

**MINUTES
of the
THIRD MEETING
of the
RURAL ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE**

**August 23-24, 2022
Los Luceros Historic Site
253 County Road 41
Alcalde**

The third meeting of the Rural Economic Opportunities Task Force (REOTF) was called to order by Senator Siah Correa Hemphill, co-chair, on August 23, 2022 at 10:02 a.m. at the Los Luceros Historic Site in Alcalde.

Present

Sen. Siah Correa Hemphill, Co-Chair
Rep. Candie G. Sweetser, Co-Chair
Rep. Anthony Allison (8/23)
Rep. Gail Armstrong (8/23)
Sen. Craig W. Brandt (8/23)
Sen. Crystal R. Diamond (8/24)
Rep. Kelly K. Fajardo (8/24)
Rep. Susan K. Herrera
Rep. Willie D. Madrid
Rep. Roger E. Montoya
Sen. Michael Padilla (8/23)
Sen. Shannon D. Pinto
Sen. Elizabeth "Liz" Stefanics (8/23)

Absent

Rep. Rachel A. Black
Sen. Carrie Hamblen
Sen. Leo Jaramillo
Sen. Joshua A. Sanchez
Rep. Nathan P. Small

Advisory Members

Rep. Harry Garcia
Rep. Tara L. Lujan

Rep. Ambrose Castellano
Rep. Rebecca Dow
Sen. David M. Gallegos
Rep. D. Wonda Johnson
Rep. Patricia A. Lundstrom
Rep. Antonio Maestas
Sen. Brenda G. McKenna
Sen. Mimi Stewart

Staff

Mark Edwards, Bill Drafter, Legislative Council Service (LCS)
Erin Bond, Researcher, LCS
Catherine Sayler, Staff, LCS

Guests

The guest list is in the meeting file.

Handouts

Handouts and other 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 task force meeting, which can be found at www.nmlegis.gov, under the "Webcast" tab. The presentations made and task force discussions for agenda items can be found on the recorded webcast for this meeting.

Tuesday, August 23

Welcome and Introductions (10:02 a.m.)

Senator Hemphill welcomed everyone and asked task force members and staff to introduce themselves.

Welcome (10:09 a.m.)

John Ramon Vigil, mayor, City of Espanola, welcomed the task force to Espanola and the Espanola Valley. He emphasized the rich cultural heritage of the Espanola Valley and its role as a thoroughfare to many places in northern New Mexico.

Broadband Status Update (10:13 a.m.)

Kelly Schlegel, director, Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE), Department of Information Technology, reported on the efforts of the OBAE to bring 100% broadband connectivity to New Mexico over the next five years. She estimates that reaching this goal will cost more than \$1 billion, and she is currently working to meet the requirements of and critical deadlines for federal funding requests. She emphasized the importance of digital equity; strong partnerships, including community and tribal engagement; and the creation of a robust middle-mile framework upon which connectivity to rural New Mexico will depend. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/REOTF%20082322%20Item%202%20Broadband%20Office%20Update.pdf>.

Cultural Affairs Overview and Los Luceros Historic Site Status (12:05 p.m.)

Michelle Gallagher Roberts, deputy secretary, Cultural Affairs Department (CAD), reviewed the CAD's mission, division responsibilities and many historic sites and programs that enrich life in New Mexico. Patrick Moore, executive director, New Mexico Historic Sites, CAD, highlighted the history of Los Luceros from its earliest native inhabitants, dating back to the 1200s, to its designation by the legislature as a state historic site in 2019. The Spanish land

grant hacienda, Los Luceros, dates back to 1775 and has been an integral part of the local community for more than 200 years, Dr. Moore said. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/REOTF%20082322%20Item%203%20Cultural%20Affairs%20Overview%20of%20Programs%20and%20Los%20Luceros.pdf>.

Tour of Bookmobile (12:59 p.m.)

Task force members toured a CAD Library Division bookmobile.

The "Fund It" Process (1:24 p.m.)

Johanna Nelson, strategic programs manager, Economic Development Department (EDD), detailed the New Mexico FUNDIT program within the EDD. She explained that the FUNDIT program functions as a "one-stop shop", helping communities identify funding opportunities and setting up quarterly meetings in which many funding agencies are present to hear about proposed projects and offer crowd-sourced suggestions. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/REOTF%20082322%20Item%204%20Fund%20IT.pdf>.

Current Thinking on Structuring a State Rural Infrastructure Program (2:11 p.m.)

Donnie Quintana, director, Local Government Division, Department of Finance and Administration, and Cally Carswell, analyst, Legislative Finance Committee (LFC), discussed the need to create a unified rural infrastructure program for New Mexico. Mr. Quintana said that a centralized state infrastructure office is needed to develop a statewide needs assessment and assist communities with all aspects of the funding process. Ms. Carswell noted the work of the LFC Capital Outlay Subcommittee to recommend capital outlay policies that would help to complete existing projects, prioritize future projects and position the state to capitalize on the large amount of state revenues and federal funds that will soon be available to New Mexico. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/REOTF%20082322%20Item%205%20Capital%20Outlay%20Policy.pdf>.

EDD — Local Economic Development Plan: Application Model (3:27 p.m.)

Daniel Guterrez, director, New Mexico MainStreet, EDD, discussed the EDD's expanding role in assisting communities to complete economic development plans after receiving grants through the Local Government Planning Fund. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/REOTF%20082322%20Item%206%20Local%20Economic%20Development%20Plan.pdf>.

Rural Summit Report (3:39 p.m.)

Representative Roger E. Montoya and Isaac Casados, chief of staff for Representative Montoya, reviewed issues raised at the first New Mexico Rural Summit held in May. Representative Montoya stressed the value gained from hearing from grassroots New Mexicans, and Mr. Casados noted that many local governments have no access to competitive grant-writing professionals and, thus, no access to federal funds. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/REOTF%20082322%20Item%207%20New%20Mexico%20Rural%20Summit.pdf>.

Motion to Request Extension of the REOTF Beyond the 2022 Interim (4:21 p.m.)

Senator Padilla moved, and Senator Pinto seconded, a motion that the co-chairs of the REOTF propose an extension of the work of the task force beyond the end of the 2022 interim.

Public Comment

A list of individuals making public comment is in the meeting file.

Recess

The meeting recessed at 4:45 p.m.

Wednesday, August 24**Reconvene**

Senator Hemphill reconvened the meeting at 9:02 a.m.

Opportunities for Value-Added Agriculture: Meat Processing (9:03 a.m.)

Jay Lillywhite, department head and professor, Agricultural Economics and Agricultural Business Department, College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, New Mexico State University (NMSU), addressed the feasibility of value-added agriculture as it relates to food animal production in New Mexico. He stated that while New Mexico is well-suited to the cow-calf component of beef production, it is less economically poised to enter the feedlot and meat processing components of beef production. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/REOTF%20082322%20Item%208%20Meat%20Processing.pdf>.

Arrowhead Community Entrepreneurship Program (10:16 a.m.)

Dana Catron, deputy director, Arrowhead Center, NMSU, gave an overview of the Arrowhead Center Community Entrepreneurship Program that supports start-up businesses in all

areas of the state through all stages of business development. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/REOTF%20082322%20Item%209%20Arrowhead%20Community%20Entrepreneurship%20Program%20%20Briefing.pdf>.

North Central New Mexico Economic Development District (NCNMEDD)

A. Grant Program (11:13 a.m.)

Monica Abeita, executive director, NCNMEDD, and Felicity Fonseca, economic development planner, NCNMEDD, gave an update on the use of funds appropriated in the 2022 legislative session to assist NCNMEDD communities in securing federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 funds. Two full-time employees have been hired to provide technical assistance and support, and nine contract grant writers have been engaged to create a team that can fully support local communities seeking assistance. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/REOTF%20082322%20Item%2010%20North%20Central%20Economic%20Development%20District.pdf>.

B. Disaster Recovery Efforts in Mora, San Miguel and Colfax Counties (11:41 a.m.)

Christopher Madrid, community development director, NCNMEDD; John N. Romero, interim superintendent, Road and Solid Waste Department, Mora County; David Montoya, emergency manager, Mora County; and Temarah L. Barela, interim county manager, Mora County, outlined disaster recovery efforts in Mora, San Miguel and Colfax counties. The counties and the NCNMEDD are all working long hours to serve communities affected by forest fires and the ensuing floods.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the task force, the meeting adjourned at 12:01 p.m.