

Improving Infrastructure in Rural Areas: Water, Wastewater, Electricity and Roads

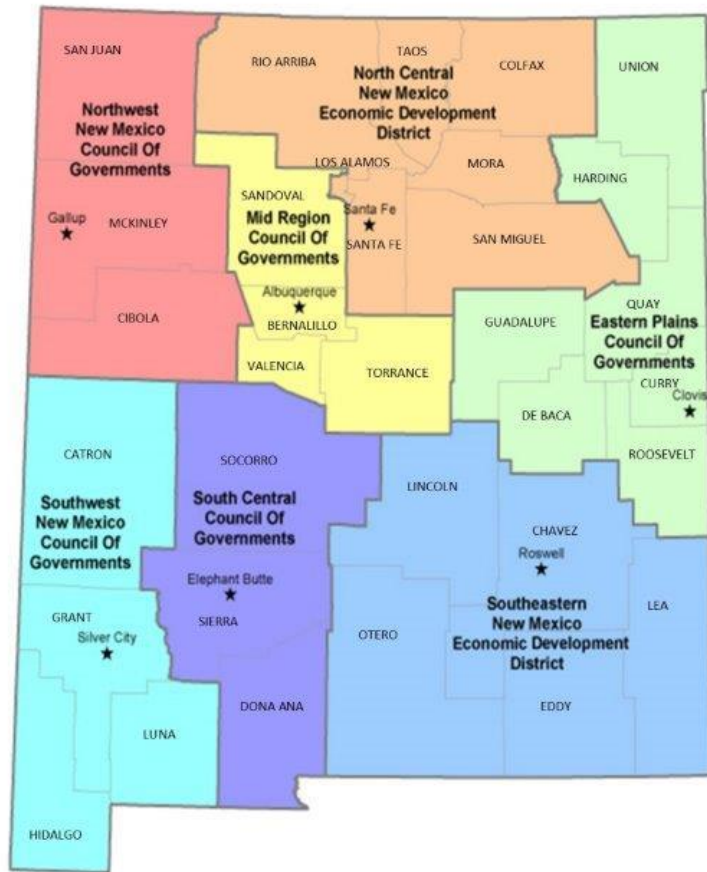
PRESENTED BY SANDY CHANCEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
EASTERN PLAINS COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Eastern Plains Council of Governments

Eastern Plains Council of Governments (EPCOG) is a planning and development organization serving the counties of Union, Harding, Quay, Guadalupe, DeBaca, Roosevelt and Curry in NE New Mexico. Our membership is made up of municipal and county governments and special districts within these counties.

Services provided to our members include assistance with Economic Development, Transportation Planning, Water Planning, Renewable Energy, Community Development, and other technical assistance such as policy development, intergovernmental agreements, grant writing and administration, organizational capacity building and other issues as staff time and expertise allow.

EPCOG is governed by a Board of Directors and employs a staff of six. Our funding comes from State and Federal grants, dues paid by members, and fee for service contracts.



Infrastructure Improvement Planning & Financing

One of the first steps to improving infrastructure is planning for the improvements. EPCOG assists with the annual Infrastructure Capital Improvements Planning (ICIP) process. In preparation of the annual ICIP, communities must identify the needed improvements and project costs and identify potential funding sources for each project. In most communities there are water, wastewater, and road improvements listed in the top five projects on the ICIP.

EPCOG encourages communities to develop comprehensive plans and asset management plans. These and many other planning processes can be funded by grants from the NM Finance Authority, Community Development Block Grants and Legislative Capital Outlay.

Construction funding can be obtained from a variety of State and Federal grant and loan programs, however matching funds are required for most grant programs.

Water Infrastructure

The need to repair or replace water system infrastructure is an ongoing need in our rural communities. Most have very old systems, and experience frequent breakdowns and water outages due to deteriorating infrastructure.

Many communities apply for Legislative Capital Outlay funding, Water Trust Board, and Community Development Block Grant funds to address these needs. USDA-Rural Development loans are also available for communities with populations of 10,000 or less.

<https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/water-waste-disposal-loan-grant-program/nm>





Regional Water Planning

Understanding the need for a sustainable water supply for the region, Eastern Plains Council of Governments has been a driving force in regional water planning. Most of our communities rely on the Ogallala Aquifer for water, and this aquifer is rapidly declining.

Many years ago, the communities in Quay, Curry and Roosevelt Counties formed the Ute Water Commission in order to reserve water from the Ute Reservoir and develop a delivery system for the water. We have been the administrative and fiscal entity for the Ute Reservoir Water Commission since it's inception. The Eastern New Mexico Rural Water Utility Authority was formed to plan, develop and operate the water delivery system. More information about the Ute Water project can be found here: <http://www.enmwua.com>.

Several of our communities have installed or are in the process of developing water reuse systems and are taking other water conservation measures.



Electricity – Renewable Energy

As the world transitions to renewable energy resources, Eastern New Mexico has become a hub for wind-generated energy. There are six wind farms located in our region, with additional turbines being added to all. A complete listing, including capacity, can be found here: <https://www.nm-prc.org/utilities/renewable-energy/#renew>.

Renewable energy has provided a significant economic boost in the EPCOG region, not only in construction jobs and revenue but also income to landowners for property leases.

The communities in our region are served by Xcel Energy or local rural electric cooperatives, all of whom utilize these wind farms to fulfill their requirement for renewable energy.



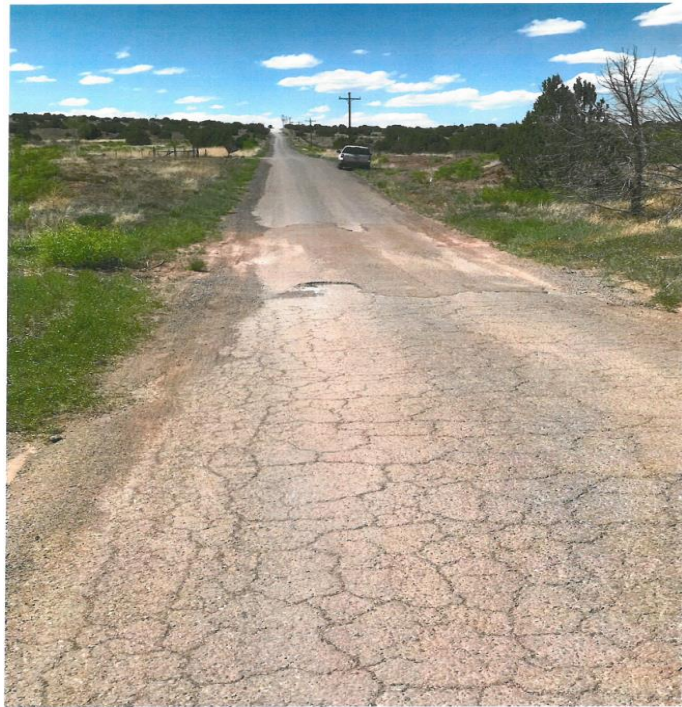
Roads and Bridges

EPCOG under an agreement with NMDOT co-manages both the Northeast (NERTPO) and Southeast (SERTPO) Transportation Planning Organizations. These organizations are established to provide technical and planning resources and services to the rural areas of New Mexico.

EPCOG has assisted in significant road, bridge, and multi-modal transportation investments within the region via programs such as Transportation Projects Fund (TPF), Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), and Recreational Trails Program (RTP), and the Local Government Road Fund (LGRF). More information, including Regional Long Range Transportation plans, can be found at www.rtpnm.org.

Road improvement needs

BAR Y ROAD – GUADALUPE COUNTY



LOS NAVAS ROAD – GUADALUPE COUNTY





Historic Rt. 66 bridge in Quay County

Funding to construct a new bridge is being sought from the Transportation Project fund.

US 54 Canadian River Bridge

OLD BRIDGE



NEW BRIDGE OPEN JULY 2021

