



Southwest New Mexico Council of Governments

2021-2026 Comprehensive Development Strategy

{Document subtitle}

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Adopted October 22, 2020

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Charmaine Wait-Silver City MainStreet
Andrea Warner-Silver City Farmers Market
Karen Whitlock-Community Member

Southwest New Mexico Council of Governments

The Southwest New Mexico Council of Governments (SWNMCOG) is one of seven economic development districts in the State of New Mexico that were incorporated in 1969. The SWNMCOG region includes Catron, Grant, Hidalgo, and Luna counties along with the nine municipalities, numerous non-profits, special districts including water associations, soil and water conservation districts, and educational institutions.

The Southwest New Mexico Council of Governments provides regional planning services in legislative assistance including Capital Outlay and Infrastructure Capital Improvement planning, transportation, housing, economic development, community development, workforce development, project management, grant writing, and technical services.

The SWNMCOG receives a grant from the United States Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) to work with local, regional, and state partners to develop and implement the Comprehensive Development Strategies (CEDS), a living document that is updated annually to address specific opportunities and challenges in the region.

EDA has helped the SWNMCOG with job creation and expansion, public works, disaster recovery, and feasibility studies for decades. Specifically, EDA has invested in Grant County's Convention and Business Center, Grant County Economic Development Master Plan, Grant County's Economic Adjustment Plan, and Luna County's Mimbres Valley Learning and Special Event Center.



Vision:
“A resilient region that is economically diverse and socially equitable.”

The map shows four counties in New Mexico: Catron (top), Grant (middle), Luna (bottom right), and Hidalgo (bottom left). The counties are colored light blue. The boundary between Grant and Luna is irregular, following a river or natural feature. A compass rose is located in the bottom right corner of the map area.

I. GOAL

The goal of the strategy-driven CEDS is designed to build capacity, guide economic prosperity, and resiliency of a region. It is a key component in establishing and maintaining a robust economic ecosystem by helping to build regional capacity that contributes to individuals, organizations, local governments, institutes of learning, and private industry success.

II. METHODOLOGY

The 2020-2025 CEDS was created through research of the SWNMCO staff, 12 virtual public meetings, 11 of which were actual working meeting with key stakeholders and the public and one meeting that to receive overall public input about the final draft document. The SWNMCOG also hired CE Labs to conduct a regional workforce and industry needs assessment to help guide the economic development framework of the CEDS.

III. ACTION PLAN

The 2020-2025 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies has two parts. Part I integrates economic development and transportation planning allowing the region to plan for workforce and transportation challenges and opportunities. Part II has goals and strategies, resiliency, and aligns with the New Mexico statewide CEDS through eight common industry sectors of Agriculture and Local Foods; Arts, Film and Entertainment; Energy; Health and Social Services; Hospitality, Tourism, and Recreation; Manufacturing and Logistics, Natural Resources and Mining,; and Small Business and Entrepreneurship.



Demographics

3,539

Catron County
Population

28,601

Grant County
Population

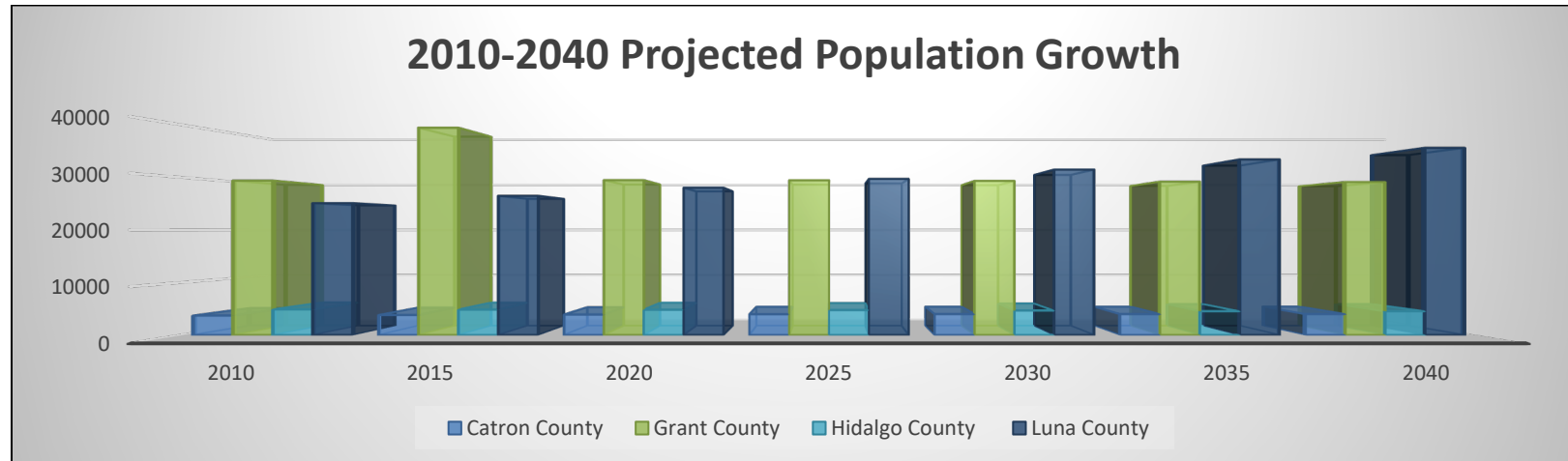
4,371

Hidalgo County
Population

24,264

Luna County
Population

*Source: 2018 American Community Survey. www.data.census.gov.



*Source: University of New Mexico, Bureau of Business and Economic Research

22.9%

Catron County
Poverty Rate

21.8%

Grant County
Poverty Rate

28.1%

Hidalgo County
Poverty Rate

30.2%

Luna County
Poverty Rate

*Source: 2018 American Community Survey. www.data.census.gov

5.8%

Catron County
Unemployment
Rate

8.7%

Grant County
Unemployment
Rate

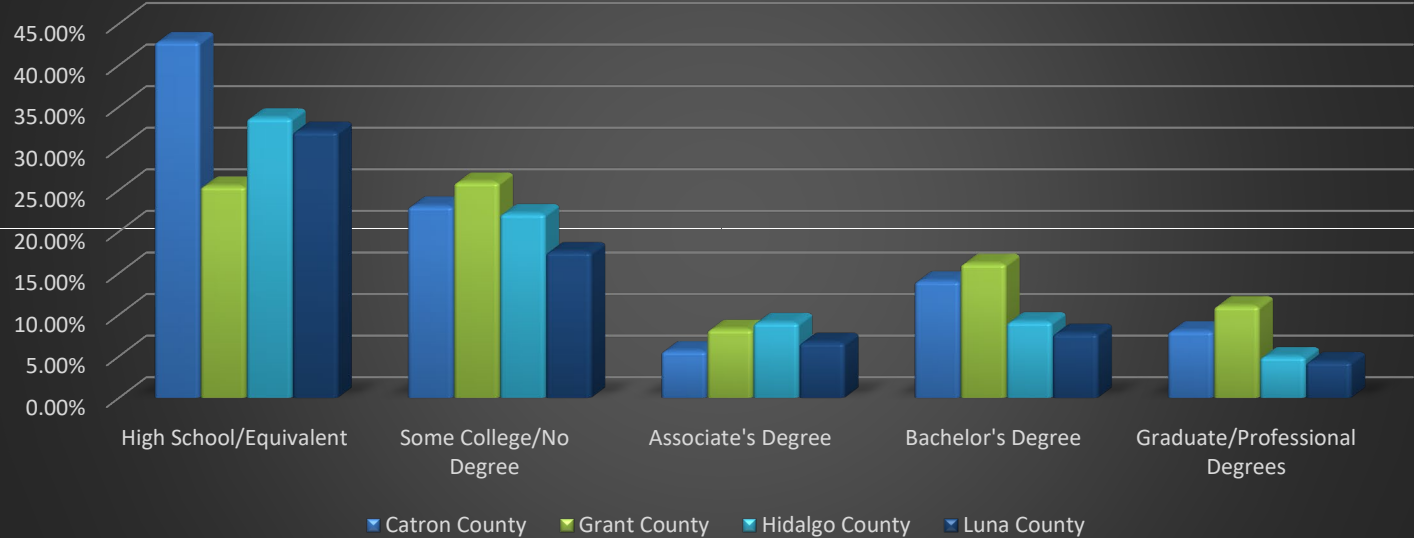
4.3%

Hidalgo County
Unemployment
Rate

13.6%

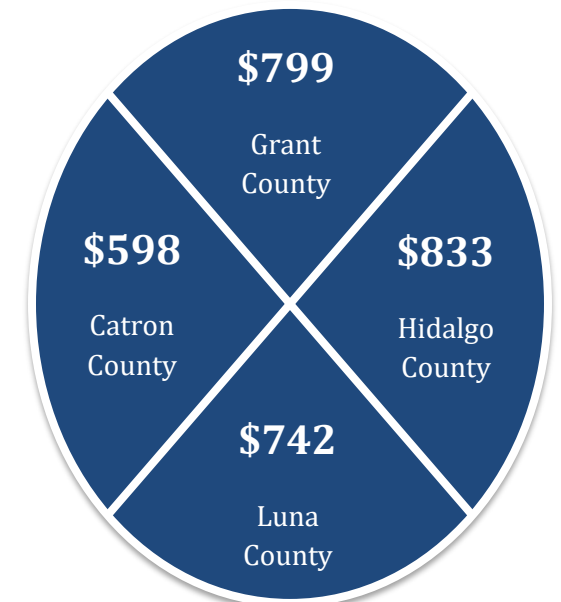
Luna County
Unemployment
Rate

Educational Attainment



*Source: 2018 American Community Survey. www.data.census.gov

Weekly Wage



*Source: www.dws.state.nm, May 2020



*Source: www.dws.state.nm, May 2020 Freeport McMoRan Chino Operations

3,893

Catron County
Housing Units

15,013

Grant County
Housing Units

2,446

Hidalgo County
Housing Units

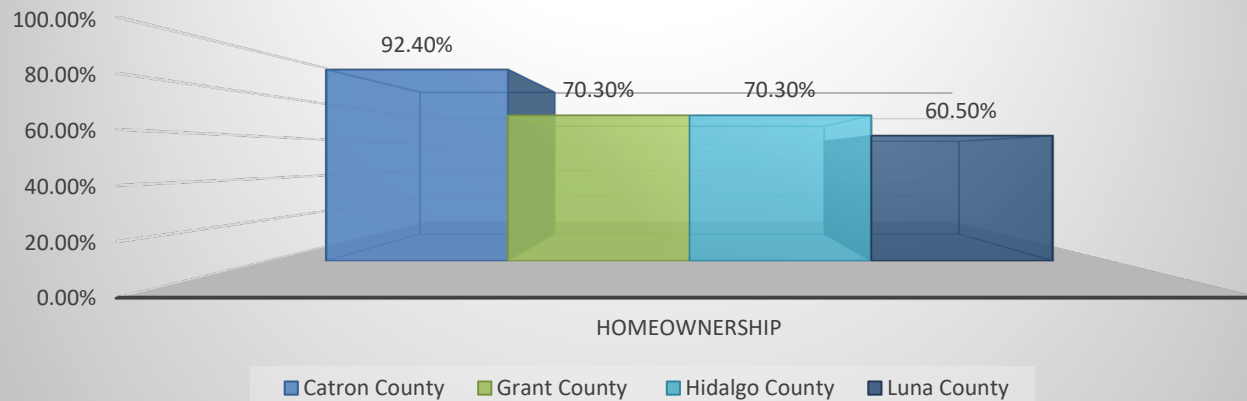
11,240

Luna County
Housing Units

\$1,150

Catron County
Renters Cost

Homeownership



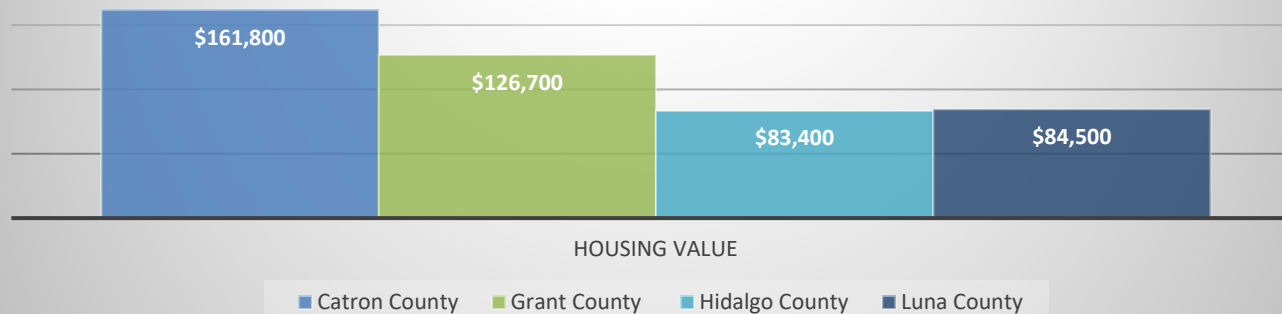
\$689

Grant County
Renters Cost

\$477

Hidalgo County
Renters Cost

Housing Value



\$531

Luna County
Renters Cost

*Source: 2018 American Community Survey. www.data.census.gov



Part I: Economic Development and Transportation



Transportation and economic development

Why smarter transport is good for jobs and growth

Economic Development

S

O

A

R

Strengths

- Art and culture
- Climate
- Local university
- Outdoor recreation
- Open space
- Dark skies
- Local governments work together
- Unique communities

Opportunities

- Two ports-of-entry; only 24 hour port in the State.
- Outdoor recreation manufacturing and prototype opportunities.
- Rural communities with logistic connections with airport facilities, I-10, rail, and trucking.

Aspirations

- Increase work ethics
- Increase broadband capacity throughout the region
- Reduce poverty rates
- Diversify regional economy
- Increase workforce training
- Increase affordable/workforce housing
- Reduce unemployment rates

Results

- The entire region is where people want to move to work, live and play.
- Talented workforce enhancing all industry sectors throughout the region.
- Diverse small business community.
- Increase quality of life amenities and services throughout the region.

Workforce

Workforce

The Southwest New Mexico Council of Governments hired Community Economics Laboratory Inc. (CELab) to conduct an Job Creation Assessment to help develop a regional workforce need to reach full employment along with program approaches to help produce the economic base jobs that are needed over the next 10 years.

CELab's Job Creation Assessment process is a new strategic planning algorithm designed to help community leaders achieve the clarity and consensus needed to plan, underwrite and manage economic development program efforts. The Job Creation Assessment process has five sections, that include:

1. Coherence
2. Needs
3. Potential
4. Factors of Production Gaps
5. Actions

The preliminary assessment covers coherence, needs, and potential in depth to give insight to the planning steps needed for the factors of production gaps and actions. This assessment included participation of leaders and stakeholders from the region's four counties to deliberate on 107 datapoints within CELab's proprietary planning and management process.

The preliminary assessment covered:

1. The number of economic base jobs needed for full employment in 10 years based on attrition, unemployment, and anticipated growth for each of the four counties.
2. What program theaters are best suited to deliver the jobs and the potential of each theater in each of the four counties.
3. The current status of existing programs in each theater and implications for program development in each of the four counties.
4. A regional dashboard that shows economic needs and potential for each county and aggregates for the region.
5. Identification of the major factors of production gaps that will prevent job creation in the region along with solution ideas.

Coherence

The coherence stage gets unanimous consensus to a series of questions on the framework, process, expectations, ambitions, mission and purpose of the group's work. This stage is essential in setting parameters around the deliberation to maintain focus without risk of ambiguity or deviation. This planning will focus on job creation and economic growth in Catron, Grant, Hidalgo, and Luna counties.

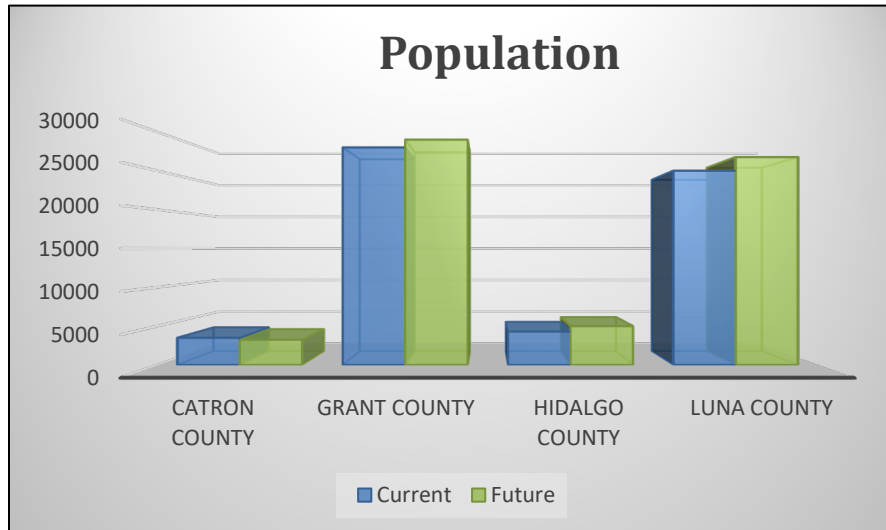
The group agreed to a pragmatic level of process ambition with the following goals:

- Reach full employment
 - Offset attrition
 - Stabilize population loss and support any new population
 - Job Parity
 - Promote regional collaboration on economic development efforts

Need

The need determines how many new jobs must be created to meet the defined goals of the community. CELab's process involves a series of datapoint estimations, both current and future, required to calculate how many jobs are needed to offset attrition.

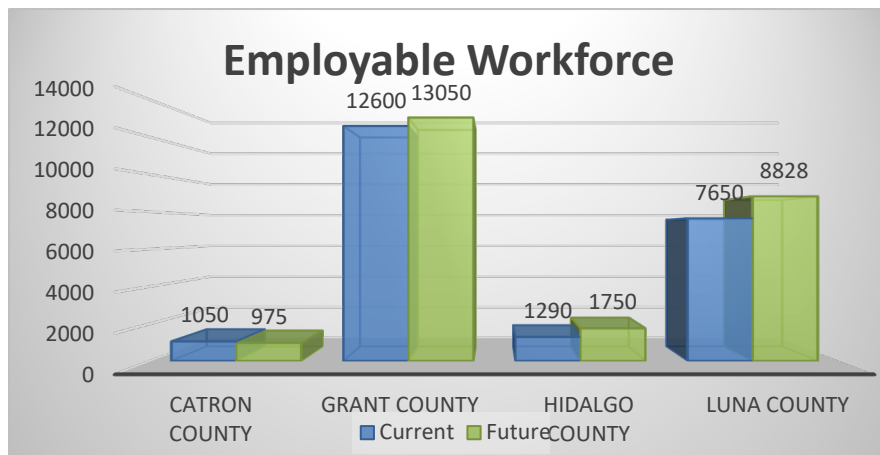
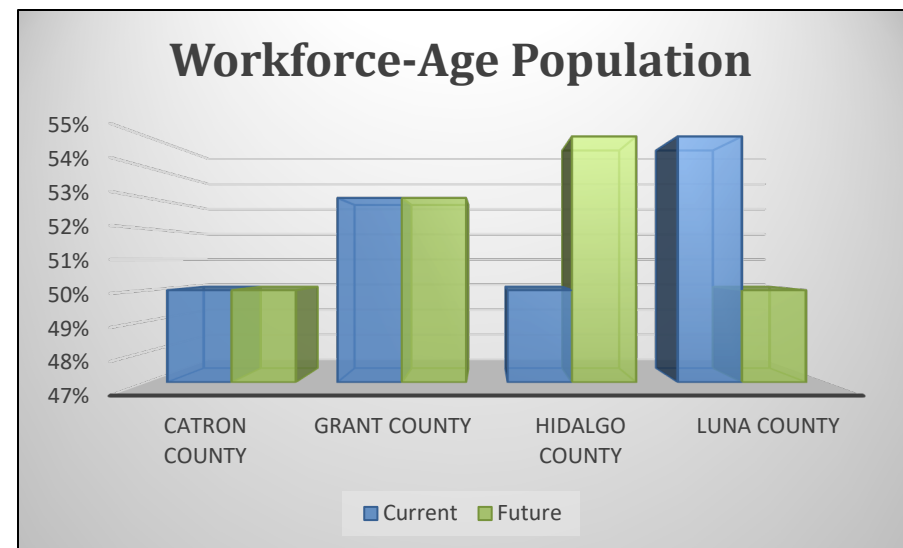
Population



The Job Creation Assessment participants were asked to estimate how many people live in the region today and what the expected the population would be at in 2030. The group estimated the total current population of southwest New Mexico at 61,300 residents and the population is 10 years will be 64,000 residents, allowing for 0.4% growth rate.

Workforce

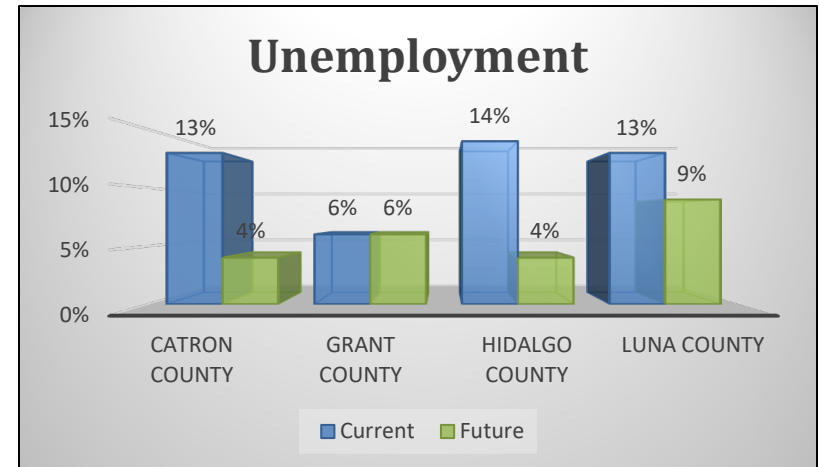
The group estimated the workforce aged population (18-65) at 34,725 residents. The group predicted slight growth, totaling to 34,988 residents of workforce age by 2030.



Employable workforce are those who are willing, able, and qualified to perform a full-time jobs suited to the economic base jobs throughout the region. The group estimated that 37% of the total regional population or 22,590 residents were willing, able, and qualified to work today. The group also predicted the number of employable workers would increase 2,013 by 2030.

Unemployment

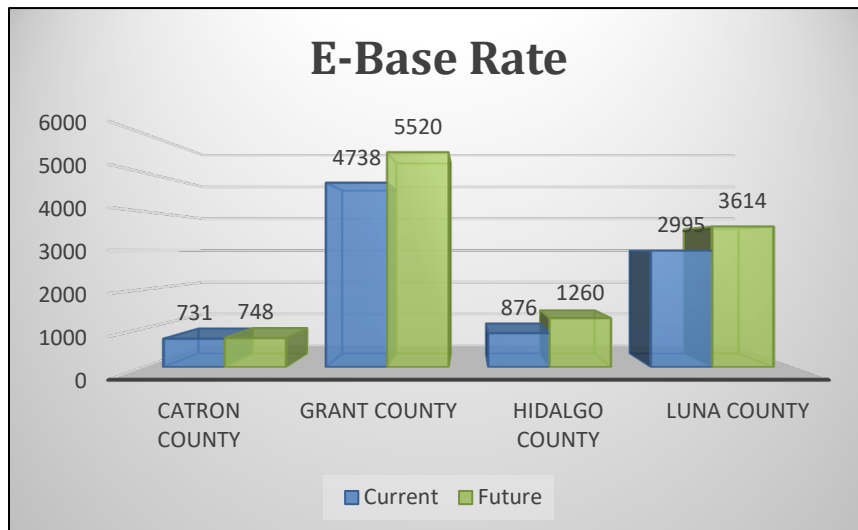
The group estimated that 9% or 2,068 employable workers are currently unemployed. The group also decided on a structural unemployment rate of 7% or 1,686 of the future employable workers. This means that 381 new jobs must be created to close the unemployment gap. These estimates indicate that there are 20,522 employable workers currently employed in the region and there is a need to increase total employment to 22,916 by 2030.



Economic Base Rate

This estimate is to determine how many economic base jobs are needed to support the service sector economy, this is known as economic base rate or e-base rate. To estimate e-base rate, the size of the service sector economy and how well it retains wealth before money is spent outside of the region. This typically depends on the availability of services locally versus services residents would need to procure from other areas. Higher e-base rates mean fewer service sector jobs are induced by creation of e-base jobs, making it harder to achieve employment goals.

Of all jobs in southwest New Mexico, the group estimated that 46% or 9,340 jobs are currently economic base and the rate would grow to 49% or 11,144 jobs by 2030.

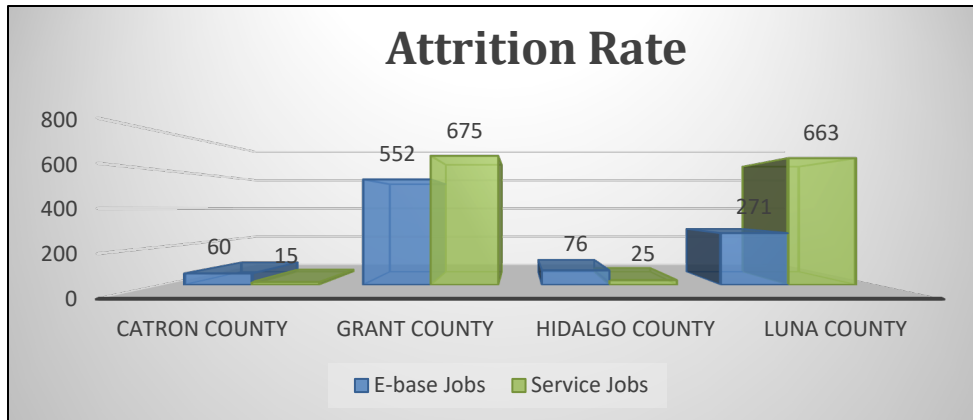


Attrition

The rate of attrition is primarily affected by what industries comprise the economic base. Industries can suffer attrition based on shortened life cycles, a high rate of automation, global market trends, or due to poor local business climate. This estimate is made as an aggregate job loss over the entire planning period.



**Total New E-Base Jobs over
10 Years
2,318**



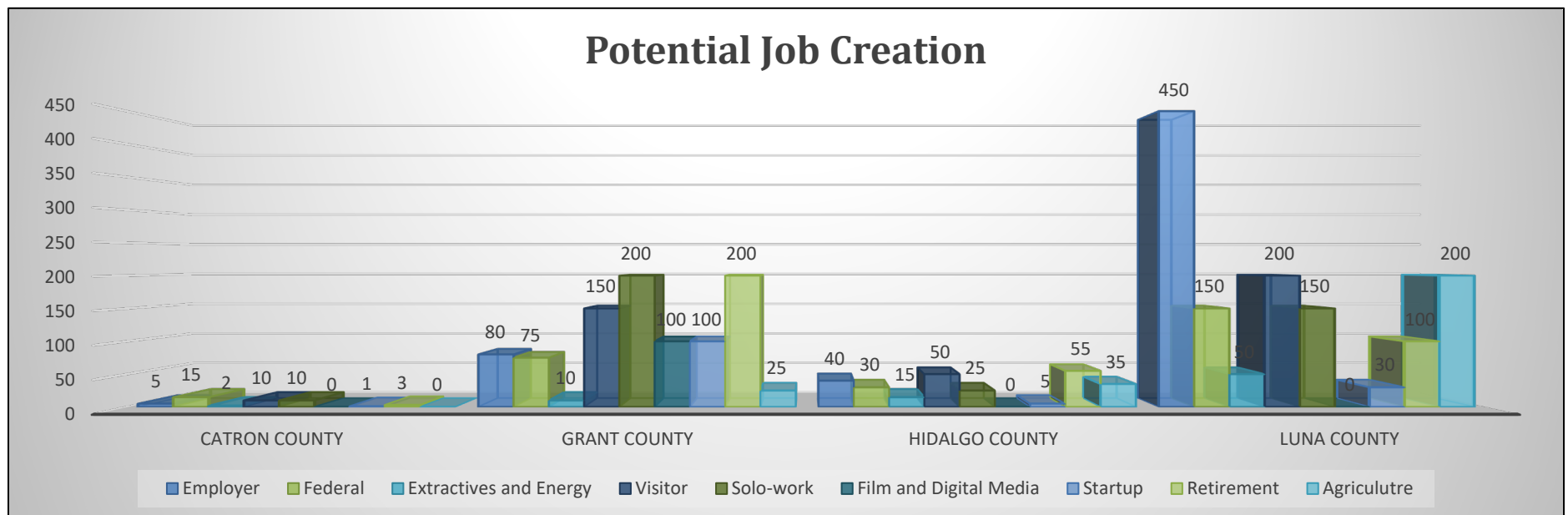
The group estimated that the regional economic base will suffer 9% economic base attrition and 12% service attrition over the next 10 years, resulting to 959 economic base jobs and 1,378 service jobs that will need to be replaced by 2030.

Based on the attrition estimates, the region will need 2,318 new economic base jobs over the next 10 years, 959 for attrition, 381 to close the unemployment gap, and 979 to support new population growth.

Potential

The potential process involves estimating how many jobs could be created in each program theater given a reasonable amount of support and a prescriptive plan. A program theater is a categorization of economic base or service sector jobs, professional expertise needed to staff the effort, the organization or business model, and metrics required to measure production. CELab estimates job creation potential using a new taxonomy of program theaters that have a distinct set of players, metrics, and methodologies. The program theaters are broken into the industry sectors for the purposes of CEDS identified under the strategies section. The program theaters are:

The group estimated how many “potential” jobs could be created in each theater for each county with a reasonable amount of support.



The program theaters are:

<u>Theater</u>	<u>Description</u>
Employer	Employer Recruiting, Retention & Expansion
Federal	Federal Agencies, Healthcare, Higher Education
Extractives & Energy	Mining, Oil & Gas, Power Plants, Renewable Energy
Visitor Driven	Tourism, Hospitality, Transit Services
Solo-work	Freelancers, 1099 Contractors, Independents
Film & Digital Media	Film, TV, Games
Start Up	Innovation to Enterprise, Start-ups, Tech Transfer
Retirement	Affluent Retiree Recruitment
Agriculture	Crop Development, Food Processing, Fishing, Forestry

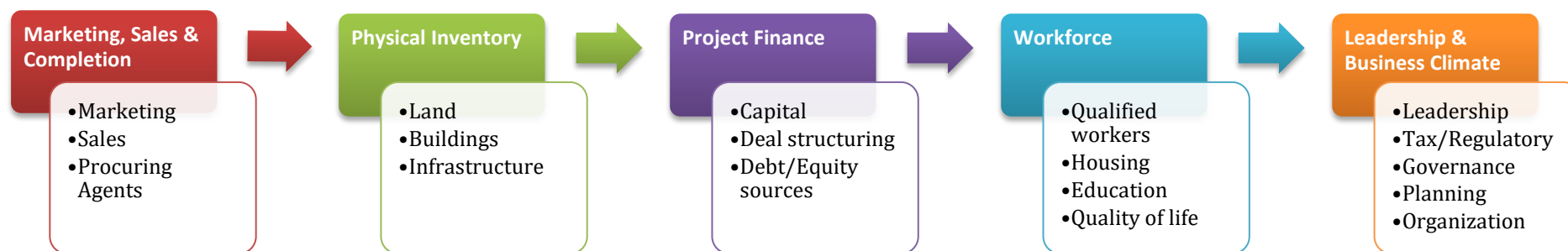
Each county estimated potential that either exceeded or was short of their job creation needs. Catron County was under 52 and Hidalgo County was 276 under jobs needed to be created while Grant County was 185 jobs over and Luna County was over 329 jobs needed in the next 10 years. The group estimated 2,571 total potential economic base jobs in the next 10 years or an average of ~250 per year, exceeding the job creation needs by 187 jobs. Southwest New Mexico could expect 201 jobs to be created without any increase in job creation program activity.

The following page shows the regional “Dashboard” comparing job creation needs to the estimated potential for the entire region and each of the four counties.

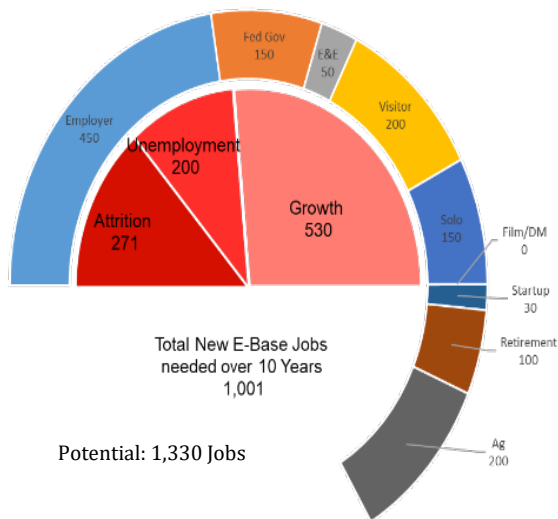
Factors of Production Gaps

The last step in the assessment is identifying factors of production gaps that will prevent job creation potential from being reached in each program theater. Factors of production gaps were identified in each theater for the entire region and it is assumed that all potential job creation for each theater would be at risk to any gap. Filling in the gaps are identified in the Strategy section of the CEDS.

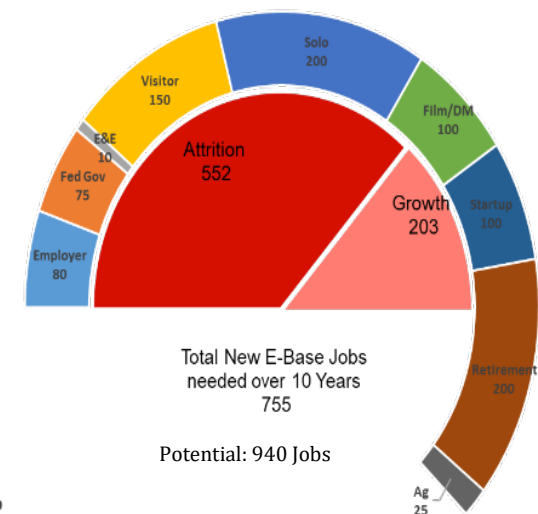
Factors of Production: General Areas



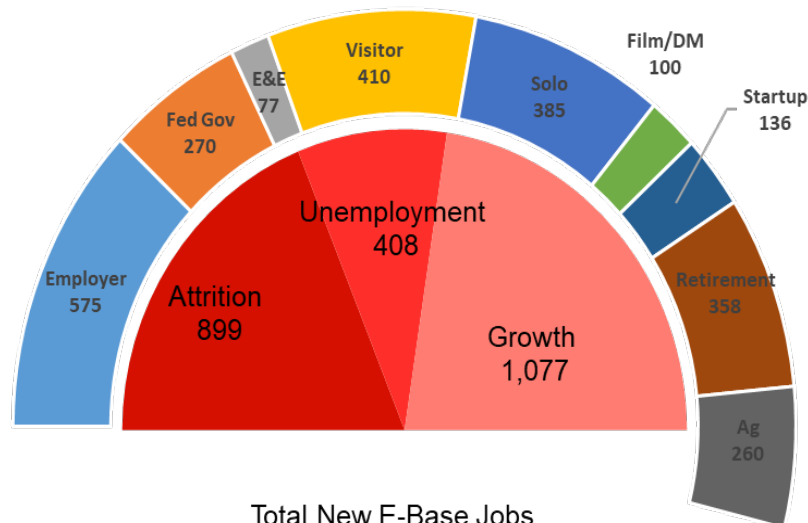
Luna County



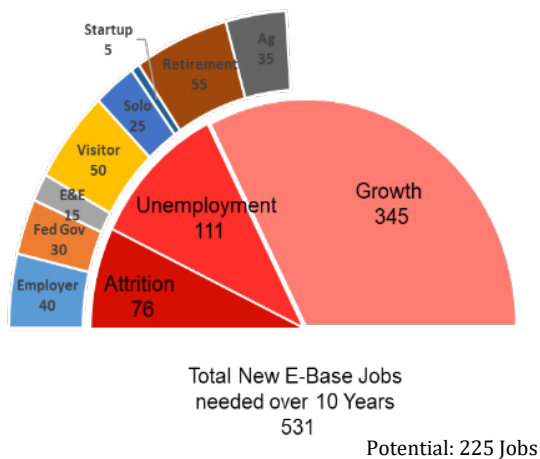
Grant County



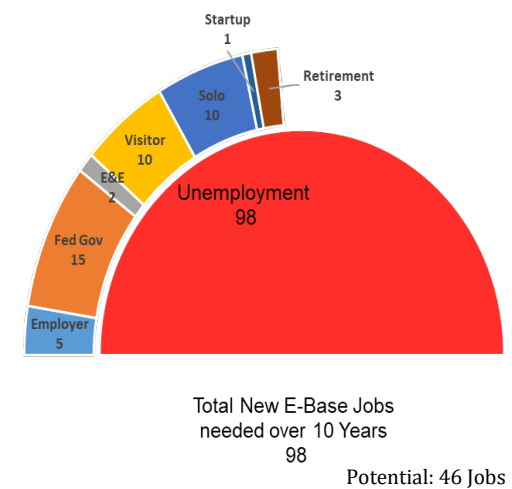
Southwest New Mexico



Hidalgo County



Catron County

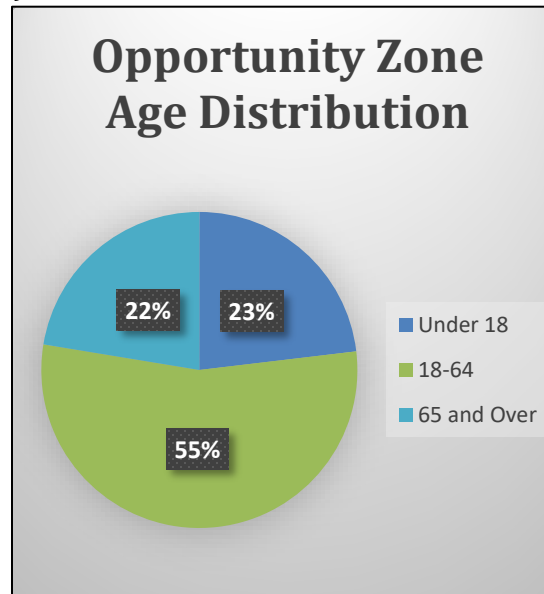
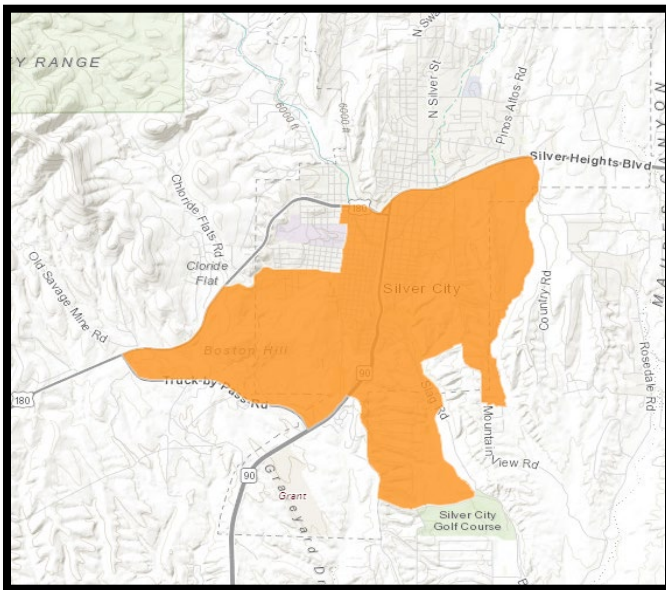


Opportunity Zones

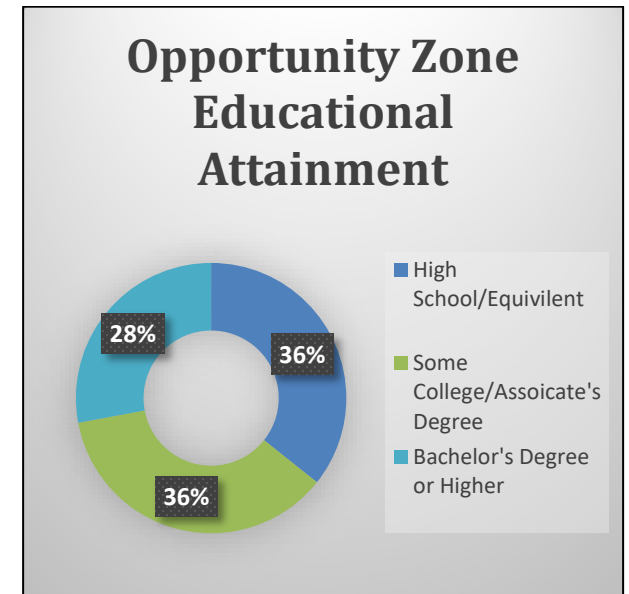
The Tax Cuts and Jobs act created Opportunity Zones (OZ) that allows preferential tax treatments to investors that help create economic development and jobs in distressed communities and are designated by Census Tract. There are three Opportunity Zones that have been created in the Southwest New Mexico Council of Governments region.

Grant County

There are 4,213 people that live in the five mile Opportunity Zone in Grant County. The per capita income of these residents is \$16,581, 9.8% unemployment, and 35.5% of the population live in poverty within the OZ. This Opportunity Zone's Census Tract has also been designated at a HUBZone by the Small Business Development Administration (SBA) until 2021.



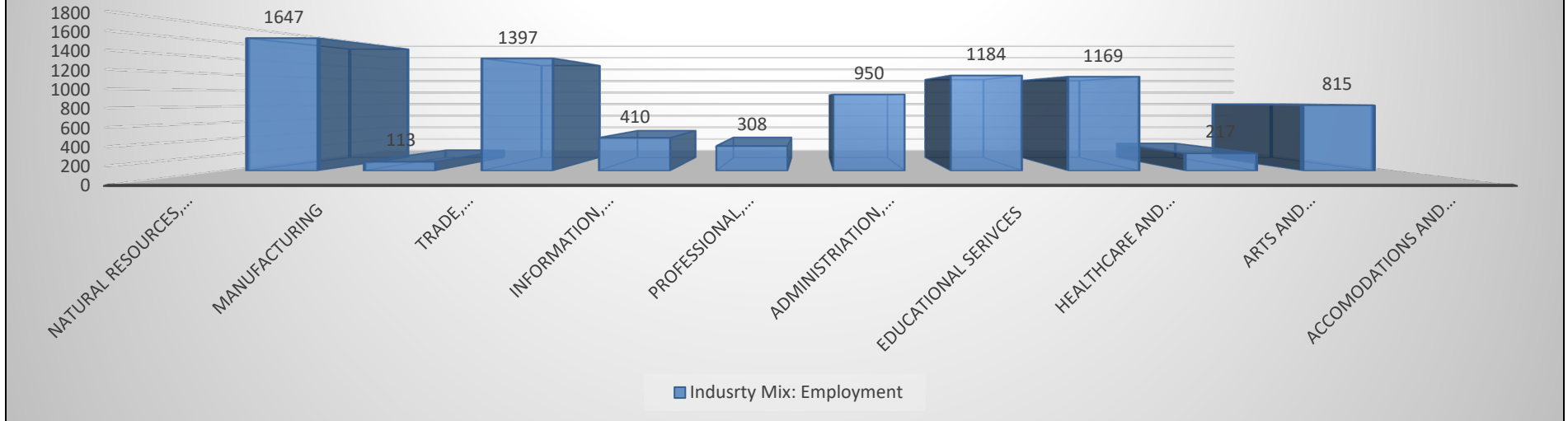
-Source: www.statsamerica.org



The age distribution in the Grant County Opportunity Zone compared to other US Opportunity Zones is the same in the population under 18, lower by 12.2% among the 18-64 year-olds, and 7.4% higher in the population 65 and over. The educational attainment in this OZ compared to other US Opportunity Zones is the same in high school or equivalent and some college or Associate's degree but 11.1% lower among those who have a Bachelor's degree or higher.

The industry mix in the Grant County Opportunity Zone is compared to other US Opportunity Zones by location quotient. The industries that have the same average as the other US OZs are Trade, Transportation, and Utilities, Health Care and Social Services, and Accommodations and Food Services. The industries that have a higher location quotient are Natural Resources, Mining, and Construction, Administration and Support, Educational Services, and Arts and Entertainment.

Indusrty Mix: Employment

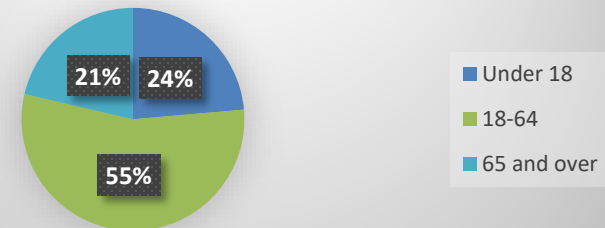


Hidalgo County

There are 2,515 people that live in the five mile Opportunity Zone in Hidalgo County. The per capita income of these residents is \$17,719, 11.6% unemployment, and 33.5% of the population lives in poverty within the OZ.

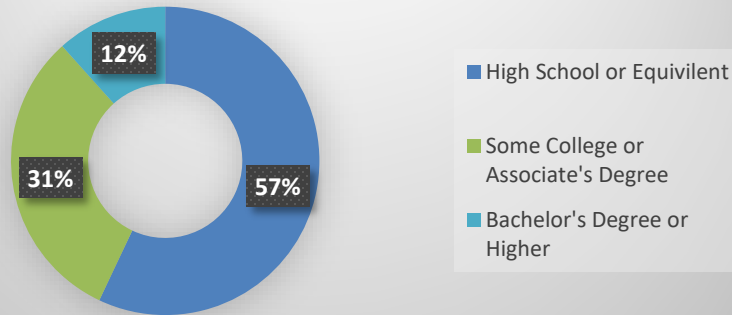


Opportunity Zone Age Distribution



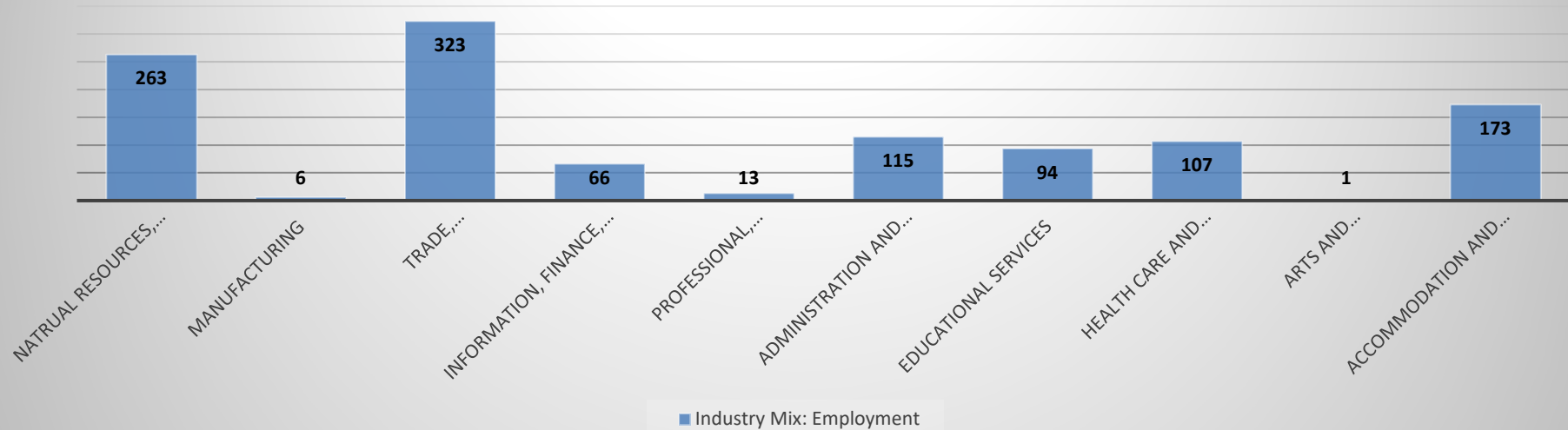
The age distribution in the Hidalgo County Opportunity Zone compared to other US Opportunity Zones is about the same in the population under 18, and lower in the 18-64 year-olds by 13%, and 7.2% higher in the population 65 and over. The educational attainment in this OZ compared to other US Opportunity Zones is higher in high school or equivalent and some college by 15% and lower in having some college or an Associate's degree by 6.8%, also 29.1% among those who have a Bachelor's degree or higher.

Opportunity Zone Educational Attainment



The industry mix and employment in the Hidalgo County Opportunity Zone is compared to other US Opportunity Zones by location quotient. The industries that have the same average as the other US OZs are Trade, Transportation, and Utilities, , Administration and Support and Accommodations, and Food Services. The industry that have a higher location quotient are Natural Resources, Mining, and Construction.

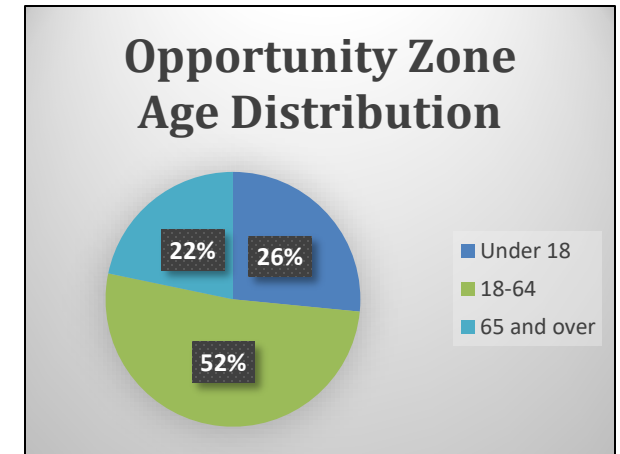
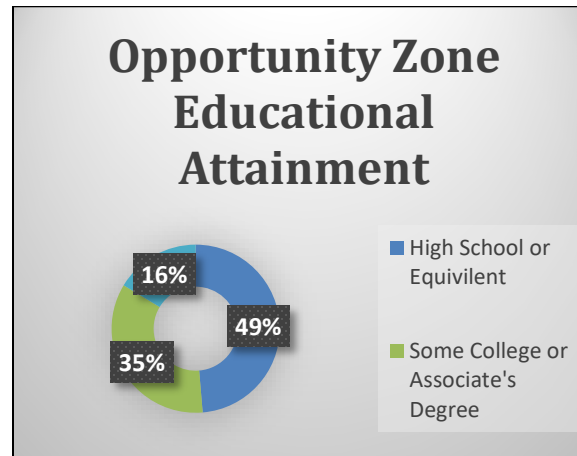
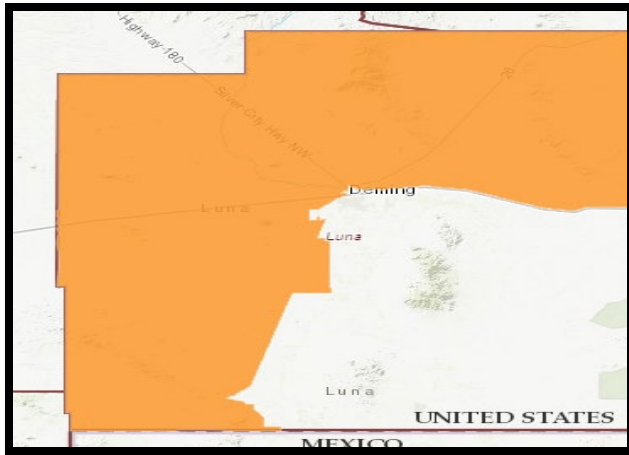
Industry Mix: Employment



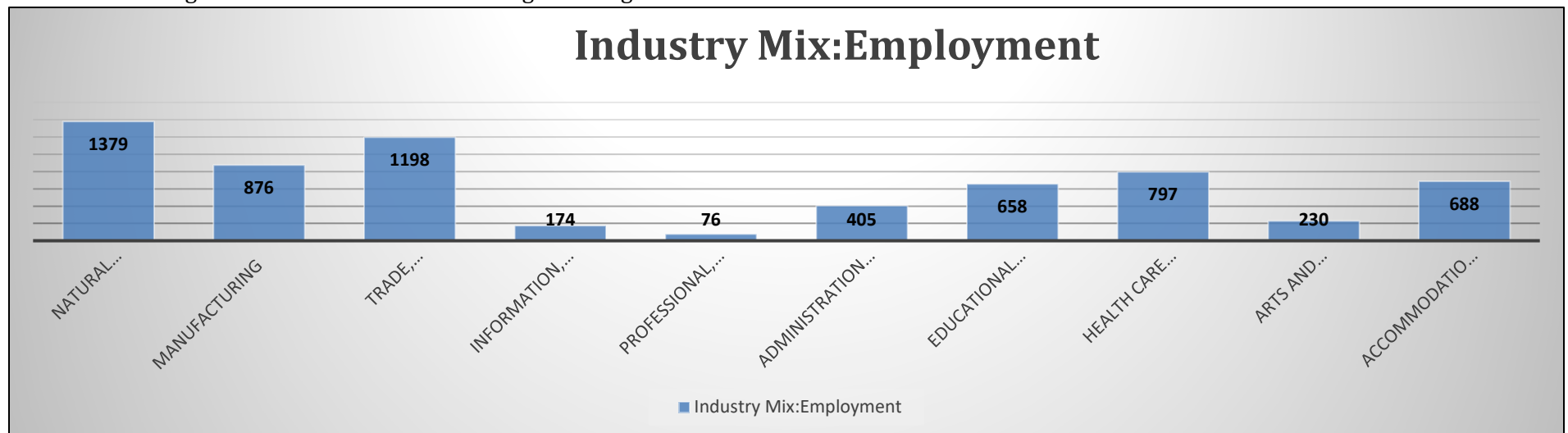
Luna County

There are 4,351 people that live in the 1,891 square mile Opportunity Zone in Luna County. The per capita income of these residents is \$14,740, 10.9% unemployment, and 34.9% of the population live in poverty within the OZ. This Opportunity Zone's Census Tract has also been designated at a HUBZone

by the Small Business Development Administration (SBA) until 2021 and is a Housing and Urban Development Department 2019 Low-income Housing Tax Credit.

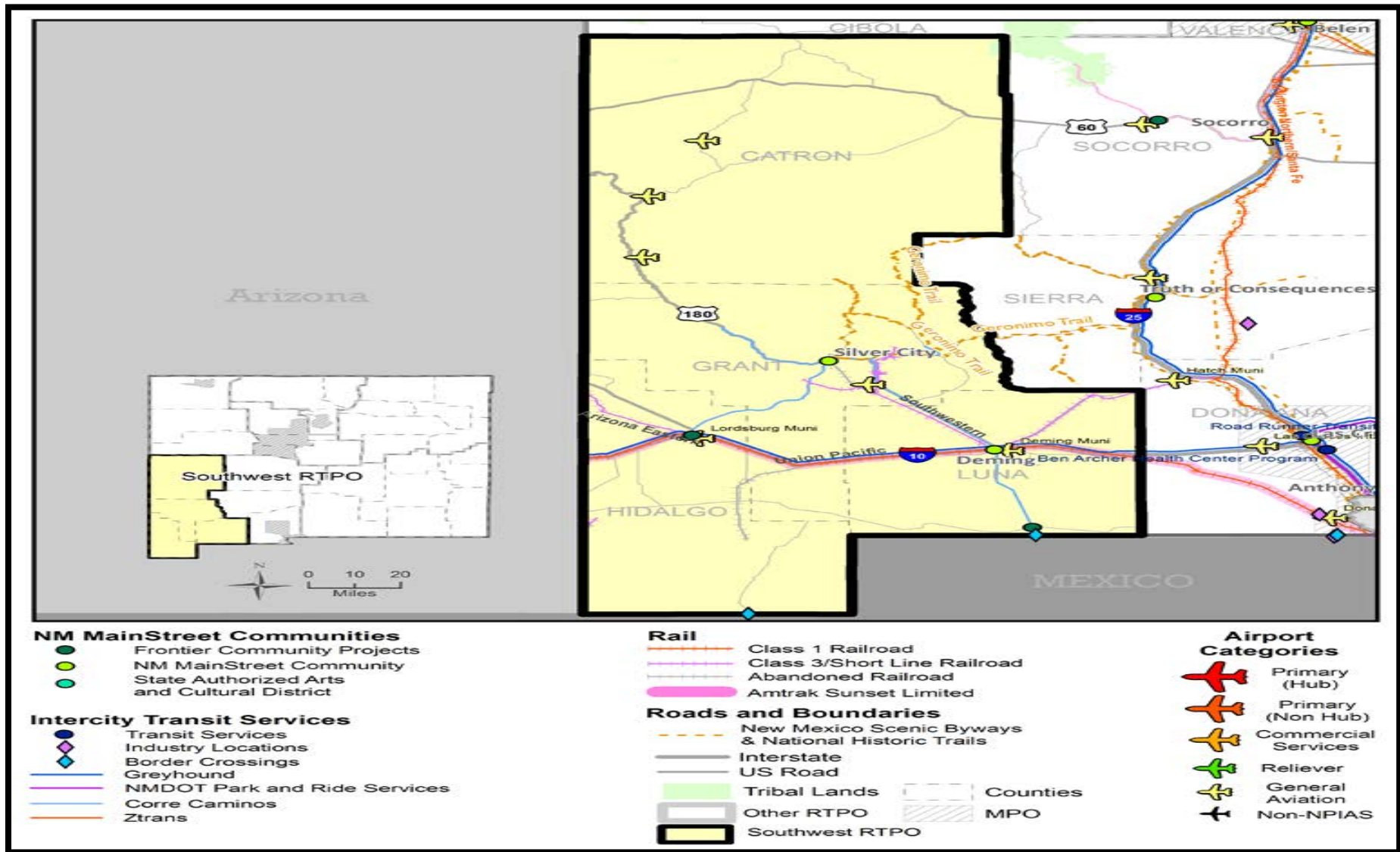


The age distribution in the Luna County Opportunity Zone compared to other US Opportunity Zones is lower in the 18-64 year-olds by 9.3% and 3.7% higher in the population under 18 and 5.5% among the population 65 and over. The educational attainment in this OZ compared to other US Opportunity Zones is higher in high school or equivalent and some college by 2.2% and lower in having some college or an Associate's degree by 8.9%, also 28.4% among those who have a Bachelor's degree or higher.



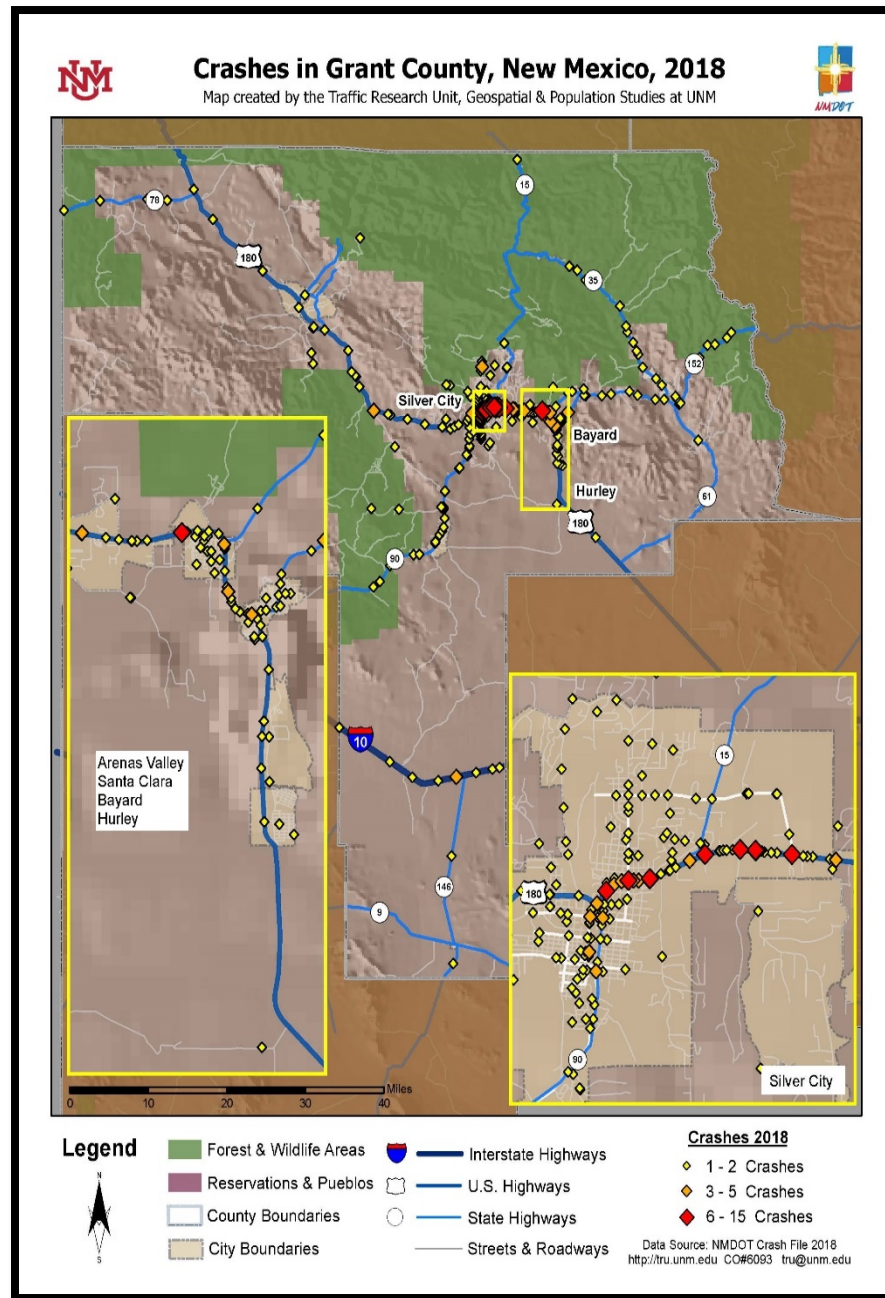
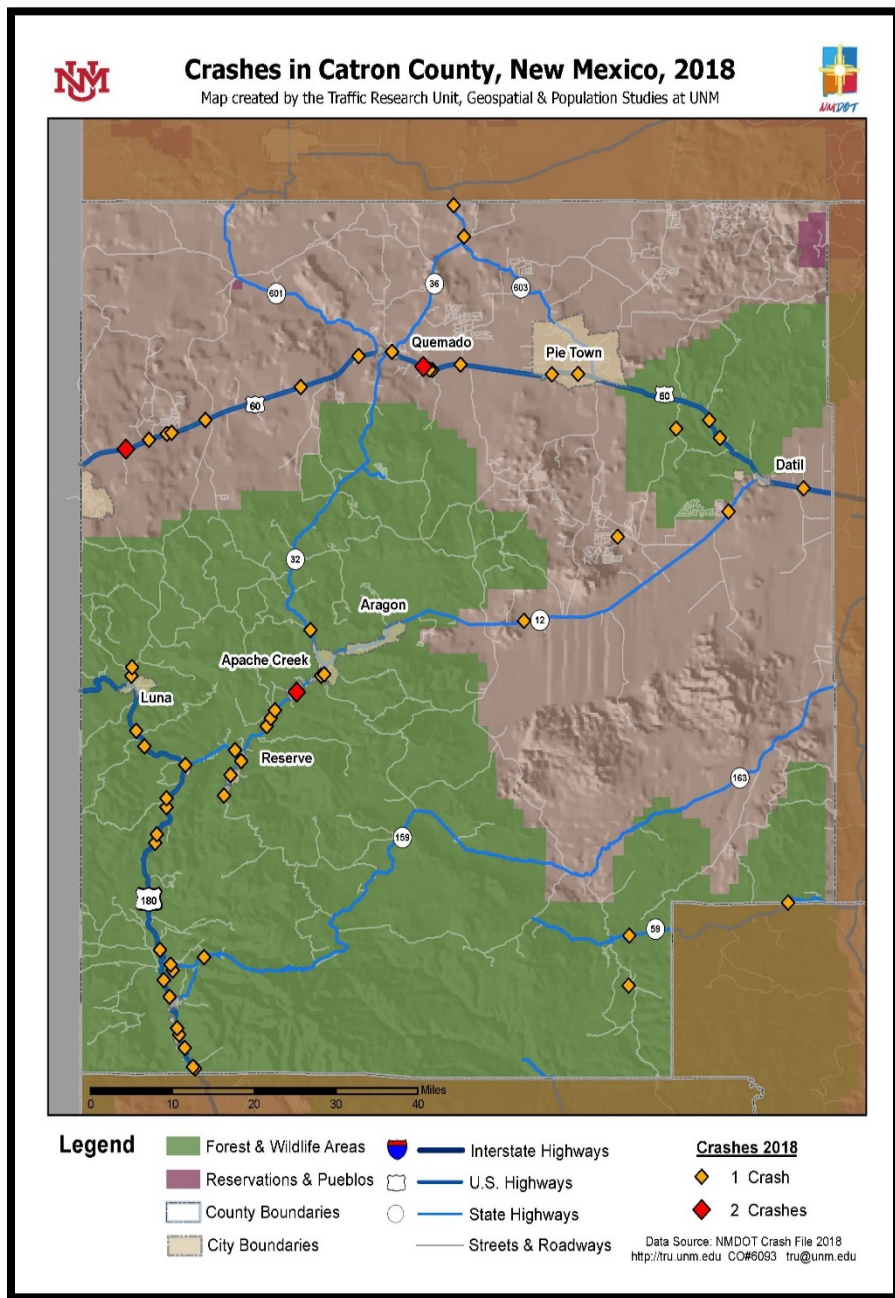
The industry mix in the Luna County Opportunity Zone is compared to other US Opportunity Zones by location quotient. The industries that have the same average as the other US OZs are Trade, Transportation, and Utilities, Educational Services, and Accommodations and Food Services. The industries that have a higher location quotient are Natural Resources, Mining, and Construction, Manufacturing, and Arts and Entertainment.

Transportation



Southwest New Mexico has many modes of transportation throughout the region. The Southwest New Mexico Council of Governments act as the Regional Transportation Planning Organization where the local governments take part in prioritizing transportation projects and have partnership with many different non-profit and community organizations, such as, local MainStreets, bicycle and trails groups, regional transit, among others. As the region

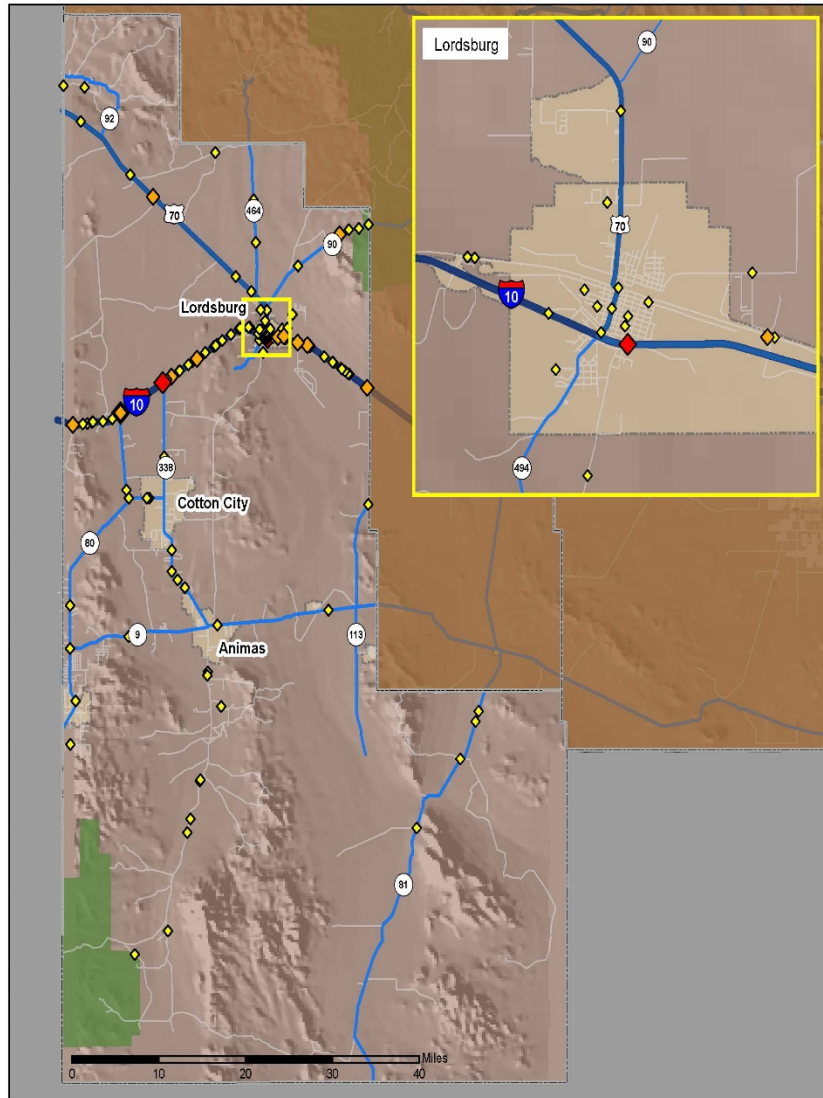
stretches over 17,000 square miles, there are many miles of road where there are different kinds of causes throughout the region including wildlife, other vehicles, weather conditions, even hazardous material spills. The maps below show the crash data for each county in the region.





Crashes in Hidalgo County, New Mexico, 2018

Map created by the Traffic Research Unit, Geospatial & Population Studies at UNM



Legend

- Forest & Wildlife Areas
- Reservations & Pueblos
- County Boundaries
- City Boundaries
- Interstate Highways
- U.S. Highways
- State Highways
- Streets & Roadways

Crashes 2018

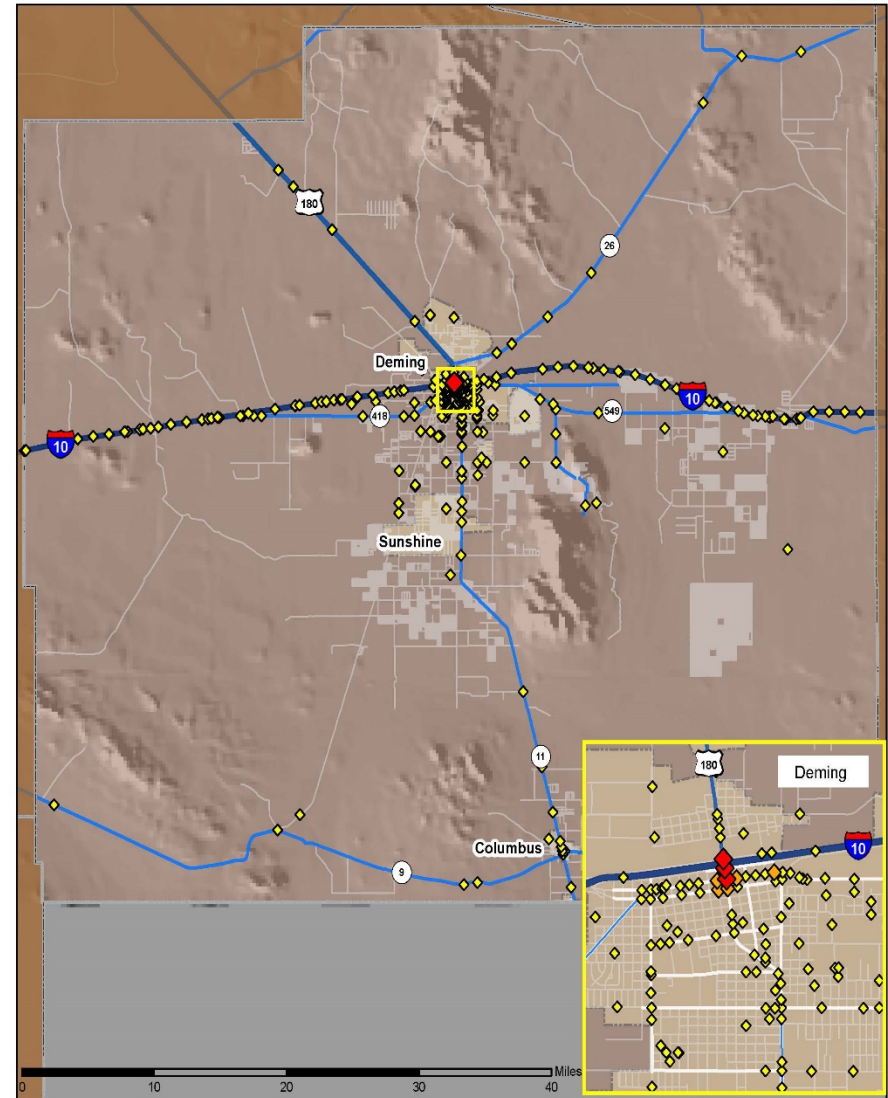
- 1 Crash
- 2 Crashes
- 3 - 4 Crashes

Data Source: NMDOT Crash File 2018
<http://tru.unm.edu> CO#6093 tru@unm.edu



Crashes in Luna County, New Mexico, 2018

Map created by the Traffic Research Unit, Geospatial & Population Studies at UNM



Legend

- Forest & Wildlife Areas
- Reservations & Pueblos
- County Boundaries
- City Boundaries
- Interstate Highways
- U.S. Highways
- State Highways
- Streets & Roadways

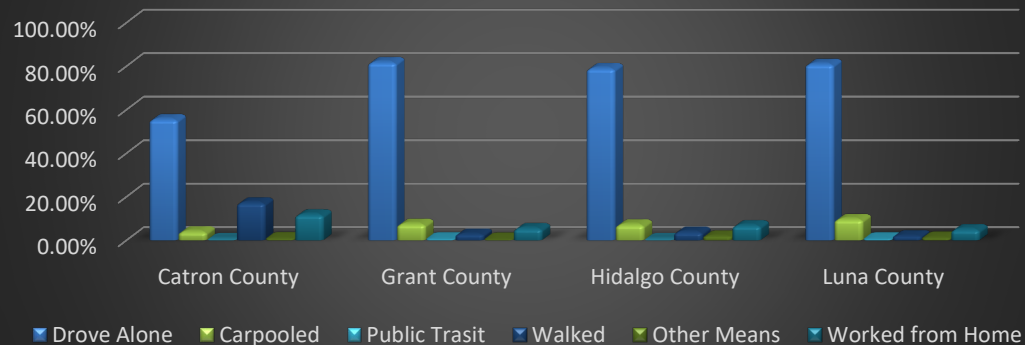
Crashes 2018

- 1 - 3 Crashes
- 4 - 6 Crashes
- 7 - 14 Crashes

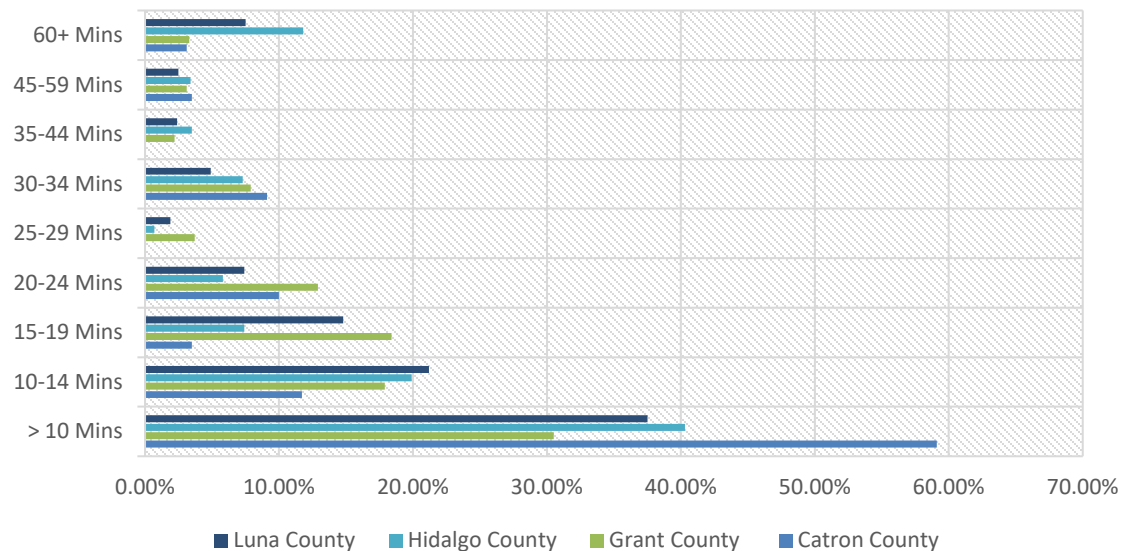
Data Source: NMDOT Crash File 2018
<http://tru.unm.edu> CO#6093 tru@unm.edu

In southwest New Mexico, there are 3,567 people who commute into the region to work while 6,518 people commute out of the region to work and 13,916 people live and work in the region. On average, eighty percent of the people traveling to work drive alone with less than 10 minutes of drive time. Most of the households in the region have two or more vehicles.

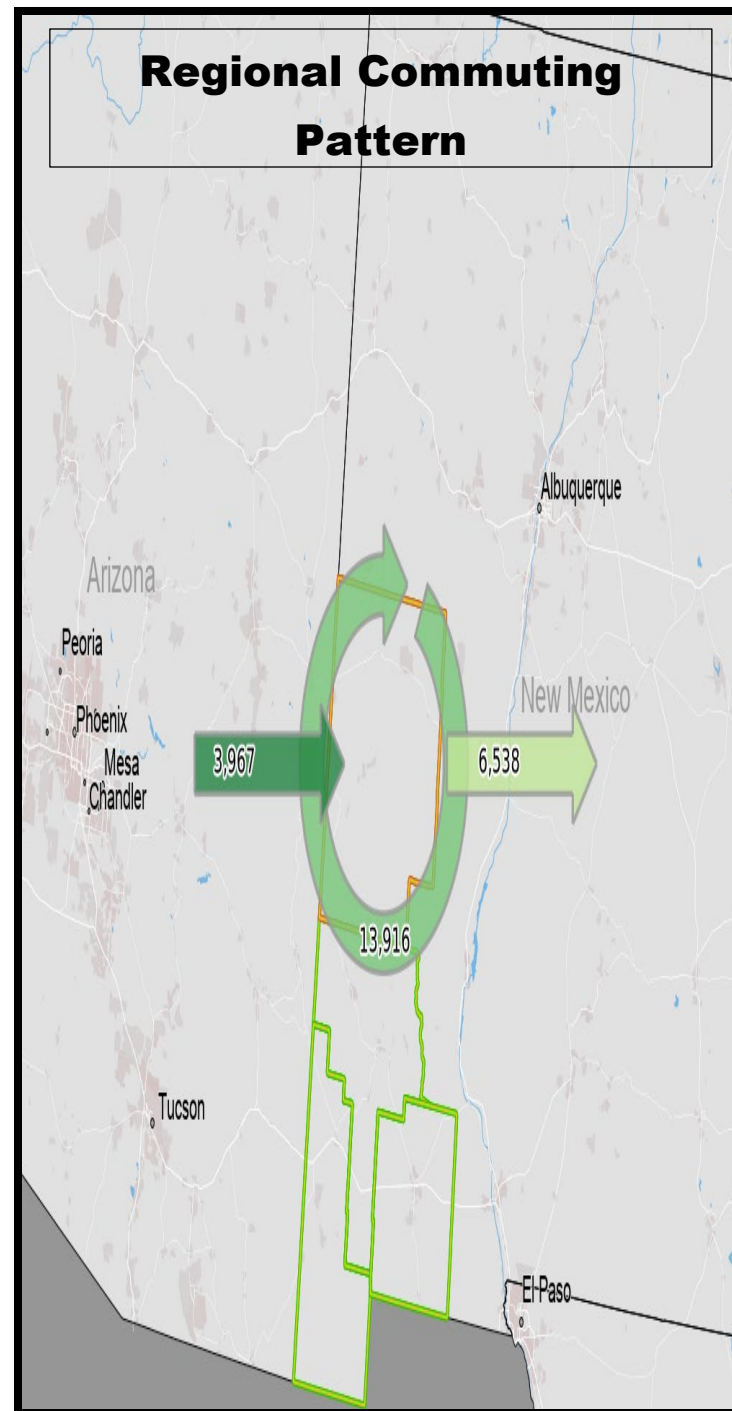
Mean of Travel to Work



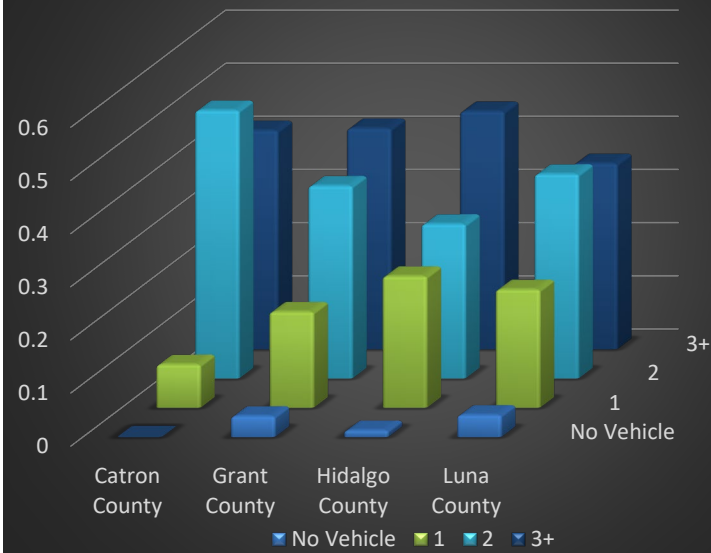
Average Travel Time to Work



Regional Commuting Pattern



Vehicles per Household



Amtrak

Amtrak provides services to southwest New Mexico via the Sunset Limited line that runs from New Orleans, Louisiana to Los Angeles, California. There is a platform station with no services in Deming and Lordsburg.

The top two destinations that are riders are traveling to from Deming and Lordsburg are Los Angeles, California and Tucson, Arizona. The average Amtrak ticket fare from Deming is \$109 and from Lordsburg is \$98. 15.8% of Deming travelers traveled 200-399 miles, 45.9% traveled 600-799 miles, and 18.4% traveled 900-1499 miles; while 27.7% of Lordsburg Amtrak travelers traveled 100-199 miles, 35.3% traveled 600-699 miles, and 16.2% traveled 900-1499 miles.

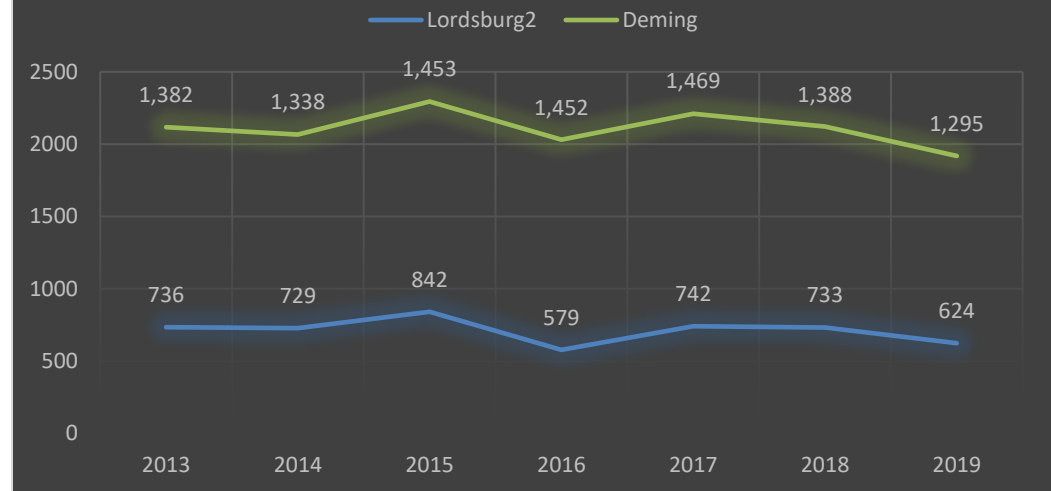
Essential Air

There is air service from Grant County airport that travels to Albuquerque, New Mexico or to Phoenix, Arizona. Currently, Advanced Air is the essential air providers.

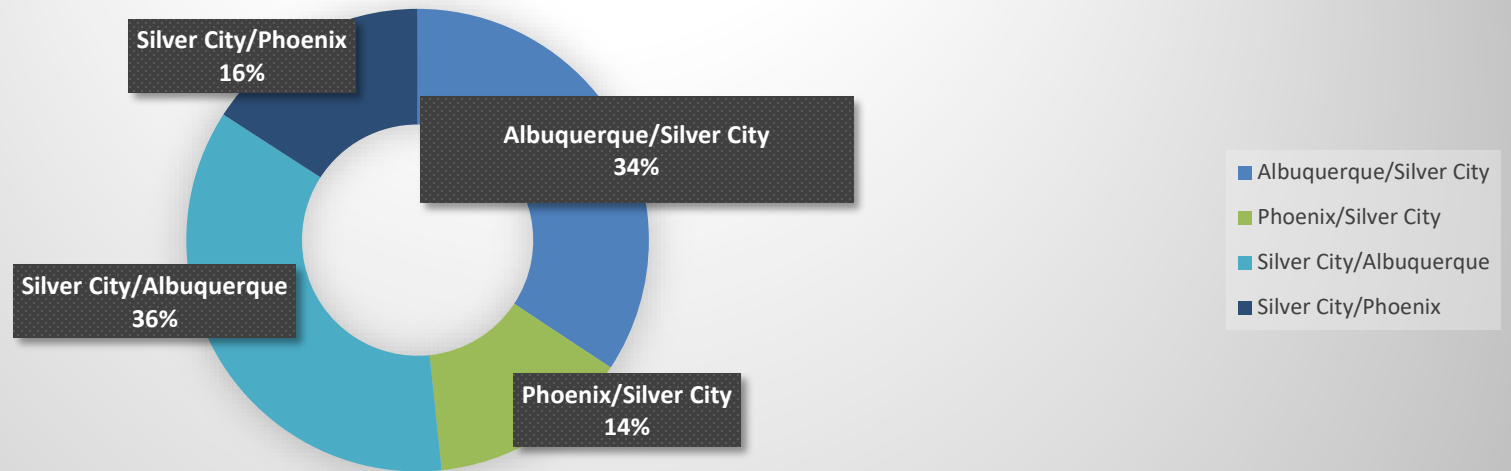
Advanced Air is based in Los Angeles, California, offering scheduled service within the southwestern United States and aircraft charter worldwide. The company features VIP services with a diversified portfolio of private aircraft but operates under FAA and the Department of Transportation.

Advanced Air ridership since becoming the essential air provider in 2015 has had 14,952 total riders. The Albuquerque to Silver City service had 5,125 and from Silver City to Albuquerque was 5,352 thus the Phoenix to Silver City service had 2,103 and the Silver City to Phoenix service had 2,372 riders. The chart on the other page shows the percentage of the riders going from one destination to another.

Amtrak Ridership



Advanced Air Service Ridership

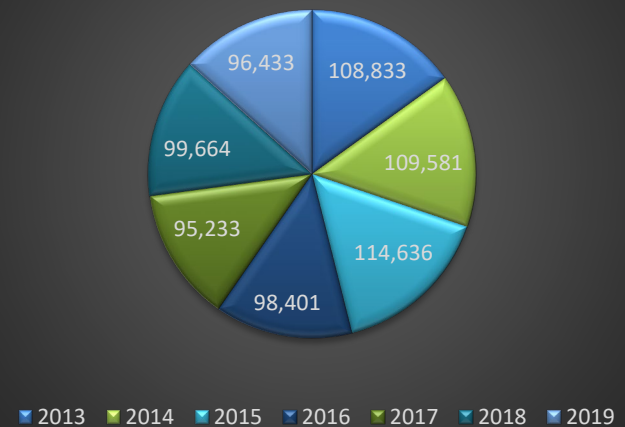


Transit

Corre Caminos provides public transportation service in and between Grant, Luna and Hidalgo counties, since 2001 with fixed and on-demand routes. We operate on grant funding, awarded by NMDOT and matched by the communities we serve. Corre Caminos partners with municipal, county, and state agencies, schools, medical care providers, chambers of commerce, and area employers to improve the quality of life in the region. Corre Caminos averages 8,300 rides per month and 32,000 miles per month.

Corre Caminos partnered with Grant and Luna County DWI programs to provide the Corre Cantinas route that runs on Friday and Saturday nights from 6:00pm to 2:30am. This route allows people to visit liquor establishments, restaurants, and private parties having a designated driver available. A past study revealed that DWI rates had dropped 37% since the implementation of Corre Cantinas.

Corre Caminos Ridership

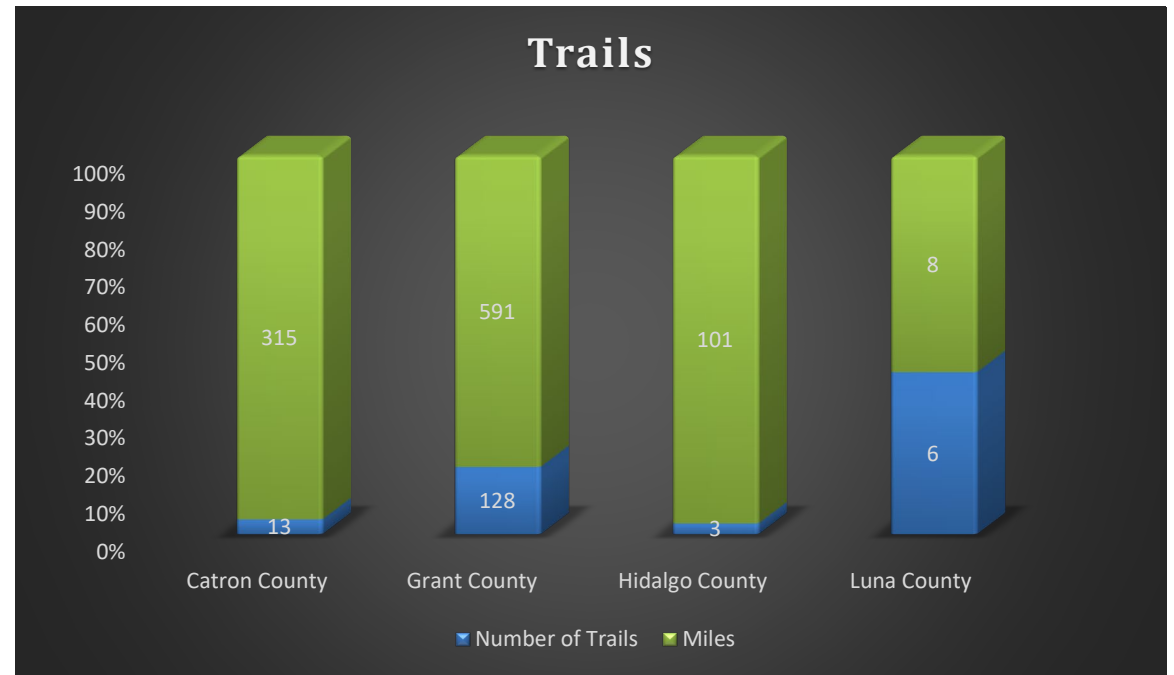


Trails

Southwest New Mexico is a great destination for most facets of outdoor recreation, the trails in the region are no exception. There are 1,015 miles of trails that can take visitors and residents exploring the great outdoors throughout the entire region. The Continental Divide Trail (CDT), one of the country's longest trail runs through the region, which Silver City is the first Gateway Community along the CDT. Although the CDT is a highlight of the trails in the region, there are others that are just as significant to the residents. The Dragonfly, Catwalk, Cliff Dwellings, and Lover's Leap trails to name a few.



Even though the Santa Teresa process the most trucks of the three ports, the trucks that come through the Columbus POE are transporting jalapenos, California long green chile, onions, and hay most of the produce being brought through in July through November. The Columbus POE has seen a decrease in the cattle that is being transported.



Port-of-Entry

An important part of southwest New Mexico's economy is the port-of-entries (POE). There are two port-of entries in the SWNMCOG region; the Columbus Port being the only 24-hour port in New Mexico and has just received a \$85 million upgrade. The Antelope Wells Port-of-Entry does not process any cargo but process the most passenger vans of the three ports in New Mexico, while Columbus process the most pedestrians.



Part II: Strategic Action

**RESILIENCY ° TOP
PRIORITIES °
AGRICULTURE AND
LOCAL FOODS ° ARTS,
FILM, AND
ENTERTAINMENT °
ENERGY ° HEALTH AND
SOCIAL SERVICES °
HOSPITALITY, TOURISM,
AND RECREATION °
MANUFACTURING AND
LOGISTICS ° NATURAL
RESOURCES AND MINING
° SMALL BUSINESS AND
ENTREPRENEURSHIP**



Resiliency

According to the Community and Regional Resilience Institute, *Community Resilience* is defined as, the capability to anticipate risk, limit impact, and bounce back rapidly through survival, adaptability, evolution, and growth in the face of turbulent change. In order to help the region become more resilient, the Southwest New Mexico Council Governments has created many partnership not only throughout the region but at the state and federal level including non-profit organizations. Some of SWNMCOG partners are: local Chambers of Commerce, MainStreet, Deming Luna County Economic Development Corporation, New Mexico Economic Development Department, New Mexico Workforce Connections, New Mexico Department of Transportation, US Department of Commerce-Economic Development Administration, US Department of Agriculture, among others. These partnerships are critical to create the quality of life assets that boomers, millennials, and genXers alike are looking for in a community.

Although there are a lot of challenges and vulnerabilities that southwest New Mexico faces, there are a lot of very positive aspects that the region also possesses to help in the recruitment of three generations. National trends are showing that jobs are now going to where the talent is and millennials are an experiential generation really gives southwest New Mexico an opportunity not only be a place where people want to live, work, and play. Therefore, enhancing the rural quality of life in the region is imperative, as the region continues to work on diversifying the regional economy and supporting the shop local campaigns. Another positive aspect about the Southwest New Mexico Council of Government's region, is that all thirteen local governments have built strong relationship with each other to work collaboratively in regards to economic development and renewable energy; there is a 2011 Memorandum of Understanding to do so. The SWNMCOG is in the process of renewing that MOU and another MOU that would allow local governments to share equipment and personnel during catastrophic events that may occur throughout the region.

During the public and stakeholder meetings the vulnerabilities are listed in the table below. While the obvious natural and manmade disasters were not really focused on because the region faces the natural disasters seasonally they need to be noted and addressed. The areas of governmental, economic, and infrastructure had some things that have been addressed in the CEDS for decades there are things that may not be new to those that are working on community and economic development are now being addressed to create not only a more resilient region but state as well. Of course, in the state of a world pandemic creates challenges that were apparent before but have moved to the forefront of economic recovery are also stated in our vulnerability table.

**“Although the world is full of suffering, it is also full
of overcoming it.**

-Helen Kellar

Vulnerabilities

Natural/Manmade Disasters

- Fires
- Flood
- Drought
- Freeze
- Improper use of pesticides
- Water supply, contaminants, and quality

Economic

- Industry Closures
- Port-of-entry closures
- Untrained workforce
- Succession Planning for agriculture, small businesses, artisan, etc.
- Business start-up overhead is huge
- Decrease in disposable income due to industry closure
- Inability to irrigate due to drought
- Liabilities of doing business is stopping good work from happening throughout the region
- Businesses not wanting to make investments in their own business or property
- Businesses afraid of competition within their community
- Residents of the region are supportive of different recreational interests

Prominent Challenges of COVID19

- Need of workforce training
- Need of entrepreneur training
- Broadband-remote learning and work
- Governmental assistance to employable workers becomes a deterrent of entrance to the workforce
- Small businesses are afraid to take on ANY debt, event low interest loans and grant
- Business environment is very vulnerable due to the New Mexico Public Health Order placed on them
- Lack of childcare and after school care

Infrastructure

- Lack of broadband capacity
- Water systems
- Lack of energy infrastructure
- Cyber security
- Road conditions
- Lack of adequate warehousing for stockpiling capabilities for emergencies
- Lack of funding for the energy grid and infrastructure

Governmental

- International Border Conflict
- State budget shortfall disallows local governments buying power
- Regulations hindering agricultural businesses
- Restrictions in timber extraction areas
- Water rights
- US regulations make agriculture from Mexico over competitive
- Building codes are a barrier to renovating historic properties
- Regulatory mandates on very small/small businesses are not feasible
- No policy about renewable energy removal could leave the state as renewable energy infrastructure “bone yard”
- Ceasing to produce petroleum and natural gas puts New Mexico education including higher education in jeopardy

To overcome these vulnerabilities and have a resilient region, the Southwest New Mexico Council of Governments acts as the collaborating entity by helping existing partners with projects and creating new partnerships to ensure the quality of life and services needed throughout the entire region. Moving forward the SWNMCOG will be encouraging more partners to be a part of the Regional Transformation Planning Organization to help fulfill the strategies in the CEDS document.

Top Priority Strategies

1. Create a regional business database to not only disseminate information quickly but also to implement a formalized Business Retention and Expansion program that provides outreach and a strong regional business community.
2. Develop a regional marketing and branding strategy for southwest New Mexico.
3. Increase the broadband capacity throughout the region as online learning and remote working becomes a more prominent way of life.
4. Advocate childcare regulations and financial for childcare for ages from 0-12 to help the workforce get back to full employment especially during the recovery of COVID19.
5. Align the region's workforce development programs and educational institutions to address the unmet workforce needs with the region's target industries.
6. Encourage the promotion and implementation of the CO.STARTERS entrepreneurship program to the communities and school districts throughout the region to help build the small business community.
7. Facilitate the establishment of tax increment financing zones in all incorporated community's downtowns and identify additional finding streams for downtown infrastructure improvements.
8. Help the movement of the development of industrial parks throughout the region to capitalize on opportunities associated with the region's renewable energy potential as well as the existing agricultural and mining industries.
9. Advocate for State legislative change to the governmental vulnerabilities to help build economic recovery especially in rural New Mexico.
10. Support new energy transmission throughout region in order to continue promoting New Mexico as a energy mecca state.
11. Maintain and enhance the road infrastructure throughout the region to include a port-of-entry truck bypass, Cedar Street in Deming, making US Highway 180 four lanes from Deming to Hurley.
12. Continue to support essential air services out of Grant County Airport and the regional transit services.
13. Advocate for "road ready" UTV/ATV friendly communities throughout the region as more tourists are using them as means of transportation.
14. Embrace Silver City as a Continental Divide Trail Gateway Community to help promote the regions outdoor recreation assets.
15. Enhance multimodal transportation and trail connectivity and accessibility to create a region that is friendly for all facets of transportation.

AGRICULTURE AND LOCAL FOODS

Did you know?

Catron, Grant, Hidalgo, and Luna counties net \$9.9 million in fruits and vegetables per year.

Agriculture is a core industry in southwest New Mexico. According to the 2017 National Agriculture Census, there are 1,107 total farms throughout Catron, Grant, Hidalgo, and Luna counties with \$126,917,000 products sold and have 98,500 head of cattle and calves. Luna county is the number one chile harvester and producer in the State of New Mexico and number seven in hay/alfalfa sales. Hidalgo County has the largest average size of farms with 5,622 acres.

Unfortunately, even though southwest New Mexico's agriculture industry is prominent so is food insecurity. One of the food insecurities that southwest New Mexico is faced with is providing nutritious food to the residents that reside within the four counties. Part of the food insecurity crisis is due to the regulations that mandate the agriculture industry. There is a need to help connect local growers to residents, institutions, and other local markets. As well as, the continuance of local farmers market, food co-ops, backyard and community gardens, roadside fruit and vegetable stands, greenhouse and geothermal production, and food pantries.



Niches

Farmers and Ranchers
Farmers Markets
Value-added Producers
Intermediate Sales
Agriculture Supply Chain
Resources Entities

Partners

NMSU Cooperative Extension
Southwest New Mexico Food Hub
New Mexico Food and Agriculture Policy Council
New Mexico Farmers Market Association
Local Farmers Markets
Food Co-Ops
Chamber of Commerce
MainStreets
Governmental Institutions
Deming-Luna County Economic Development Corporation
Western New Mexico University

Strategies



Facilitate connections between local farmers/ranchers/food producers to restaurants, schools, food trucks, supply chains, MainStreets, and grocery stores by supporting the expansion of the Southwest New Mexico Food Hub's efforts.



Cultivate a culture of food entrepreneurship that will benefit residents and tourist through commercial kitchens, greenhouse training and sales, apprenticeships and supporting cottage industry policies at the State and Federal level.



Support farm and ranching on public lands.



Encourage local governments to have procurement policies for institutions such as jails and university to purchase locally grown food.



Increase meat processing facilities for personal and commercial use throughout the region by increasing the amount of USDA and State agriculture inspectors.



Increase the cold storage throughout the region with adequate infrastructure.



Support change in the legislative policies and regulation to decrease the regulations on farmers, ranchers, and food producers.

ARTS, FILM, AND ENTERTAINMENT



Southwest New Mexico is full of culture and embraces the history of the area. The festivals and event are also reflective of this culture, such as the Clay Festival, Blues Fest, Salsa Fest, Tijano Festival, Luna Rodeo, and much more. There are many organizations that are a part of the events that are brought into the regions The Silver City and Deming MainStreets are the home to much of the art galleries, public art, historic theaters, and other entertainment venues.

As New Mexico becomes more recognized for the efforts in film, southwest New Mexico is no different. Although there has been only a few films that have used the region as the backdrop, the region is working towards bring more films in to help diversify the economy in the region.



Niches

Photography
Digital Media
Artisan Manufacturing
Fine Art
Culinary Arts
Music
Performing Arts
Museums
Film

Partners

New Mexico Film Office
Western New Mexico University
Mimbres Arts Council
MainStreets/Arts and Cultural District
Silver City Art Association
Deming Arts Center
Grant County Arts Guild
Deming Performing Arts
Tumbleweed Theater
Virus Theater
Silver City Community Theater
Museums
Film Associations
Play Sharity Children's Museum
Grant County Youth Mural Program
Southwest New Mexico Clay Trail
Southwest New Mexico Arts, Culture, and Tourism
Silver City Museum

Strategies



Continue to improve the quality of life so creatives want to live, work, and play in the region.



Support the change in New Mexico's legislation to help historic building become rehabilitate while being occupied to help the recruitment of creatives.



Develop downtown artisan live/work space throughout the region.



Create art and cultural hubs throughout the region to engage residents, especially the youth along with tourists in the region's arts, culture, and history.



Develop a creative co-work for artisans, business students, and other professionals to encourage creative startups.



Support creative economy endeavors through creating a regional asset assessment and market them.



Increase film crew placement housing and infrastructure throughout the region to make southwest New Mexico enticing for film making.



Use entertainment centers to engage community members, especially the region's youth.

Energy

New Mexico
is the 9th
largest state
in energy
production.

Energy sources in New Mexico include oil and gas, solar, wind, geothermal, and biofuel. Although southwest New Mexico is not known for oil and gas but is a prime area for solar, wind, geothermal, and biofuel. Unfortunately, until there is more energy transmission capability, it is hard to recruit the renewable energy companies to the region; however, the region could be training the workforce that could work on the renewable energy equipment but also training the workforce to begin manufacturing the renewable energy equipment and components.



Niches

Solar
Geothermal
Wind
Biomass
Energy Efficiency
Energy Transmission
Oil and Natural Gas
Battery Storage

Partners

Public Service Company of New Mexico
Columbus, Duncan, and Navopache
Electric Co-Ops
New Mexico Solar Energy Association
Renewable Energy Industries
Association
Sun Zia Transmission
Southline Transmission
CRYC Energy
MachoSprings Wind and Solar
Green Streams Farms
US Airforce-Kirkland/Holloman
New Mexico Tech
New Mexico State University
Alta Luna Solar
Los Alamos National Labs
Sandia National Labs
LANL
Kellar Logging Company
Laney Logging Company
Borderlands Wind Farm
Western New Mexico University

Strategies



Increase the number of energy companies by the developmemt of Southline and Sun Zia transmission lines.



Educate the general public and local businesses of the benefits of renewable energy, energy efficiency, and energy conservation.



Evaluate and support transportation decisions and investments with energy efficiency and renewable energy considerations.



Align the needs of the regional workforce to be prepared for energy efficiency and renewable energy industry growth and to meet the needs of current employers.



Increase energy efficient construction and retrofits for regional government and community buildings.



Encourage renewable energy equipment manufacturing entrepreneurs and develop the workforce.

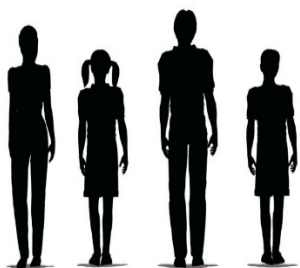


Continue to support responsible traditional energy production to keep state and local budgets in tact.



Ensure that energy sources are reliable and affordable in order to recruit and retain residents and businesses.

Health and Social Services



1 in 5 people in New Mexico live below the Federal Poverty Level.



Almost 1 in 10 have no health insurance coverage in New Mexico.

36 in 100 people in New Mexico speak another language besides English at home

The socio-economics of the region are no different than that of New Mexico. All four counties poverty rates are over 22%. As the SWNMCOG, other economic development partners, and local governments try to help lower unemployment rates by creating jobs the region faces other issues such as childcare for all income levels, health issues, food insecurities, access to broadband, drug abuse, homelessness.

As the economy begins to open after the COVID-19 pandemic, the biggest issues that the region is facing is getting mothers back to work, as well as childcare for those children that will be in a remote learning environment and broadband capacity for people that will continue to work remotely.

Niches

Telemedicine
Health Care Providers
Addiction Treatment Centers
Mental Health Facilities
Child Care
Senior Care
Juvenile Justice
Telehealth
Family Support

Partners

Children Youth and Family Department
Hidalgo MS
Gila Regional Medical Center
El Grito Head Start
WNMU Early Childhood Program
Western New Mexico University
School Districts
ALTSD
NM Mortgage Finance Authority
Mimbres Memorial Hospital
Ben Archer
Independent Medical Providers
Detention Centers
Juvenile Justice
Community Partnership for Children
Community Action Agency
The Commons
SWNM Food Hub
Grass Roots Wellness Center
Border Area Mental Health
Presbyterian Health
WESST
Food Banks/Pantries
Housing Authorities
USDA
Health Councils

Strategies



Expand health care degrees at Western New Mexico University and career pathways within the school districts.



Support increased adequate broadband infrastructure throughout the region to enable telemedicine communications and educational services.



Improve the quality of life so health care staff, especially specialized doctors, want to live in the region.



Maintain and expand funding for adult services by working with regional social services and healthcare providers, Aging and Long-term Services Department (ALTSD), Area Agency on Aging (AAA), New Mexico Aging with Senior Services Providers and Agencies Advisory Council, other state agencies, and legislators.



Support legislation, rules, and regulation changes to allow additional behavioral health professionals to receive tele-clinical supervision.



Promote and implement a “common curricula” with topics required across multiple professions that certifying behavioral health boards and agencies help develop and promote remotely.



Address mental health laws and practices so that county Detention Centers are not burdened by mental health disorders.



Support the development of affordable continuum of adult care to include day care to long-term care in order for seniors to stay in the region.



Address the food insecurity and care for older adults and children throughout the region.



Create affordable child care including after-school, out-of-school for all families throughout the region.



Create a regional network of resources for seniors.



Bring medical specialist to the region, at least a few days a month to alleviate seniors from traveling far distances to receive care.

Hospitality, Tourism, and Recreation



The region's landscapes, history, culture, and events are all wonderful assets. That employs almost 50% of the regions residents and paid \$31 million in federal, state, and local taxes. There are many people who not only visit the region for the first time but 73.5% of all visitors in Catron County have a second home there, 16.4% in Grant County, 3.3% in Hidalgo County, and 10.2% in Luna County.



Even though the quaint communities and fabulous events are enough to visit the region. There is a whole other world that people come to explore, the outdoor recreation includes, trail hiking, hunting, fishing, camping, mountain biking, motorcycling, bird watching, rock hounding, star gazing, just to name a few. The are also great historic hotels, state and national parks, among restaurants that serve amazing food.



Niches

Historical and Cultural Tourism
Outdoor Recreation
Events
Ecotourism
Agritourism
Adventure Tourism
Conventions
Dark Skies
Birding
Rockhounding

Partners

MainStreet/Arts and Culture Districts
Museums
Hotel and restaurant owners
NM Economic Development
Department
NM Outdoor Recreation Division
NM MainStreet Division
NM Tourism Department
NM Game and Fish
NM Department of Transportation
Bureau of Land Management
National Parks Service
State Parks
US Forest Service
School Districts
Western New Mexico University
WNMU-Cultural Affairs
Mimbres Regional Arts Council
Ghost Towns
Outfitters/Guides
Art Associations
Deming Arts Council
Youth Conservation Corps
Emergency Planning Coordinator
Grant County Cattle Growers

Strategies



Increase resident and industry advocacy of each other throughout the region to create more “community pride.”



Maintain/Expand connectivity of trails throughout the region including the Continental Divide Trail.



Increase recreational use of national parks, lakes, trails, forest and other tourist destinations such as Catwalk and Cliff Dwellings through an advertising campaign.



Develop small scale building investor co-ops that would help renovate vacant buildings while creating co-work style setup for multiple businesses.



Increase outdoor infrastructure to help recruit outdoor economy and other types of businesses throughout the region.



Educate constituents about the outdoor economy.



Support legislation of increasing the supply of rural liquor licenses but keeping value to existing licenses.



Support legislation about allowing people to occupy vacant buildings while bring the building up to code while educating interested parties in the cost of renovating.



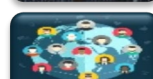
Collaborate and leverage funding opportunities with key partners to help build capacity and grow the outdoor economy.



Support innovative hospitality business models to increase the quality of life throughout the region’s communities.



Increase the direct hospitality jobs and entrepreneurship by aligning the educational standards with industry needs.



Increase and support the awareness of all facets of recreation for all residents and tourist’s enjoyment.



Improve and increase the types of transportation efforts throughout the region.



Increase marketing efforts for creative and cultural events as well as outdoor recreation for the region.



Support conventions and meetings at conference centers throughout the region.

Manufacturing and Logistics



According to New Mexico Partnership, manufacturing in New Mexico is a \$5.9 billion dollar industry that makes up 7.4% of New Mexico's GDP. Southwest New Mexico is the home to some unique manufacturers that have been here for decades along with newer manufacturers. Some of these include Syzygy-a custom tile manufacturer, Little Toad Brewery and Distillery, Compass Components-electronic component manufacturer, Solitaire Manufacture Homes, Solar Biz-solar panel component manufacturer, Udder Delight-a goat milk body care, among many others.



The Columbus/Palomas port-of-entry and the numerous industrial parks in the region provides a huge opportunity for the logistics. The Village of Columbus and Luna County have been exploring the opportunities.



Niches

Manufacturing:

- Assembly of Electronics
- Energy Components
- Environmental Technologies
- Aerospace Technologies
- Agriculture Manufacturing
- Brewing/Distilling
- Future Technology

Logistics:

- Rail
- Air
- Truck
- Storage

Partners

- Deming Luna County EDC
- Small Business Development Center
- Spaceport America
- International Business Accelerator
- NM Economic Development Department
- NM Department of Workforce Connection
- NM Department of Transportation
- NM Partnership
- NM Manufacturing Extension Partnership
- Union Pacific
- Burlington Northern Santa Fe
- Public Service of New Mexico
- Navopache Electric Co-Op
- Columbus Electric Co-Op
- School Districts
- Western New Mexico University
- New Mexico State University
- New Mexico Tech
- Chambers of Commerce
- Airports
- New Mexico Gas Company
- El Paso Natural Gas
- Sandia & Los Alamos National Labs

Strategies



Develop a logistics hub that includes cold storage near the Columbus and Antelope Wells Port-of-Entries to increase the international economic opportunities.



Develop a agriculture distribution hubs throughout the region.



Initiate communication with logging companies and the US Forest Service to help the gap in logging area restrictions.



Support the research and development of innovative and future manufacturing and logistic technologies.



Encourage development of aerospace and clean energy technology manufacturing in the region.



Encourage the expansion of workforce programs to meet the needs of manufacturing businesses in the region



Increase recruitment efforts of manufacturing or logistic companies to the region's industrial parks.



Capitalize on the rail and airport infrastructure throughout the region to increase commerce activities.

Natural Resources and Mining

Mining is not only a major industry component in southwest New Mexico but in New Mexico as a whole. The copper commodity creates \$4.3 million dollars to the state budget, a prime driver behind public education and services in New Mexico. The mining industry employs over 1,600 people in southwest New Mexico, some people commute from as far as Tucson, Arizona and El Paso, Texas.

Natural resources in the section encompasses a huge array of resources, from the Gila National Forest and Wilderness, water, geothermal waters, dark skies, biomass products, environmental sciences, and everything in between.

While mining does and has employed many people throughout the region, the region also feels the ebb and flows of mining. During this CEDS process, the stakeholders felt that the other natural resources as a way to diversify the region's economy, since there is an abundance of it.

New Mexico is 3rd in US
Copper Production.



Niches

Mining Support Products and Services

Mining Research and Development

Forestry

Farming and Ranching

Partners

US Forest Service

National Parks Service

Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Freeport McMoRan

School Districts

Western New Mexico University

Natural Resource Conservation District

Local Governments

Laney Logging Company

Kellar Logging Company

Farmers/Ranchers

Farm and Livestock Bureau

New Mexico Office of the State Engineer

Interstate Stream Commission

New Mexico Acequia Association

Grant County Water Commission

Strategies



Continue to have access and protection of National Forests for all residents and tourist enjoyment.



Increase the mining research and development efforts in the region.



Create a regional mining, geological, environmental museum to help educate residents and tourists.



Development of geological assets through education and explorations.



Maintain the region's Dark Skies as development continues.



Enhance the geothermal economic development opportunities throughout the region.



Upgrade water infrastructure throughout the region to improve water conservation measures.



Conduct a local government land bank inventory to help forecast water demand throughout the region.



Work with Freeport McMoRan, U.S. Forest Services, and other natural resource industry employers to help educate communities throughout the region about land reclamation.



Work with Freeport McMoRan, U.S. Forest Service, and other natural resource industry employers to educate school-aged children about the types of jobs that are a part of this industry.



Support efforts of local school districts and Western New Mexico University to educate students about careers in the mining, forestry, and other environmental based industries



Facilitate environmental education such as illegal dumping, waste, and fire to the residents of the region.

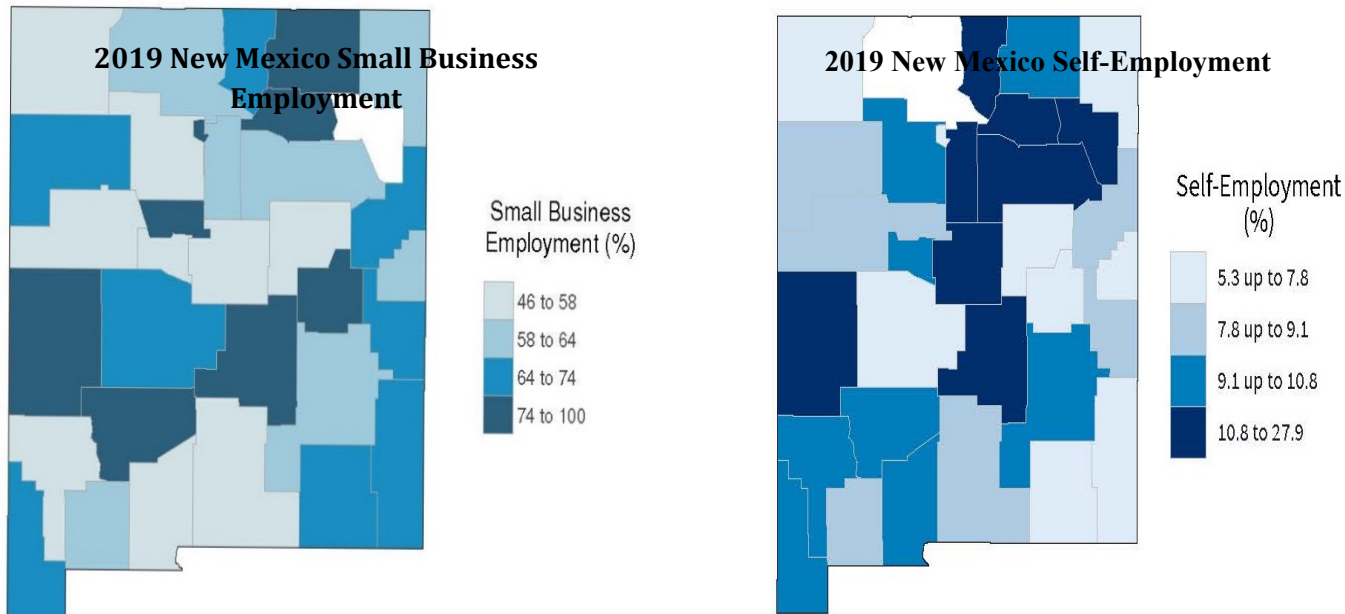


Use known research to develop biomass product from forest and agricultural waste.

Small Business and Entrepreneurship

According to Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy, small businesses in New Mexico employed 54.2% of employed people. In southwest New Mexico small businesses employed from 46-100% of the counties employment; while 9.1-27.9% of the counties were self-employed. Small businesses are vital to the rural region and the SWNMCOG are continuing to find ways to partner with other local economic development partners to continue to build the entrepreneur ecosystem in the region.

The Southwest New Mexico Council of Governments, local governments, MainStreets, Chambers of Commerce, swACT among community facilitators are currently training entrepreneurs through the CO.STARTERS program to continue building the small business network integrating existing business with startups within the region. This grass roots collaboration is to help diversify the economy while building relationships.



Niches

Small Business
Start-up
Solo-Work
E-Commerce
Business
Accelerators/Incubators
Makers Space
Co-Work
Business Retention and Recovery

Partners

Small Business Development Center
Chambers of Commerce
New Mexico Economic Development Department
University of New Mexico
Western New Mexico University
New Mexico State University
International Business Accelerator
MainStreets
Future Forge
Studio G
New Mexico Border Authority
School Districts
New Mexico Secretary of State
Local Governments
Dream Springs
WESST
New Mexico Loan Fund
Small Businesses

Strategies



Provide a public/private co-work environment to encourage entrepreneurship network and spur innovated ideas.



Support the efforts of Studio G Virtual Business Incubator along with Future Forge and UNM/WNMU Maker Spaces.



Build a consortia of small business to create an insurance pool on the health insurance Marketplace to help the region's small businesses be more competitive.



Broaden the regional collaboration by utilizing the SWNMCOG as the regional leader to help disseminate and connect resources.



Start at least one entrepreneur event such as "Start-up Weekend" or Junior Achievement Activity a year.



Develop regional entrepreneurial trainings that include microlending, tax policy and rules, legal, etc. throughout the year.



Encourage entrepreneurship and mentorship in secondary and higher education.



Support the solo-works place program and funding throughout the region.



Address the region's vacant building issue by partnering with local school districts and WNMU to revitalize the building by providing vocational training classes on-hands training.



Build container-style business incubator that would allow start-ups build their business while partnering with vacant property owners to bring the building up to code.



Partner with businesses throughout the region to help begin succession planning to help retain the region's youth.



Support policies that would allow waivers for historic property owners occupy and renovate the buildings at the same time.



Continue the Co-Starters Core, Rebuild, and Accelerator program as part as entrepreneurial training throughout the region



Build awareness of website, social media, PayPal, Etsy, etc. to enhance e-commerce opportunities.



Work with SBDC, NMEDD, and local Chambers of Commerce, MainStreets, and EDOs to start a Business Retention, Expansion, and Recovery program.