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# Table of Contents

**Forward** .................................................................................................................................................................................. 5  
 About New Mexico First ........................................................................................................................................................................ 5  
 The Town Hall Process .......................................................................................................................................................................... 5  
 This Report .......................................................................................................................................................................................... 5  
 Authors & Editors ................................................................................................................................................................................ 5  
 Research & Review Committee ........................................................................................................................................................... 5  
 Regional Forum Participants ............................................................................................................................................................... 6  

**Introduction** ................................................................................................................................................................................ 7  
 Rural Life ........................................................................................................................................................................................... 7  
 What is Rural? ..................................................................................................................................................................................... 7  
 What is Economic Development? .................................................................................................................................................... 7  
 Water Barrel Metaphor ....................................................................................................................................................................... 8  
 Primary Industries .............................................................................................................................................................................. 8  
 Secondary Industries ........................................................................................................................................................................ 9  
 Measuring Economic Development .................................................................................................................................................. 9  
 New Mexico’s Economic Rankings ................................................................................................................................................... 9  
 New Mexico Industries ....................................................................................................................................................................... 10  
 Federal Investments ........................................................................................................................................................................... 10  
 Affordable Housing ........................................................................................................................................................................... 11  
 Environmental Sustainability .............................................................................................................................................................. 11  
 Potential Process Difficulties .......................................................................................................................................................... 11  
 Making Choices .................................................................................................................................................................................. 11  

**Economic Development Approaches** ............................................................................................................................................... 12  

**APPROACH 1: Focus on Business Development** ....................................................................................................................................... 13  
 Summary ........................................................................................................................................................................................................ 13  
 Economy and Population ..................................................................................................................................................................... 13  
 Traditional Strategies ......................................................................................................................................................................... 13  
 Labor Shortage ................................................................................................................................................................................... 13  
 Addressing the Labor Shortage .......................................................................................................................................................... 14  
 A Quality Workforce .......................................................................................................................................................................... 14  
 WorkKeys ......................................................................................................................................................................................... 14  
 CASE STUDY: Rio Rancho & Intel ................................................................................................................................................ 15  
 Actions That Grow the Economy ....................................................................................................................................................... 15  
 Charting a Path .................................................................................................................................................................................... 15  
 CASE STUDY: Clovis .......................................................................................................................................................................... 16  
 Implications and Tradeoffs of the Business Development Approach ...................................................................................................... 16  
 Notes/Comments on Approach 1 .................................................................................................................................................... 16  

### APPRAOCH 2: Focus on Community Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving the Community</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet Workers</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Class</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Attractions</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASE STUDY: Silver City</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are New People Always a Good Thing?</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smart Growth</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MainStreet</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Leadership</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASE STUDY: Santa Rosa</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications and Tradeoffs of the Community Approach</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes/Comments on Approach 2</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### APPRAOCH 3: Focus on Regional Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regionalism</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASE STUDY: Bueno Foods</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is a Region?</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASE STUDY: Southeastern New Mexico Regional Air Service</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why Collaborate Regionally?</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Public Services</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASE STUDY: Siroli Projects</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased Local Responsibilities</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Trading Partners</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASE STUDY: Gallup and the Navajo Nation</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadband</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASE STUDY: Spaceport America</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications and Tradeoffs of the Regional Development Approach</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes/Comments on Approach 3</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Concluding Thoughts

Concluding Thoughts .................................................................................................................. 25

### Appendices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appendix</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX A: Current Economic Development Programs</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Training Incentive Program (JTIP)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other EDD Activities</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Department of Agriculture</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Small Business Administration</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Business Investment Corporation</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico Economic Development Partnership (NMEDP)</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico Community Capital</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico Rural Development Response Council (NMRDRC)</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Economic Development Act (LEDA)</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B: Economic Development Recommendations from Previous New Mexico First Town Halls ...............28
  2004 Statewide Town Hall on Small and Emerging Business .................................................................28
  2005 Statewide Town Hall on Federal Investments in New Mexico .........................................................29
  2006 Statewide Town Hall on Higher Education .................................................................................29
  2007 Statewide Town Hall on Healthcare Reform ...............................................................................30
APPENDIX C: A Brief Economic Evaluation of 27 Non-Metropolitan Counties ...........................................31
  Population ..............................................................................................................................................31
  Worker Earnings (place of work) .............................................................................................................32
  Employment – Jobs .................................................................................................................................33
  Earnings Per Worker – Wages ..................................................................................................................34
  Per Capita Income Maintenance ...........................................................................................................35
APPENDIX D: USDA County Demographic & Socioeconomic Information .....................................................36
APPENDIX E: Remedial Education .............................................................................................................38
APPENDIX F: County-Level “Creative Class” Measure ............................................................................39
Forward

About New Mexico First

New Mexico First is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that engages citizens in public policy in order to improve the state. Co-founded in 1986 by U.S. Senators Pete Domenici (R-NM) and Jeff Bingaman (D-NM), the organization brings people together for two- and three-day town hall meetings. These town halls use a unique consensus-building process that enables participants to learn about a topic in depth, develop concrete policy recommendations addressing that topic, and then work with fellow New Mexicans to help implement those recommendations with policymakers.

New Mexico First was created to answer the question: “What would it take to make New Mexico first in national rankings, instead of near the bottom? (Historically, the state often has ranked poorly in factors like poverty, education, or health.) Regardless what topic is being covered in a town hall or forum, we continue to focus on how to strengthen the state.

The Town Hall Process

New Mexico First town halls are not typical conferences with day after day of presentations. There will be a few guest speakers to help set the context, but the bulk of the town hall is comprised of small group discussions among citizens who care about the topic.

Using New Mexico First’s proven consensus-building process, the three-day town hall will ask participants to share their best ideas for improving the state’s rural economies. Because citizen discussion is at the heart of this process, we ask participants to take an active part in all three days of the event.

On day one of the town hall, participants are divided into their small groups to discuss the issues and answer a common set of questions. On day two, participants begin refining and combining those answers. On day three, participants come together as a full group and finalize their consensus recommendations.

This Report

New Mexico First’s Board of Directors chose the topic of this town hall in August 2007, based on input from citizens throughout the state. Regional forums were held in five New Mexico communities to hear people’s concerns and hopes regarding economic development issues. This report is based on the feedback received from those regional forums and from a committee of volunteer reviewers.

A number of New Mexicans contributed to this report. The reviewers were not paid; instead they donated their time as a demonstration of their support of the town hall process. New Mexico First thanks all the people who lent their expertise to this document.

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Introduction

About this Guide
This background report is designed to help participants prepare for the New Mexico First town hall, Business as UNusual: A Town Hall on Rural-Urban Economic Development. The event will be held March 27-29, 2008 in Ruidoso.

The town hall will focus on rural economies, including the possible value of rural-urban partnerships. This guide is organized around three main approaches that rural communities might consider, along with an introduction that provides context for all three. The approaches are not mutually exclusive, and most readers will find their opinions reflected in more than one.

Note: There are few right or wrong answers, and the problems around economic development issues are complex. As a result, no brief explanation of the situation – including this report – can hope to cover all the information and opinions available. The contributors have provided their knowledge and advice, but ultimately the people and policymakers of New Mexico must decide what to do.

Rural Life
New Mexico is a predominantly rural state. The vast majority of our land is undeveloped, and many New Mexicans like it that way. However, while 79% of our counties are classified as rural (26 out of 33), only 35% of our people actually live in rural areas. This percentage continues to decline.

Many people are emotionally drawn to the idea of living in a small town and are deeply concerned about the preservation of agricultural lifestyles and cultural identities. However, practical issues like good jobs, salaries, access to medical care, or convenience bring many small town residents to the cities. Increasing numbers of New Mexicans eventually move to the Albuquerque area, Las Cruces, or out of state.

This outflow of people is making it difficult for rural communities to remain vibrant. In some cases, they seek to maintain or grow their communities by offering incentives to new businesses. Other places focus on cleaning up their town so it is more welcoming. Others try to build trading relationships with larger businesses in Albuquerque or Las Cruces, growing their community through partnerships. Some communities try to do all those things and more.

Whatever the approach, most New Mexicans agree that rural life is a critical element of our heritage and culture.

What is Rural?
The federal government defines counties as “rural” and the related term “frontier” (which essentially means really rural) using a complex set of measurements including the number of people in a county, the number of people per square mile, and the distance of a community from a metropolitan area.

For the purpose of this report and the town hall, we will keep it simple. We are considering all New Mexico towns other than Albuquerque, Rio Rancho, Santa Fe, and Las Cruces to be rural, since they face similar challenges. We also encourage readers to bear in mind that very small rural communities, such as Elida or Roy, confront different hurdles than their less rural counterparts like Gallup or Artesia. There are 12 New Mexico counties that are extremely rural with five or fewer people per square mile (compared with Bernalillo County’s 477 per square mile).

What is Economic Development?
Economic development is a term that often gets used without definition. Some people say that it is an activity exclusively devoted to increasing wealth in a community. Others take the opposite extreme and say that economic development is practically any activity that improves the community. For the purpose of this report, we will adopt an explanation that meets in the middle.

—


2 U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1, Matrix P1. Available at factfinder.census.gov/servlet/TMSubjectAllThemesServlet?_lang=en&ds_name=DEC_2000_SF1_U&ds_label=Census+2000+Summary+File+1+(SF+1)+100-Percent+Data
Economic development is an integrated activity through which government, business, education, and the community work together to create a vibrant local economy that:

- Encourages local enterprise
- Serves the needs of local residents, workers, and businesses
- Promotes stable employment and revenues by building on local competitive advantages
- Protects the natural environment
- Is capable of succeeding in the global marketplace

Water Barrel Metaphor

A community’s economy can be described metaphorically as being like an old water barrel. Water flows into the barrel from numerous sources each at a different rate.

Within each community, the water in the barrel represents the total money available, including local government funds, business assets, individual accounts, and so on. That money leaks out of the community as it is spent elsewhere.

The downspouts that bring money back into the community are primarily businesses that manufacture locally but sell their products outside the area. The more that a business gets its supplies locally and sells its products or services elsewhere, the more leakages are blocked, keeping more “water” in the barrel. These businesses that bring in outside money are called primary industries, and they produce the coveted “economic base” jobs.

An economic base job is any job that produces a product or service that is sold outside the community and thus brings in outside money. Most economists believe that the economic base job is the most important factor to a healthy economy.

Economic base jobs often include agriculture, mining, oil and gas, energy, manufacturing, tourism, federal employment, and more recently, exported services.

A community does not necessarily improve as water in the barrel rises. It just has more revenue per person to work with. Economic development is the act of strengthening an economy and thus increasing the amount of money a community has to invest in improvements.

The amount of water in the barrel (the size of local economy) can be increased or maintained two ways:

- Increasing or maintaining the amount flowing into the barrel by recruiting, expanding or starting up economic base enterprises
- Reducing the amount leaking out by improving the range and quality of products and services produced locally

Practically all communities will want some kind of economic development, regardless of their current condition. Some places will find it challenging to maintain their community quality because expenses for schools, road repair, health care, and other costs continue to climb. Communities that do not maintain their economic strength in proportion to these costs will experience difficulty.

Primary (Economic Base) Industries

The economic bases of most rural communities have undergone great change over the last 25 years. Traditional rural economic base sectors of agriculture, mining, and oil and gas are being increasingly mechanized. This means they are employing fewer people. Similarly, large-scale manufacturing has steadily declined and this industry continues to be subject to price fluctuations.

In addition, the income from these primary industries can change dramatically and unpredictably over time, all dependent on market prices. This type of change can lead...
to boom-and-bust cycles. When uranium prices are low ($15/pound in January 2004), communities like Eunice and Grants that are dependent on uranium mines might be hard-pressed for cash; when prices are high ($136/pound in June 2007), these communities must be prepared to deal wisely with the sudden spike in their income\(^4\).

Long-term planners point out that agriculture and extractive industries use local natural resources that may not always be available. Wells may dry up, mines may play out, soil may be depleted, and so communities may have to find alternatives. Farmers and ranchers throughout the Southwest face droughts and competition for water, which threaten the economic base and way of life.

### Secondary Industries

Businesses that do not sell goods or services outside the local community do not count toward economic development directly, although they are a necessary part of the community. The local coffee shop or hardware store that serves mostly local people are secondary players in any community’s economic picture; they keep the community functioning and attractive. These service sector jobs affect how long the money brought in by the economic base employers circulates in the local economy.

However, adding jobs in the service sector only really helps if they produce goods and services the community is currently going out of town to buy. Adding more fast food restaurants, for example, rarely helps the economy or stops someone from going out of town to eat\(^5\).

How well secondary industries actually strengthen the community economically depends on a couple of factors:

- If these businesses use locally produced products and services, they keep money \textit{in} the community.
- If they buy their supplies from outside the local area, or if they end up sending their profits away to distant corporate headquarters, then they can do more to move money \textit{out} of the community than into it.

### Measuring Economic Development

There are a wide range of measurements that are used to judge how well a community is doing economically. Some of the most common are presented below.

**Gross domestic product (GDP)** is the total market value of all goods and services produced within the community within a given period of time (usually, a calendar year). This is a calculated figure, based on:

- household expenditures
- capital investments by businesses or households
- government expenditures
- gross exports and imports

**Job creation statistics** are also often used as a measure of economic growth, particularly when the community has a high unemployment rate, and therefore many people needing jobs.

**Average personal and household income** can also serve as a metric for economics on the individual level.

**The unemployment rate** measures the percentage of people actively seeking employment within the last four weeks who are not working. This does not measure people who could be in the labor force but who are not interested in working, such as retirees, full-time parents or students, or people who have given up on looking for work.

**Poverty rates** measure how much money families have for housing, food, and other expenses. Rates are developed by the U.S. Census Bureau, vary depending on the number of people in the household, and change annually. For example, the 2006 poverty level for a person under 65 years old is $10,488\(^6\).

### New Mexico’s Economic Rankings

While New Mexico is considered one of the poorer states in terms of per capita income, our numbers are improving. Statistics that set the context follow:

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\(^4\) Uranium prices taken from www.cameco.com/investor_relations/ux_history/historical_ux.php

\(^5\) Source: Interview, economic developer Mark Lautman, Mesa Del Sol.

• The state had a per-capita GDP of $31,986 in 2006, putting the state at 40th out of 50 states.
• The state ranks 47th out of the 50 states for per capita income. Our average is $24,291, while the U.S. average is $30,547. It ranges from a high of $51,000 in Los Alamos County to a low of $17,000 in Cibola.
• In December 2007, New Mexico ranked 11th of the 50 states on its seasonally adjusted unemployment rate, with 3.7% of the population unemployed.
• New Mexico has the fourth highest rate of poverty in the nation, with 18.5% of New Mexicans living below the poverty line. In 2006, McKinley County had the highest proportion of people living in poverty (44%) of any smaller county in the U.S.

Because our state varies so much from county to county, these rates may not reflect the situation in your area. For a better picture of your community, please see the county-level data, available in Appendix A.

New Mexico Industries

When New Mexico communities consider how to strengthen their economies, it is helpful to understand some of the major industry sectors that provide economic base jobs here.

• Mining, oil, and gas
• Energy and utilities
• Agriculture and related industries
• Tourism and food services
• Manufacturing

• Exported services (call centers, consultants and professional services)
• Arts (including crafts, artwork, or other creative products)
• Government

Federal Investments

One fourth of New Mexico jobs are in the government sector, which is unusually high compared with other states. The federal government underwrites a large part of our economy through investments in military bases, national laboratories, national parks, and other grants. In 2004, every dollar that New Mexico provided to the federal government in taxes was repaid with two dollars of federal spending in the state. This was the highest return on investment of any state. In contrast, for every dollar that New Jersey paid to the federal government, their state got only 55 cents.

In 2005, a New Mexico First town hall focused on federal spending. Participants raised serious concerns about the state’s vulnerability if our federal funding was cut. The town hall called for increased private sector development in order to reduce our reliance on the federal government.

In recent years, several long-established federal institutions in New Mexico have seen their funding challenged. Cannon Air Force Base in Clovis was threatened with closure as a result of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Committee. Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) in Los Alamos and Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque spent much of 2007 contemplating significant budget cuts, though the worst of those cuts were rescinded in the December Omnibus Budget. Given that four out of our five Congressional representatives will be new to their positions in the next Congress, it may be difficult for New Mexico to retain all of its current federal funding.

10 U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey, factfinder.census.gov/servlet/GRTTable?_bm=y&_box_head_nbr=R1701&ds_name=ACS_2006_EST_G00&_lang=en&-format=US-30&-CONTEXT=grt
Affordable Housing

The lack of affordable housing is a major barrier to economic development and community quality in many places. A housing crunch can prevent a community from drawing the employees they need to expand the economic base or services sector. When people cannot afford to rent or own a home close to their work it causes problems. Forced into longer commutes, workers suffer from inflating transportation costs; there are also environmental impacts. A family permanently locked out of home ownership because housing prices are rising faster than wages does not have the ability to build equity.

Environmental Sustainability

Many New Mexicans agree that our desert environment presents challenges, particularly in how we use our water. While environmental issues are often thought of as separate from economic development, these two areas definitely impact each other. For example, decisions about whether to increase the amount of water in a river can impact local economies, since businesses, farmers, and ranchers may rely on that water.

Experts agree that the Southwest is consuming more water than is naturally available through rain, snow, or rivers, which means we are depleting our ground water supply. Economic development is often tied to population, but as the state’s population increases, each resident makes more demands on water. Furthermore, if climate change forecasts are accurate, the Southwest region could face significant water shortages in coming decades.

According to a 2005 Gallup poll, 53% of Americans say protecting the environment should be given priority “even at the risk of curbing economic growth,” while another 36% prioritize the economy "even if the environment suffers to some extent.” However, economic growth and environmental stewardship are not necessarily at odds. A growing number of people are calling for businesses that are both green and profitable. For example, New Mexico is rich in sun and wind, opening the door to potential economic growth through alternative energy production. Biofuels are another obvious possibility for agricultural economies.

Potential Process Difficulties

Economic development is a messy, complicated issue, and the process of working on it is no simpler. Many individuals and organizations are addressing it at many levels, from the state capitol to self-employed contractors.

People outside the economic development network – community leaders, business people, civil servants, etc. – make decisions that can affect economic development. Participants in New Mexico First’s recent community forums felt that politics sometimes gets in the way of progress. They believed that policymakers can make poor economic decisions based on factors such as:

- Lack of collaboration between development efforts
- Turf wars between individuals or agencies
- Competition built into the free market system
- Shifting priorities with the election of new policymakers

Making Choices

Many communities struggle with the question of whether they really want economic development because they believe it will create unwanted growth or change the character of the community. They often want to retain their small town feel, but they also want a range of quality jobs so that their children are less likely to grow up and move away. They want new housing, but they do not want it to look like an urban subdivision. They want a strong economic base to support their schools and roads, but they do not really want very many outsiders to move to their town. Every community must decide how to deal with these contradictions. They must make choices.

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15 Climate Change and Water in New Mexico: Final Report, October 2007, a summary of recommendations from regional forums on water. Available at www.nmfirst.org/townhalls


19 These concerns were voiced in several of our regional forums. While data on these difficulties does not exist, we wanted to recognize the concerns of New Mexicans.
Economic Development Approaches

As New Mexico First’s staff traveled the state talking to people, it became clear that there are at least three basic sets of priorities that people use to approach economic development issues – business development, community development, and regional development.

These priorities are not mutually exclusive, and people often will support parts of all of them. However, most people tend to prefer one over the others when it comes to choosing where economic development should start for their community. These three approaches provide the structure for the rest of this background report. They will also guide your discussion at the town hall.

| Approach 1: PRIORITIZE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT | In this approach, communities make a strategic choice to be proactive about growing their economies. They focus on the traditional activities of recruiting, creating, expanding, and retaining businesses. They also focus on preparing the workforce to fill jobs at those businesses. They narrow their focus to the most basic of priorities: growing their economic wealth faster than their population. In this approach, communities use data to develop a clear strategy, a plan, and the programs to implement them. |
| Approach 2: PRIORITIZE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT | In this approach, the focus is on improving the community, making it livable, attractive and sustainable. The modern workforce is increasingly mobile and not tied to specific geographic locations, so communities aim to keep talented local people in the community – and attract new people – by making their towns more efficient and appealing places to live and work. In this approach, the key strategies are improving quality of life, the environment, health care, education, infrastructure, art, and culture. |
| Approach 3: PRIORITIZE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT | In this approach, political jurisdictions and boundaries become less relevant, since economic activities cross them seamlessly. Businesses and communities reach into nearby parts of the state to find the resources they need and efficient trade partners. While free-market competition among communities is a factor, interdependent players cooperate frequently for mutual success throughout the region. In this approach, rural and urban communities collaborate more, as do neighboring towns. |
APPROACH 1: Focus on Business Development

Summary
In this approach, communities make a strategic choice to be proactive about growing their economies. They focus on the traditional activities of recruiting, creating, expanding, and retaining businesses. They also focus on preparing the workforce to fill jobs at those businesses. They narrow their focus to the most basic of priorities: growing their economic wealth faster than their population. In this approach, communities use data to develop a clear strategy, a plan, and the programs to implement them.

Economy and Population
Communities that employ this approach to economic development are focused on specific areas of the economy and try to measure direct results. They use a narrow definition of economic development in which success is measured by whether the money in the community grows faster than its population.

The rationale is that the communities must provide a range of social services for their populations. Steady economic development can enable households, businesses, charities, schools, and local governments to have more money per person to serve than they had the year before. Eventually, supporters say, everyone in town will have the discretionary investment income to finance the projects and programs that will make the community a better place to live.

Traditional Strategies
How might a community build this type of growing economy? For decades, local and state governments have embraced the recruit, retain, expand, and create strategies. This means they have focused their energies on recruiting new businesses to a community through incentives or other outreach, retaining existing businesses by supporting the companies the community already has, expanding existing businesses by encouraging companies to grow and hire more people, and, finally, creating new business through encouraging entrepreneurship.

Labor Shortage
Note: Labor issues are addressed in this section, but they can affect all three approaches in this report.

There is one easily tracked statistic that may be good or bad, depending on how you look at it. New Mexico currently has an unusually low unemployment rate of about 3% (compared to the national average of 4.7%)21. That has not always been the case. Nine years ago, New Mexico had the highest rate of unemployment anywhere in the country – 6.4%22. Since then, the state has seen many new jobs created. In September 2007, there were roughly two new jobs being created for every new entrant into the workforce23.

Having a low unemployment rate is a mixed blessing. While it means that many people have jobs, low unemployment makes it difficult for employers to expand

their business or create more jobs, simply because there are not workers available to fill them.

Factors driving unemployment vary widely from community to community. There are a number of reasons why the unemployment rate is so low, but simple demographics lead the list. As 76 million baby boomers nationally reach retirement age, we may see the first time in history when the number of people leaving the workforce for retirement is greater than the number of qualified young people coming in. In rural areas, this imbalance is even greater, as many young people leave their communities for college or jobs and never return.

National projections suggest that, while the amount of labor needed will continue to increase steadily, the amount of labor available will no longer be able to keep up with the demand.

In sum, our state and nation have a problem. Without a labor pool, there may be very limited economic growth. As more baby boomers retire, the problem may escalate.

Addressing the Labor Shortage

The labor problem is not just a matter of a shrinking proportion of workers in the economy but also their education and skill. When communities are short on available workers, they have a choice to make. They can:

• Import workers from other locations
• Bring young workers into jobs earlier
• Keep older workers from retiring
• Encourage workers to fill more than one job
• Encourage existing workers to take additional education and training
• Increase the number of qualified workers by improving educational achievement

Traditionally, communities have imported workers when they cannot find labor available locally. This is particularly true in seasonal agricultural work here in the Southwest. However, the workforce shortage is happening internationally, so it is harder to bring in qualified employees for even the most basic jobs.

A Quality Workforce

Many people believe that the growing need for a quality workforce in rural communities may be their greatest and most important challenge. Even when workers are available to fill a job, they may not be properly prepared. These issues of workforce readiness are found throughout the state:

• Employers filling entry-level jobs cannot find enough employees who understand a work ethic of being on time and dressed appropriately. Some report that they cannot find enough who can pass a background check or drug test.
• Other employers report that they have employees who understand work ethic basics, but lack skills in reading, writing, and math.

WorkKeys

Currently, employers in New Mexico seem to be gambling on what skills a job candidate actually has to offer. WorkKeys, a program developed by ACT and administered by the state’s Department of Workforce Solutions, hopes to remedy this. WorkKeys assesses an individual’s skill level in several areas such as “reading for information,” or “applied mathematics.” In some skill areas, certificates are available so that job applicants can show what skills they have mastered.

In addition, WorkKeys has profiles of the job skills required for 432 occupational profiles, outlining the minimum skills required for those jobs. This way, both job applicants and employers can seek the best match possible between needs and skills, and applicants can learn where they might get additional help.

At the same time that employers are struggling to find employees with basic skills, many businesses need people with more advanced skills. In the most recent year studied (2002), jobs in New Mexico divided up this way:

• 40% needed only short on-the-job training
• 19% needed moderate on-the-job training
• 25% required a college degree

This information came from opinions shared during New Mexico First’s regional forums on economic development, winter 2007.
• 11% Bachelor’s degree
• 2.5% Master’s or Ph.D. degree
• 1.5% a professional degree, such as a law degree or MD27.

Communities seeking to grow economically must address the likelihood of future labor shortages, as well as the need for their young people to develop strong academic and practical skills.

CASE STUDY: Rio Rancho & Intel
While Intel is certainly not a rural company, it provides an example of how a business and educational interests can intersect.

Intel came to Albuquerque in 1980, at a time when New Mexico had few trained clean-room workers. In order to create a workforce, Intel helped to create job-training programs through New Mexico’s higher education system.

Today, Intel is the largest private-sector industrial employer in the Albuquerque area, and a number of other related businesses have moved into the area. Semiconductor job training is available through West Mesa High School, Central New Mexico Community College, and University of New Mexico.

Beyond these direct training programs, the company invests heavily in math and science K-12 and college education statewide.

Actions That Grow the Economy
The business development approach to economic growth involves a limited number of activities that communities can use to grow their economy or prevent “leakage” to other communities. (See p. 8 for the barrel metaphor on leakage.) These activities include28:

1. Increase productivity and wages of your economic base workers
2. Increase the number of economic base jobs (jobs that bring money into the community from elsewhere)
3. Increase the value of government investments
4. Wait for windfall events like spikes in uranium and natural gas prices
5. Recruit, expand or start up service sector enterprises that keep local residents from buying out of town
6. Make your service sector more productive
7. Make your service sector more price and quality competitive in terms of price and quality
8. Increase the number of wealthy retirees

Charting a Path
Communities pursuing the business development approach must grapple with all these factors. Given that each community is unique, it is best to collect local data. However, collecting and using good data is costly.

“Thinking about your community’s economic future without projecting your demographic future is like planning a college fund without thinking about how many kids you have or what kind of schools you want them to attend,” says New Mexico economic developer Mark Lautman.

Some communities, such as Gallup, NM, choose to engage the entire community in developing a vision for their future. They compare options for moving forward and develop a strategic plan. Ideally this process is informed by good data. For good decision-making, communities should know the following:

• What are the demographics of your population, particularly in terms of age?
• How fast is your community population growing or shrinking?
• How large is your economic base? What sectors are growing? Shrinking?
• How large is your workforce? Can it keep pace against retiring workers?
• What skills does the workforce have?
• What would you need to do to attract talented new people to your community?
• What environmental limitations does your community face?

For this type of data to be most helpful, it should be updated annually so that communities can chart their progress.

CASE STUDY: Clovis
The eastern New Mexico town of Clovis is an obvious example of a community that uses a traditional business recruitment approach to economic development. It markets itself to prospective new companies by touting some of the following incentives:

- Available lots within a 240 acre Industrial Development Park acquired by the city
- Revenue bonds
- Property tax abatement
- Gross receipts tax incentive
- Partnership with Clovis Community College for workforce training programs
- An existing labor pool, including people with bilingual skills

Success
Clovis’ recruitment strategy resulted in a 2007 announcement that a new biogas plant plans to build there, employing 250 people. The company, for which financing is pending, plans to extract methane gas from cow manure and produce alternative fuel. The factory is expected to reduce methane gas and improve groundwater, while re-using about 600,000 gallons of wastewater per day from the Southwest Cheese plant.

Implications and Tradeoffs of the Business Development Approach

- Energy is devoted to recruiting and retaining companies, often instead of community improvement projects such as parks or landscaping.
- Without good data, communities could make poor decisions (such as preparing people for jobs that do not materialize).
- Bringing in new companies can change the character of a community.
- Some community leaders report limited success with traditional business recruitment strategies and question whether the effort is worth the investment in community resources.
- It may be difficult for some rural communities to import workers.

Notes/Comments on Approach 1

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APPROACH 2:  
Focus on Community Development

**Summary**

In this approach, the focus is on improving the community, making it livable, attractive and sustainable. The modern workforce is increasingly mobile and not tied to specific geographic locations, so communities aim to keep talented local people in the community – and attract new people – by making their towns more efficient and appealing places to live and work. In this approach, the key strategies are improving quality of life, the environment, health care, education, infrastructure, art and culture.

**Improving the Community**

Supporters of the community development approach say that to build an economically sound community, you need to begin with the community itself. If you do not have a pool of people just waiting for jobs, then the primary economic need becomes attracting good people to your community and keeping them there. In order to do this, you need to invest in your community, make it a place where people want to live. This investment, supporters say, actually does two things: it brings in new people and it also helps retain existing residents.

Improvements might include quality housing, downtown revitalization, new schools, infrastructure, sidewalks, parks, zoning changes, expanded public safety investments (like more police), landscaping roads leading to and from town, and any number of other reforms. While these activities may not directly or immediately bring money into a community, many advocates believe they have the indirect effect of making the town more appealing to potential businesses or individuals.

**Internet Workers**

How might improving your community help stop the "brain drain" of losing its young people and even bring in new residents? As the world transforms to an information-based economy, more of the labor can be done off-site, potentially from anywhere. In today’s economy, many people can work wherever they choose, as long as they have reliable broadband internet access and easy access to an airline hub.

This “flat world” argument\(^1\), that location no longer really matters for workers, seems to be good news for smaller communities. Workers will no longer have to move to urban areas in order to find good jobs. In the flat world, workers can do what they need to do wherever they are, presuming they can communicate with the outside world. Many national businesses are already moving this way\(^2\).

- IBM: 40% of the workforce has no office at the company
- Sun Microsystems: nearly 50% of employees can work from home
- AT&T: one-third of managers can choose their own sites
- Agilent: 70% of the workforce is connected remotely at least some of the time
- Jet Blue: 100% of reservations agents work from home (most of them stay-at-home moms)

This trend is event happening close to home. The Illinois-based company Verety announced in March 2008 that it will bring 100 “work-at-home” jobs to Roswell, NM, with employees taking drive-through food orders remotely and routing them to the restaurant using the service\(^3\).

These types of off-site employees can save their companies real estate costs and they can be potential new residents for rural communities.

**Creative Class**

Many of these mobile professionals are part of a larger group of people who are increasingly sought after: the “creative class.” This group includes over a third of the nation’s workforce. They include a range of professions including knowledge workers, artists, engineers, actors, or

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\(^{3}\) “Verety to Bring 100 New Work-at-Home Jobs to New Mexico,” press release from the NM Economic Development Department, March 7, 2008.
architects. See Appendix for a breakdown of “creative class” workers in New Mexico by county.

**Community Attractions**

What draws new people to a community? In many cases, they want the same things existing members of the community want: good schools, affordable housing, recreational opportunities, and the chance to socialize with people like themselves. In these places, face-to-face interaction among a critical mass of like-minded people creates new ideas, products, and services, and contributes to economic success.

Some of these professionals already show a tendency to be attracted to parts of the country that have “rural amenities” – things like natural beauty or outdoor recreation around lakes or mountains. While precisely defining “natural amenities” can be tricky, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) came up with six measures that seem to describe those rural locations that people find attractive:

- Warm winters
- Plenty of winter sun
- Temperate summers
- Low summer humidity
- Varied landscape
- Natural water

These resources may be a draw. However, many of the other things this class tends to look for are associated with urban areas (an arts community, universities, active street scene). Some data suggests that the rural communities most likely to be successful in recruiting internet-based workers are those that are within an hour’s drive of a major city.

CASE STUDY: Silver City

The southwestern New Mexico town of Silver City once was a mining town, but when the major local company scaled back its operations, the town’s economy faltered. In the last decade, Silver City revitalized by gaining reputation as an ‘Arts Community.’ The town’s shift is the result of a collaborative effort by a number of local organizations and businesses.

The Mimbres Region Arts Council (MRAC) led the way with public/private partnerships that brought local galleries together with nonprofit arts organizations to develop arts related events. The first, an Evening at the Galleries, grew into the Weekend at the Galleries, a four-day event over Columbus Day weekend that has become the region’s largest art-walk with 30 galleries and over 100 artists participating. The event is concentrated in a four-block area of downtown.

Similar efforts produced the Silver City Blues Festival and Pickamania music festivals, celebrating acoustic musical traditions. These events are held in the city park and include Sunday morning ‘art-walks’ through the galleries and various peripheral downtown activities. The Blues Festival fills hotel, motel, and bed and breakfast rooms throughout the county and into neighboring communities.

**Are New People Always a Good Thing?**

There are many ways to attract people to your community, and some are more economically positive than others. For example, some communities have looked into marketing themselves nationally as great places to retire. Retirees that move into the community would bring their pensions and social security income from elsewhere to feed the economic base.

However, it can be uncertain whether an influx of retirees would be a net increase in the economy. Retirees can have quite expensive infrastructure requirements around healthcare and emergency services, and the community income from these individuals may not financially support the amount and quality of infrastructure necessary.

When communities set out to attract a population, they must carefully calculate the costs and benefits to ensure that they do not create an unsustainable situation.

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Smart Growth
Many communities throughout New Mexico have become interested in “Smart Growth,” a philosophy of community development that focuses on preserving historic sections of a town while creating walkable, multi-use areas. The MainStreet program, described below, is one type of Smart Growth activity.

MainStreet
The state’s EDD runs the New Mexico MainStreet program, which seeks to improve the downtown area of participating communities. The MainStreet program concentrates on:

- Organization – helping to build effective relationships among the community’s downtown stakeholders
- Economic positioning – strengthening downtown’s existing economic assets and fulfilling its broadest market potential
- Design – enhancing the unique visual quality of downtown to create an appealing environment
- Promotion – creating and marketing a positive image based on the uniqueness of the downtown district

Currently, 20 communities are part of MainStreet, and from July 2005 to June 2006, the program helped create 126 new businesses and 446 new jobs, rehabilitated 171 buildings, and generated over $12 million in public reinvestment. One concern about MainStreet developments is that they tend to be in the center of town, as opposed to nearer the edge of town (such as the highway corridor), where visitors are more likely to travel. This placement can mean that MainStreet investments may be invisible unless people already come to the center of town.

Community Leadership
All the activities described in this report require effective community leadership. Some people who participated in New Mexico First’s community meetings said that developing and strengthening local leadership was among the most important economic development activities they could pursue. The more rural the community is, the more likely it is there could be fewer effective leaders. Leadership training efforts that also educate community members on local issues and economic priorities could be an effective strategy for some towns to move forward.

CASE STUDY: Santa Rosa
Ten years ago, the eastern New Mexico town of Santa Rosa began a self-analysis of its resources and assets and then began changing its infrastructure to fit those assets. Under the leadership of Mayor Jose Campos, the process included community leaders and town hall meetings. Since that time, the city secured grants and investments to complete the following improvements:

- Drilled a new well and secured water rights
- Repaired leaky water systems that were losing 18% of pumped water
- Improved roads by repaving the business loop and adding new lighting and sidewalks
- Worked with the telecommunications company to bring internet first to the schools and, later, to homes
- Modified planning and zoning laws to make the community look better
- Changed the way garbage was handled to eliminate the open land fills that let trash blow around town
- Partnered with MainStreet to build a new city hall and revitalize the downtown square
- Sold an existing run-down park to a new business, creating 70 jobs, and used the money to convert a landfill to a new modern park

The community also came together to save a local natural resource, the Blue Hole, which is one of the few scuba diving locations in the region. Large rocks that had been dumped in the hole in the early 1980s undermined the natural water flow and compromised its structural integrity. Through a partnership with the state legislature, the U.S. diving team, the state police, and the high school welding class that built custom dredging equipment, the community in 2002 restored the Blue Hole to its natural water flow. The project produced both environmental and tourism benefits.

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38 www.edd.state.nm.us/mainStreet
39 From the MainStreet website, www.edd.state.nm.us/mainStreet/join/index.html.
Implications and Tradeoffs of the Community Development Approach

Towns that choose the community development approach should consider the following factors:

- This approach may or may not produce long-term economic improvements in your community. You may not see economic benefits – at least in terms of economic base jobs – right away or at all.

- Some opponents argue that efforts like MainStreet may detract communities from more fundamental economic development activities to bring in jobs.

- If improvements recruit new people to a community, not all increases in population will necessarily be good for the economy. Some people, like low or middle-income elderly, might drain more resources away than they bring to it.

- Communities must balance the types of improvements they choose to make against protecting the town’s culture and heritage. Many long-time residents may argue against some “improvements” that they believe hurt the community’s small town feel.

Notes/Comments on Approach 2

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**APPROACH 3:**
Focus on Regional Development

**Summary**
In this approach, political jurisdictions and boundaries become less relevant, since economic activities cross them seamlessly. Businesses and communities reach into nearby parts of the state to find the resources they need and efficient trade partners. While free-market competition is still in place, interdependent players cooperate frequently for mutual success throughout the region. In this approach, rural and urban communities collaborate more, as do neighboring rural towns.

**Regionalism**
We live our lives regionally. "We live in one community, work in another, shop in still others...."\(^{40}\) That is why some people advocate for regional approaches to economic development.

Regional approaches can include:

- **Rural-urban** partnerships where businesses in small communities supply products or services to larger companies in cities
- **Rural-rural** partnerships where neighboring small and mid-sized communities work together toward common goals (such as transportation, water, or business recruitment)

**Rural-urban** approaches often enable the smaller town to benefit from the resources of their larger neighbor. For example, Sandia National Laboratories has a Small Business Assistance Program that provides up to $10,000 in assistance to strengthen rural companies. The Labs also have a department dedicated to educating small businesses on how they can become suppliers for Sandia.

**Rural-rural** approaches bring together neighboring rural communities and may combat some perceived economic disadvantages of rural communities, in particular their small size and sparse population. A regional approach to economic development also can make "distance" an advantage rather than a disadvantage. For example, when you think of a place as a region, it is easier to consider a state park an asset, even if it is 20 miles away.

A regional approach gets more people with different perspectives working on economic development for the region. It takes advantage of amenities that are in one part of the region and does not require each town to have that amenity. Furthermore, strategies for addressing big issues like natural resources or transportation planning require a regional approach.

**CASE STUDY: Bueno Foods**
Bueno Foods, an Albuquerque Mexican food supplier, packages green and red chile, tortillas, and prepared foods that utilize chile for resale in grocery stores and restaurants throughout the Southwest. This family-owned company employs about 300 people directly and relies on regional trading partnerships with farmers and processors in southern New Mexico to provide all of its chile.

These partnerships enable Bueno Foods to acquire a quality, locally grown product, while enabling the suppliers to receive technical and sanitation consulting from Bueno. The economic impact on southern New Mexico is significant, in that Bueno's purchases not only bolster the farmers but also related rural businesses (sellers of equipment, fertilizers, and other supplies).

While this trade arrangement is an example of an effective urban-rural partnership, people worry about the industry as a whole. "The local chile industry may be dying," said Gene Baca, Senior Vice President of Bueno Foods and President of the New Mexico Chile Association. "Foreign competition with cheaper labor could price New Mexico chile out of the global market."

Baca calls for state, regional, and university partnerships to help bring down costs through automation. Currently, the chiles are hand picked.

Chile is a $400 million industry in New Mexico, employing about 5,000 people. It has declined from a high of over $600 million at its peak.

**What is a Region?**
There are different types of regions.

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\(^{40}\) Taken from Allan Wallis, "The New Regionalism," found on MuniMall.net He is quoting Bruce Katz of the Brookings Institution.
• There are "macro" regions, such as the Rio Grande Corridor, the Four Corners area, or the Borderplex of El Paso, Juarez, and Las Cruces.

• **Economic regions** help blur political boundaries and work toward a common economic purpose. For example, people in Hobbs benefit from west Texas shoppers; Clovis residents get their major healthcare in Lubbock; Farmington draws visitors and shoppers from Aztec, Durango, and nearby tribal communities.

• Natural resources can create **natural regions**, formed to manage assets like watersheds; the Pecos Watershed spans at least seven New Mexico counties, and those counties must collaborate on water management issues.

• **Educational regions** can be defined by the major university or college in an area, drawing students from surrounding areas.

### CASE STUDY: Southeastern New Mexico Regional Air Service

The Chaves County Development Foundation in Roswell established an alliance in 2006 with the nearby town and county governments (Artesia, Carlsbad, Ruidoso, Eddy County and Chaves County) to establish Roswell as the regional hub for air transit. The region lacked a reliable airline to bring travelers in and out of southeastern New Mexico. Over several months, Roswell community leaders Jon Hitchcock and Bill Armstrong met with multiple airlines before convincing American Eagle to test out daily service between Dallas and Roswell. The majority of those 50-seat jets have been 80% or more full since the service began in 2007. The influx of travelers brings economic and quality of life benefits to the entire region.

### Why Collaborate Regionally?

When communities think regionally in terms of economic development, it enables them to work collaboratively to address the challenges of size, scale, and distance.

### Shared Public Services

An additional reason to work regionally is that communities have limited resources on their own and can have more clout (and keep more of their money in their own area) through regional collaborations. For example, access to broadband and wireless technology is often thought of as an opportunity for development in rural areas. Small rural communities may lack the bargaining power to get it on their own. Acting regionally may enable them to acquire the service and negotiate for better rates or services.

### CASE STUDY: Sirolli Projects

A 2005 visit by economic developer Ernesto Sirolli spawned a number of regional approaches based on his theories, including projects in Taos, Silver City, Deming, and Albuquerque’s Southeast Heights. Sirolli helps communities establish a local organization to work in concert with development efforts to assist entrepreneurs.

The Taos project points to 21 small businesses in the region that were founded as a result of this work, and the Albuquerque program points to the creation of a temporary worker service through a local church[41].

### Increased Local Responsibilities

Another reason to consider regionalism is that the U.S. and other countries are transferring more responsibilities to local governments. "More of the policymaking and service delivery functions mandated by federal and state governments are being directed to the local level," according to economist Allan Wallis[42]. "Many of these – transportation, air and water quality planning, and an increasing amount of social services planning – are required to be carried out on a regional basis." All of these decisions have a direct impact on economic development.

### Regional Trading Partners

Some small town businesses stand to benefit from regional partnerships with companies in larger cities. For example, Intel estimates that 15-20% of its local purchases are made outside of Albuquerque or Rio Rancho[43]. In a period like the present, when the economies of Albuquerque and Las Cruces are growing, rural areas can benefit if they find ways to sell products or services to businesses in the Rio Grande Corridor.

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41 Grant, G. “Hail, the returning economic-development hero!” column in the May 29, 2007 Albuquerque Tribune.


43 Source: Intel spokesperson Jami Grindatto
CASE STUDY: Gallup and the Navajo Nation

The city of Gallup and the Navajo Nation have a history of tension and conflict over regional water rights and development issues. In recent years, however, a spirit of collaboration and recognition of mutual interests has developed.

In 2003, New Mexico First facilitated a local town hall for the City of Gallup on water issues. The City invited Navajo Nation water department professionals and elected officials, who attended and actively participated in the town hall. The event produced joint language, presented to the town hall by Mayor Bob Rosebrough and Navajo Nation Water Resources Chairman George Arthur, calling for future ground water well projects to serve both Gallup and adjoining Navajo Chapters.

Following the water town hall, the city (with the active assistance of the U.S. Indian Health Service) extended city water to Navajo families adjacent to the city limits, resolving a long-standing controversy that divided the entities. The Navajo Nation reciprocated by developing a ground water well on the reservation 15 miles north of Gallup that supplies water to the regional system.

The city and Navajo Nation have successfully developed a memorandum of understanding for the development and implementation of the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project, which will provide a long-term solution by piping water from the San Juan River south to the Eastern Navajo Agency, Gallup, and the surrounding Navajo Chapters. The two entities are also cooperating to reach agreements for short-term ground water projects.

The spirit of cooperation has extended beyond water projects. The economic development departments of both entities work together on promoting the entire region to prospective businesses. By collaborating regionally, both communities have the potential to be wealthier – both economically and in natural resources.

Advocating for broadband access, cables to rural homes, and affordable service are all actions that may best be addressed regionally.

Additionally, while low cost and reliable internet is important, they are not enough to enhance economic development on their own. People in rural communities may also need training and encouragement in the use of information technology.

CASE STUDY: Spaceport America

One of the New Mexico’s most interesting regional development opportunities is Spaceport America, to be located in Sierra County, within easy driving distance of Truth or Consequences (T or C), Hatch, Alamogordo, and Las Cruces.

Planners project that operations at the Spaceport could generate $212 million in revenues, $60 million in earnings, and up to 3,000 workers in the first five years.

The research and development activities may be located at New Mexico State University while operations could be located in rural towns nearer the Spaceport. The small communities of Hatch or T or C could be the home of many of the ancillary industries.

Noted Garrey Carruthers, Dean of the College of Business at NMSU, “The largest regional impact may come from ‘terrestrial tourism,’ such as housing and entertaining families of the astronauts, and viewers who visit the site.” Much like the Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta, tourism offers wide opportunities for all communities in the region.

The financing of Spaceport America includes appropriations from the state of New Mexico, private vendors such as Virgin Galactic, and a tax levied by vote of the citizens of Dona Ana, Sierra, and Otero Counties.

“Requiring all participants to have some ‘skin in the game’ makes this a most interesting rural/urban development project,” said Carruthers. “The most profound outcome of the successful completion of Spaceport America may be influencing school children, who after watching launches, will become inspired to become scientists and engineers.”

44 Case study drawn from Southwest Regional SpacePort Strategic Analysis, October 2005, produced by the Arrowhead Center, New Mexico State University. Available at http://www.spaceportamerica.com/economic.html

Broadband

Where broadband and wireless technology access was not possible a generation ago, now it could increasingly be considered a necessity. It can reduce the disadvantages created by distance and small populations, allow services to be produced that are not dependent on location, and generally improve the quality of life in the rural areas: telework, entertainment, education opportunities, tele-health, online services and shopping.
### Implications and Tradeoffs of the Regional Development Approach

- Regional approaches are more likely to be based on an agreed to process (such as the creation of a strategic plan to achieve a common goal) rather than a formal governmental relationship or a structural change. Given that many rural places have been in competition with their neighbors in the past, it will require trust for a relatively informal regional process to work. Even if a compelling case can be made to cooperate regionally, the baggage of the old relationships can get in the way.

- The public sector (government) is often more resistant to regional approaches than the private or non-profit sectors.

- Changes in elected officials might affect the degree to which regional agreements are maintained.

- A regional approach requires enlightened and motivated leadership. It is a challenge for rural places to undertake programs to ensure a steady supply of such leadership. One approach is to institute regional leadership development programs, so people from different towns learn together to benefit the entire region.

### Notes/Comments on Approach 3

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Concluding Thoughts

As you read through the three approaches, you may well have found your own opinions reflected in more than one of them. That is expected and will stimulate interesting discussions during the town hall.

In New Mexico First town halls, the goal is to bring together a wide spectrum of New Mexicans, with different opinions and points of view, and to help the group to find the invisible consensus. We choose to unify New Mexicans by finding and focusing on the common ground.

During Business as UNusual: A Town Hall on Rural-Urban Economic Innovation, you will take part in three days worth of discussions. By the end of the process, the entire group will have come to consensus on a short list of recommendations for business people, communities, and policymakers. These recommendations should point to strategies the participants feel can make the biggest impacts.

Implementation

Once the town hall is complete, some of the participants will spend 12-18 months trying to implement them, working with state and local officials, economic development professionals, the business community, and other New Mexicans. This implementation team will be led by the former mayor of Gallup, Bob Rosebrough. If you are interested in being a part of this implementation team, please sign up during the town hall.
Appendices

APPENDIX A:
Current Economic Development Programs

There are wide ranges of programs in place that provide funding and/or support to businesses statewide. Many of these programs come through the state’s Economic Development Department (EDD), though many other governmental, nongovernmental, and private agencies also offer their own distinct forms of support for economic development efforts.

Job Training Incentive Program (JTIP)
EDD administers JTIP, which funds classroom and on-the-job training for newly created careers in expanding or relocating businesses for up to six months. JTIP currently reimburses companies for 50-70% of employee wages and required travel expenses to support job training. JTIP is only available for companies that either manufacture locally or provide a service that is exported out of state, and only for new employees in full-time positions who have lived in New Mexico for a year.

Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs)
New Mexico has 19 SBDCs, which provide a host of training and support services to small business owners and entrepreneurs. Many of these services focus on the planning and start up process, but SBDCs will also help existing businesses with expanding into international trade, selling to the government, and accessing government help for veterans, women, and minority business owners.

Other EDD Activities
New Mexico offers a range of incentives designed to make the state’s economic climate more attractive and appealing to businesses and entrepreneurs. For example, in recent years, New Mexico:

- Cut the personal income tax rate by 40%
- Reduced capital gains taxes by 75%
- Offered a Rural Jobs tax credit, where employers can receive a credit per new job for two years
- Enacted the High Wage Job Tax Credit
- Created a research & development small business tax credit.

The EDD provides guidance, certification, and capital funding to communities that want to create a business incubator, and four incubators have registered themselves with this support program so far.

EDD has certified many communities statewide, helping them create a local economic development act; in return, EDD provides funding for economic development programs and advertising opportunities.

U.S. Department of Agriculture
The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Rural Development (RD) agency offers more than 80 direct loan, loan guarantee, and grant programs to assist communities in rural areas. Organized into three groups, RD funds assist communities with housing, business development, and infrastructure needs. These include projects such as transitioning to digital television, improving distance learning and telemedicine, developing cooperative programs, assisting low-income families to buy a home, installing water and sewer systems, guaranteeing loans of up to $25 million for businesses, or even offsetting particularly high energy costs.

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45 www.nmsbdc.org
47 www.edd.state.nm.us/communityAssistance/businessIncubators/index.html.
48 www.edd.state.nm.us/communityAssistance/certifiedCommunities/index.html
49 www.rurdev.usda.gov
U.S. Small Business Administration
The Small Business Administration offers numerous loan programs to assist small businesses. Their primary program, the Basic 7(a) Loan Guaranty, helps small businesses obtain long-term financing through private lenders. The SBA also offers microloans, short-term loans of up to $35,000 for working capital or purchase of needed supplies50.

Small Business Investment Corporation
The New Mexico Small Business Investment Corporation (NMSBIC) was created in 2000 to support businesses with 25 or fewer employees. This arm of the state government works with nonprofits such as ACCION New Mexico and WESST Corp. to provide microloans to start and support these small businesses in cases where traditional bank funding might not be available51.

New Mexico Economic Development Partnership (NMEDP)
The NMEDP focuses on recruiting companies into New Mexico, providing a central point where companies interested in the state can come for information and encouragement. It is a private-public nonprofit that works closely with state government, promoting the state’s strengths to those who need them52.

New Mexico Community Capital
New Mexico Community Capital provides venture capital and advice to existing businesses, channeling funds from traditional lenders as well as tribal communities, nonprofit grantmakers, and individuals. They use a “double bottom line” approach, looking for both social and financial returns on their investment, concentrating on improving communities through job creation and workforce development53.

New Mexico Rural Development Response Council (NMRDRC)
The NMRDRC serves as a resource for rural communities and businesses, helping them with economic development projects, from concept through implementation. Their work concentrates on improving the economic base of the community and providing whatever supports the community needs to make that happen54.

Local Economic Development Act (LEDA)
The EDD encourages communities to pass their own Local Economic Development Act (LEDA), an ordinance that creates an economic development organization and a strategic plan, precisely tailored to community needs. Regional representatives of the EDD provide support for communities in this process, helping with creation and promotion55.

Industrial Revenue Bonds (IRBs)
Industrial Revenue Bonds (IRBs) are loans to companies from government. The company leases a facility from the government, with the understanding that they will purchase the facility once the lease has run its course. This lease also provides a property tax exemption on the facility, since it remains community-owned56.

50 www.sba.gov
51 www.nmsbic.org and financenewmexico.org
52 www.nmpartnership.com/index.php
53 www.nmccap.org
54 www.ruraldevelopmentnm.org
55 www.edd.state.nm.us/communityAssistance/passLEDA/index.html)
56 www.developclovis.com/incentives.html
APPENDIX B:
Economic Development Recommendations from Previous New Mexico First Town Halls

2004 Statewide Town Hall, Las Cruces, NM
Growing an Entrepreneurial Economy: Small and Emerging Business in New Mexico

Increase Collaboration
1. Establish a state-funded, statewide certification program for business incubation in conjunction with New Mexico’s Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) and the New Mexico Economic Development Department.
2. Find ways to eliminate the “information glut” by organizing, packaging and marketing information on available resources and services for emerging and small businesses.
3. SBDCs or similar entities could simplify and funnel information and coordinate networking opportunities between businesses.
4. Steer resources found among chambers, university branches, community colleges and SBDCs to recruit small business owners to mentor other small business owners and/or interns by providing relevant, hands-on guidance.

Simplify Taxes
5. Rewrite New Mexico’s tax code to reduce its complexity and to remove conflicts in the following ways:
   a. Ensure uniform application of the tax laws through better education of small businesses.
   b. Ensure fair and equitable enforcement of tax laws.
   c. Exempt investments in New Mexico’s small businesses from capital gains tax.
   d. Provide greater incentives for investments in rural small businesses.
   e. Give tax breaks for companies that invest in intellectual capital, e.g., employee education.
   f. Compare New Mexico tax requirements with other states and revise them to provide incentives to small and emerging business.
   g. Provide in-state preference for public-sector contracting.

Streamline Regulatory Process
6. Implement common-sense practices to reduce time inefficiencies and red tape:
   a. Establish a one-stop shop for small businesses within existing agencies.
   b. Designate particular agency employees to shepherd entrepreneurs through required processes in cooperation with the state small business ombudsman.
   c. Provide quality training with a particular emphasis on customer service and performance measures for all staff.

Provide Affordable Healthcare and Liability Insurance
7. Create a market-driven healthcare/insurance system for small businesses that recognizes the complexity of the overall existing healthcare system and decouples healthcare coverage from sources of employment to encourage employee mobility.
Overarching Strategies
1. Emphasize the need for ‘systematic change’ in education to achieve improvements, efficiencies and economies, such as combining public and higher education into one coordinated system.
2. Recommend strategic plans for business development.
3. Call for the creation of a more diversified economy less reliant on federal resources.

Coordination and Collaboration
4. Develop strategies for enhancing coordination and collaboration among entities when applying for and receiving federal funds and to take advantage of new federal funding opportunities.

Research and Technology
5. Make economic development a mission component of the national laboratories, including accelerated commercialization of new technology;
6. Ensure stability of the national labs by expanding their missions and work with other federal agencies;
7. Develop a technology and manufacturing master plan;
8. Review the effect of gross receipts taxes on R&D, and
9. Support research that advances economic development.

Business Development and Education
10. More aggressively identify and request strategic land exchanges, leases and access rights;
11. Prioritize state capital spending to maximize federal infrastructure projects, and;
12. Evaluate funding formulas to address demographics and emerging trends associated with homeland security, border issues, immigration, public safety, transportation and health care.

Leveraged Federal Funding
13. Create incentives for and an environment conducive to economic development and an entrepreneurial culture to increase private investment and establish a permanent physical presence in the state based on long-term relationships with research facilities.
14. Create and empower a public/private coalition of experts to determine the economic sectors that best contribute to New Mexico’s growth based on our unique resources and strengths.
15. Foster entrepreneurship and business development by supporting and/or expanding effective business assistance programs such as: enterprise facilitation, business incubation, Small Business Development Centers, technical assistance programs, loans, and investments and assistance to small business to meet procurement requirements of federal contractors.

Increase Standards and Collaboration
1. Raise P-20 academic standards so that NM students can compete with students from other places and meet the needs of employers.
2. HED and PED should collaborate to establish one educational vision, measurable standards to achieve that vision, and a comprehensive database to track progress and enable the exchange of data.
3. NM’s educational system should use a P-20 approach that includes school and community-based programs.
4. Establish and maintain a statewide education system.

Reform NM’s Systems of Higher Education
5. Promote stakeholder discussions about a statewide system of governance and coordination of higher education
6. Coordinate efforts and eliminate duplication among government and community organizations involved in the educational system.

Link Education to Economic and Labor Trends
7. Establish a strategic plan enabling NM students to develop a career path through the P-20 educational
system that aligns with economic development priorities, if they choose.

8. Use long-term labor force projections to encourage students to follow career pathways that will meet projected labor needs and fill high-value jobs of the future.

9. Implement a statewide work-based assessment (e.g., WorkKeys)

**Funding**

10. Change the higher education funding formula to place greater emphasis on student performance.

11. Increase financial aid for college students.

12. Increase educator salaries.

13. Student Programs

14. Evaluate contributors and barriers to student success, using lessons learned to recommend new strategies and services.

15. Create a statewide support network that links educational and economic development support for all communities, particularly rural ones.

16. Strengthen programs that develop and support P-20 life and career-readiness skills.

17. The Governor, tribal leaders, and business leaders should conduct a major public awareness campaign on the value of education.

18. Support multiple learning styles through faculty professional development.

**Technology**

19. Establish a statewide high-speed digital network infrastructure to support learning and collaboration.

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**2007 Statewide Town Hall, Albuquerque, NM**

**Strengthening New Mexico Healthcare: Access, Coverage, and Economics**

**Access to Quality Care**

1. Provide sustainable, permanent funding for incentives to recruit and retain healthcare professionals, particularly in rural communities.

2. Increase the capacity of our educational system to produce healthcare workers.

**Economics that Work**

3. Create across-the-board incentives for measurable wellness, prevention, and healthy lifestyles outcomes in order to bring down healthcare costs.

4. Fund and facilitate systemic coordination of the healthcare industry, including both technology and human resources.
APPENDIX C:
A Brief Economic Evaluation of 27 Non-Metropolitan Counties

This data was prepared by William H. Fruth, POLICOM Corporation (www.policom.com), the keynote at the town hall.

There are 27 counties in New Mexico which are not part of a “Metropolitan Statistical Area” and are, therefore, rural or quasi-rural in nature. Of the 27 counties, 14 are part of a “Micropolitan Statistical Area.” A micropolitan area must have an urban center (city) of at least 10,000 people but less than 50,000. There are 576 micropolitan areas in the United States. Data for the 27 counties from 1996 to 2005 was evaluated for Population, Worker Earnings, Employment, Wages, and Per Capita Income Maintenance.

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Worker Earnings (place of work)
“Worker Earnings” are all the wages and salaries paid and the profits of proprietors that are earned within the county, no matter where the worker lives.

Taos County had a growth rate in worker earnings more than twice the nation from 2001-2005. In fact, it ranked 6th among the 576 micropolitan areas in the county. Guadalupe County, unfortunately, lost worker earnings during this time. Los Alamos County generates the most worker earnings among the 27 counties.

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### Employment – Jobs

Harding County, the smallest county by population, had the fastest percentage growth in employment, increasing by 92 jobs from 2001 to 2005. Luna County had the 2nd fastest job growth rate. Grant and Quay Counties lost jobs over the last five years.

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Earnings Per Worker – Wages

Eddy County had a significant increase in wages (7.5%) between 2001 and 2005, the 4th fastest rate in the nation among the micropolitan areas. The county also had the 2nd highest wage among the 27 counties. Wages declined in Guadalupe and Harding Counties. Los Alamos County ($71,641) had not only the highest wages in New Mexico, it is ranked 13th among the more than 3,000 counties in the United States.

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Per Capita Income Maintenance

Income maintenance includes public assistance to the poor including general welfare and food stamps. The total income maintenance for each county was divided by the resident population to provide the relative amount for each county.

Union County had the fastest growth rate (11.2%) among the 27 counties but its actual amount is about the national average. McKinley County had the highest amount ($1,011) which is almost twice the national average. Los Alamos had the lowest amount and Harding County had the slowest growth rate.

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APPENDIX D:
USDA County Demographic & Socioeconomic Information

From the EDD website at http://www.edd.state.nm.us/dataCenter/countyComparison/index.php.

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Percentage of population in the workforce: 49.78% 37.14% 39.55% 43.66% 45.33% 43.87% 37.97% 41.33% 35.67% 32.91%
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<td>36.72%</td>
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APPENDIX E: Remedial Education

Percentage of High School Graduates taking Remedial Literacy and/or Numeracy Classes in College by District (2000 – 2004). This information is relevant to economic development because it points to the challenges of building a quality workforce.

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APPENDIX F: County-Level “Creative Class” Measure

See [http://www.ers.usda.gov/Data/CreativeClassCodes](http://www.ers.usda.gov/Data/CreativeClassCodes) for complete documentation.

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Final Report on Town Hall Results

March 27-29, 2008
Inn of the Mountain Gods, Ruidoso, NM

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# Table of Contents: Final Report on Town Hall Results

Executive Summary .................................................................................................................................4
  About New Mexico First ..........................................................................................................................4
Introduction ..............................................................................................................................................5
  Common Themes ..................................................................................................................................5
Town Hall Recommendations ....................................................................................................................6
  Implementation of the Town Hall Recommendations .............................................................................8
Appendix A: Vision Statements ..................................................................................................................9
  Blue Vision Statement ...........................................................................................................................9
  Red Vision Statement .............................................................................................................................9
  Brown Vision Statement .........................................................................................................................9
  Yellow Vision Statement .........................................................................................................................9
  Orange Vision Statement .......................................................................................................................10
  Green Vision Statement .........................................................................................................................10
Appendix B: Town Hall Committees and Speakers ..................................................................................11
  Town Hall Speakers .............................................................................................................................11
  Town Hall Leadership Team ..................................................................................................................11
  Town Hall Implementation Team ..........................................................................................................11
Appendix C: Town Hall Registrants ..........................................................................................................12
  Town Hall Participants ..........................................................................................................................12
  Town Hall Observers .............................................................................................................................14
  Demographic Distribution of Participants .............................................................................................15
Appendix D: New Mexico First Leadership ..............................................................................................16
  Board of Directors and Executive Committee .......................................................................................16
  Board Emeritus .......................................................................................................................................17
  Founders ..................................................................................................................................................17
  Ex-Officio Board Members ....................................................................................................................17
  Staff .........................................................................................................................................................17
Executive Summary

New Mexicans want the state’s rural communities to remain vibrant and viable, recognizing the value of sustaining existing businesses, attracting new ones, and providing sound educations for the next generation. New Mexicans also want economic development that is environmentally responsible.

These recommendations and others resulted from a New Mexico First statewide town hall, Business as Unusual: A Town Hall on Rural-Urban Economic Development. The event was held in Ruidoso, March 27-29 and attended by 160 people. They came from 37 different communities and included business owners, teachers, farmers, environmentalists, youth, and government officials.

New Mexico First focuses on attaining balance between various stakeholder groups so that all necessary viewpoints are present in the town hall. To this end, full scholarships were offered to students as well as community members who indicated they needed financial support. Registrants could choose between acting as a participant (attending the full town hall and actively taking part in discussions) or simply observing.

Participants developed recommendations about what should be done to strengthen New Mexico’s rural economies, including how to encourage economic collaboration between rural and urban communities. The recommendations are summarized below, with additional details provided in the full report.

Character of Communities

1. Build on what is already in place, leveraging a community’s primary industries and assets to draw in new businesses.
2. Design community plans that preserve arts and culture and that create places where people want to work and live.
3. Protect precious resources by evaluating the impact of potential businesses on the community and environment.

Planning and Marketing

4. Ensure that adequate infrastructure is in place to meet transportation, power transmission, energy, water, sewer, communications, and broadband needs.
5. Use data to set economic goals, including a statewide system to collect information on demographics, job demand, workforce supply, and tax base benchmarks.
6. Create economic development plans that include the public and draw on community assessments and resources.
7. Develop marketing plans to promote communities, help sustain existing businesses, and attract new ones.

Collaboration

8. Create regional commerce networks that link local producers with industries and consumers.
9. Make economic development a priority within each state department and agency to encourage sustainable and successful development statewide.

10. Use local funding to create economic partnerships, so that effective and compatible development can be consistently pursued in the region.
11. Use a “one-stop” approach to economic development by enabling local, regional, and state entities to pool resources, share strengths, and correct weaknesses.
12. Utilize the state’s existing Certified Communities Initiative, so that communities can assess strengths and weaknesses and formulate economic development approaches.

Technical Assistance for Rural Communities

13. Provide teams of economic development experts to help communities develop and execute development plans.
14. Establish interdisciplinary economic development and community development teams, so that rural and frontier communities have access to necessary expertise.
15. Provide technical assistance on smart growth and regional planning to encourage rural and tribal sustainability.

Education and Workforce Training

16. Strengthen NM’s entire educational system, from preschool through college, so that a trained workforce is prepared for business, industry, and entrepreneurship.
17. Work regionally to meet workforce training needs that address shortfalls of critical skills.

Regulation and Tax Policy

18. Simplify state and local regulations to be fair, simplified, uniform, timely, consistent, affordable, and transparent.
19. Modify the state’s tax structure so that communities can more easily recruit, retain, and expand business.

These recommendations are presented in greater detail in the full report that follows. They will be prioritized by an implementation team composed of town hall participants. This group will spend 12-18 months advancing the recommendations with policymakers, community leaders, and the public.

About New Mexico First

New Mexico First is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that engages citizens in public policy. Co-founded in 1986 by U.S. Senators Pete Domenici and Jeff Bingaman, New Mexico First engages people in public policy. Best known for its statewide town halls, the organization uses a unique consensus-building process that enables participants to learn about a topic in depth, develop concrete policy recommendations addressing that topic, and then advance the recommendations with state leaders. New Mexico First is funded through donations, memberships, registrations, and contracts.

The annual statewide town hall focuses on a different subject each year, with past deliberations addressing water, education, healthcare, and other subjects of importance to New Mexico.
Business as UNusual:
A Town Hall on Rural-Urban Economic Development

Introduction
In March 2008, New Mexico First convened its 36th statewide town hall. The event focused on how to strengthen New Mexico’s rural economies. This town hall benefited from the best statewide representation of any in recent history, with residents of 37 different New Mexico communities attending the event. Participants included business leaders, educators, community members, government officials, economic developers, environmentalists, as well as college and high school students. These committed citizens made it clear that the economic health of New Mexico’s rural communities is an issue of critical importance, and that collaboration between rural and urban areas is one strategy for achieving that goal.

This event used New Mexico First’s unique town hall format: a three-day deliberation during which participants identified challenges and came to consensus on possible solutions. Their deliberation was informed by a comprehensive background report on economic development approaches that participants reviewed in advance. (The report is available online at www.newmexicofirst.org)

In addition, participants benefitted from keynote presentations by Lieutenant Governor Diane Denish, Economic Development Secretary Fred Mondragon, and POLICOM Corporation President Bill Fruth. A panel of state experts on economic development also spoke.

As noted above, participants traveled from throughout the state to attend. In addition, New Mexico First staff went to several communities prior to the town hall in order to hear first-hand from local citizens what issues they felt should be addressed at the town hall. These activities generated advanced interest in the event while providing specific focus to the unique needs of rural areas. The pre-town hall community meetings also enabled New Mexico First to collect feedback and suggestions for the event’s background report described above.

The town hall was held March 27-29, 2008 at the Inn of the Mountain Gods on the Mescalero Apache Reservation in Mescalero, NM. Scholarships covered registration, food, and lodging fees for those with financial need.

Common Themes
After extensive discussions, town hall participants came to consensus on 19 recommendations as one large group. Participants developed their initial ideas in small groups. The ideas were combined and refined until the full group agreed to all the recommendations. Common themes began to emerge immediately including:

- Sustaining existing businesses and attracting new ones to small communities
- Providing sound educations for the next generation of young people
- Economic development that is environmentally responsible
- Regional partnerships on broad issues such as workforce, transportation, energy, water, and broadband
- Collection of localized data on demographics, jobs, and labor supply
- Reforming the state’s regulation and tax codes to become more business-friendly
- Development of local marketing strategies to sustain and attract local businesses
- Economic development experts to advise communities as they develop and implement local plans
- Preservation of arts, culture, and history within communities

The recommendations were based on consensus-based vision statements, developed in the small groups, that asked participants to imagine what thriving rural economies might look like in ten years. (The vision statements are printed in their entirety in Appendix A of this report.)
# Town Hall Recommendations

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<tr>
<th>MAIN IDEA</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Theme: CHARACTER OF COMMUNITIES</strong></td>
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<td>1. Build on what you've got.</td>
<td>To ensure the ongoing viability of primary industries and to strengthen rural economies, local and regional economic councils (or other appropriate individuals and organizations) should identify and leverage the current, existing primary businesses and underlying assets to draw in additional primary businesses and secondary support businesses that build on the assets, qualities, and characteristics of the community.</td>
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| 2. Design community plans that preserve arts, culture, and history. | So that arts, culture, and history are preserved, businesses, individuals, and the community should identify and design plans to:  
  - Create a place where people want to shop, work, and live  
  - Promote the uniqueness of the community, with the understanding that the spirit of the community leads to a creative process for economic development that is appropriate to the community  
Communities will seek support in the form of ordinances, resolutions, and other sources supported by lawmakers, business owners, and entrepreneurs who acquire funding for projects that are produced from the plan. |
<p>| 3. Protect precious resources. | To protect resources that have been identified as being precious and significant to the communities, decision-makers should evaluate potential businesses and industries according to their impact on available resources to ensure responsible and environmentally sensitive development. |
| <strong>Theme: PLANNING AND MARKETING</strong> | |
| 4. Take care of infrastructure. | So that economic development can be accomplished, government, community, businesses, and the private sector should ensure that adequate infrastructure—or plans for infrastructure—are in place to meet requirements including transportation, power transmission, energy, water, sewer and waste disposal, communications, and broadband technology. |
| 5. Use data to understand local needs and set economic goals. | So that actionable economic development goals can be accomplished, the legislature should appropriate funding to be used to develop and implement a statewide methodology for data collection and analysis to illustrate status, changes, and (predictive) trends in state, regional, and local demographics, job demand (primary and secondary) workforce supply, and tax base benchmarks, including but not limited to econometric modeling, input/output analysis, retail leakage analysis, cluster analysis, and import substitution analysis. This data will be complemented by locally defined data on regional resources, assets, strengths, and weaknesses. |
| 6. Create local and regional economic development plans that include the public and data. | So that New Mexico’s communities can become more attractive, livable, sustainable, and prosperous, the state legislature working with the governor should provide dedicated funding sufficient to develop community and regional comprehensive plans for economic development. The plans will be developed by conducting community assessments, creating an inventory of assets and resources, and identifying workforce, infrastructure, and other needs. In addition, the plans will be developed with public participation planning involving citizens, businesses, industry, educational organizations, tribes, non-governmental organizations, governments, and youth, using data collected through the implementation of Recommendation 5 (above). These plans should be formally adopted by all appropriate governmental and economic development entities, and these entities should be held accountable for implementation through annual reports. |</p>
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<th>MAIN IDEA</th>
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<td>7. Use marketing strategies to promote communities.</td>
<td>So that rural communities can sustain existing businesses and attract new ones, the communities should form partnerships to plan and implement marketing strategies, based on analysis of data, in collaboration with the private sector, regional planning organizations, the state Economic Development Department, and community leaders.</td>
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**Theme: COLLABORATION**

| 8. Create regional commerce networks including rural and urban areas. | So that regional commerce networks are developed, the state Economic Development Department (EDD) and regional business organizations should create new opportunities for collaboration by linking local producers with industries and consumers. These collaborations may be organized through EDD, regional business, volunteer economic experts and investors, as well as research institutions and development resources. |
| 9. Make economic development a priority within each state department and agency. | To encourage sustainable and successful economic development, the state’s executive branch should charge each department and agency to participate, implement, and incorporate rural economic development planning as one of its primary objectives and establish a key contact person within each agency. |
| 10. Use local funding to create economic development partnerships. | So that effective and compatible economic development can be consistently pursued in the region, the community, town, and/or county (rural-to-rural or rural-to-urban collaborative) should commit and utilize existing local funding sources (such as a tax, venture capital partnerships, public financing) to create public/private partnerships to fund the economic development process. |
| 11. Use “one-stop” approach to economic development through collaboration. | So that a true one-stop regional economic development approach can be accomplished, local, regional, and state entities (government, business, industry) should pool resources, share strengths, and correct weaknesses in order to effectively recruit, expand, and sustain economic opportunities. |

**Theme: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES**

| 12. Tap the state’s existing Certified Communities Initiative (CCI). | So that communities can assess their strengths and weaknesses and formulate economic development approaches, they should go through state’s Economic Development Department regional representatives and the Certified Communities Initiative (CCI).¹ |
| 13. Provide teams of economic development experts. | So that rural economic development efforts can be realized, the NM Industrial Development Executives Association (NM IDEA), in cooperation with the Economic Development Department’s regional representatives, will make available teams of economic development experts to help the communities finalize and execute their plans. |
| 14. Establish interdisciplinary economic development and community development teams. | So that rural and frontier communities have access to economic development expertise, the legislature should fund the creation of interdisciplinary economic development and community development teams. |
| 15. Provide technical assistance on smart growth and regional planning. | To encourage rural sustainability, the state economic development department should be adequately funded in order to make available to tribal and other community leaders technical assistance relating to smart growth and regional planning in rural areas. |

¹ The CCI is a program of the state Economic Development Department that guides communities toward taking necessary actions to posture themselves for economic development opportunities.
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<td>Theme: EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE TRAINING</td>
<td><strong>16. Strengthen NM’s entire educational system, from pre-school through college.</strong> So that a fully and appropriately trained workforce is available to business and industry and to assure a pipeline of youth entrepreneurs, all the relevant state agencies(^2) should work with stakeholders to create a seamless educational system from pre-school through college. The town hall recommends that the school expand its role as the center of education for the community it serves and ensures access to higher education, vocational training, and youth entrepreneurship to meet evolving needs.</td>
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<td><strong>17. Work regionally to meet workforce skills and training needs.</strong> To create a trained and educated workforce tailored to the needs of existing and new businesses, all relevant state agencies(^3) and business leaders should work collaboratively to generate regional plans to address shortfalls of critical workforce skills.</td>
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<td>Theme: REGULATION AND TAX POLICY</td>
<td><strong>18. Simplify state and local regulations.</strong> So that economic development efforts can be enhanced, New Mexico should have a state and local regulatory framework that is fair, simplified, uniform, accessible, timely, consistent, affordable, and transparent. The town hall recommends that reform of the existing structure be implemented through collaborative efforts of the executive branch, the legislature, local governments, and stakeholders. The town hall supports the creation and funding of the Regulatory Process and Administrative Law Interim Committee, established in the 2008 legislative session. The town hall supports the adoption and adaptation of the Model Uniform Administrative Act as New Mexico is the only state in the nation who has not yet done so.</td>
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<td><strong>19. Modify the state’s tax structure to support business.</strong> So that communities can recruit, retain, and expand in order to experience sustainable economic growth, the legislature, including taxing authorities, will continue to create and maintain a tax policy structure that will focus on modification of NM’s tax structure to accommodate all forms of business, recognizing that GRT pyramiding is a significant issue(^4).</td>
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**Implementation of the Town Hall Recommendations**

This **New Mexico First** town hall was not a destination, but rather was a launching point for state and local reform. In order to ensure that these recommendations will be acted upon, **New Mexico First** identified an Implementation Team Chair with leadership experience and influence. Linda Kay Jones is a Silver City community leader with almost 25 years experience in rural economic development. A small business owner, Linda Kay is the past Executive Director of the Silver City-Grant County Economic Development Corporation and she directs the annual week-long New Mexico Economic Development Course held in Silver City. She is Special Assistant to the President of Western New Mexico University, where she spearheads projects in institutional advancement, economic development, and community affairs.

As Chair of the Leadership Team, Linda Kay will lead a group of 20 town hall volunteers who want to take action on the recommendations that were so thoughtfully prepared during the three-day process. Updates on the progress of the Implementation Team will be provided to the town hall participants.

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\(^{2}\) Relevant state agencies include the Higher Education Department, Public Education Department, Economic Development Department, and the Department of Workforce Solutions.

\(^{3}\) Same agencies as previous footnote.

\(^{4}\) Gross receipts tax “pyramiding” refers to the tax layering effect that often occurs when business services are purchased by a company and they become incorporated into the final product or service of that company. When the business service is purchased as an input, it is taxed. When the company's final product or service is sold, that business service input is technically taxed again because it is now part of the final sale.
Appendix A: Vision Statements

During the town hall, participants divided into groups to develop vision statements of what ideal, economically vibrant rural communities would look like in ten years.

**Blue Vision Statement**

New Mexico’s rural and tribal economies are thriving. Ten years ago, negative societal issues were a serious problem in rural communities, impacting the state’s economic development and community stability. However, these issues have been successfully addressed and are now in decline. In addition, rural economies are now environmentally sustainable. Development has been controlled and has resulted in a compact built environment with fully developed transportation networks, affordable housing, sustainable water, and utility infrastructure. Alternative energy sources have been developed and implemented, and strategies address the challenges of climate change. Land-based businesses are thriving. Land is leveraged in a sustainable manner, with alternative farming, biomass, and other technologies contributing to economic development. Government regulation complements and assists the private sector. This attractive framework has led to full employment at higher-than-national-average wages for workers, including public-service sector workers.

**Red Vision Statement**

In 2018, New Mexico’s rural communities have thriving economies based on their unique personalities and that build on the resources that the individual communities have within the region. These communities are sustainable in terms of alternative and renewable energy, vocational and secondary education, water, food, services, and infrastructure. This has been achieved through engaging all citizens and by partnering with groups such as business, education, and all levels of government within the community and in other communities. The educational curriculum has been transformed through community participation to produce a 90% graduation rate and graduates who are ready to enter the local job market.

**Brown Vision Statement**

As the national model for rural economic development, New Mexico is recognized for its commitment to a thriving economy that maximizes economic development while sustaining and protecting natural resources. Companies from around the world are clamoring for well educated and trained NM graduates, but those students choose to remain in the state and live and work in smaller communities because they are vibrant and offer numerous career opportunities in traditional and new industries (agriculture, solar, renewable energy, and as yet unidentified). Those industries provide an economic base for rural communities around the state. New Mexico’s governmental systems have evolved to become a support system for sustainable local governments that balance economic development, education, environmental, and social systems. New Mexico residents (no matter where they live) have reasonable, regional access (geographical, financial etc.) to necessary services (such as food and healthcare) and quality of life factors (such as natural attractions and entertainment). The state has become an international example of an educational system that produces graduates that are suitably trained for the needs of the new economies around the state. New Mexico companies thrive because of their access to a highly trained workforce (regardless of their geographic location). Tourists from around the world see the entire state of New Mexico as a premier destination because of its respect for its natural beauty, history, and culture, and its user-friendly travel environment. New Mexico citizens view their communities as the best place in the world to live and work.

**Yellow Vision Statement**

It is 2018 and New Mexico’s rural economies are thriving and quality of life is wonderful because we are able to draw new and diverse individuals into our communities. We have improved education, educational access, and opportunities for our citizens who are completing post-secondary education and are able to stay or return to the community. Our people can find good employment, adequate healthcare, rural lifestyle, and affordable housing. Our economy is thriving because there is demand for locally produced goods and services on a regional and global scale, and we are able to benefit from our connection to global resources. We have protected our local cultural diversity with our traditions, language and history, as well as our natural environment.
Orange Vision Statement
By the year 2018, New Mexico’s rural economies will be thriving based on several key developments, including high-speed access to the Internet and enhanced telecommunications connectivity that allows businesses to sell their products and services globally while providing universal accessibility to healthcare through telemedicine technologies. There will be a close collaboration between the business community and the education system, resulting in a 100 percent graduation rate for all high school freshmen, schools meeting national standards and becoming the centers of activity in rural areas, opportunities for young people that prepare them for the workforce and a future in their local communities, advanced telecommunications connectivity in remote areas that promotes distance learning, and students understanding how their degrees apply to future trades and applicable skills. New Mexico’s regulation of business will be more fair, consistent, and transparent. There will be extensive transportation connectivity, including air service and comprehensive road networks, and the development and maintenance of the transportation infrastructure will support a diverse industry base. More communities will realize their historical and cultural assets, which will lead to the improved economic development of their areas, and the concept of regeneration will be incorporated to include cultural and ecosystem values. Water will be transferred from one use to another in an effective manner, and successful sustainable water policies will be in place that support regional economic development efforts.

Green Vision Statement
Ten years from now New Mexico maintains its unique identity and still looks like home with communities working together better through regionalization than they have in years. New Mexico’s major corporations have established economic linkages throughout rural New Mexico. The population is stable and for the first time in the history of the state, New Mexico is ranked fourth lowest in poverty in the U.S. A new hope has been established where drugs are left as simply a bad dream and the drug crisis has been ended. The impacts of economic development are acknowledged along with the positive returns that walk hand-in-hand with those impacts. The definition of wealth has been determined and is much different than it was in years past with: pueblo and rural communities mutually, organically, and locally sustainable; all the services needed to provide community members with adequate goods and services; expanded entrepreneurship at both the local and regional levels; and New Mexico’s youth having job flexibility and a reason to return home after their education is complete. Because broadband is now free and accessible in all quadrants of the state, open lines of communication between communities has been established and arguments over initiatives have ceased, leaving dynamic, creative, local and regional interactive economic development resource teams in their stead, and a subsection of rural community members have been granted compensation for certain difficulties they have had to bear. The youth of ten years ago have become the leadership of today, having received improved education and skill sets, and they are responsible for installing desalination plants in rural areas, developing strategies for development outside of wealth creation, promoting communities that are global, green, and growing. Locally manufactured goods are finding their way into the international marketplace with the help of artisans and local manufacturing companies. And permanent funding in the recurring budget (HB 2) for youth entrepreneurial initiatives is constant.
Appendix B: Town Hall Committees and Speakers

Town Hall Speakers

Diane Denish  
Lieutenant Governor, State New Mexico

Bill Fruth  
President, POLICOM Corporation

Ryan Gleason  
State Director, USDA Rural Development-NM

Jami Grindatto  
New Mexico Corporate Affairs Director, Intel

Mark Lautman  
Director, Economic Development, Mesa del Sol

Richard Luarkie  
1st Lieutenant, Governor Pueblo of Laguna

Bob Mang  
Owner, Regenesis, LLC

Fred Mondragón  
Cabinet Secretary, NM Department of Economic Development

Town Hall Implementation Team

The following town hall attendees volunteered to serve on the Implementation Team. They will advance the recommendations with state and local leaders.

Linda Kay Jones, Leadership Team Chair  
Heather Balas, NMF President

Mike Anaya  
Lisa Baca Diaz  
Michael Bain

Jamai Blivin  
Teresa Fleming  
Michelle Frost

Paul Gutiérrez  
Hayley Klein  
Mark Lautman

Beverlee McClure  
Ray Mondragon  
Tim Nisty

Stuart Paisano  
Daniel Sambrano  
Roberta Scott

Judy Stubbs  
Kris Swedin  
Tom Taylor

Town Hall Leadership Team

The following people served on the Leadership Team of the town hall, facilitating sessions or managing the flow of recommendations into the final report.

Carl Moore, Leadership Chair  
Garrey Carruthers, Plenary Chair  
Michelle Hennie, Master Recorder  
Charlotte Pollard, Assistant Master Recorder

Discussion Leaders and Recorders

Diane Albert  
J.D. Bullington  
Jacey Blue Campbell  
Kathy Komoll

Celia Merrill  
Carl Moore  
Suzanne Otter

Kathleen Owegon  
Jennifer Salisbury  
Donna Smith  
Anne Stauffer  
Lisa Stuckey
Appendix C: Town Hall Registrants

Town Hall Participants

Richard Adkisson
New Mexico State University
Las Cruces

Michael Anaya
New Mexico Association of Counties
Santa Fe

Marvis Aragon Jr.
Acoma Business Enterprises
Acoma

Lisa Baca Diaz
Primero Planning
Gallup

Michael Bain
The Quivira Coalition
Santa Fe

Cindy Balazs
Self
Mesilla Park

Aron Balok
New Mexico Farm & Livestock Bureau
Roswell

Scott Beckman
Regional Development Corporation
Santa Fe

Jamai Blivin
New Mexico Learning Network
Espanola

Mike Bowen
NM Mining Association
Santa Fe

Simon Brackley
Santa Fe Chamber of Commerce
Santa Fe

David Buchholtz
Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck
Albuquerque

Brent Bullock
Pecos Valley Artesian Conservancy District
Roswell

Michele Caskey
Sierra Dunes Global Association
Capitan

Gerald Chacon
NMSU Extension Service
Santa Fe

Patricia Chavez
NM Economic Development Partnership
Albuquerque

Bethe Cunningham
EDC of Lea County
Hobbs

Luci Davis
BHP Billiton
Farmington

Robert Donnell
Chaves County Development Foundation
Roswell

Wally Drangmeister
WESST
Albuquerque

Dennis Dunnum
Town of Carrizozo
Carrizozo

LaVerne Ellerbe
New Mexico Higher Education Department
Santa Fe

Michael Elrod
ENMU-Ruidoso
Ruidoso

Theresa Esparza
Meyners + Company, LLC
Albuquerque

Greg Fisher
Roosevelt County CDC
Portales

Teresa Fleming
Intel Corporation
Rio Rancho

C. Richard Foote
Corrales MainStreet
Corrales

Ira Kaye Fraschier
Eastern New Mexico University
Portales

Michelle Frost
New Mexico Cattle Growers Association
San Jon

Vickie Galindo
NMSU - Arrowhead Center
Las Cruces

Marcos Gonzales
New Mexico Finance Authority
Santa Fe

John Guldemann
Jinglebob Ltd
Animas

Paul Gutierrez
New Mexico Association of Counties
Santa Fe

Lea Harrison
New Mexico Partnership
Albuquerque

Jude Heimel
Jude Heimel & Associates
Santa Fe

Jim Holloway
NM PED/Rural Education Division
Santa Fe

Chuck Howe
Village of Angel Fire
Angel Fire

Alice Jones
Western New Mexico University
Silver City

Sharon King
Roosevelt County Chamber of Commerce
Portales

Randy Kirkpatrick
San Juan Water Commission
Farmington

Hayley Klein
Greater Artesia Chamber of Commerce
Artesia

Debi Lee
City of Portales
Portales

Dr. Melissa Lomax
NM Public Education Department
Santa Fe

Marie Longserre
Santa Fe Business Incubator
Santa Fe

Susie Marbury
NM EMNDRD
Santa Fe
Richard Marquez  
NM Rural Electric Cooperative Association  
Santa Fe

Alex Martinez  
SER Jobs For Progress, Inc.  
Santa Fe

Sandra McCordell  
Current-C Energy Systems, Inc.  
Mills

Beverlee McClure  
Association of Commerce & Industry  
Albuquerque

Kevin McMullan  
NM Health Policy Commission  
Santa Fe

Tom Mills  
Gallagher & Kennedy P.A.  
Santa Fe

Peter Mitchell  
City of Albuquerque  
Albuquerque

Fred Mondragon  
NM Economic Development Department  
Santa Fe

Raymond Mondragon  
ENMR Plateau  
Clovis

Joseph Montoya  
New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority  
Albuquerque

Michelle Mosser  
Grace Communications  
Santa Fe

Justin Mount  
NM Economic Development Department  
Santa Fe

Joe Nestor  
Blast & Clean  
Albuquerque

Tim Nisly  
SVEDC  
Albuquerque

Ethan Ortega  
Student, Tomorrow's Leaders Program  
Portales

Stuart Paisano  
NM Economic Development Department  
Santa Fe

Myra Pancrazio  
Estancia Valley EDA  
Moriarty

P.J Parker  
City of Jali  
Jali

Romy Pierce  
Relay NM  
Albuquerque

Wayne Powell  
UNM Office for Community Health  
Albuquerque

Michele Rebstock  
Village of Ruidoso  
Ruidoso

Shelley Redford  
Redford Associates  
Silver City

Stephanie Reid  
New Mexico Oil & Gas Association  
Santa Fe

John Rice  
IMPACT-NM, Business Growth Services  
Bernalillo

Patrick Risner  
BHP Billiton  
Farmingdale

Anil Rupasingha  
New Mexico State University  
Las Cruces

Michael Sage  
NWNMCOG  
Gallup

Daniel Sambrano  
Dona Ana Heritage/Preservation Corp.  
Dona Ana

Gerald Schultz  
Black Range RC&D  
Tyrone

Sharon Schultz  
Tourism Association of New Mexico  
Albuquerque

Sally Schwartz  
All Things Said  
Albuquerque

Robert Scott  
SBDC, UNM-Valencia  
Los Lunas

Deborah Seligman  
Tri-State G&T Association  
Santa Fe

William Senkowski  
Student, Tomorrow's Leaders Program  
Portales

Gene Smith  
Eastern New Mexico University  
Portales

Jim Sours  
First Community Bank  
Clovis

Allen Sparks  
Fort Sumner Comm. Dev. Corp.  
Fort Sumner

Judy Stubbs  
NM Economic Development Department  
Roswell

Kris Swedin  
Santa Fe Community College  
Santa Fe

Amanda Tarango  
Student, Tomorrow's Leaders Program  
Portales

Tom Taylor  
State Representative  
Farmingdale

Roger Toledo  
Ojo Encino Navajo Chapter  
Albuquerque

Fabian Trujillo  
City of Santa Fe  
Santa Fe

Vangie Trujillo  
Los Alamos National Laboratory  
Los Alamos

Sharon Vander Meer  
Las Vegas SMED Corp  
Las Vegas

Len Vohs  
City of Clovis  
Clovis

Rachel Weber  
Ruidoso Valley Chamber of Commerce  
Ruidoso

Bob Wessely  
Water Assembly  
Placitas
Nicole Wilkening
City of Portales
Portales

George Williams
University of New Mexico
Albuquerque

Anita Williams Kelly
Meyers + Company, LLC
Albuquerque

Meryn Witt
Mora Valley Chamber of Commerce
Mora

**Town Hall Observers**

Zane Bergman
First National Bank in Hobbs
Hobbs

Claire Burroughes
City of Clovis
Clovis

Ed Deems
Town of Carrizozo
Carrizozo

Ruby Dorsey-Gonzales
Union County Community Development Corp.
Clayton

Gary Esslinger
Elephant Butte Irrigation District
Las Cruces

Patricio Garcia
Rio Arriba County
Espanola

Paul Gutierrez
New Mexico State University
Las Cruces

John Zent
ConocoPhillips
Farmington

Brent Ziarnick
NMSU - Arrowhead Center
Las Cruces

Linda Kay Jones
Western New Mexico University
Silver City

William Knauf
Mesa del Sol
Albuquerque

Dennis Lopez
Roosevelt County
Portales

Jim Manatt
Providence Technologies
Roswell

Sherman McCorkle
Technology Ventures Corp.
Albuquerque

Susan McGuire
Retired/US Senate
Cedar Crest

Tad Powers
Hidalgo County
Rodeo

Fredrick Shepherd
Mesilla Valley Economic Development Alliance
Las Cruces

Nancy Sparks
Fort Sumner Comm Dev. Corp.
Fort Sumner

Joni Thompson
ACVB
Albuquerque

Tony Trujillo
Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold
Silver City

Jack Valencia
North Central Regional Transit District
Santa Fe

Eric Zamora
Valencia County
Los Lunas
**Demographic Distribution of Participants**

The 160 town hall registrants were drawn from 37 communities around New Mexico and they represented a wide range of perspectives.

**Communities Represented**
- Acoma
- Albuquerque
- Angel Fire
- Animas
- Artesia
- Bernalillo
- Capitan
- Carrizozo
- Cedar Crest
- Clayton
- Clovis
- Corrales
- Dona Ana
- Espanola
- Farmington
- Fort Sumner
- Gallup
- Hobbs
- Jal
- Las Cruces
- Las Vegas
- Los Alamos
- Los Lunas
- Mesilla Park
- Mills
- Mora
- Moriarty
- Placitas
- Portales
- Rio Rancho
- Rodeo
- Roswell
- Ruidoso
- San Jon
- Santa Fe
- Silver City
- Tyrone

**Participants by Interest Area**

![Pie chart showing distribution of participants by interest area: Business, Agriculture, Education, Environment, Government, Tribal, Other.](chart_url)
Appendix D: New Mexico First Leadership

Board of Directors and Executive Committee

Lillian Montoya-Rael*
Board Chair
Smith Barney, Santa Fe

Heather Balas,* President
New Mexico First
Albuquerque

Phelps Anderson
Sun Valley Energy Corporation
Roswell

Connie Beimer
University of New Mexico Albuquerque

Zane Bergman
First National Bank, Hobbs

Simon Brackley
Santa Fe Chamber, Santa Fe

Brenda Brooks
National Enrichment Facility, Eunice

Jose A. Campos
NM State Rep-Dist. 63, Santa Rosa

Garrey Carruthers*
College of Business NMSU
Las Cruces

Steve Carter
Sierra Title Company of NM
Las Cruces

Carol Cochran,* Treasurer
REDW The Rogoff Firm,
Albuquerque

Luci Davis*
BHP Billiton, Farmington

Linda Duffy
Sandia National Laboratories
Albuquerque

Jed Fanning
First Community Bank Albuquerque

Jack Fortner
Fortner & Dalley, Farmington

Bill Garcia*
Immediate Past Board Chair Santa Fe

Jami Grindatto*
Intel Corporation, Rio Rancho

Michelle Henrie
Atkinson & Thal, Albuquerque

Jim Hinton*
Presbyterian Healthcare Systems
Albuquerque

Sharon King*
Roosevelt County Chamber
Portales

Robert A. Jung II*
Los Ranchos de Albuquerque

Jim Manatt,* Chair-Elect
Providence Technologies, Roswell

Beverlee McClure
ACI, Albuquerque

Sherman McCorkle*
TVC, Albuquerque

Susan McGuire*
Retired/US Senate
Cedar Crest

Tom Mills
Gallagher & Kennedy, P.A.
Santa Fe

Carl Moore*
The Community Store, Santa Fe

Stuart Paisano
NM Economic Development Dept.
Santa Fe

Malcolm Petree
Rio Rancho

Alice Quintanilla
Information Assets Management
Los Alamos

Leonard Lee Rawson
NM State Senator-District 37
Las Cruces

Shelley Redford*
Redford Associates, Silver City

Bob Rosebrough
Rosebrough, Baber, & Howe
Gallup

Jennifer A. Salisbury
Attorney, Corrales

Brian Sanderoff*
Research & Polling Inc.
Albuquerque

Jack Swickard
The Triton Group, Inc.
Roswell

Jennifer Thomas
Bank of Albuquerque
Albuquerque

Sherri Wells
Moss Adams, Albuquerque

Sayuri Yamada
PNM Resources
Santa Fe

Mary Yates
Yates Industries
Artesia

* Executive Committee members
Board Emeritus

Robert Armstrong
Roswell
Jon Barela
Rio Rancho
Kathleen Bond
Olathe, Colorado
Mary Jean Christensen
Gallup
Dale Dekker
Albuquerque
Diane Denish
Santa Fe
John Dowling
Gallup
Richard Fairbanks
Albuquerque
Dr. Everett Frost
Portales
William “Bing” Grady
Albuquerque
Bill Knauf
Albuquerque

Carol Robertson Lopez
Santa Fe
Maureen Luna
Albuquerque
Tom Mills
Santa Fe
Arlene Roth
Fort Myers, Florida
Lynn Slade
Albuquerque
David Steinborn
Las Cruces
Thomas Tinnin
Albuquerque
A.P. Trujillo
Silver City
J. Ronald Vigil
Santa Fe
John Wagner
Albuquerque

Founders

The Honorable Jeff Bingaman
United States Senator

The Honorable Pete Domenici
United States Senator

Ex-Officio Board Members

The Honorable Bill Richardson
Governor of New Mexico
The Honorable Heather Wilson
US Congresswoman-District I
The Honorable Steve Pearce
US Congressman-District II
The Honorable Tom Udall
US Congressman-District III
Dr. James A. Fries
President, NMHU

Dr. John E. Counts
President, WNMU
Dr. Steven Gamble
President ENMU
Mr. David Schmidley
President, UNM
Dr. Daniel H. Lopez
President, NMIMT
Dr. Michael Martin
President, NMSU

Staff

Heather Balas
President and Executive Director
Jacey Blue Campbell
Program Coordinator
Krista Koppinger
Director of Events & Administration

Charlotte Pollard
Deputy Director
Brittney Tatum
Student Intern, UNM