

**MINUTES
of the
THIRD MEETING
of the
ECONOMIC AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND POLICY COMMITTEE**

**September 11-13, 2024
Burrell College of Osteopathic Medicine
3501 Arrowhead Drive
Las Cruces**

The third meeting of the Economic and Rural Development and Policy Committee was called to order by Representative Doreen Y. Gallegos, chair, on Wednesday, September 11, 2024, at 9:18 a.m. at the Burrell College of Osteopathic Medicine (BCOM) in Las Cruces.

Present

Rep. Doreen Y. Gallegos, Chair
Sen. Carrie Hamblen, Vice Chair
Rep. Janelle Anyanonu (9/12, 9/13)
Sen. Crystal Brantley
Rep. Jenifer Jones (9/11)
Rep. Martin R. Zamora

Absent

Rep. Gail Armstrong
Rep. Ambrose Castellano
Sen. Ron Griggs
Rep. Joshua N. Hernandez
Rep. Charlotte Little
Rep. Tara L. Lujan
Rep. Patricia A. Lundstrom
Rep. Jimmy G. Mason
Rep. Kristina Ortez

Advisory Members

Rep. Anthony Allison
Rep. Willie D. Madrid (9/11, 9/13)
Rep. Alan T. Martinez
Rep. Patricia Roybal Caballero
Sen. Elizabeth "Liz" Stefanics (9/11, 9/12)

Rep. Eliseo Lee Alcon
Rep. Cynthia Borrego
Sen. William F. Burt
Sen. Katy M. Duhigg
Rep. Mark Duncan
Rep. Joy Garratt
Sen. Siah Correa Hemphill
Rep. Pamelya Herndon
Rep. Susan K. Herrera
Rep. D. Wonda Johnson
Rep. Derrick J. Lente
Sen. Antonio Maestas
Rep. Marian Matthews
Rep. Tanya Mirabal Moya
Rep. Rod Montoya
Sen. George K. Muñoz
Sen. Cliff R. Pirtle
Rep. William "Bill" R. Rehm
Rep. Andrea Romero

Sen. Joshua A. Sanchez
Sen. Benny Shendo, Jr.
Rep. Reena Szczepanski
Sen. Bill Tallman

Guest Legislators

Rep. Micaela Lara Cadena (9/12)
Rep. Raymundo Lara (9/12)
Rep. Harlan Vincent (9/11)

(Attendance dates are noted for those members not present for the entire meeting.)

Staff

Erin Bond, Researcher, Legislative Council Service (LCS)
D. Martin Fischer, Staff Attorney, LCS
Andrea Martinez Cordero, Intern, LCS

Guests

The guest list is in the meeting file.

Handouts

Copies of all handouts and written testimony are in the meeting file and posted on the legislature's website.

References to Webcast

The time reference noted next to each agenda item in this document is cross-referenced to the webcast of the committee meeting, which can be found at www.nmlegis.gov, under the "Webcast" tab. The presentations made and committee discussions for agenda items can be found on the recorded webcast for this meeting.

Wednesday, September 11

Welcome and Introductions (9:18 a.m.)

Representative Gallegos thanked the community for hosting the committee, and members of the committee introduced themselves.

Welcome and State of Local Economy (9:27 a.m.)

Javier Perea, mayor, City of Sunland Park, provided an update on Sunland Park's recent projects and developments. Christopher Schaljo-Hernandez, commissioner, District 1, and chair, Dona Ana County Board of County Commissioners, discussed recent resolutions and actions taken by the Dona Ana County Board of County Commissioners and economic development projects in Dona Ana County. Russell Hernandez, mayor, Town of Mesilla, spoke about the economic outlook, public safety and water conditions of Mesilla. Eric Enriquez, mayor, City of Las Cruces, discussed the positive changes that Las Cruces is making for economic growth and the ongoing needs of the city.

Local Chambers of Commerce Perspective of Las Cruces' Economy (11:01 a.m.)

Richard Aguilar, chair, Las Cruces Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and Adam Amador, Ph.D., board member, Las Cruces Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, presented on the chamber's goals, mission, recent developments and challenges. Senator Hamblen, president and chief executive officer (CEO), Las Cruces Green Chamber of Commerce, spoke about the importance of small businesses and recent developments in Las Cruces. Debbi Moore, president and CEO, Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce, spoke about the chamber's goals and internship program and statistics highlighting some of the chamber's successes. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=ERDPC&Date=9/11/2024&ItemNumber=2>.

Update on South Fork and Salt Fires Recovery Efforts (12:19 p.m.)

Rick Baugh, general manager, Ruidoso Downs Racetrack and Casino, spoke about the history of the racetrack and described the flooding damage and challenges that the Ruidoso Downs Racetrack and Casino has faced since the fires. Thora Walsh Padilla, president, Mescalero Apache Tribe, spoke about the nature of the landscape, the need to coexist and collaborate with nature and one another and the economic challenges of the tribe since the fires. Mark Fischer, commissioner, District 5, Lincoln County Board of County Commissioners, spoke about the damage and recovery efforts in Lincoln County and the repercussions of poor forest management. Randall Camp, county manager, Lincoln County, discussed the level of devastation to Lincoln County. Lynn Crawford, mayor, Village of Ruidoso, described the loss of property and economic impact in terms of lost gross receipts tax revenue, some solutions that the village is considering and forest management. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=ERDPC&Date=9/11/2024&ItemNumber=3>.

Disaster Recovery Issues (2:07 p.m.)

Ali Rye, deputy secretary for operations, Homeland Security and Emergency Management Department, talked about various disaster recovery issues and programs. She also spoke about resources available to those affected by disasters.

Catastrophic Business Fund (2:26 p.m.)

Senator Hamblen; Elizabeth Teeters, director, Economic Development Department, City of Las Cruces; and Celina Morales, interim deputy director, Economic Development Department, City of Las Cruces, spoke about the year-long pilot project of the Catastrophic Business Assistance Program and the impact of the program on businesses, jobs saved and economic loss prevented. Senator Hamblen also spoke about the potential to turn the program into a statewide program to help small businesses across the state. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=ERDPC&Date=9/11/2024&ItemNumber=5>.

The State of the Agricultural Economy (3:25 p.m.)

Tiffany Rivera, director of government affairs, New Mexico Farm and Livestock Bureau, discussed the agricultural economy, detailing the forecasted income for different sectors of the agricultural economy and highlighting major issues and opportunities. Bronson Corn, president, New Mexico Cattlegrowers' Association (NMCGA), and Tom Paterson, president-elect, NMCGA, discussed the top issues affecting cattlegrowers, including brush management, the lack of veterinarians and production issues related to predators and rising costs. They offered various responses and potential solutions to the issues. Jon Boren, Ph.D., associate dean and director, Cooperative Extension Service, New Mexico State University (NMSU), presented on the Cooperative Extension Service, including what it is, how it is funded and its departments and programs. Ben Etcheverry, president, New Mexico Chile Association, and agriculture operations supervisor, Olam Spices, discussed the New Mexico Chile Association's statistics on the chile industry, the chile industry's major concerns of labor, water shortages and rising costs and recommended steps to address the issues. Jeff M. Witte, director, New Mexico Department of Agriculture, spoke about key statistics of the state's agricultural sector, the main challenges facing the sector and opportunities for the state's agricultural sector to improve. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=ERDPC&Date=9/11/2024&ItemNumber=6>.

Recess

The meeting recessed at 5:20 p.m.

Thursday, September 12

Reconvene and Welcome (9:34 a.m.)

Representative Gallegos welcomed committee members and guests to the meeting.

Border Industrial Association and International Business Accelerator Update (9:35 a.m.)

Jerry Pacheco, president, The Border Industrial Association, and executive director, International Business Accelerator, provided an update on the member organizations of The Border Industrial Association, recently completed projects and the impact of the Santa Teresa port of entry. He also discussed statistics about New Mexico's exports and the port of entry's infrastructure projects and needs. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=ERDPC&Date=9/11/2024&ItemNumber=7>.

Improving Infrastructure to Attract and Keep Businesses (10:40 a.m.)

Davin Lopez, president and CEO, Mesilla Valley Economic Development Association, discussed international trends in the border industry, New Mexico's strength in the border industry, the importance of infrastructure site readiness and a proposal for a fund to assist with infrastructure site readiness. Juan Carlos Crosby, executive director, Camino Real Regional

Utility Authority (CRRUA), and Mario Juarez-Infante, city manager, City of Sunland Park, and vice chair, CRRUA, spoke about Sunland Park's strategic plan, recent projects and infrastructure developments, efforts to improve quality of life, housing and public safety. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=ERDPC&Date=9/11/2024&ItemNumber=8>.

The Business of Early Childhood Education and the Providers (12:29 p.m.)

Kate Noble, president and CEO, Growing Up New Mexico, discussed how important child care is for economic development and the lost earnings, productivity and revenue from the lack of child care. Angela Garcia, CEO and owner, Toy Box Early Learning and Childcare Centers, and Daisy Lira, executive director, The Hive Education, spoke about child care centers and child education programs. Barbara Luna Tedrow, policy chair, New Mexico Child Care and Education Association, discussed New Mexico's achievements in child care and education, challenges facing New Mexico's child care businesses and strategies for overcoming the challenges. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=ERDPC&Date=9/11/2024&ItemNumber=9>.

Welcome from BCOM (1:53 p.m.)

Nina Nuñez, vice president of institutional effectiveness and chief of staff, BCOM, and Nellie Fisher, student doctor, BCOM, welcomed the committee to the BCOM and spoke about the college's programs and recent developments.

Serving Patients: Operations and Sustainability of Hospitals (2:04 p.m.)

Sandra Emanuel, L.C.S.W., CEO, Peak Behavioral Health, spoke about the challenges of and support for navigating the complex state process for licensing and certification. Linda Siegle, lobbyist, New Mexico Nurse Practitioner Council, discussed the shortage of nurses nationally and in New Mexico, the causes of the shortage and steps to address the shortage. Nathaniel Roybal, M.D., Ph.D., immediate past president, Greater Albuquerque Medical Association, presented about the demand for independent medical practices in New Mexico, the challenges to starting independent practices in New Mexico and ways to support the creation of more independent practices. Frank Corcoran, CEO, Sierra Vista Hospital, discussed the challenges and benefits of rural and smaller hospitals, as well as the contributions such hospitals make to economic growth. Karen Carson, M.D., chair, New Mexico Medical Board, spoke about the challenges facing New Mexico's health care field, especially the shortage of practitioners. She also presented about independent medical practices and why she believes they are such a critical component of the state economy. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=ERDPC&Date=9/11/2024&ItemNumber=11>.

Health Care as an Economic Development Strategy (4:09 p.m.)

Cassie Arias-Ward, economic and tourism development coordinator, City of Deming, and executive director, Deming Luna County Economic Development, Inc., talked about the benefits of focusing on health care as a driver of economic development. Ernesto Robles, area practice manager, La Clinica de Familia, and John Muñoz, chief experience officer, Electronic Caregiver, presented on technology that supports school-based health care. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=ERDPC&Date=9/11/2024&ItemNumber=12>.

Recess

The meeting recessed at 4:44 p.m.

Friday, September 13

NMSU System Economic Development Initiatives (9:19 a.m.)

Mónica Torres, Ph.D., interim president, NMSU, welcomed the committee to NMSU and provided a broad overview of the university. Jay Lillywhite, Ph.D., director, Agricultural Experiment Station, NMSU, spoke about the agricultural programs at NMSU, including the experiment stations. Marcella Shelby, Ph.D., strategic initiatives officer, Physical Science Laboratory, NMSU, discussed the initiatives, facilities, partnerships and economic impact of the Physical Science Laboratory. Mary Ulrich, Ph.D., executive director, Workforce Development and Career Readiness, Dona Ana Community College, discussed the mission, programs, career training approaches and statistics on the college's workforce development. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=ERDPC&Date=9/11/2024&ItemNumber=13>.

Small Businesses — What Is Working and What Is Not (10:20 a.m.)

Martha Orta, CEO, Casa Mexicana Enterprises, Inc., discussed Casa Mexicana Enterprises, Inc.'s history and business model and the challenges she faces operating a small business. David Crider, general manager, Southwest Expeditions, spoke about the challenges that he has been facing with rising costs, crime and advertising and offered some ideas for solutions. Kit Johnson, director of operations, Bowlin Travel Centers Inc., discussed challenges small businesses face. Juan Albert, owner, Backyard Farms, spoke about the difficulties of starting a small business and the challenges small businesses experience in New Mexico.

Update from the Spaceport Authority (11:43 a.m.)

Scott McLaughlin, executive director, Spaceport Authority, and Francisco Pallares, D.E.D., director of business development, Spaceport Authority, gave an update on the status of the Spaceport, discussing its activities, projects, budget and new business development. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=ERDPC&Date=9/11/2024&ItemNumber=15>.

Update from Virgin Galactic (12:48 p.m.)

Michael Moses, president, Spaceline, Virgin Galactic, and Jason Lazich, director of infrastructure and ground services, Virgin Galactic, provided an update on the operations of Virgin Galactic, including flights, fleet capacity, spaceships and community impact. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=ERDPC&Date=9/11/2024&ItemNumber=16>.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 1:29 p.m.