assessor's office at (575) 647-7400.



Paul Ponce
Chief Deputy Assessor



Andy Segovia
County Assessor



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

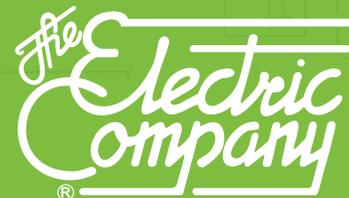
www.donaanacounty.org/assessor

DOÑA ANA COUNTY ASSESSOR'S OFFICE



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City of Las Cruces®

As mayor of Las Cruces, my fellow members of City Council and I look forward to working with Governor Martinez, our southern New Mexico delegation and lawmakers from across the state this legislative session. Las Cruces is a dynamic city and together we can continue to enhance its many great qualities.

Here's to a great 2018!

KEN MIYAGISHIMA, MAYOR OF LAS CRUCES



2018 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



\$260,000

INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS: TELSHOR BOULEVARD/SPRUCE STREET

Plan, design, and construct the intersection to improve the flow of traffic along both roadways. This benefits current and new businesses, provides access for public safety vehicles, and reduces traffic.



\$140,000

LAS CRUCES PUBLIC SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS: SQUAD VEHICLE

The addition of a smaller, more efficient vehicle for first-responders that can accommodate a custom box for firefighting, EMS equipment, and to transport patients.



\$105,000

POLICE MOBILE DATA TERMINALS: 30 REPLACEMENTS

Thirty mobile data terminals will replace out-of-date equipment and provide officers with better tools for serving the community.



\$100,000

PARKING LOT: LCFD - FIRE STATION #2

The City's oldest fire station needs a complete replacement of its parking lot to improve access for people and vehicles, including Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access to the building, drive pads and aprons.



\$100,000

BRANIGAN CULTURAL CENTER: ASBESTOS ABATEMENT AND CEILING REPLACEMENT

Preservation efforts to ensure use of the historic Branigan Cultural Center as a museum requires the removal of asbestos from the ceiling to create a safe environment for visitors.



\$100,000

PLAYGROUND IMPROVEMENTS: CITY PARKS

Plan, design, remove, construct, equip, renovate and install playground equipment at various City parks.



\$850,000

I-10/I-25 INTERCHANGE LANDSCAPING

Plan, design, construct, and install landscaping, signage, drainage improvements, and erosion control improvements at the Interstate 10/Interstate 25 Interchange.



\$29,000

PIONEER WOMEN'S PARK: MASTER PLAN

The City is seeking legislative funding for the master planning of Pioneer Women's Park to improve the level of service.



\$100,000

ACUTE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH HOSPITAL: LAS CRUCES FEASIBILITY STUDY

The City is seeking legislative funding to conduct a feasibility study for the design, construction, and operation of an acute behavioral health hospital in Las Cruces.



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

South Doña Ana

Southern Doña Ana County aims high

BY ALTA LECOMPTÉ

Doña Ana County stepped into the national spotlight in late 2017 with a dramatic bid to land Amazon's second headquarters.

Jerry Pacheco, president of the Border Industrial Association, said MSN, CNN Money, USA Today, the Seattle Times and Business Insider, as well as sources throughout Mexico, took note of the response to an Amazon Request for Proposal (RFP) by the Binational Community Los Santos, which includes Santa Teresa in New Mexico and San Jeronimo and San Jose in Mexico.

While acknowledging the effort is a "long shot," Davin Lopez, CEO and president of the Mesilla Valley Economic Development Alliance, called Doña Ana County's proposal "bold and innovative."

"The opportunity we have crafted offers Amazon the first of its kind, bi-national, seamless, cross-border campus within the area known as Los Santos," Lopez said.

According to the Amazon RFP, its HQ2 would hire as many as 50,000 new full-time employees with \$100,000 plus average annual compensation, and more than \$5 billion in capital expenditures.

Lopez explained the proposal would enable Amazon to take advantage of the binational region's assets: a 2.7 million population base, 139,000 postsecondary students found across six universities, two international commercial airports, three medical schools "and the binational spirit found in one region."

"Our participation was part of an overall New Mexico statewide response, carefully crafted, not for the purpose of creating a quick buzz, but

designed to methodically walk Amazon through the details of how New Mexico could help them overcome the challenges associated with such an ambitious plan," Lopez said.

While southern Doña Ana County dreams big, it continues to see ongoing commercial expansion, infrastructure improvements and bi-lateral collaboration.

Pacheco said 2017 marked significant commercial activity and infrastructure construction.

Commercial projects included:

- Valley Cold Storage's 107,000-square-foot refrigerated warehouse in the Santa Teresa West Park
- FedEx Ground's 215,000-square-foot distribution center in the Santa Teresa West Park
- Franklin Mountain Industrial's 183,000-square-foot spec building in the Santa Teresa Airport Park
- Twin Cities's 19-acre expansion of its previous 32-acre container yard
- RL Jones' lease of 24,000 square feet in the Santa Teresa Airport Park

Infrastructure upgrades begun in 2017 included:

- \$8.3 million from New Mexico capital outlay and \$200,000 from Doña Ana County to redesign/reconstruct Airport Road, Industrial Boulevard and the Twin Cities Interchange beginning in summer 2017
- \$40 million Pete Domenici Highway reconstruction beginning in summer 2017
- \$12 million upgrades on McNutt Road
- \$1.8 million in LEDA state economic development funding for a new water well located in the Santa Teresa Intermodal Park.

In southern Doña Ana County, a bilateral relationship is cultivated on an ongoing basis.

Bill Mattiace, executive director of the New Mexico Border Authority, said NMBA was scheduled to begin construction in late 2017 on the first-ever international visitors center.

"The huge gazebo design will have shade, rest rooms and sitting areas for the visitors waiting for their relatives to cross at the Santa Teresa Port of Entry," he said.

Meanwhile, Mattiace said, an international rail crossing at Santa Teresa is moving toward fruition.

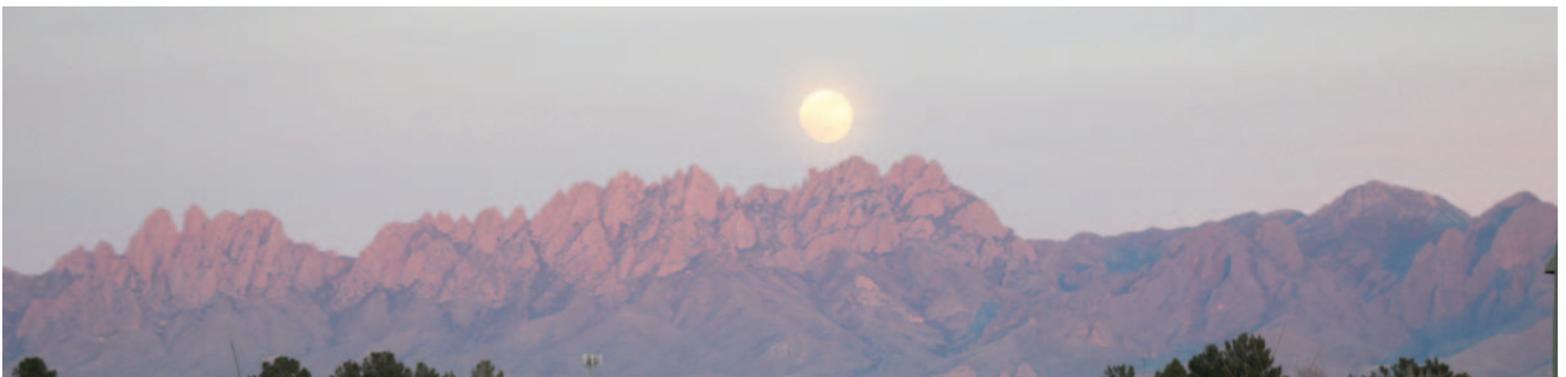
He said a study has been completed and a crossing point designated.

"We have great working plans with the State of Chihuahua," Mattiace said. "Plus both countries have sent diplomatic notes supporting the rail crossing at Santa Teresa/ Chihuahua."

A \$90 million port of entry currently is under construction in Columbus, Luna County, he added.

"This growth at the ports will help both counties with job creation, a major issue facing many New Mexico counties," he said. "I believe if the state continues investing in roads and more rooftops are built as we see happening in Sunland Park, then retail will follow, and new jobs will be created."

Pacheco called on the legislature to address the fuel tax in the border commercial zone, exempting Mexican carriers to promote cross-border commerce and economic growth.



DAC International Jetport set to upgrade in 2019

BY ALTA LECOMPTE

The Doña Ana County International Jetport in Santa Teresa has been steadily making improvements that increase its value to economic development in the southern half of the county.

The FAA Airport Improvement Program will fund an upgrade to the present runway, 10-28, in fiscal 2019, said William Provance, airport manager.

Provance said state capital outlay funds were used in 2016 to plan the upgrade, which will begin as soon as the FAA funds are available.

“At present, the runway is only capable of handling light corporate jets under 20,000 pounds single wheel weight,” he said. “The upgrade to the runway will allow aircraft up to 64,000 pounds dual wheel weight to land. That will mean large corporate jets and small cargo aircraft can utilize the jetport.”

He said the upgrade to the runway will encourage international traffic.

“There are several companies in the industrial park that have indicated they would ship by air if the runway was strong enough to use aircraft large enough to make it economically feasible,” Provance said.

Meanwhile, he said, the jetport awaits funding to complete other projects, including a crosswind runway that would meet FAA standards for 95 percent coverage in all wind conditions.

“The crosswind runway has not been funded, but we are planning to

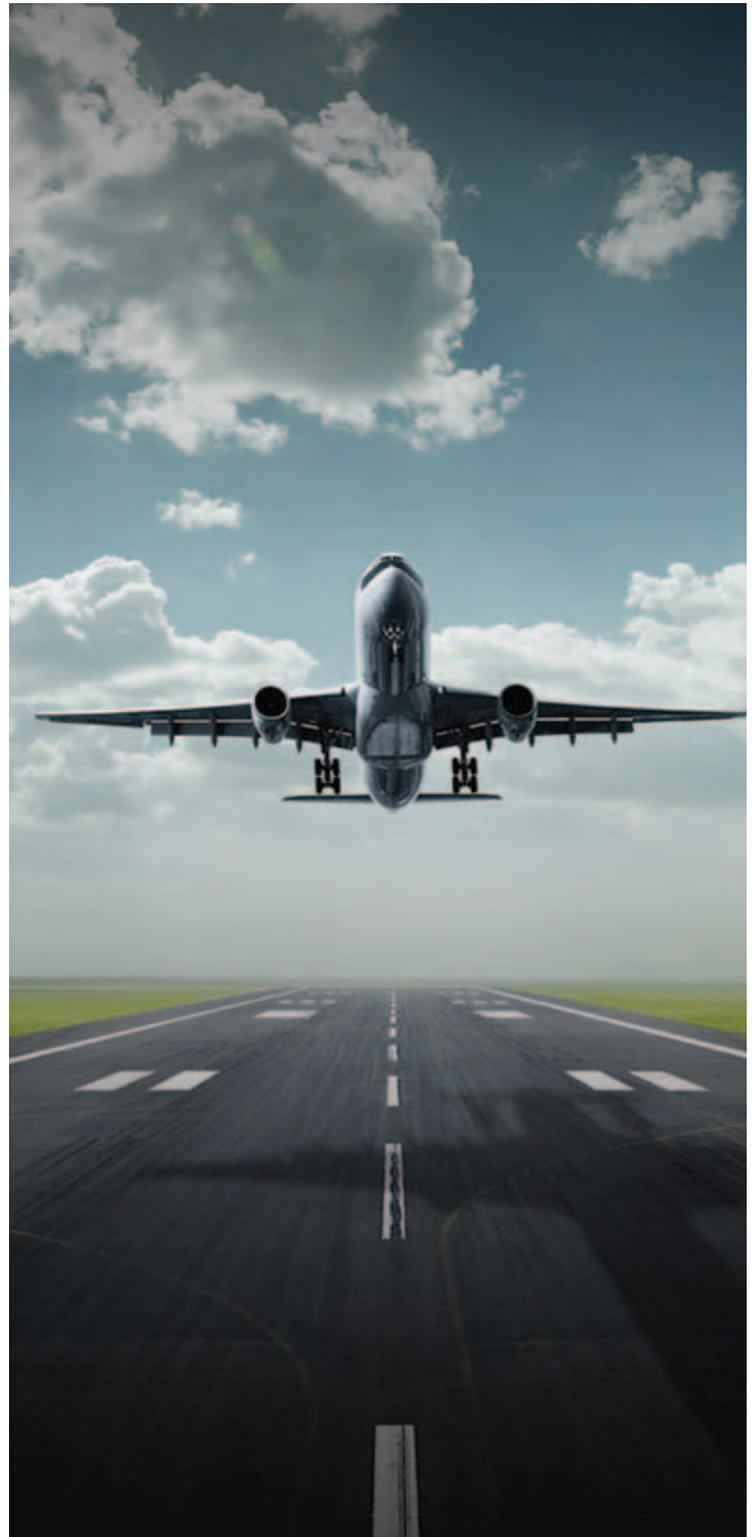
use FAA entitlement funds to start the land acquisition and environmental work over the next couple of years,” Provance said. “We will accelerate that process as funds become available.”

The runway will be built in two phases, with the ultimate buildout being 12,000 feet long with full instrument approaches.

“We are currently seeking funding for an additional T-hangar,” he said. “For the last 10 years we have had a waiting list for hangar space for small aircraft.”

The jetport is strategic, due to proximity to Santa Teresa’s industrial parks, a hub for manufacturing goods for interstate and international trade along the U.S./Mexico border. It is the third spoke of a rail, highway and air transportation system to support trade.

Commenting on recent activity at the jetport, New Mexico Border Authority Executive Director Bill Mattiace said, “The DAC International Jetport is improving in so many ways, now a full-service airport for U.S. Customs on arrival and departures. Under the leadership of Bill Provance, our county airport has completed extensive Master Border Plans, reconstruction of Runway 10-28 is in progress and the grounds and security have never been better maintained.”



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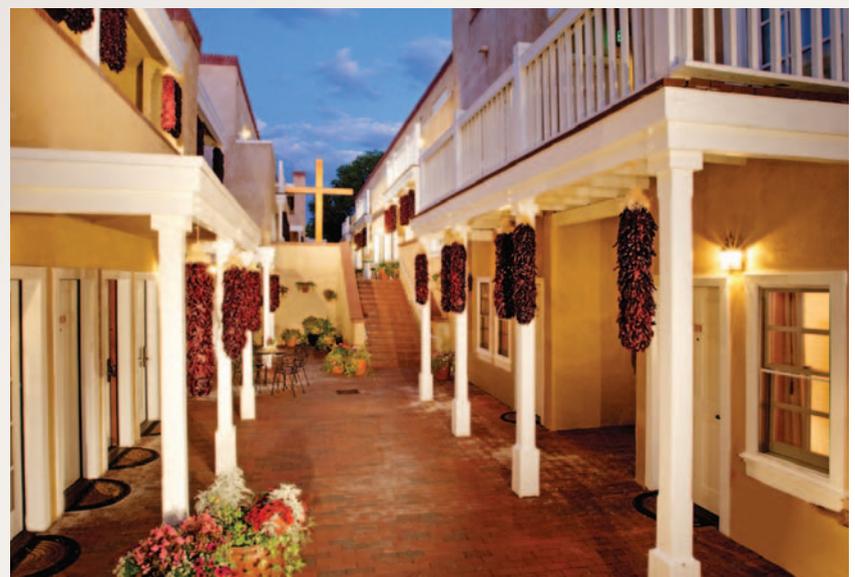
Inn and Spa at Loretto

211 Old Santa Fe Trail | HotelLoretto.com
Call 866-582-1646



Hotel St. Francis

210 Don Gaspar Ave. | HotelStFrancis.com
Call 877-901-7666



Hotel Chimayo de Santa Fe

125 Washington Ave. | HotelChimayo.com
Call 877-901-7666

*This offer applies to new bookings made between now and February 18, 2018. It cannot be combined with any other offer or promotion. Parking costs associated with this offer are (per night): \$15 for valet parking at the Inn and Spa at Loretto; \$12.50 for valet parking at Eldorado Hotel & Spa; and \$5 for self parking at Hotel St. Francis and Hotel Chimayo de Santa Fe. Blackout dates and other restrictions may apply.

Hatch



Infrastructure improvements come to Hatch, but chile crop faces labor issues

BY RICHARD COLTHARP

Hatch, New Mexico, would not be the world's Chile Capital without water, so people there understand the weight of its importance.

The latest improvement to the Village of Hatch doesn't have a lot of glitz or glamor, but it means citizens could avoid future disaster.

"We've got a new well we've been working on for four years," said Andy Nuñez, the village's mayor. "It cost a half million dollars, but we're not going to have any problems here in Hatch with our village's water supply."

The new well is expected to be operational in early 2018 after the Environment Department's approval process. The new well will be tied into the existing well, all-electric and modernized, with four miles of pipeline. The two wells will rotate, and it will give the village an important redundancy in case of flood or other complications.

"Before, if anything happened to the existing well, we would be without water," Nuñez said, adding that the new well is a result of a capital outlay project a few years ago.

"We're also getting some streets fixed up and we have

contracts out on new sidewalks," Nuñez said. "And we've got new water meters."

The computerized water meters drop the reading time from nearly three days to a half day.

A new park will also be coming in a couple of years to downtown, on two acres the village purchased from the school system.

"We don't have anything actually downtown, so this will give us a nice attraction down there," he said.

Another future improvement is less exciting than a park, but arguably more important.

"We're working out an agreement with Doña Ana County to put in a brand new solid waste facility," Nuñez said.

The existing facility has been in place for nearly 40 years and is in a flood area.

"The last big rain washed a bunch out," he said.

The plan will be similar to one the county worked with Chaparral. Hatch will turn over property to the county, and the new facility could be done in six months, even creating a few new jobs, Nuñez said.

The community was devastated in 2016 when Hatch Police officer Jose Chavez was killed in the line of duty.

"We've finally got our police department to full staff (eight)," Nuñez said. "We've got a good bunch of policemen."

The village buildings are all in good shape, Nuñez said, but new vehicles will soon be needed to replace some older, less reliable pickups.

The village recently received funding for a three-year contract to work on economic development, needed in this community where the largest employers are the school system and agricultural companies.

Chile remains Hatch's lifeblood, and 2017 was a good year because of the weather and good, well-timed rains.

Still, an ongoing issue is labor.

"We've had some trouble during green chile season," Nuñez said. "Farms have had a hard time finding enough people to pick it. Some are growing less chile than before."

Red chile season is less of a problem because the picking is different and easier, Nuñez said.



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

Administrative Staff

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Hatch, NM 87937
(575)267-5216
www.VillageofHatch.com



Grant

County aims to spend money wisely in 2018

BY ELVA K. ÖSTERREICH

Grant County is home to a diverse landscape, from the high desert on the southern end of the county to high mountains in the north. Elevations range from 4,500 to 11,000 feet above sea level. The wildlife and plant life are plentiful. The county is also known as a gateway to the Continental Divide Trail.

The Gila National Forest, City of Rocks, lakes to fish and scenic trails to wander are just a few of the environmental attractions drawing people to Grant County, both new residents and visitors. Economically, mining has always been one of the primary drivers of the county.

Currently, copper prices are high, and the mines are doing well, Silver City Grant County Chamber of Commerce President Scott Terry said.

“Western New Mexico University student population is staying good,” he said. “We also have so many different health care clinics and professionals. Those three factors really are the glue that holds this county together.”

He said Gov. Susana Martinez has been doing a good job of promoting tourism and retirement in New Mexico, two strong influences in Grant County.

There’s a lot the county wants to accomplish legislatively, Terry said, but since 2018 is a budget session, he doesn’t expect those needs to be met until 2019.

“They know that if this governor doesn’t go along with it, she’s just going to veto it,” he said. “2018 is going to be about treading water. Just keep your head above the water and don’t sink.”

“There are going to be some idiots that are going to want to spend every cotton-picking dime that they are forecasting,” Terry said. “But wanting, hoping for and getting are all different, so honestly, I don’t know what will happen.”

Executive Director of the Southwest New Mexico Council of Governments Priscilla Lucero talked about a December Grant County forum to determine legislative priorities.

The concern for some of the local governments is the decline in the state’s Small Cities Assistance Fund, which gives money back to underpopulated cities, she said. There is always a concern by local legislatures that

capital outlay dollars are properly spent, as well as the expenditure of the Colonias Infrastructure Fund.

“One of the other things that is really a critical need in this community is the need for childcare,” Lucero said.

Rep. Rebecca Dow also mentioned a need for some deregulation in the childcare realm during a December presentation in Silver City. She said there are plenty of empty buildings that could be renovated and used for the purpose, but some regulations make it cost-prohibitive to do so. She used an example of a building with windows that are three inches higher than regulations demand for childcare.

One of the things the Grant County December forum set out to do was thank the state for improving agency processes, Lucero said. Delays in disbursements of capital outlay funds have been made timelier, for example.

Capital outlay requests from Grant County entities include:

- Improvements to Silver Consolidated schools with a broad band fiber ring and data center
- New vans to improve transportation at Cobre Consolidated School District
- Western New Mexico University improvements to Harlan Hall
- Funds for information technology infrastructure, HVAC renovation, roofing and virtual desktop infrastructure
- Grant County’s primary priority revolves around roof improvements and the Grant County Detention Center and new vehicles for the sheriff’s office
- Silver City wants to focus on sidewalks
- Bayard is looking to improve streets and drainage, water and waste water systems, and recreation.
- Hurley needs a backhoe
- Santa Clara needs maintenance vehicles and cemetery improvements, as well as to purchase the first Grant County Courthouse.
- The Mimbres Region Arts Council would like to develop a Silver City-based arts center
- The Silver City Arts and Cultural District is asking for support for a Southwest New Mexico Clay Trail and Corridor to Mexico; MainStreet would like to develop a MainStreet Plaza downtown.

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

- To support hold harmless and ensure capital outlay and colonias infrastructure programs
- Support for critical water and wastewater projects
- Continue core education funding and support infrastructure and other programs
- Community health
- Support of economic development and rural investment programs
- Support of legislative initiatives such as Frontier Communities and MainStreet programs

Quick Facts

PEOPLE

Population: 28,280 (2016 estimate)
Households: 12,032 (2011-2015 5-year survey)
Median household income: \$38,311 (2011-2015)
Persons below poverty level: 22.8 percent (2011-2015)

BUSINESS

Employer establishments: 605 (2015)
Non-employer establishments: 1,550 (2015)
Total number of firms: 1,930 (2012)

GEOGRAPHY

Land area (square miles): 3,962
Persons per square mile: 7.4 (2010)



Grant County Communities

BAYARD CITY

Population: 2,304

Located in the foothills of the Gila and Mogollon mountains, Bayard was incorporated in 1938.

CLIFF

Census-designated place

Population: 293

Primarily a farming and ranching community, the post office was established in 1894.

HURLEY

Town

Population: 1,278

As early as 1801, the Chino Mines were the principal source of copper for the mint in Mexico.

PINOS ALTOS

Census-designated place

Population: 198

Spanish for "tall pines," Pinos Altos is located in the Gila National Forest, with several historic places to visit.

SANTA CLARA

Village

Population: 1,665

A part of the central mining district that includes Bayard, Hanover and Hurley, Santa

Clara was founded in the early 1860s. In the 1960s, residents from nearby Santa Rita removed their homes from the path of the expanding open pit mining operation of the Kennecott Copper Corp.

SAN LORENZO

Census-designated place

Population: 97

San Lorenzo is a scenic village located in the Mimbres Valley. The San Lorenzo Canyon Recreation area offers opportunities for hiking and primitive camping.

SILVER CITY

Town, County Seat

Population: 10,172

Silver City, the largest town in Grant County, is a hub of activity. It values and preserves its historical, cultural and natural heritage. Home to a four-year university and historic downtown and cultural district, it is surrounded by the Gila National Forest.

Source: Population from U.S. Census 2010, U.S. Census Bureau

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
575-537-4000

www.cobre.k12.nm.us

CHARTER SCHOOLS

Aldo Leopold Charter School

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

PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Guadalupe Montessori School

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

www.guadalupeмонтessori.org

UNIVERSITIES/COLLEGES

Western New Mexico University

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

wnmu.edu



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Cynthia Ann Bettison

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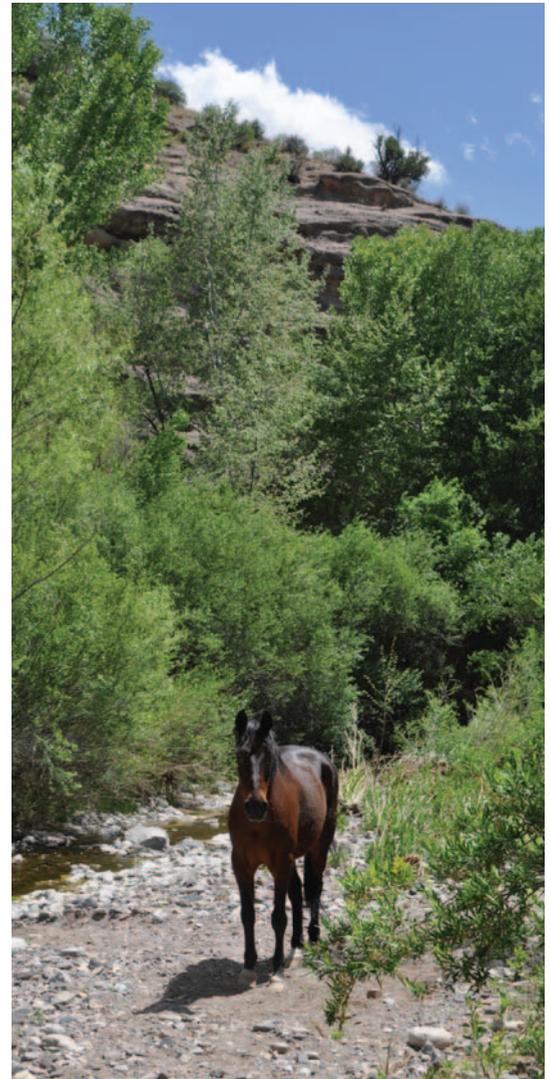
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Guadalupe "Lupe" Cano

District 4
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councilordistrict4@silvercitynm.gov



Quick Facts

PEOPLE

Population: 4,302 (2016 estimate)
Households: 1,858 (2011-2015, 5-year survey)
Median household income: \$34,444 (2011-2015)
Persons below poverty level, percent: 26.7 percent (2011-2015)

BUSINESS

Total employer establishments: 100 (2015)
Non-employer establishments: 207 (2015)
Total number of firms: 250 (2012)

GEOGRAPHY

Land area (square miles): 3,436.86
Persons per square mile: 1.4 (2010)

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

EDUCATION

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Lordsburg Municipal Schools

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

Animas Independent Schools

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

UNIVERSITIES/COLLEGES

Hidalgo Learning Center, Western New Mexico University

520 West Second St.,
Lordsburg, NM 88045
575-542-3315
wnmu.edu/ExtUniv/Hidalgo_Learning_Center.shtml

Hidalgo

Financial challenges hit Hidalgo County hard

BY MICHAEL SCANLON

Fully aware of the New Mexico's finances and political realities, officials in Hidalgo County are looking toward the 2018 legislative session with bad roads, unhappy teachers and low expectations.

"We've always got a wish list," said Randy Piper, superintendent of Lordsburg Municipal Schools, the larger of two school districts in the county with a total of about 500 students.

"I think if there's one thing we'd ask for it would be to increase our funding, so we could give our teachers a raise," he said, noting teachers' expenses – insurance, for example – keep rising while their pay remains stagnant. "My staff is taking home less money than they were five years ago."

But Piper, like others in Hidalgo County, knows the legislature comes into 2018 with a prior-year budget shortfall that must be covered and projected revenues that won't pay for operating a state so dependent on oil and gas prices.

"We need a more stable funding source, maybe," Piper said. "We're surviving, but to survive we're having to cut staff."

Recruiting teachers to come to Lordsburg for such low pay is a big part of the problem, he said.

"For a young, single teacher, would you rather be in Lordsburg or Las Cruces, where there are more recreational opportunities?" Piper said.

As a matter of necessity, the district has cut administrative staff and pinches pennies wherever it can, Piper said.

"We're trying to get smarter with some of the stuff we're doing – things like LED lighting in older buildings," he said.

LED lights use far less energy than incandescent light bulbs, and the Public Service Company of New Mexico offers an energy-efficiency rebate to help pay for them.

At city hall, Lordsburg Mayor Arthur Clark Smith was wishing for money to do road repairs in the city. Interstate 10, he said, also desperately needs attention.

"I-10 is really in bad shape from Deming to the Arizona border," he said, adding that the state and federal government should make those repairs as a matter of public safety.

As for Lordsburg, the mayor said he doesn't see much hope for capital outlay money for repairs or any new projects, based on the outcome of last year's session.

Hidalgo County Commission Chairwoman Marianne Stewart said roads are a problem across the entire sprawling, rural county.

"All our roads are in pretty tough shape," she said. "We have equipment that's old and worn out."

She said local officials can only hope that the current lean funding picture will brighten over time.

"I don't think it's going to come back to what it was five years ago, but I do think it will improve," she said.

"We're not unique in this situation," Stewart said, adding that most of the state is struggling to keep up with public finance needs. "We just don't have the economic boom going on."

To make matters worse, the shortage of state funding is compounded by an unreliable source of federal funding under the Payment In Lieu of Taxes, or PILT. It is a program under which the federal government pays counties compensation for the property taxes lost because of federal ownership of land.

In Hidalgo County, those funds amount to about \$700,000.

"Every year, we have to beg our (congressional) legislators for that money," she said. "Washington doesn't want to give us our PILT money. We really depend on it."



Hidalgo County Communities

ANIMAS

Census-designated place
Population: 240 (2016 estimate)

Founded around 1753 by the Spanish, Animas became part of the newly independent country of Mexico in 1821. A ranching community, it is located in the area sold to the United States with the Gadsden Purchase of 1853. The name probably came from the Spanish for souls, or lost souls and may refer to the numerous people who died during the early days of Apache-settler conflict.

COTTON CITY

Census-designated place
Population: 393 (2016 estimate)

The Cotton City area was centered around a cotton gin for many years. The region has had a strong farming base, growing chile, cotton, beans and corn. Cotton City is included with Animas for mail and educational services. Gas and food are bought elsewhere.

GLEN ACRES

Census-designated place
Population: 337 (2010)

Glen Acres is a golf and country club subdivision next to Lordsburg. The city of Lordsburg is working to incorporate the area in order to include it in water and sewage services.

LORDSBURG

City, County Seat
Mayor: Arthur Clark Smith
Population: 2,531 (2015 estimate)

Located on Interstate 10, Lordsburg is the county seat and most populous town in Hidalgo County. The area dates back to the 1880s, when the arrival of the Southern Pacific Railroad brought with it railroad workers, farmers, ranchers, miners and merchants. The town received publicity in the classic 1939 Western, "Stagecoach," starring John Wayne.

RODEO

Census-designated place
Population: 101 (2010)

One mile from the Arizona border on state Highway 80, Rodeo is New Mexico's westernmost town. Founded in 1902 as a rail stop, it once was an important shipping point for livestock. The town today is home to the Chiricahua Art Museum and the Chiricahua Desert Museum.

SHAKESPEARE

Ghost town

A historic mining town and stage stop founded in the mid-19th century, Shakespeare is now a privately owned ghost town open for tours. It is located 2.5 miles southwest of Lordsburg on New Mexico Highway 494. Shakespeare was declared a National Historic Site in 1970. Visit <http://www.shakespeareghosttown.com> for tour information.

STEINS

Pronounced STEENS (long e), Steins is another historic ghost town in the county. Steins is located 19 miles west of Lordsburg just off Interstate 10 at Exit #3, and is privately owned and offers tours, according to its Facebook page, Steins NM Railroad Ghost Town.

VIRDEN

Village
Mayor: Rulene M. Jensen
Population: 154 (2016 estimate)

Established by the New Mexico Mining Co. as Richmond in 1916, this site along the Gila River was chosen to build a stamp mill. In 1912, Mormons leaving Chihuahua during the Mexican Revolution entered into talks with the company, eventually purchasing the area for \$50,000 and renaming the town Virden in honor of NMMC president Ernest Virden.

Elected Officials

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Darr Shannon

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575-313-3818
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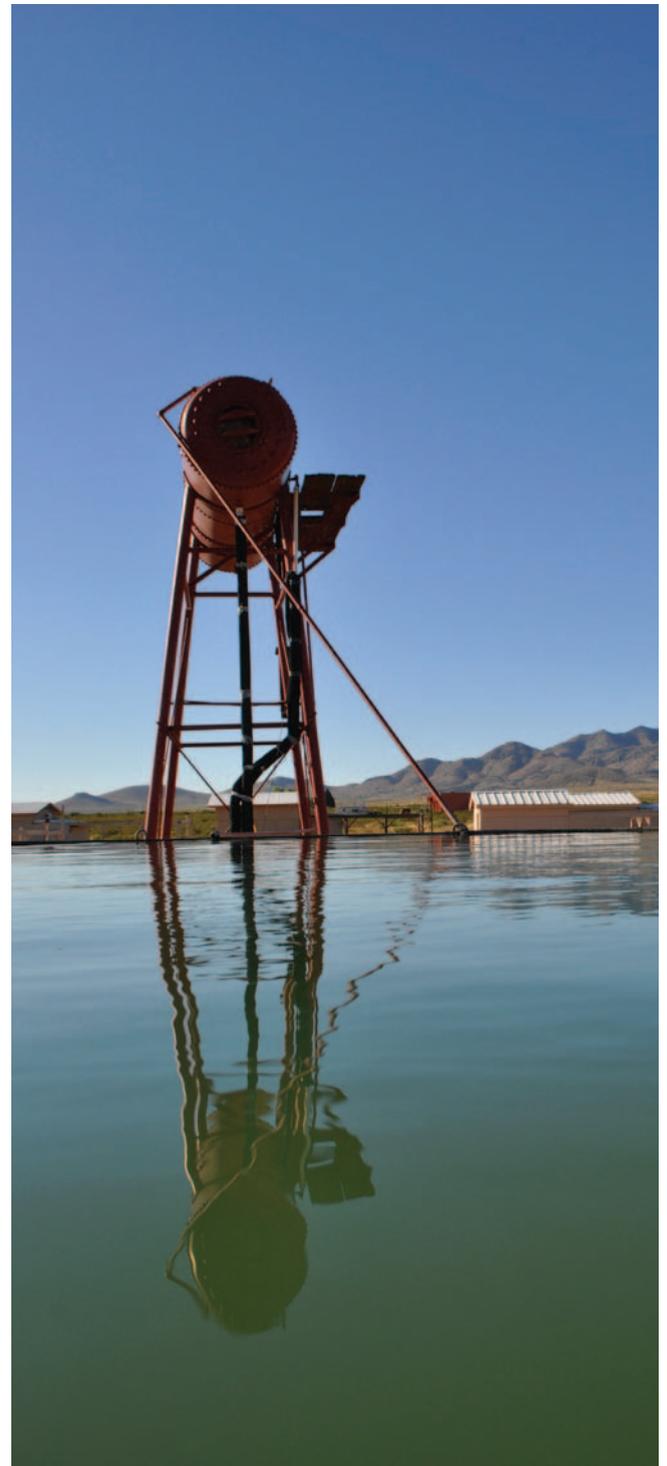
LORDSBURG CITY COUNCIL

409 W. Wabash St.,
Lordsburg, NM 88045
575-542-3259

Arthur Clark Smith,
Mayor

Councilors:

Alfredo Morelos Jr.,
Mayor Pro-tem
Alex V. De La Garza
Ernest Gallegos
Glenda Greene
Rodney Plowman
Roxann Randall



Quick Facts

PEOPLE

Population: 19,429 (2016 estimate)
Households: 8,479 (2011-2015, 5-year survey)
Median household income: \$40,708 (2015)
Persons below poverty level: 17.8 percent (2011-2015)

BUSINESS

Total employer establishments: 677 (2015)
Total employment: 5,111 (2015)
Total non-employer establishments: 1,867 (2015)
Total firms: 2,794 (2012)

GEOGRAPHY

Land area (square miles) 4,831.09
Persons per square mile: 4.2 (2010)

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



LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

- Forfeiture Act reform
- Protecting county funding of healthcare
- Tax reform
- Local Election Act
- Extend 2014 HB16 Liquor Tax distribution sunset

Lincoln

Sprawling Lincoln County treasures its past, strives for the future

BY MARTY RACINE

Believe it or not, Lincoln County of Wild West fame was once the largest county in the United States by land area.

Subsequent adjustments still leave it as one large piece of real estate, encompassing a northern tip that identifies with Albuquerque and southern regions that reflect an attitude more consistent with the mid-sized shopping destinations of Roswell and Alamogordo.

In between lie grasslands, deserts, luxurious forests and Alpine meadows. From snow to sand, Lincoln County presents an ever-shifting panorama of rugged landscapes and striking vistas.

Managing such a varied place requires a certain compromise inside county government and a sometimes-uneasy alliance of cultural attitudes – from the more conservative and rural backdrop of Corona and Capitan to the artistic aura of Lincoln and Carrizozo, from the tourist and retirement economies of Ruidoso to the generations-old culture still rooted in the picturesque Hondo Valley.

The largest town, Ruidoso, relies on tourism to drive its economy, from the summer horseracing card at Ruidoso Downs to the winter slopes of iconic Sierra Blanca, which, at 12,000 feet above sea level, stands benignly over the village's quaint Midtown.

As a tourist and second-home destination, however, Ruidoso's inflated property values tend to rise beyond the reach of the service industry workforce, which is then compelled to reside in outlying areas. This creates a class of workers with little stake in the fortunes of Ruidoso. The village recently formed the Workforce Housing Authority Board to monitor implementation of ordinances designed to create affordable housing within village limits. The issue has festered for years and is likely not to be resolved overnight.

As an old mountain town, Ruidoso has long dealt with aging water-line infrastructure and has embarked on an ambitious program to replace leaking municipal pipes. The city's main reservoir, Grindstone Dam, underwent repairs to the dam wall several years ago, necessitating a deliberate lowering of the water table.

"The (dam) liner was installed two years ago, leakage is going down dramatically," Ruidoso News reporter Dianne Stallings said in November 2017. "Combined with replacement of old water lines (the cost) is under \$3 million every two years through a voter-approved bond."

Even before the near-disastrous Little Bear Fire in 2012, the village had initiated a community-wide tree-thinning and green waste program that has become a model for the Rocky Mountain region.

For the 2018 Legislature, Stallings said, "Ruidoso listed a \$750,000 rehabilitation and upgrade to the Alto water treatment plant as the top capital outlay funding priority. Other projects are the continuing need for sewer line repair and extensions to hook up more people now on septic systems; emergency 911 mapping and addressing equipment; remodeling of the Horton Complex for village offices; continued removal of trees; and money to replace some of the bridges wiped out in 2008. Way down the list are improvements to the Grindstone Recreation Area."

Despite little population growth, outlying municipalities face their own infrastructure issues, such as water systems, fire protection, roadways and schools.

The New Mexico Association of Counties adopted a list of legislative priorities and requested each county to adopt them through resolution, Lincoln County Manager Nita Taylor told the Las Cruces Bulletin. They were passed by resolution at the Nov. 21 county commission meeting.



Lincoln County Communities

ALTO

Census-designated place

Population: 1,213

Located in the Lincoln National Forest, five miles north of the village of Ruidoso, this golf course community is at 7,300 feet and received its name from the Spanish word “high” because of its elevation.

CAPITAN

Village

Population: 1,439

Located north of the Lincoln National Forest, Capitan was founded in the 1890s and incorporated in 1941. It is both the birthplace and final resting place of U.S. Forest Service mascot Smokey Bear.

CARRIZOZO

Town, County seat

Population: 970 (2013 estimate)

Carrizozo was founded in 1899 and grew to prominence as the main railroad access for the county. The town experienced significant population growth in the early decades of the 1900s, but as the significance of railroad transport diminished, the population gradually declined. Carrizozo has a burgeoning art district downtown and is known statewide for a cherry cider drink, often found in rural convenience stores.

CORONA

Village

Population: 165

Corona was established as a stagecoach stop in the 1850s, then a railroad town in 1903. Located on U.S. Highway 54, Corona is where the famous 1947 UFO crash was first

reported and is actually closer to the crash site than Roswell, which was made famous by the incident.

FORT STANTON

State historical site

Population: 41

Built in 1855 by the U.S. government to protect settlements along the Rio Bonito from marauding Apaches, Fort Stanton was occupied by Confederate forces during the Civil War. It became the country’s first tuberculosis internment camp during World War II. It was established as a living history venue in 2008.

HONDO

Census-designated place

Population: 225

Spanish settlers in the 1880s founded Hondo where the Rio Bonito and Rio Ruidoso converge to form the Rio Hondo.

LINCOLN

State historical site

Population: 51

Originally called Las Placitas del Rio Bonito when it was first settled in the 1850s, the town was renamed after Lincoln County was created in 1869. It is the most visited state monument in New Mexico because Billy the Kid made an infamous escape from its courthouse during the Lincoln County War. Many historical buildings out of the Old West, some of them restored, remain.

RUIDOSO

Village

Population: 7,824 (2014 estimate)

Mayor: Tom Battin

The mountain resort town is a

destination for both New Mexicans and Texans seeking cooler summers and greener scenery. Located in the Sierra Blanca mountain range, the village takes its name from the Rio Ruidoso, which translates to Noisy River. Alto, Mescalero and Ruidoso Downs are considered suburbs of Ruidoso statistically, though Ruidoso Downs has its own city government.

RUIDOSO DOWNS

City

Population: 2,635 (2014 estimate)

Mayor: Gary Williams

Formerly known as Hollywood and Greentree, this city that adjoins Ruidoso draws visitors to The Ruidoso Downs Race Track, Billy the Kid Casino and the Hubbard Museum of the American West.

SAN PATRICIO

Town

Population: 564

This community is home to a Benedictine spirituality center and sits at 5,400 feet. The historic town was part of the Lincoln County War and is located on the Rio Ruidoso between Hondo and Glencoe.

WHITE OAKS

Ghost town

Population: Undetermined

Located on the outskirts of the Lincoln National Forest, White Oaks began as a gold boomtown in 1879. By the early 1900s, the mines had dried up and the town was almost – but not completely – abandoned. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, one of the town’s saloons remains open – the No Scum Allowed Saloon.

EDUCATION

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Capitan Municipal Schools

519 Smokey Bear Blvd.

P.O. Box 278,

Capitan, NM 88316

505-354-8500

www.capitantigers.org

Carrizozo Municipal Schools

800 D Ave.,

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

575-849-1911

www.cpscarninals.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

COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES

Eastern New Mexico University- Ruidoso

709 Mechem Drive,

Ruidoso, NM 88345

575-257-2120

www.ruidoso.enmu.edu

Elected Officials

LINCOLN COUNTY COMMISSION

300 Central Ave., P.O. Box 338,
Carrizozo, NM 88301
Phone: 574-648-2394

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575-808-0729
willastone@hotmail.com

Lynn Willard **District 2**

109 Nogal Place, Ruidoso, NM 88345
575-404-1794
lynnwillardlincolncounty@gmail.com

Dallas Draper, Vice Chair **District 3**

113 Alpine Village Road, Ruidoso, NM
88345
575-937-4790
dash3d@hotmail.com

Tom Stewart **District 4**

P.O. Box 515, Alto, NM 88312
575-973-7363
tstewart@lincolncountynm.gov

Elaine Allen **District 5**

P.O. Box 74, Lincoln, NM 88338
575-653-4251
eeaela@yahoo.com

RUIDOSO DOWNS CITY COUNCIL

123 Downs Drive, Ruidoso Downs,
NM 88346

Gary Williams, Mayor

575-378-7068
gwilliams@ruidosodowns.us

Judith Miller, Mayor Pro-Tem

575-378-4823
Jrmjudy07@gmail.com

Marjorie Morales

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junderwoodlaw@windstream.net

Jimmy Romero

575-973-7094
Jgromero.city@gmail.com

Shane Walker

575-626-7099
Walkerref69@yahoo.com

VILLAGE OF RUIDOSO COUNCIL

313 Cree Meadows Dr.,
Ruidoso, NM 88345
Phone: 575-257-4343

Tom Battin, Mayor

575-258-4343
tombattin@ruidoso-nm.gov

Lynn D. Crawford, Mayor Pro-tem

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LynnCrawford@ruidoso-nm.gov

Timothy Coughlin

575-973-5469
timothycoughlin@ruidoso-nm.gov

John Cornelius

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Joseph W. Eby

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Dr. Gary Jackson

575-937-2885
garyjackson@ruidoso-nm.gov

Rafael "Rifle" Salas

575-808-0430
riflesalas@ruidoso-nm.gov



Here for the health of New Mexicans.

We've been the cornerstone of healthcare in New Mexico for as long as there's been a New Mexico. We've provided care to communities across the state, beginning in 1908. Today, we continue to invest in New Mexico's future – for this generation and for those to come.

 **PRESBYTERIAN**

www.phs.org

Not-for-profit

Quick Facts

PEOPLE

Population: 24,450 (2016)
Households: 9,044 (2011-2015, 5-year estimate)
Median household income: \$28,489 (2014)
Persons below poverty level: 30.6 percent (2014)

BUSINESS

Total employer establishments: 385 (2015)
Total non-employer establishments: 779 (2015)
Total number of firms: 1,353 (2012)

GEOGRAPHY

Land area (square miles): 2,965.10
Population per square mile: 8.5 (2010)

EDUCATION

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Deming Public Schools

1001 S. Diamond Ave., Deming, NM 88030
www.demingps.org

COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES

Mimbres Valley Learning Center (WNMU)

2300 E. Pine St., Deming, NM 88030
575-546-6556
wnmu.edu/ExtUniv/deming



Luna

Port-of-entry project could be a boon for Luna

BY MICHAEL SCANLON

Like public officials across New Mexico, Luna County Manager Ira Pearson accepts the slim-to-none chance that the county will see a funding increase or money for capital improvements from the 2018 New Mexico Legislature.

“We’d like to, but we don’t expect it,” Pearson said.

But while legislators wrestle with a state budget blunted by a decline in oil and gas revenues, Luna County is focusing on an initiative it hopes will spur economic development in the county.

The plan is related to a new international port-of-entry now under construction at the border crossing just south of Columbus in southern Luna County. The new port will feature expanded capacity for commercial traffic to and from Mexico. Luna County wants to see how it can benefit from that.

“We have an \$85 million investment (in the port upgrade), and I want to make sure the state can partner with us to capture some of those dollars,” Pearson said.

The county has embarked on a \$500,000 corridor study to look at the 36 miles of N.M. Highway 11 stretching from the port to the Hatch Highway, or N.M. Highway 26, on the north side of Deming.

The question is, what

improvements must be made to the route and Luna County’s overall transportation infrastructure to handle the increased traffic, while promoting economic development and safety, and minimizing environmental impact.

A main goal is to maximize the return on whatever investment the improvements will require.

An engineering consulting firm is working on the study, which is due to be finished in the spring.

Pearson said some of the possibilities for development include truck stops, truck repair facilities, warehousing and cold storage, among other ideas.

Officials broke ground in April for the port-of-entry expansion, which will add a commercial vehicle lane and three lanes for private vehicles.

Pearson said the construction project already has brought higher gross-receipts taxes to the Village of Columbus and Luna County.

The port project, along with an ongoing \$12 million expansion of the Luna County Detention Center and various school construction projects, is giving the county an economic boost.

“We have seen an increase in gross-receipts taxes because of those,” Pearson said.

Luna County Communities

COLUMBUS

Village

Population: 1,625 (2015 estimate)

Mayor: Philip Skinner

Thirty miles south of Deming and three miles north of the U.S.-Mexico border, opposite the Mexican village of Puerto Palomas, Chihuahua, stands Columbus, the second-most-populous town in Luna County. In 1916, the town was attacked by Mexican revolutionary Francisco "Pancho" Villa, killing eight soldiers and 10 residents, in what historians refer to as the Battle of Columbus. Columbus Elementary School serves schoolchildren from both Columbus and its neighbor to the south, Palomas, by busing students across the border.

DEMING

City

Population: 14,749 (2016 estimate)

Mayor: Benny Jasso

The Luna County Seat, Deming is the largest city in the county and is home to nearly 60 percent of its population. Founded in 1881 and incorporated in 1902, Deming began as a railroad town and main port of entry near the Mexican border and has grown into an agricultural center and transportation hub. Tourism and retirement are also major industries.



Elected Officials

LUNA COUNTY COMMISSION

700 S. Silver Ave., P.O. Box 1838, Deming, NM 88031
Phone: 575-546-0491

Barbara Reedy

District 1

barbara_reedy@lunacountynm.us

Linda Smrkovsky, Chair

District 2

575-494-0512

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John Sweetser

District 3

575-546-0494

john_sweetser@lunacountynm.us

DEMING CITY COUNCIL

309 S. Gold Ave., Ste. 3, Deming, NM 88030

575-546-8848

www.cityofdeming.org

Benny L. Jasso

Mayor

575-546-8848

David L. Sanchez

District 1

575-546-3155

dsanchez505@q.com

Roxana Rincon

District 2

575-546-8848

deming@cityofdeming.org

Joe "Butter" Milo

District 3

575-546-7385

deming@cityofdeming.org

Victor Cruz

District 4

575-546-8848

valuemedicalcare@gmail.com



Quick Facts

PEOPLE

Population: 65,410 (2016)
Households: 23,668 (2011-2015, 5-year survey)
Median household income: \$39,775 (2011-2015)
Persons below poverty level: 20.5 percent

BUSINESS

Total employer establishments: 941 (2015)
Total non-employer establishment: 3,273 (2015)
Total number of firms: 3,918 (2012)

GEOGRAPHY

Land area (square miles): 6,613.21
Persons per square mile: 9.6 (2010)

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

Otero hopes to be permanent home of F-16s

BY ELVA K. ÖSTERREICH

G.B. Oliver, interim director of the Alamogordo Chamber of Commerce, said Otero County has been blessed with a great economic opportunity as F-16 fighter jet squadrons come to train at Holloman Air Force Base. Currently, the F-16s are scheduled for a temporary mission at the Otero County base, but the county is working toward making the mission permanent.

"I think you will see over the next couple of years our focus is going to be on the schools, housing," he said.

The county has brought together a single entity, MainGate United, which is assembling various committees to address the issues the U.S. Air Force has identified must be changed before it considers making Otero County the F-16s' permanent home.

"We need to be focused," Oliver said. "When this community needs a chamber, it will be the conduit through which all will flow through Holloman to the business community."

Oliver said he thinks funds for Otero County coming out of Santa Fe will be extremely limited.

"I have come to the conclusion we are going to fix our own problems," he said. "For a little while, that's the way it is."

Oliver said one concern with moving the F-16s is maintaining a skilled workforce to handle maintenance on the planes.

"The Air Force is now going to civilian maintenance," he said. "Those are A&P (airframe and/or powerplant) mechanics. You can tell an Air Force guy where he has to live, but when you are asking for civilian contractors, they have a choice. That is why it's imperative we meet the needs in this community."

Otero

New projects give rise to opportunity

BY ELVA K. ÖSTERREICH

Otero County Economic Development Council Director Mike Espiritu said the January legislative session is going to be "pretty tough" for getting anything done. But he is all for workforce support.

"I always wanted to see some type of incentive or opportunity passed by the state to keep our military in the state as part of the workforce," he said. "It's a workforce problem because we tax everyone across the board, we lose that veteran workforce to other states."

Espiritu said liquor license laws still need to be updated to increase economic opportunity. The cost of a liquor license is too high, creating a statewide challenge for small businesses, which often can't afford one. Ultimately, he said, the licenses are purchased by large companies.

Overall in Otero County, though, Espiritu said "things are moving up."

White Sands Mall is moving in new tenants since Kmart's closure, including Hobby Lobby, Melrose Fashions and Harbor Freight.

AECOM, maintenance contractors for the incoming F-16s at Holloman Air Force Base, is looking to hire 600 people.

A new call center is in the works for Otero County as well, he said.

Espiritu said another new project is in the works, a steel mill, which could be located on the edge of Alamogordo, between White Sands Boulevard and the relief route and Eighth and First streets.

"We are working through the pro-

cess," he said. "It would mean a lot of jobs. The capital investment is pretty large. It will be very impactful in our community if we are fortunate enough to finalize on it."

District 51 Rep. Yvette Herrell said the potential steel mill company, Gulf Coast Mining, has mining operations near Orogrande and Capitan.

"This is an opportunity to diversify," Herrell said. "It could be a real opportunity for us. It could bring in 1,500 to 2,000 jobs to the area."

According to Alamogordo Mayor Richard Boss's November 2017 state of the city address to the city council, the city is making strides in getting its projects in line and completed.

A major road project, aligning Florida Avenue at First Street, is nearing completion, on schedule for January 2018. The \$3.3 million project received local general obligation bond funding.

The White Sands Regional Airport has completed a \$5.25 million project using federal, state and local dollars adding a 2,200-foot runway extension, which provides an F-16 alternate emergency landing capability for the U.S. Air Force and meets requirements for the BAe-146 U.S. Forest Service fire suppression aircraft upgrade. The runway also gained some improvements in lighting and safety equipment.

In 2018, Boss told the council, the Alamogordo Police Department plans to implement a S.W.A.T. unit, develop a traffic unit and create a major crime team.



Elected Officials

OTERO COUNTY COMMISSION

1101 New York Ave., Alamogordo, NM 88310
575-437-7427
www.co.otero.nm.us

Susan Flores District 1

575-437-7427
sflores@co.otero.nm.us

Lori Bies District 2

l.bies@co.otero.nm.us
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Janet White District 3

575-415-7774
jwhite@co.otero.nm.us

ALAMOGORDO CITY COMMISSION

1376 E. 9th St., Alamogordo, NM 88310
575-439-4205

Richard A. Boss, Mayor

575-214-0024
rboss@ci.alamogordo.nm.us

Jason Baldwin

District 1
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Nadia Sikes

District 2
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Susan Payne

District 3
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Jenny Turnbull

District 4
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Alfonso "Al" Hernandez

District 5, Mayor Pro-Tem
575-921-3632
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Erica M. Martin

District 6
2945 Desert Breeze Ct., Alamogordo, NM 88310
575-430-4262
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TULAROSA VILLAGE COUNCIL

705 St. Francis Dr., Tularosa, NM 88352
575-585-2771

Ray S. Cordova, Mayor

mayor@tularosa.net

Patrick Garcia, Mayor Pro-Tem

patrick.garcia@tularosak12.us

Deanna Montoya, Trustee

deanna.montoya@gmail.com

Robert Sainz, Trustee

575-491-8577

John "Ray" Telles

jtel92211@gmail.com

CLOUDCROFT VILLAGE COUNCIL

201 Burro Ave., Cloudcroft, NM 88317
575-682-2411

Dave Venable, Mayor

villageofcloudcroft@tularosa.net

Bruce Smaga, Mayor Pro-tem

smagahouse@tularosa.net

Bill Denney, Councilor

billd@ote-coop.com

Jim Maynard, Councilor

jmaynard@greenmnt.com

Cindy Voight, Councilor

craigcindyvoight@gmail.com

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
https://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

Father James B. Hay Catholic School

Grades PK-5
1000 E. Eighth St., Alamogordo, NM 88310
575-437-7821
fjbhatholic.org

Imago Dei Academy Classical Christian School

1100 Michigan Ave., Alamogordo, NM 88310
575-434-3903
www.imagodei.academy

Legacy Christian Academy

Private, Catholic, Grades PK-12
Prep. National Top 50 Honor Roll School
3001 Thunder Road, Alamogordo, NM 88310
575-434-0352

www.legacychristianacademy-edu.com

COMMUNITY COLLEGES

New Mexico State University- Alamogordo

NMSU-A, accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, offers freshman and sophomore level classes and consists of three divisions: Humanities, Social Sciences & Education; Math, Engineering Science & Health; and Professional Occupations, Technology & Fine Arts.
2400 North Scenic Drive, Alamogordo, NM 88310
575-439-3600
www.nmsua.edu

Park University

49th FSS/FSDE 596 4th St.
Building 224, Suite 213, Holloman AFB, NM 88330
575-479-2337
www.park.edu/campus-centers/new-mexico/nm-alamogordo.html

Otero County Communities

ALAMOGORDO

City

Population: 29,850

Mayor: Richard Boss

The county seat, Alamogordo is home to the oldest zoo in the Southwest, Alameda Park Zoo, as well as the New Mexico Museum of Space History and the Clyde M. Tombaugh Planetarium. Its culture and economy are augmented by nearby Holloman Air Force Base.

BENT

Unincorporated community
Population: 119

A cross at the top of Round Mountain commemorates an 1868 battle in which soldiers and Tularosa villagers defeated Apache warriors.

BOLES ACRES

Census-designated place
Population: 1,172

Listed in Sperling's best places to live, Boles Acres has an unemployment rate of 5 percent. The median home price is \$118,700.

CHAPARRAL

Unincorporated community
Population: 14,631

The population of Chaparral, included in the Las Cruces Metropolitan Statistical area, has grown rapidly in recent years.

CLOUDCROFT Village

Population: 697

Mayor: Dave Veneable

Located high atop a forested "island" in the arid desert, Cloudcroft's elevation (8,600 feet) brings a relatively mild, wet summer that makes this Alpine village a popular seasonal destination.

HIGH ROLLS — MOUNTAIN PARK

Unincorporated community
Population: 829

Located at the southernmost tip of the Sacramento Mountains, High Rolls includes a general store, a

post office, an elementary school, two churches and occasionally a bar. It has many local attractions, including a Cherry Festival and Apple Festival.

HOLLOMAN AFB

Census-designated place
Population: Supports up to 21,000 Active Duty,

Guard, Reserve, retirees, DOD civilians and their family members Established in 1942, six miles west of Alamogordo, the base in 1948 was named in honor of Col. George V. Holloman, a pioneer in guided missile research. Total economic impact is more than \$480 million per year.

LA LUZ

Census-designated place
Population: 1,615

Founded in 1719, La Luz is the oldest settlement in the Tularosa Basin. It lies on the eastern edge of the Tularosa Basin and on the western flank of the Sacramento Mountains.

MAYHILL

Unincorporated community
Population: 80

Surrounded by the Lincoln National Forest, Mayhill is almost entirely residential, with a number of vacation homes as well as farms and ranches. The population density is two people per square mile.

MESCALERO

Census-designated place
Population: 1,338

Mescalero was originally called Blazer's Mill and was the location of a famous gunfight during the Lincoln County War. The Mescalero Apache Tribe operates tribal enterprises including Inn of the Mountain Gods Resort & Casino, Ski Apache, Casino Apache Travel Center, Mescalero Forest Products and Mescalero Cattle Growers.

MOUNTAIN PARK

Unincorporated community

Population: Unavailable

Birthplace of political cartoonist and two-time Pulitzer Prize winner Bill Mauldin. Home of the Old Apple Barn, built in 1941.

NEWMAN

Unincorporated community

Population: Unavailable

Newman, just north of El Paso, Texas, was a small railroad town and yard. It was named after Texas real estate developer Henry L.E. Newman.

OROGRANDE

Unincorporated community

Population: 52

Established as a mining town in 1905 and named Jicarilla Junction due to its proximity to the Jicarilla Mountains, the town was renamed Orogrande (Spanish for big gold) in 1906. It is a semi-ghost town that does offer a functioning gas station/convenience store.

PIÑON

Unincorporated community

Population: 71

The town is in the pinon-juniper shrub lands habitat with an altitude of 6,060 feet. The population remained stable between 2000 and 2010.

SUNSPOT

Unincorporated community

Population: 674

Located at an elevation of 9,200 feet, Sunspot is

named after the nearby National Solar Observatory on Sacramento Peak, which is open most days from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunspot has no gas station, grocery store or restaurant.

THREE RIVERS
Unincorporated community

Population: 119

The community is home to the 50-acre Three Rivers Petroglyph Site, which contains more than 21,000 glyphs dating from 900 to 1400 AD.

TIMBERON

Census-designated place
Population: 348

Considered a resort and retirement community, high in the Sacramento Mountains, Timberon has a golf course, lodge and airstrip.

TULAROSA

Village

Population: 3,031

Mayor: Ray Cordova

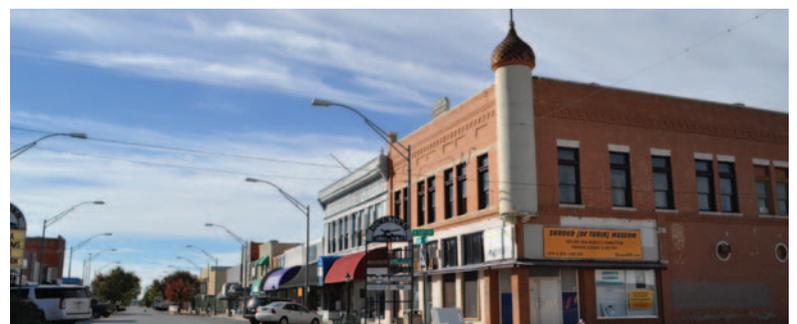
Tularosa received its name from the Spanish description of red reeds that line the Rio Tularosa. It is well known for its display of luminarias on Christmas Eve.

WEED

Unincorporated community

Population: 63

Nestled on the east slope of the Sacramento Mountains at 7,047 feet, Weed was founded in 1884 by George and Elizabeth Lewis. It was named after William H. Weed, who opened a branch store there.



Sierra

Looking back, looking forward - Sierra home to history, future in dramatic ways

BY RICHARD COLTHARP

In Sierra County, the past, the present and the future collide and co-exist perhaps like no place else in New Mexico.

The county is home to some of New Mexico's faded Old West ghost towns.

It's also home to the most futuristic structure in the state: Spaceport America.

You can find almost everything else in between.

The county's biggest city, Truth or Consequences, has seen revitalization in its downtown, owed at least in part to the economic boost from the Spaceport.

"Good things are happening," said Juan Fuentes, Truth or Consequences' city manager. "There is a new brewery (T or C Brewery) that opened and has generated new life downtown and created synergy."

"Spaceport America has been very lucrative for Sierra County, and it's only going to get better," said Bruce Swingle, Sierra County manager. "The Spaceport today represents just three percent of what it's going to be in the future."

The old and new also intertwine at the New Mexico State Veterans Home, which on Veterans Day 2017 dedicated a new \$20 million addition to its well-established facility.

"The construction temporarily increased our gross receipts tax," Fuentes said. "But the real impact will come when beds start filling up and the families start coming. It will be a special Alzheimer's unit."

The Spaceport Visitor Center is located in T or C's historic downtown, again bringing new and old together.

"The visitor center has helped the city," Fuentes said. "Having it downtown has brought in people from out of state, given us that free marketing and promotion. People want to know about the Spaceport."

Truth or Consequences turned 100

years old in 2016. Many people know the story of how the city changed its name, essentially on a dare, after the popular radio game show of the time. But that was in 1950, and fewer and fewer people know the city's original name, Hot Springs.

The hot springs remain a vital attraction for Truth or Consequences, and the dozen or so hot springs spas in and around downtown have played a big role in T or C's economic development.

The city wants to expand on that strength, and Tourism/Marketing Director Melanie Anderson has launched a new branding campaign aimed at just that.

"Our re-branding is called Hot Springs Life, and it's to give visitors something more reflective of who we are," Anderson said.

The city's name won't change back; the uniqueness of Truth or Consequences has its own attraction. The city wants more people to know learn what it has to offer.

"Emphasizing the hot springs will rank us higher because of searches and hashtags," Anderson said. "It's more than just going to the hot springs. It's about massage, hiking, biking, the lake (Elephant Butte Reservoir), the mountains, the river (Rio Grande), and we want to tell those stories."

Not all of the old things are charming, however.

At street level and below, time has taken a toll.

"Our legislative priorities are water, waterline replacement and street improvements," Fuentes said. "Those are the big-ticket priorities and the number-one projects that need funding. We're having to constantly repair aging and breaking lines in our system. We have to keep tearing up roads, which is

CONTINUED ON PAGE 88 ■



EDUCATION

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Truth or Consequences Municipal Schools

180 N. Date St., Truth or Consequences, NM 87901

575-894-8166

www.torcschools.net

COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES

Western New Mexico University

Gardner Learning Center

601 Sunset St., Truth or Consequences, NM 87901

575-894-9050

<https://extended.wnmu.edu/torc>

Quick Facts

PEOPLE

Population: 11,191 (2016)

Households: 5,044 (2011-2015, 5-year survey)

Median household income: \$29,356 (2011-2015)

Persons below poverty level: 27 percent

BUSINESS

Total employer establishments: 218 (2015)

Non-employer establishments: 720 (2015)

Total number of firms: 837 (2010)

GEOGRAPHY

Land area (square miles): 4,178

Persons per square mile: 2.9 (2010)

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

creating issues for our residents.”

Water is a priority for all of the municipalities in the region.

“We are working to create a minimum pool of water for the reservoir,” Swingle said. “Elephant Butte is the No. 1 recreational destination in the state. We have to ensure we retain and maintain it.”

To help do that, Swingle and others have created a joint powers commission including the City of Truth or Consequences, the City of Elephant Butte, the Village of Williamsburg and Sierra County.

“We’re constantly pursuing other water rights to make sure the levels stay at an acceptable level,” Swingle said, adding they are waiting on approvals from the Bureau of Reclamations. “But nothing like this has ever been done.”

And while Elephant Butte is obviously important to the economy in Sierra County, Swingle reminds people of its impact across the entire state.

“Eighty-seven percent of the State Parks’ budget comes from Elephant Butte,” he said.

Rebecca Dow, state representative for District 38, which includes Sierra County, said fishing alone at Elephant Butte has a \$2 million impact on the state.

As in other counties in New Mexico, Sierra County has a concern regarding its detention center. Often, proposed laws arise regarding the state’s detention center, without additional funding to take on new actions.

“We’re opposed to any legislation that requires more expense,” Swingle said. “About 25 percent of our general fund goes to detention.

“State tax policy is still a major concern,” Swingle said. “We want improvements, but would like to have a seat at

the table to ensure we have input.”

As for Truth or Consequences, age is a factor with many county roads, made worse by flooding.

“We have tremendous flooding issues every year,” Swingle said. “We’re prone to it because of the county’s topography. FEMA funds will restore the road to what it was, repair the damage, but will do nothing toward improvements or mitigating future flood issues.

The county has had success with modifying floodwater crossings and rip-rap (rocks gathered under wire) that have proven to prevent future problems, but it has not had enough money to do it more than on a case-by-case basis.

“Abatements and mitigation are paying off,” Swingle said. “But there are just too many roads to keep up with.”

There is also a serious need for road equipment, such as graders and loaders.

Of course, the most talked about road in Sierra County is the road to Spaceport America.

The northern road is substandard and has been under constant repair for nine years.

“To begin with, we’d like to make improvements to ensure sustainability, with the proper drainage,” Swingle said, adding that a properly done road would save the county millions of dollars in maintenance in the long run. “Every time it rains there is significant damage.”

The 22 miles of the southern road, for which Doña Ana County is responsible, was started in late 2017 and is scheduled to be completed in 2018. Swingle said the southern road features the design and flood mitigation to prevent constant damage.

Another legislative priority is to seek funding for improvements to community centers in Winston and Hillsboro, Swingle said.



Bringing attention to hidden gems MRGEDA supports region’s advantages

BY RICHARD COLTHARP

If there is strength in numbers, there is also strength in acreage.

In terms of people, Sierra, Socorro, Catron and Valencia are not the most populous counties in New Mexico, but they certainly represent a lot of square miles.

They also represent some unique and powerful qualities that increase in value when multiplied.

The Middle Rio Grande Economic Development Association was recently created to combine the strengths of Sierra County, Socorro County, Catron County and part of Valencia County.

Gail Armstrong, state representative for District 49, which includes a large portion of the MRGEDA, said the organization represents an important, collaborative step forward.

Sierra County Manager Bruce Swingle said there are five clusters in which those counties create logical synergies:

- Agricultural business
- Recreation, tourism and the arts
- Healthcare
- Forest products and renewable energy
- Technology and workforce education

“We do ag very well,” Swingle said of the industry that has historically been one of New Mexico’s most important. All four counties have a rich history of farming and ranching, and cattle – both beef cows and milk cows – maintain a strong presence.

Magdalena, in Socorro County, was home to one of America’s biggest and longest-standing cattle drive trails, which was still in use as recently as 1970.

Sheep are also raised in the counties, along with crops such as hay, alfalfa, green chile and corn silage.

Tourism, recreation and the arts in the counties are as diverse as New Mexico itself.

Technology-minded tourists are fascinated by the Very Large Array in Catron County and Spaceport America in Sierra County. History-minded tourists enjoy things like the ghost towns in Sierra, the San Miguel Mission in Socorro and Socorro’s Capitol Bar, which bills itself as the oldest in New Mexico, established in 1896. Recreational tourists enjoy the fishing at Elephant Butte Reservoir, great hunting throughout the region and the Bosque del Apache Wildlife Refuge, which draws international attention for its unique birding. Other tourists love the art and

hot springs of Truth or Consequences in Sierra, the rodeos in Socorro and the legendary Pie Town in Catron.

You might not think of healthcare but, Swingle said, those counties combine to represent 4,400 healthcare jobs, a number likely to grow with the \$30 million expansion of Sierra Vista Hospital in Truth or Consequences.

With Gila National Forest and part of the Cibola National Forest covering large swaths of these counties, there is opportunity for forest products as the U.S. Forest Service may begin thinning of its lands, potentially creating usable byproducts for energy sources.

Technology and workforce education are vital for the entire state. With prestigious New Mexico Tech in Socorro, and Western New Mexico University services in Sierra County, there is good access to higher education. And between NM Tech, White Sands Missile Range (whose land takes up 20 percent of Sierra County), the Very Large Array and Spaceport America, there is a high concentration of high-tech work in these counties.

There is much more than meets the eye, and MRGEDA (www.mrgeda.com) wants to get a lot more eyes looking at the region.

Sierra County Communities

ARREY

Census-designated place
Population: 225

The community just south of the Caballo Reservoir is where farming begins in the Mesilla Valley, producing chile, pecans, onions and other crops. The name Arrey is believed to refer to French settlers in the 1800s.

CHLORIDE

Ghost town
Population: 11

A mining town known by a couple different names in its early days, the name Chloride — based on high-grade silver ore found there — stuck and became official in 1881 when a post office was established and remained open until 1956. At its height, it had more than 1,000 people living there. Some old structures remain.

CUCHILLO

Census-designated place
Population: 35

Named for a nearby creek and a local Apache chief, Cuchillo Negro (Black Knife), the Hispanic farming and ranching community flourished from 1880 to 1930 because of its location between silver mines and the railroad in Engle. A few historic buildings have survived.

CUTTER

Census-designated place
Population: Unavailable

A railroad station 20 miles east of Truth or Consequences, Cutter once had more than 3,000 people living there during the mining boom, but now only a railroad sign remains.

DERRY

Census-designated place
Population: 49

A companion farming community to Arrey, it is the southernmost community in Sierra County with much of its corn and alfalfa grown for dairies.

ELEPHANT BUTTE

City
Population: 1,390

Supported by the water sports that its namesake reservoir attracts, the city of Elephant Butte's fortune rises and falls with the waters, but "New Mexico's Diamond in the Desert" has seen its population balloon to 3,000 when all the summer homes are occupied.

ENGLE

Census-designated place
Population: Unavailable

Once a cattle town that formed around a rail station, Engle saw its greatest growth during the construction of the Elephant Butte Dam. Today, it serves as a gateway to Ted Turner's Armendaris Ranch and Spaceport America.

HILLSBORO

Census-designated place
Population: 124 (2010)

Now a quaint small town, gold and silver mines once made Hillsboro the county seat in 1884 and it reached a population of 1,200 by 1907. Glimpses of its colorful past can still be seen, including the former courthouse and jail where a controversial trial was held for the accused killers of Col. Albert Fountain and his 8-year-old son.

KINGSTON

Census-designated place
Population: 32

Another town that rose and fell with a nearby silver mine, Kingston was touted as one of the largest and most developed towns in the territory, with Mark Twain, Butch Cassidy and The Sundance Kid among its notable visitors. It's often referred to as a ghost town, though a few hardy souls remain.

LAKE VALLEY

Census-designated place
Population: 63 (2016 estimate)

The mining town of Lake Valley was founded in 1878 after silver was discovered. Almost overnight, it blossomed into a major settlement with a population of 4,000. Today, all that remains is a ghost town, though a few folks carry on in the statistical census area. The Bureau of Land Management has restored the schoolhouse and chapel for a self-guided, interpretive walking tour.

LAS PLACITAS

Census-designated place
Population: 576

Also called Placitas or Placita, the town reportedly was founded by the Sedillo family in the 1840s, with a schoolhouse, dance hall and the San Lorenzo Catholic Church built in 1916 as its main features.

MONTICELLO

Census-designated place
Population: 135

At its peak, Monticello had more than 5,000 people living along the banks of the shallow Alamosa River. Founded by ranchers and farmers, it is best known today for its organic farms, including an award-winning balsamic vinegar made here.

TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES

City
Population: 6,103

Mayor: Steve Green

The county seat and commercial hub, Truth or Consequences is a city that is constantly trying to reinvent itself. Originally named Hot Springs, the city agreed to change its name in 1950 to that of a popular national radio show that became an early television show. An attraction always has been its access to hot springs that are featured in bathhouses and hotels. In recent years, that has been complemented by a funky eclecticism downtown and the town's position as the closest fully developed area to Spaceport America.

UPHAM

Unincorporated community
Population: Unavailable

More of a cattle unloading stop along the railroad, Upham is best known today for leading visitors to nearby Spaceport America along its unpaved southern route off Interstate 25.

WILLIAMSBURG

Village
Population: 437

Mayor: Deb Stubblefield

When Hot Springs changed its name in 1950 to Truth or Consequences, a group of residents moved down the road in protest, naming itself after the first mayor, Dr. Thomas Williams. Today, the relationship to T or C is friendlier, with T or C contracted to provide utility service to the village.

WINSTON

Census-designated place
Population: 59 (2016 estimate)

Some miners found Chloride to be too rowdy, so they moved a couple miles south, forming Winston, named after Frank Winston, a local miner, businessman and legislator. A flood in the 1950s wiped out many of the town's buildings, but Winston's home survived and a general store is still open seven days a week.

**Legislators,
we appreciate
your support**



Sierra County Commission

Kenneth Lyon, Chairman
Frances Luna, Vice Chair
Sherry Fletcher, Member
Bruce Swingle, Sierra County Manager

Sierra County

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

Elected Officials

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Frances Luna, Vice chair
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fluna@sierraco.org

Sherry Fletcher
575-894-6215
sfletcher@sierraco.org

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Sandra Whitehead, Mayor pro-tem
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Kathy Clark, Commissioner
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Rolf Hechler, Commissioner
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Joshua Frankel, Commissioner
joshua.frankel@torcnm.org

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Edna Trager, Councilor
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WILLIAMSBURG TRUSTEES

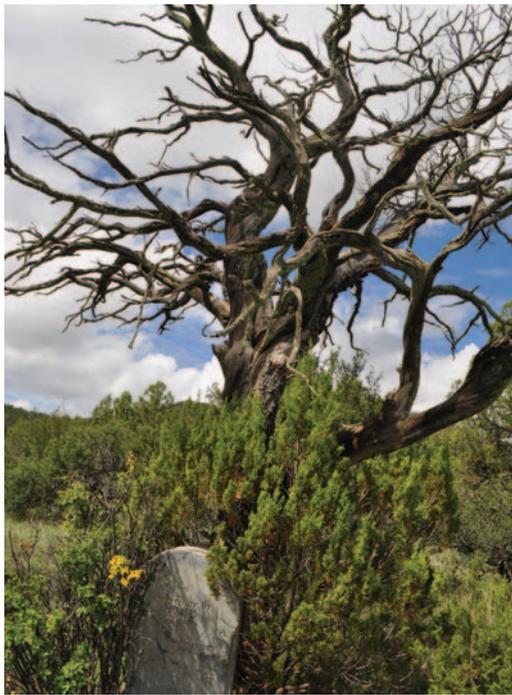
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mayor@villageofwilliamsburg.com

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

Guillermo "Spike" Hernandez
ghernandez@villageofwilliamsburg.com

Voted into office during 2017 after resignations:
Mary Gagne, Trustee
Will Frazier, Trustee



Socorro

Collaboration spurs projects, progress in Socorro County

BY RICHARD COLTHARP

First-run movies are back in Socorro, thanks to a partnership between the City of Socorro, New Mexico Tech and First State Bank, that revived the Loma Theater downtown.

As Socorro Consolidated Schools builds a new football field and track, it will get help from Socorro County on some demolition.

That collaboration helps make things go in the county of just over 17,000 people.

“All of our agencies work well together,” Socorro County Manager Delilah Walsh said.

Socorro County 2018 legislative priorities include:

- Completion of drainage study on County Road 91, in conjunction with drainage and flooding in the Lemitar-Escondida area
- Solar panels at the county detention center, the facility which has the county’s largest utility costs
- Completion of the Sabinal-Abeytas Community Center, a gathering spot and community kitchen
- Support of county cooperative extension services
- Funding for local senior centers
- Review of fiscal impact prior to any measures affecting detention

The opioid crisis is everywhere, including New Mexico, and it inevitably leads to other crime.

“The crime we see is almost 100 percent drug-related,” Socorro County Manager Delilah Walsh said. “What we’re seeing is primarily heroin, coming from Mexico.”

Walsh said the Socorro County Detention Center recently housed a mother, father, daughter and grandfather simultaneously on opioid charges.

“The problem is culturally systemic in families,” she said. “That’s what we need to stop. We need resources in place. Heroin is so hard, because it’s so addictive and the withdrawals are so painful. We’re not addressing substance-abuse treatment. We’re only addressing incarceration.”

It’s a key issue for Socorro County because of funding. Fully 25 percent of the county’s general fund is spent on detention. Because of changes in bond and bail laws, Socorro’s incarceration rates have gone down. However, the county remains responsible for replacement measures, such as monitoring ankle bracelets.

“Our detention center population has decreased, but our work has exploded on the pretrial side,” Walsh said. “That’s not saving the county any money.”

“We want legislators to know the fiscal impact of their decisions,” she said. We want them to avoid anything that would increase those expenses, putting more burden on counties for extraordinary care of inmates.

“There’s always an impact,” Walsh said.

One local program that historically helps keep kids

off the drug track is 4-H.

“That program is really, really important to us,” Walsh said. “It’s such a great investment in our kids.”

4-H is part of the county’s cooperative extension services, and Walsh hopes the legislature upholds the state’s portion of those costs, which are typically covered by the state (33 percent), the county (33 percent) and New Mexico State University (33 percent). In Socorro, the county also picks up the cost of a full-time 4-H coordinator.

“We also want to make sure entities are reporting gross receipts in the proper codes,” Walsh said. “For example, if a company in Las Cruces gets a bid to do work here, we want to make sure they file properly so we get our gross receipts tax.”

Speaking of which, the county should get a GRT bump from a \$22 million bridge project for Interstate 25 on-ramps at Lemitar.

RODEO, SOCCER AND MORE

A long-planned project gives New Mexico a versatile venue in the center of the state. The City of Socorro Rodeo and Sports Complex opened in 2017, and is designed to accommodate a wide range of events. The covered rodeo arena can host rodeo and many other types of events, and an uncovered arena provides auxiliary space. Four regulation soccer fields, including one lighted one, are ideally suited for regional tournaments. There’s also a 5K cross country track and an RV park to complement the events. The facility is also adjacent to the convention center along U.S. Highway 60.

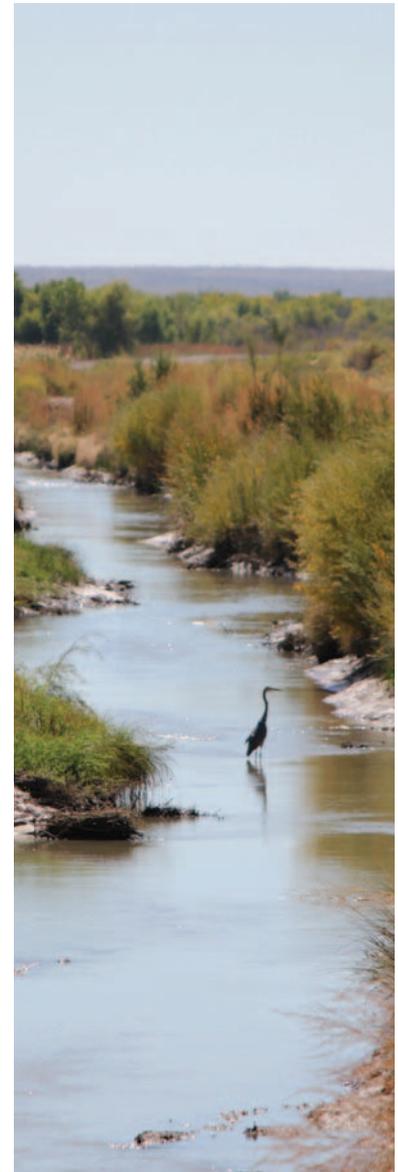
NEW MEXICO TECH

New Mexico Tech University in Socorro has done its part to keep New Mexico at the forefront of science since 1889.

President Stephen Wells is in his second full year at the university, which is planning a big project to renovate Brown Hall, Tech’s primary administration building. Funding for the renovation is part of a general obligation bond. The \$7.1 million project would provide much needed upgrades to the building, which was built in the 1940s.

FIRST RESPONSE

The New Mexico Firefighters Training Academy in Socorro continues to regularly host the Department of Homeland Security’s national first-responder training. First responders from all over the country can be found in the community, taking advantage of the unique facilities at the academy. Their presence also provides a nice economic lift to Socorro.



Quick Facts

PEOPLE

Population: 17,027 (2016 estimate)
Households: 4,957 (2011-2015, 5-year survey)
Median household income: \$34,037
Persons below poverty level: 25.4 percent

BUSINESS

Total employer establishments: 219 (2015)
Non-employer establishments: 754 (2015)
Total number of firms: 961 (2012)

GEOGRAPHY

Land area (square miles): 6,646.68
Persons per square mile: 2.7 (2010)

Socorro County Communities

ABEYTAS

**Census-designated place
Population: 63 (2016
estimate)**

This agricultural community is on the western bank of the Rio Grande at the northern end of Socorro County.

ALAMO

**Census-designated place
Population: 1,085**

Alamo is the largest community on the Alamo Navajo Indian Reservation, which has a population of 2,200.

BINGHAM

**Census-designated place
Population: Unavailable**

Halfway between Carrizozo and San Antonio on U.S. Highway 380, Bingham is known for its rock and mineral shop, where visitors can still buy Trinitite, the glass formed at nearby Trinity Site, the location of the first atomic bomb blast.

CHAMIZAL

**Census-designated place
Population: 100 (2016)**

Ten miles north of Socorro lies Chamizal.

CLAUNCH

**Census-designated place
Population: 18**

This community, named for the Claunch Cattle Co., in northeast Socorro County along state Highway 55, sits almost directly in the center of New Mexico.

ESCONDIDA

**Census-designated place
Population: 47 (2016
estimate)**

Just south of Escondida, Lake Escondida has fishing, camping and picnic areas, and is an increasingly popular recreation spot.

LEMITAR

**Census-designated place
Population: 327 (2016
estimate)**

About seven miles north of Socorro sits this agricultural community. While Hatch remains the Chile Capital of the World, the reputation of

Lemitar's chile is green and growing.

LUIS LOPEZ

**Census-designated place
Population: Unavailable**

This community, a few miles south of Socorro, is named for Capt. Luis Lopez, who in 1667 was mayor of the Piro Pueblo along the Rio Grande.

MAGDALENA

Village

**Population: 913 (2014
estimate)**

More accustomed to attention as the closest community to the Very Large Array, Magdalena made national headlines after the state's severe drought resulted in the town's well running dry. The village re-drilled the well, which did get the water flowing again, but it was pumping only about a quarter of what it previously produced. Mining (silver and zinc) and a railroad spur brought the village a period of prosperity. The spur's strategic location made it a destination for cattle drives. Cowboys from all over the Southwest drove cattle to Magdalena to load on the trains, earning Magdalena the nickname "The Trail's End."

POLVADERA

**Census-designated place
Population: 414**

A farming community on the west bank of the Rio Grande north of Socorro, Polvadera was founded in the 1620s but abandoned in 1680 after the Pueblo Revolt, when the native people rose up against the Spanish colonists.

SAN ACACIA

**Census-designated place
Population: 44**

Fifteen miles north of Socorro, east of Interstate 25 and just west of the Rio Grande, lies San Acacia, once a thriving railroad town. The San Acacia Butte was a guidepost for traders

along the El Camino Real. The community is now largely deserted, though a few families remain.

SAN ANTONIO

**Census-designated place
Population: 165**

For a small place, there's a lot going on in San Antonio, which sits just east of Interstate 25 on U.S. Highway 380. In a state that boasts about its green chile cheeseburgers, this tiny burg just may have the very best. The legendary Owl Bar & Café is on the north side of Highway 380 and the Buckhorn Tavern is on the south. Devotees of each restaurant's burgers will debate the qualities with gusto. San Antonio is also a gateway to the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge.

SAN ANTONITO

**Census-designated place
Population: 94**

San Antonito is an agricultural community along state Highway 1.

SOCORRO

City

**Population: 8,751 (2014
estimate)**

The county seat of Socorro County is home to the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, better known as New Mexico Tech. With about 2,000 students, it has a reputation as one

of the best technological schools in the nation, and as an important research center, especially for astronomy. Socorro's location along Interstate 25 echoes back to the 1600s, when the main north-south route was El Camino Real, and Socorro was an important stop along the way. The Piro Indians, who inhabited the area as far back as the 1200s, provided support and sustenance for the colonists of Juan de Oñate, who named the area Socorro, meaning "help" in Spanish. In New Mexico's territorial days, Fort Craig, south of Socorro, became a Civil War outpost and saw the 1862 Battle of Valverde. History remains an attractive part of Socorro's present-day culture, including the San Miguel Mission Church, Socorro's historic plaza and even the Capitol Bar, which was established in 1896.

VEGUITA

**Census-designated place
Population: 263 (2016
estimate)**

A farming community just east of the Rio Grande at the northern tip of Socorro County.



NRAO plans Very Large Array's next generation

BY RICHARD COLTHARP

Socorro County's "movie star," the Very Large Array, is designed to listen far into space, but its caretakers at the National Radio Astronomy Observatory are working to make sure it remains valuable far into the future.

Many are familiar with the Karl G. Jansky Very Large Array, a series of giant antennas south of U.S. Highway 60 between Magdalena and Datil. Many may not know the array went through a \$20 million, decade-long electronics upgrade that was completed in 2012, more than 30 years after the VLA's 1980 opening.

But, as the NRAO's public information officer, Dave Finley, said, "You can't stand still in science. You have to keep improving capabilities. We are looking into the future, to science challenges of the next 20 to 30 years, and what equipment you need to answer those challenges."

Every 10 years, the National Science Foundation conducts a Decadal Survey to review America's science assets and future needs. In preparation for the 2020 survey, scientists and engineers from the NRAO and elsewhere are working on a concept that would keep the VLA viable and valuable.

To meet those future needs, Finley said, the VLA would likely expand to around 200 antennas.

"We currently have 27," Finley said. "And instead of them all on the Plains of San Agustin, they would be spread out all over the state of New Mexico, and even into northern Mexico. It would give more resolving power and more sensitivity."

The additional antennas, Finley said, would likely be much smaller than the current iconic instruments, which have appeared in multiple movies and television shows over the years.

"We'll spend the next couple of years here building our case, a design with good technical specifications and rational costs," Finley said. "We've been getting input from the astronomical community."

If all goes well with the committees of the Decadal Survey, the NSF will likely approve the project. Then the NRAO would be tasked with another project, the actual construction plans. A reasonable timeline, Finley said, could see completed construction in 2025.

"We want to ensure New Mexico remains at the forefront of science for another several decades," Finley said.



To our legislators:

**Thanks for
your support**

SOCORRO COUNTY COMMISSION

Pauline Jaramillo, District 1
Martha Salas, District 2
Manuel Anaya, District 3
Antonio Ray Martinez, District 4
Glen Duggins, District 5
COUNTY MANAGER - Delilah Walsh



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NEW MEXICO GOVERNORS SINCE 1986

1986: After 16 consecutive years of Democratic governors, Republican Garrey Carruthers received 53 percent of the vote, defeating Democrat Ray B. Powell, a retired Sandia Labs senior executive.

1990: Carruthers was succeeded in 1990 by Democrat Bruce King, who was elected to his third non-consecutive term.

1994: Republican Gary Johnson became governor, the first governor to serve two consecutive four-year terms.

2002: Democrat Bill Richardson was elected governor in 2002 and reelected in 2006.

2010: Incumbent Gov. Susana Martinez, a Republican and former Doña Ana County district attorney, was elected in 2010 and reelected in 2014. She cannot run for reelection in 2018.

Democrats hope to regain governorship in 2018

BY MIKE COOK

New Mexico Democrats are hoping a 30-year election tradition continues as they look to take back the governor's office in 2018.

Since current NMSU Chancellor Garrey Carruthers, a Republican, was elected New Mexico's chief executive in 1986, Democrats and Republicans have traded wins in the governor's race either every four or every eight years.

Party control of the governor's office switched in 1986, 1990, 1994, 2002 and 2010.

The party primaries are not until June, but the state GOP appears to have settled on U.S. Rep. Steve Pearce as its choice for governor. No other Republican has announced in the race.

Pearce, 70, is a native of Lamesa, Texas and was raised in Hobbs. A retired oil-field executive, Pearce was a U.S. Air Force C-130 pilot during the Vietnam War. He was a member of the New Mexico House of Representatives for four years before winning the state's second congressional district seat in 2002. Pearce held it until 2008 when he ran unsuccessfully for the U.S. Senate. Pearce won the House seat back in 2010, and was reelected by wide margins in 2012, 2014 and 2016.

Fellow U.S. Rep. Michelle Lujan-Grisham of Albuquerque is one of four Democrats running for governor.

A native of Los Alamos, Lujan Grisham, 58, won the first congressional district seat in 2012 with 59 percent of the vote. She was reelected with the same percentage in 2014, and with 65 percent in 2016. Lujan-Grisham previously was secretary of the New Mexico Department of Health, served as director of the state Agency on Aging and was a Bernalillo County commissioner.

State Sen. Joseph Cervantes, a native of Las Cruces with 17 years of experience in the state legislature, is also seeking the Democratic nomination. Before being elected to the New Mexico House in 2000, Cervantes served on the Doña Ana County commission for four years. He is a longtime Las Cruces attorney and member of a prominent Mesilla Valley farming family. Cervantes was elected to the state Senate in 2012 and was unopposed for reelection in 2016.

Albuquerque media executive and entrepreneur Jeff Apodaca, 55, is making his first bid for elective office in the Democratic gubernatorial primary. He is the son of former Gov. Jerry Apodaca. Jeff Apodaca was vice president and general manager of Univision in Albuquerque before entering the governor's race. He grew up in Las Cruces and Santa Fe.

The fourth announced Democrat running for governor is Peter DeBenedittis, 59, a native of Newark, New Jersey who moved to Santa Fe in

1995. With a Ph.D. in speech-communication, DeBenedittis founded Peter D. & Company in 1999. The company provides education and drug prevention services to New Mexico schools, counties and state agencies.

"All signs in the Democratic primary point to Michelle Lujan Grisham heading into 2018 as the favorite," Heath Haussamen of Las Cruces, editor and publisher of NMPolitics.net, said in October.

"She's raised lots of money, consolidated support and run a fairly solid campaign. She's not unbeatable, but it will be difficult to top her in the primary. No other candidate has yet shown the strength and momentum to make me think they can do that, but anything is possible."

"As for the general election," Haussamen said, "I've yet to be convinced that Steve Pearce can win a statewide race. His history suggests otherwise. But again, anything is possible. That said, neither Trump nor incumbent Martinez are popular in New Mexico at this point. Given that and the increased level of activism and voting on the left we've seen in 2017, I suspect 2018 will be a strong year for Democrats in New Mexico."

"Lujan Grisham is far ahead in the money race and as a sitting congresswoman she has other built-in advantages," said political blogger Joe Monahan of Albuquerque, who has covered New Mexico politics as a journalist and consultant for more than 40 years. "She is the current front-runner but there is plenty of time for Joe Cervantes or Jeff Apodaca to get the race in play, but they will have to get busy."

"New Mexico is a Democratic state currently presided over by an unpopular Republican governor," said Monahan, author of the long-running and popular blog "New Mexico Politics with Joe Monahan" (joemonahan.com). "The state will be ranked 'lean Democrat' or 'likely Democrat' well into the election year. Having said that, Pearce is an experienced and tough campaigner. Democrats will not take him for granted."

The New Mexico Democratic and Republican primaries are Tuesday, June 5. The general election is Tuesday, Nov. 6.

The statewide turnout was about 40 percent in 2014 (the last governor's race) and about 53 percent in 2010. It was about 62 percent in 2016.

As of Dec. 30, 2016, New Mexico had almost 1.3 million registered voters, including 600,770 (46 percent) Democrats, 402,457 (31 percent) Republicans, 243,581 (19 percent) declined to state and 49,304 (four percent) other.

Tax reform unlikely in short session

BY MIKE COOK

New Mexico State Senate Finance Committee Chairman John Arthur Smith, D-Luna, Hidalgo, Sierra and Doña Ana, said he doesn't think it's likely tax reform will be a serious issue during the 2018 legislative session – given the state's political situation at present as well as the limitations of a short session.

"It would be easier if the governor's approval rating wasn't 37 percent," he said. "We need tax stability. We don't have a tax department that can tell us if we're revenue-neutral or not."

Of the state's 200 or so tax exemptions, he said, five to 10 generate about 75 percent of the revenues. The state ended the tax on food and some medical services more than a decade ago, Smith said. Since then, he said, New Mexico has been paying millions of dollars in subsidies to local governments in lieu of the lost tax revenue. The state will pay about \$1 billion during the 15-year phaseout of the "hold harmless" payments, Smith said. The legislature passed the phaseout and it was signed by the governor in 2013.

Because state revenues are improving, City of Las Cruces lobbyist Larry Horan told the Las Cruces City Council in late September that the legislature is less likely to eliminate hold-harmless payments during the 2018 session.

Earlier this year, the state hired professional services company Ernst & Young to evaluate New Mexico's tax code. Smith said Ernst and Young will study tax policy in other states and will look at what tax concessions, including exemptions, deductions and credits, are costing the state in revenue.

"About half of all revenue that the state does not collect as a result of tax breaks comes from three sources: multiple extractive industry tax breaks (comprising 27 percent of all tax breaks); two broad gross receipts tax breaks that benefit all New Mexicans (17 percent); and nonprofit organizations' exemption from gross receipts tax (eight percent)," former State Auditor Tim Keller said in a September 2017 report. "The remaining

one-half of all tax breaks span multiple industries, sizes and types of programs." Smith said he does not expect Ernst and Young to issue a report in time for the 2018 legislative session.

While he expects some discussion of tax reform at the 2018 session, Sen. Bill Soules, D-Doña Ana, said a 30-day session gives legislators only a short amount of time to study and understand complex tax proposals.

"How can we work around the food tax and the tax breaks we've been given to get back on really solid ground," said state Senate President Pro Tem Mary Kay Papen of Las Cruces.

The 2003 state Blue Ribbon Tax Reform Commission studied tax reform and stabilization, Papen said.

Comprehensive tax reform is essential "to better position New Mexico as we compete for businesses large and small," Lt. Gov. John Sanchez said. A simplified tax system, he said, will make the state better able to compete with other states for jobs.

Tax reform is needed in New Mexico, said Rep. Bill McCamley, D-Doña Ana, and should include "a fair tax on the wealthy and well-to-do."

McCamley said he would not support any additional tax burden on working people, who he said are struggling to "pay the grocery bill, much less paying for their children's education."

To see a copy of the presentation to the New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee in August 2017, download the PDF at www.tax.newmexico.gov/uploads/PressRelease/e19f5d4c-8b014c6d870f8073d673341b/August_2017_Forecast_TRD_Testimony_to_LFC.pdf.

To see a copy of the September 2017 transparency report from the office of the state auditor, download the PDF at www.saonm.org/media/uploads/Tax_Ex_Transparency_Report.pdf.

“How can we work around the food tax and the tax breaks we've been given to get back on really solid ground? – Sen. Mary Kay Papen, D-Doña Ana County”

Mechem was state's first governor from Las Cruces

BY MIKE COOK

If elected in 2018, state Sen. Joseph Cervantes, D-Doña Ana, would be New Mexico's fifth governor from Las Cruces.

It took until 1950 – 38 years after statehood – before New Mexico elected a chief executive from Las Cruces. Voters had chosen governors from Las Vegas, Portales, Roswell, Gallup, Clovis, Tucumcari, Santa Fe, Albuquerque and even tiny White Oaks and Encino before electing Las Cruces attorney and New Mexico House of Representatives member Edwin L. Mechem, a Republican, in 1950.

Mechem, an Alamogordo native, defeated former Democratic Gov. John Miles, becoming the state's first Republican governor in 20 years. He was re-elected in 1952, but barred by state law from running again in 1954.

Mechem skipped a term and then defeated incumbent Democrat John F. Simms in 1956. Democratic State Rep. John Burrows of Portales defeated Mechem by less than 2,000 votes in 1958.

In a 1960 rematch, Mechem defeated Borrows by about 2,000 votes. He served a single two-year term and then lost to Democrat Jack Campbell, a state representative from Albuquerque, in 1962.

Mechem served as a New Mexico U.S. senator from 1962-64 and was a long-time federal judge. He died in 2002 at age 90.

Then-state senator Jerry Apodaca, D-Doña Ana, became the second Las Cruces elected governor in 1974, serving a single four-year term.

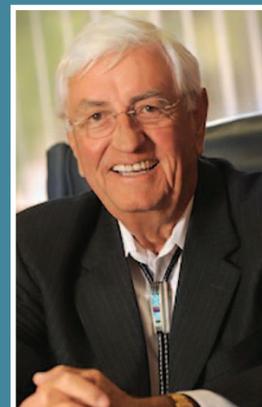
NMSU Chancellor Garrey Carruthers, a Las Cruces Republican, was elected governor in 1986. He was the last of four governors who served one four-year term and could not succeed himself.

Incumbent Gov. Susana Martinez, also a Las Cruces Republican, and the former Third Judicial District attorney, was elected in 2010 and re-elected in 2014.

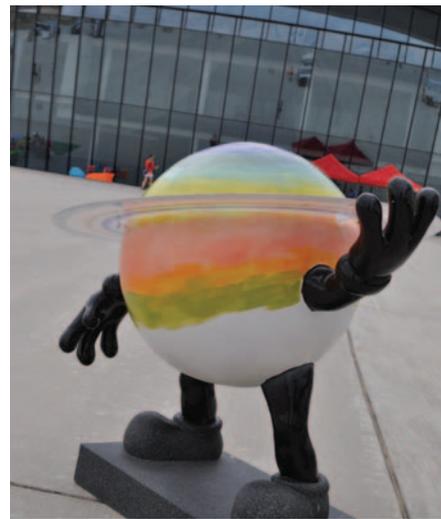
So, as of 2018, New Mexico has had a governor from Las Cruces for almost 24 of its 112 years of statehood.



Former New Mexico Gov. Edwin L. Mechem



NMSU Chancellor Garrey Carruthers



Battle heats up for commercial space exploration in New Mexico

BY ELVA K. ÖSTERREICH

Spaceport America Director Dan Hicks said it is New Mexico's destiny to have a space transportation center.

"It's because we are the best place in the nation – there are so many natural things that give us this right," he said.

He is talking about the altitude, the air space supported by White Sands Missile Range and the facility with its support systems in the middle of the New Mexico desert.

For the 2018 legislative session, Hicks is going to bat for more funding to keep New Mexico's spaceport competitive in the world. The facility started strong, one of the few places to be if one was looking for a place for a commercial business to look into connecting with space.

"Ten years ago New Mexico was leading, a trendsetter for access to commercial space," Hicks said. "Now there are 10 others licensed and nine more with applications. We are at a critical juncture."

In 2014 and 2015 the commercial space industry had some setbacks with accidents and mishaps happening in most of the large companies, but things are moving again, and New Mexico needs to move with it, he said.

"The space industry has recovered and now more money is being spent than ever," he said. "Now we need a little seed money to build on what we have. We are falling behind because we haven't had the funding."

Hicks said while Florida and Vermont are pumping \$20-30 million into their

facilities, Spaceport America isn't operating at anything like those levels. They are asking for an increase in funds this year from \$375,000 to \$1million.

Spaceport America is not so much about a return on financial investment, Hicks said. It's about supporting and creating a space economy that drives jobs, and New Mexico as a destination. To continue to do that, Hicks said he needs more employees.

"I am looking for people, aerospace engineers, an air space specialist, a master planning and facilities manager so I can continue to grow spaceport," Hicks said. "We are not growing because I don't have the staff to grow."

"Virgin has started outfitting their hangar terminal at Spaceport," he said. "When they finish flight testing in the Mojave they will be here soon."

Three of the four NASA Flight Opportunities Program participants are committed spaceport tenants, he said.

Legislatively, Spaceport is also looking for support for the Commercial Space Protection Act which provides spaceport customers with protections from the premature disclosure of sensitive proprietary information.

Also, Spaceport America requires a long-term facility expansion in accordance with a master plan to facilitate additional development.

"We are going to need facility upgrades," Hicks said.

Long-term capital outlay requests include money for a taxiway, payload processing center, vertical launch area improvements and fuel farm expansion.

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