

**The Board of Director's Meeting**  
**April 12, 2024**  
**Quarterly Meeting**  
**Minutes**

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

The quarterly meeting of the Board of Directors of the Southeastern New Mexico Economic Development District/COG was called to order by Board President Sam Seely.

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**3. ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

The following Member Governments were represented by Directors or Alternates:

**MEMBER GOVERNMENTS-PRESENT**

Lea County—Mike Gallagher  
Lincoln County—Mital Bhakta  
Otero County—Pam Heltner, County Manager  
Alamogordo—Susan Payne, Mayor  
Capitan—Kevin Kennedy  
Carrizozo—Bob Hemphill, Mayor  
Cloudcroft—Timothy King, Trustee  
Corona—Sam Seely, Mayor  
Dexter—Ron Chambers, Councilor  
Eunice—Billy Hobbs, Mayor  
Hope—Rudy Sales, Public Works Director  
Jal—Van Mirick, Public Works Director  
Lovington—David Miranda, City Manager  
Roswell—Tim Jennings, Mayor  
Ruidoso—Gary Jackson, Councilor  
Ruidoso Downs—Joey Jarvis, Public Works Director  
Tatum—Marilyn Burns, Mayor  
Tularosa—Manuel Brusuelas, Trustee

**NON-GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES-PRESENT**

Chaves County—Jon Hitchcock  
Lea County—Robbie Roberts

**MEMBER GOVERNMENTS-NOT PRESENT**  
**NOT PRESENT**

Chaves County—Dara Dana  
Eddy County—Ernie Carlson, Commissioner  
Artesia—Hayley Klein, ED /Artesia Chamber  
Carlsbad—Lisa Anaya Flores, Councilor  
Hagerman—Tony Garcia, Mayor  
Hobbs—Todd Randall, City Engineer  
Lake Arthur—Ysidro Salazar, Mayor  
Loving—Rick Fuentes

**NON-GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES**  
**NOT PRESENT**

Eddy County--Vacant  
Lincoln County—Coda Omness  
Otero County--Vacant

A quorum was present with 18 of the 26 Member Governments represented. Two non-government Representatives were also present.

**GUESTS AND VISITORS PRESENT**

Harlan Vincent, Representative

Jimmy Mason, Representative  
Randall Pettigrew, Representative  
Larry Scott, Representative  
Greg Nibert, Senator  
Chris Garner, Auditor—Pattillo, Brown & Hill, LLP  
Curtis Clough, Superintendent-Corona Schools  
Rifle Salas, Councilor  
Carolyn Arias, Office Manager SBDC  
Donna Maestas-DeVries, NMFA  
Scott Bucher, Director SBDC  
Sandi Wilkie, Dist. Mgr. Carlsbad SWCD  
Nate Williams, Deputy Director NMPED Community Schools

#### SNMEDD/COG STAFF PRESENT

Dora Batista, Executive Director  
Mary Ann Burr, SERPTO Program Manager  
Kristina Casaus, Administrative Assistant  
Pansy Moffitt, Office/Finance Administrator  
Debi Lee, Consultant

#### **4. Program: Legislative Review by Area Legislators**

There were five legislators in attendance to report the results of the 30-day legislative session: Senator Greg Nibert, Representative Harlan Vincent, Representative Jimmy Mason, Representative Larry Scott, and Representative Randall Pettigrew.

Senator Nibert stated that a lot of money was put into the Water Trust Board. He suggested that the communities look into grants and other funding available to help with water infrastructure. Money was also put into rural healthcare to assist the smaller communities, several health clinics and rural hospitals in Southeastern New Mexico that were fixing to close their clinics.

Senator Nibert also stated that there was a Bill that allowed police officers and detention officers to be rehired as an exception to the rule of not hiring retired officers. If they are hired, they must stay 3 years to keep their retirement while they are working. This is effective between now and 2027.

A Bill was passed to increase the penalty for 2<sup>nd</sup> degree murder from 15 years to 18 years. There is an effort to slow down the revolving door that if an individual commits a crime and is released on their own recognizance and goes out and commits a second crime, before they will be released again the first judge needs to be notified for the failure of the individual to meet conditions of their release. It will be up to the first judge to determine whether that individual should be retained because they did not comply with the rules of the first instance.

Representative Vincent reiterated the return-to-work bill was a good idea because of the shortage of law enforcement officers. The City of Albuquerque is 600 officers short. This demonstrates a good reason for the return-to-work bill. Several volunteer fire houses have had to close due to the shortage of firefighters. A retention/recruitment bill for firefighters and EMTs passed.

Emergency services will get an additional 11 million, included in the bill to be divided between 33 counties.

The Paid Family Medical Leave Act gives an employee up to 3 months to take time off for any family occurrence and does not have to get permission from their employer or human resources. They only need to go to New Mexico Workforce Solutions and get a form and take it back to the employer.

Representative Vincent stated that this is a terrible bill and would negatively impact our government entities' businesses.

Representative Scott spoke on the energy and tax committee. The clean fuel bill passed by 2 votes. He stated that it would develop a clean fuel credit that will be added to the price of gasoline and diesel. At the end of the process 20% by 2030 and 30% by 2040 or a .50 cent increase. It is predicted that the environment department is considering the California advanced clean car rules. It requires that 43% of vehicles sold in the state will be electric or plug in or plug in electric hybrid. This is not feasible for the rural areas of our state.

For the past several sessions, the tax policy has been to transfer payments for refundable tax credits for low-income families with children and tax credits for low income working families where if you don't have a tax liability, the state writes you a check. This session also included subsidies for solar panels, electric vehicles and charging stations.

A bill to impose a 7-day waiting period on firearms passed. If a person is a concealed carrier, they do not have to wait 7 days. The New Mexico fire arms violence crime is approximately twice the national average. He attributes the increase to the October 2014 the Albuquerque Police Department consent decree with the Justice Department because of the killing of a homeless man the previous year. Representative Scott stated that his opinion was that the Albuquerque Police Department is demoralized as they are not broken window policing and the catch and release and now resulting in having a high crime rate today.

Representative Scott stated that the public policy of this state is to be net zero carbon neutral by 2050. The petroleum industry is producing 1.7 million barrels a day resulting in that industry making 53 % of the state's budget. If that goes away, we have no other means to replace even a portion of that income.

Representative Mason serves on the commerce committee and reference SB37, the Meat Inspection Act which passed. This would require the state to hire meat inspectors that meet the same requirements as USDA.

Representative Pettigrew stated that we need to use the excess funding from oil and gas to bring in other businesses to grow the economy in New Mexico. There were 15 attempts, legislation, against oil and gas, 10 attempts against building new offices and divisions, 7 anti-gun bills, and efforts to continue to grow government and the purchase land mass.

Representative Pettigrew serves on House Appropriations. Road reconstruction and rehabilitation had zero dollars in the budget. There was over 6.5 billion dollars in the TRP report for roads to be used for reconstruction and rebuilding roads across the state of New Mexico. In 2023, HB2, SB26 and SB378 deferred those dollars from the oil and gas industry money into different funds leaving 3.5 billion dollars to be used for road improvements.

Representative Pettigrew and the other legislators thanked the COG for their assistance during the legislative session.

## **5. ACTION ITEMS:**

### **a. Approve Meeting Agenda for April 12, 2024**

Motion made by Mike Gallagher to approve the agenda and seconded by Robbie Roberts. All voted aye and the motion carried.

### **b. Approve Minutes of January 12, 2024.**

Motion made by Mike Gallagher to approve minutes and seconded by Robbie Roberts. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**c. Review and Adopt 2022-2023 Audit Report, Pattillo, Brown, & Hill, LLP**

The annual audit report was presented by Chris Garner, Partner. Audit reports were available for those who wanted to take one. Mr. Garner reviewed the financial statements. His conclusion was the SNMEDD had an unmodified opinion, meaning that there were no findings.

The final Audit Report has been sent to the State Auditor.

A motion was made to accept the 2022-2023 audit report. Mike Gallagher made the motion and Robbie Roberts seconded it. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**d. Review and Accept Financial Report**

The financial report was presented by Dora Batista. Dora stated that budgeted operating income collected to date was 63.17% and expenses were 52.18%. We are in an excellent financial position as we begin our last quarter.

Motion made by Kevin Kennedy to accept the financial report as presented and seconded by Bob Hemphill. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**e. Review and Approve 2024-2025 Membership Dues**

Dora Batista stated the SNMEDD has not raised their dues since 2016 and announced that they will remain the same through 2024-2025. She stated that the dues are approximately one-quarter of our budget. With these dues, we can provide many services to our communities, especially to the smaller municipalities that do not have enough staff. We are most appreciative of everyone's cooperation and support.

This year, we have received additional funding through EDA and DFA to support technical assistance, grant writing and capacity building.

**f. Approve New Bank Signature Authorization Cards**

Dora Batista stated that because we have a new President and Vice President, we need to add them to our checking accounts and delete the previous President. Our current Treasurer, Tony Garcia, comes in and signs checks when he is available, but there are times that he is not available, and we need 2 signatures. We have added Sam Seely, President and David Miranda, Vice President to our signature cards. These additions need to be approved by our Board. The motion was made by Pamela Heltner and seconded by Joey Jarvis to add and replace names on the checking accounts as recommended. All voted aye and motion carried.

**g. Review and Approve DFA Annual Work Plan**

The 2024-2025 Annual Work Plan was included in the Board Packet. This is required by DFA and lists our activities and functions as shown in the Quarterly Report submitted by Dora. DFA requires SNMEDD minutes showing the work plan was approved by the Board.

A motion was made by Bob Hemphill to accept the Annual Work Plan for 2024-2025. Pamela Heltner seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**h. Nate Williams, Bureau Deputy Director, Finance and Operations Community Schools Team**

The Community Schools Team would like to enter into a contractual agreement with SNMEDD to hire one of their contact employees as a full-time employee and assign them to continue the

same services that they are performing. The Regional Cooperative that they have previously contracted with originally can no longer continue these services. Mr. Williams stated that there will be no cost to SNMEDD. He may be adding one or more employees to that list. The COG will be receiving an administrative fee for their services.

A motion was made by Kevin Kennedy to approve the contractual agreement and Joey Jarvis seconded. All voted aye and motion carried.

## 6. PROGRAM AND ACTIVITY REPORTS:

### **Dora Batista**—SNMEDD District Activity and Program Updates

Dora stated that her report was included in the Board Packet.

Dora reported on the success of the 30-day legislative session and stated that the five counties received capital outlay in the amount of \$22,602,000. She thanked the legislators, Debi Lee, Bob Wooley, and Benen Lee for their countless hours that they put in to make the process a success. She said she and Paul Pappas assisted.

A new program that was created from this legislative session was the change from HB2 Junior funds to NM GRO. A considerable amount of these funds will be distributed to the seven different COGs to oversee the procurement of the funds. The Chief of Staff for the Senate Finance Committee, Adrian Avila, contacted the COGS and stated that the state legislature was wanting to utilize the COGs as a mechanism to address local priorities for the elected members of the Legislature. They wanted a new method to get these funds dispersed. The Local Government Division at DFA has been short-staffed and overburdened. Many of the funds have not been spent or the grant agreements executed and secured, and they hoped that the COGs could get these funds out quickly and more efficiently. Dora explained that being notified of the new process, NM GRO requests at the legislative session, was fast and furious only giving the COG 36 hours to certify all of the Legislators requests. The NM GRO would give each of our Senators \$800,000 to award in \$200,000 increments for a two-year period of time. The House of Representative was given \$480,000 each to be awarded in \$160,000 increments. Each increment had to be for the same purpose and could not be divided into different projects and was intended for operational costs and resources that benefit the communities. SNMEDD was awarded \$320,000 for technical support and grant writing services.

The SNMEDD COG will be responsible for 29 projects totaling \$5,920,000. They range from domestic violence shelter service, law enforcement vehicles, youth mentoring, agriculture education programs, oil field task force, and veteran therapy. Dora stated that SNMEDD will receive an admin fee for managing the NM GRO funding and this program needs to be up and ready by July 1, 2024. We are already working on this process. Our goal is to have the RFPs out and the funds contracted by the end of December 2024.

With the EDA Disaster Recovery Grant, we continue to assist Lincoln County with their project funds. The Village of Ruidoso and Lincoln County recently applied for matching funds from the State and were awarded the funds together totaling \$1,427,000. These funds need to be expended by June 30, 2024.

EDA recently notified the Village of Ruidoso that they would be funded \$1.78 million and Lincoln County \$4 million for economic development projects to recover from the fires. They can expect the grant agreement any time.

We continue to act as fiscal agents to those municipalities/counties that had audit findings. We are notified by DFA and the Municipality/County that a fiscal agent is needed. A Memorandum

of Understanding agreement is entered between the Municipality/County and the SNMEDD. Once the grant agreement is released, a copy is sent to the agency administering the grant, then the grant agreement is released once the MOU is received. Currently we have approximately 100 with another 35-40 possible.

Dora reported on the Small Communities Economic Development and Capacity Building Program supported by NMSU. Technical assistance, resources, and other training based on small community's needs are offered to increase internal capacity and to assist in economic activities for the community. Currently we are working with The City of Artesia and the Village of Cloudcroft. We are beginning a strategic plan in Artesia with Leadership New Mexico and working with staff and other professionals to provide requested resources to Cloudcroft.

Hubert Quintana was honored at the session on January 22, 2024, with House Memorial 9. This presentation was well attended by family members and staff members. A copy of the Memorial was included in the board packet.

Purdue University is continuing to work on a regional housing analysis that is paid for with the EDA technical capacity grant. SNMEDD, Purdue University, NMSU, NMEDD, and 100% Chaves County will be presenting this housing data as well as Industry Cluster and Workforce analysis data at the SNMEDD Regional Economic Housing conference on May 22-23, 2024, at the Roswell convention Center. There will be a tour of the BiltWise Production Facility. Invitations will be coming out soon.

The ICIP Deadline submission is Friday, July 12, 2024.

**Mary Ann Burr**—SERTPO

SERTPO held two meetings this past quarter. The Transportation Project Fund (TPF) Timeline was approved, and the application cycle is underway. Forty-three applications were received (i.e., Project Feasibility Forms (PFFs)), and the NMDOT District 2 Project Feasibility reviews have been held. Applicants are completing their final application packets which are due April 25, 2024. The TPF rating meeting has been scheduled for May 23, 2024 (Ruidoso).

During the March 21, 2024, meeting held in Artesia, election of officers was held. SERTPO has a new Chairman, Jeffrey Honeycutt (Lincoln County) and new Vice-Chairman, Joey Jarvis (Ruidoso Downs).

A SERTPO Bootcamp training was held February 16, 2024, at the Roswell Public Library.

Regarding the planning grants, the Hope Comp Plan is nearing completion and will be entering close-out. The close-out CDBG hearing has been scheduled. The Tularosa Comp Plan has an RFP currently being advertised. The Ruidoso Downs Asset Management Plan is underway with its consultant, who is collecting/digitizing data for mapping and revisiting the city to see troubled areas. We are anticipating the initial invoicing. The Lake Arthur Asset Management Plan is also underway, with a kickoff meeting planned for next week. We are anticipating initial invoicing for this plan as well. The Hagerman Asset Management Plan is in the close-out stage.

**Paul Pappas**—Project Coordinator

Paul Pappas was not present; his report was included in the Board Packet.

The allocation hearings for the 2023 CDBG applications were held on January 11, 2024. Three

applications were fully funded for our District: City of Carlsbad, Village of Loving, and City of Lovington, the City of Carlsbad, and the Village of Loving have already executed their grant agreements and have gone out for RFP for engineering. The City of Lovington is still waiting for their grant agreement. An environmental assessment has already begun.  
grant agreement.

A list of existing projects and their status was included in his report.

Any municipality that is interested in applying for the 2024 CDBG Grant is encouraged to let Paul or Dora know so they can start scheduling the required hearings to get a jump on the applications. There were few applications submitted and everyone submitted got fully funded.

**Debi Lee**—Consultant Southeast New Mexico  
Debi's report was included in the Board Packet.

Debi reported that the Funding Opportunities and Information to Know e-mail is now being sent out every other week as a newsletter and the number of recipients has increased.

The Economic Snapshot reports that counties and municipalities are showing year-over-year increases with the mining and oil & gas industry reporting the largest increase of 52%. Overall southeast New Mexico is reporting upward trends. You can review the details for your county in the Report provided in your packet.

We continue to support communities that need assistance with grant applications. The following entities and applications have been submitted:

Federal Matching Grants from NMDFA have been awarded to the City of Ruidoso Downs, Town of Lake Arthur, Town of Tatum, Village of Hope, Village of Tularosa, and Town of Hagerman and most recently the Town of Carrizozo. House Bill 177 was signed into law this year and will appropriate \$100 million for next year's Matching Grant requests. We will let you know when those funds become available.

The Quality of Life/Recreation Fund from NMDFA has been awarded to the City of Artesia, City of Carlsbad, Town of Carrizozo, Chaves County, Village of Cloudcroft, Eddy County, Town of Hagerman, City of Hobbs, Lincoln County, City of Roswell, Village of Ruidoso, and the City of Ruidoso Downs. At the request of several communities, we worked with our legislators to request a time extension for the projects that were due to expire June 2024. A bill was passed to extend the funding and was signed by the Governor.

New Mexico True Destination Forward Grant that was submitted for the City of Roswell was awarded \$100,000 to finalize the design of the Wayfinding Gateway Signage in downtown. An application for the City of Carlsbad is being submitted requesting funding in the amount of \$525,000 under Tier II B category to renovate and modernize a museum building in the historic/cultural district. We are hopeful that this project will be funded.

Transportation Project Funding (TPF) – Assisted five communities with their TPF application for review and consideration by SERTPO and NMDOT. They included: Town of Tatum, Town of Dexter, Town of Carrizozo, Town of Lake Arthur, and City of Jal. With available grant funding, Stantec engineering services worked with these entities to prepare a project estimate, map, and project description. All entities in our region requesting TPF will make a presentation to the SERTPO Committee to be rated and scored on May 16, 2024. They will then be submitted to NMDO for final approval on September 1, 2024.

Keep New Mexico True – Clean and Beautiful Program Grant – Assisted the Town of Tatum in applying for funding for their community. This is a competitive grant with their main purpose to support litter eradication, waste reduction and community beautification initiatives.

SNMEDD C&ED Pilot Program is ongoing with the City of Artesia and the Village of Cloudercroft. Leadership NM has been contracted to facilitate the next step which is a strategic planning process with Team Artesia. An action plan has been developed and will align with Artesia's Comprehensive Planning goals and objectives will be used in the strategic planning process. Financial Wellness training has been scheduled for Artesia for April 24, 2024, with follow-up technical assistance in writing an investment policy, review of procurement policy and other financial needs. SNMEDD will also be assisting to identify potential grant funding for project priorities. We also met with the new Mayor of the Village of Cloudercroft and the governing body to discuss the C&ED Program where they listed their top priorities and needs for technical assistance. We have contracted with a grant writer to assist in helping them submit applications for funding.


A Regional Economic Housing Summit is planned for May 22-23, 2024, in Roswell. We are excited to feature Purdue University, Center for Regional Develop and have Indraneel Kumar and Annie Porter Cruz as featured speakers on the economic cluster analysis and housing analysis. We will also have other professional economic and housing experts speak and expect to have an informative and eventful conference planning the future of southeast NM.

**12. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND INFORMATION SHARING:** Donna Maestas-De Vries from NMFA announced there is money available for manufactured and mobile home mortgages. The home must be on a permanent foundation. She provided brochures explaining the program.

**13.. ADJOURN:**

Adjourned at 12:00 pm.

APPROVED:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Sam Seely, Board President

7-12-24  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

ATTESTED BY:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dora Maestas, Secretary

7-12-24  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date