



'ROUND THE ROUNDHOUSE



**New Mexico
STATE EMPLOYEES' NEWSPAPER**

Volume 35, Issue Number 1
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**¡Bienvenidos!
Welcome to the
New Mexico Legislature**

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Governor Appoints Wayne Propst as Department of Finance and Administration Secretary

By Nora Sackett



Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham on December 13th announced the appointment of Wayne Propst as secretary of the Department of Finance and Administration (DFA). Propst will assume leadership of the department at the start of January following Secretary Deborah Romero's retirement from state government at the end of the year.

"Wayne is an effective leader whose strong financial background and years of experience in government will be instrumental in continuing our work to deliver for New Mexicans," said Gov. Lujan Grisham. "He understands the purpose and importance of managing resources to best execute policies that lift up all New Mexico families, and I am looking forward to working with him again."

"It is an honor to join the governor's administration at a truly historic and optimistic time for New Mexico," Propst said. "I look forward to working with the Legislature, agency colleagues and others to make smart, fiscally responsible investments in New Mexico's future."

Propst has two decades of experience in state and federal government and financial management, including nearly a decade as executive director of the Public Employees Retirement Association of New Mexico, where he oversaw a \$15.5 billion trust fund and worked with Gov. Lujan Grisham to enact comprehensive pension reform to improve the fund's long-term solvency. In addition to having served as executive director of the New Mexico Retiree Health Care Authority, Propst also previously worked as a principal analyst for the New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee. He currently serves as chief of staff for the New Mexico Public Regulation Committee.

Propst previously worked under the governor when she led the New Mexico Department of Health, where he was director of the Office of Policy and Multi-cultural Health. He also served as a deputy legislative director for United States Senator Jeff Bingaman. He holds a bachelor's degree from Eastern New Mexico University and is a graduate of the University of New Mexico School of Law.

The Risk Management Division (RMD) of the General Services Department Organized Two Major Events this Fall

By Thom Cole

RMD's Loss Control Bureau in September hosted the annual education conference and business meeting of the State Risk and Insurance Management Association. More than 250 state risk managers from across the country attended the event at the Buffalo Thunder Resort & Spa.

The conference addressed emerging risks to states and the myriad of challenges and opportunities that risk managers face in finding solutions, said Julia Lanham, chief of the Loss Control Bureau. RMD provides liability, property and other coverage for state agencies.

RMD's team of volunteers also arranged a taste of New Mexico for conference attendees, including a backstage tour of the Santa Fe Opera, a hoop dancing demonstration, a visit to Bandelier National Monument, exploration of Meow Wolf and a train ride to Lamy.

In October, RMD's Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Bureau held its 12th annual symposium. More than 200 people attended the event either in-person or online.

The ADR Bureau promotes the use of ADR within state agencies as an efficient way to improve workplace relationships.

This year's symposium featured workshops by national and local presenters on a wide variety of topics and included a roundtable discussion with working New Mexico mediators in diverse fields, said Mary Jo Lujan, chief of the ADR Bureau.

The free symposium is the only event of its kind in New Mexico for mediators, ADR coordinators and those who promote early dispute resolution.



General Services Department employees who helped organize the conference in Santa Fe for the State Risk and Insurance Management Association. Standing from left to right are Rose Hernandez, Lakisha Holley, Orlando Lujan, Angela Martinez, Farah Shawabkeh and Ruth Garcia. Seated from left to right are Rachel Lovato, Mary Iddings and Rod Crawley. Not pictured is Clifford Quintana.

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First-Ever ORD Director Leaves Legacy of Equity, Stewardship

By Ami Jones

Axie Navas, whose efforts as the first-ever Outdoor Recreation Division Director propelled New Mexico as a national leader in the field, is leaving state government.

Growing New Mexico's outdoor recreation assets is a priority for Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham, who signed a law creating the state's first Outdoor Recreation Division (ORD), a division of the Economic Development Department, just a few months after taking office in 2019. Navas, a former editor at Outside magazine, was named New Mexico's first ORD Director.



Economic Development Cabinet Secretary Alicia J. Keyes said. "Axie has led this charge with innovative and groundbreaking work, garnering many accomplishments for New Mexico along the way. We thank her for her service and wish her luck in the next phase of her career as she balances that with her new obligations as a first-time parent."

The Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) annual report released in early November showed that New Mexico now ranks fifth in the United States for outdoor recreation employment growth in 2021, with an 18.2 percent bump in the sector year over year. The data also demonstrated that the state is outpacing the nation in GDP, employment, and compensation generated by the outdoor recreation economy.

Since 2019, some of the top accomplishments for the office have been:

- Creating the first-of-its-kind Outdoor Equity Fund, a grant that has funded 128 organizations with \$2 million and introduced nearly 40,000 young New Mexicans to the outdoors.
- Awarding over \$5 million to 66 outdoor infrastructure projects statewide through the Outdoor Recreation Trails+ Grant program. These projects will create or support a combined 959.6 miles of trails and 1,115 jobs.
- Working with the Confluence of States; a bipartisan collaboration to ensure the outdoor recreation industry protects and sustains the economy and environment, one state at a time for generations to come. Navas was elected chair and vice-chair of the Confluence of States in 2021 and 2022 respectively.
- Sponsoring of a paid high school outdoor internship program that has placed 29 students with nine New Mexico outdoor recreation employers, catalyzing over \$90,000 in funding for student interns to better connect underserved and nontraditional students to college and careers.
- Launching the first-ever Outdoor Pitchfest, now the annual Adventure Pitch, which awarded \$15,000 in cash prizes to three entrepreneurs this year.
- Sponsoring and producing inaugural outdoor recreation incubators and accelerators.
- Ensuring outdoor recreation access is considered under Gov. Lujan Grisham's 30x30 Executive Order.
- Serving on a state-led coalition to develop permanent, robust conservation and outdoor recreation funding at the state level – an initiative that will go to the legislature in 2023.
- Garnering a \$1.985 million Economic Development Administration grant award to help the outdoor industry recover and thrive post-pandemic.

Under Navas, ORD also successfully led an Outstanding National Resource Waters petition to protect 125 miles of rivers in New Mexico based on their "outstanding" recreational significance to the state, ensuring exceptional water quality for hunters, anglers, acequias, birders, and everyone else living and recreating along their banks.

Outdoor recreation industry events have also seen an uptick with Navas at the helm. Annual in-state conferences, like the ORD sponsored Outdoor Economics Conference, as well as destination outdoor events have increased statewide. The office continues to partner with industry leaders to champion development in this target industry.

"I am so proud of what the Outdoor Recreation Division has accomplished since Gov. Lujan Grisham created the office in April 2019," ORD Director Navas, who departs at the end of the year, said. "To cite just a few wins, we've launched the first-of-its-kind Outdoor Equity Fund, developed robust outdoor infrastructure funding for communities throughout the state, and grown outdoor industry career opportunities by a magnitude of almost 20. I'm confident that this is just the beginning, and that ORD's momentum will continue to pick up speed from here under the guidance of the next director. It's bittersweet to leave, but I know ORD will thrive in this next chapter as an established and powerful champion of the outdoor economy and equitable outdoor access."

ORD Deputy Director Alyssa Renwick will lead ORD until a permanent director is named. *Those interested in the position should send a resumé and letter of interest to Secretary Keyes via, Westlee Painter, Executive Assistant to Deputy Secretary Jon Clark, at WestleeA.Painter@edd.nm.gov.*



Op Ed: New Mexico Can Make Historic Advances in 2023 Legislative Session

By Lt. Governor Howie Morales



New Mexico has a rare opportunity to make lasting and historic progress on difficult problems during the 2023 meeting of the Legislature. Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham has expressed her strong support for having the state invest in ensuring that every child is fed; substantially expanding affordable housing across New Mexico while reducing homelessness and bolstering our ongoing efforts to rebuild and strengthen the network of behavioral and mental health care. I am hopeful that by working together, the Legislature and Executive will accomplish all of these key goals. Now is the time to tackle the big social issues, when our state is prosperous and doing well financially. If we don't strengthen our communities and make life better for all New Mexicans now, when will we ever get around to doing it? That's why we were elected. New Mexico's economic outlook has

never been stronger than at this moment. The state's projected revenue for the 2024 fiscal year is nearly \$12 billion, including \$3.6 billion in new revenues. That's 42.7% larger than the \$8.5 billion budget in revenues for the current year, according to the Legislative Finance Committee. The good news comes thanks to surging world demand for Permian Basin oil and gas production, our low rate of unemployment, and a 21% increase in taxable gross receipts driven by our administration's successful efforts to diversify our economy, and improve the state's business climate.

In this year's legislative session, we will continue the responsible investments we know are working already in education, health care, conservation and public safety. We will also support innovative new strategies with real investments to meet other pressing needs.

As Gov. Lujan Grisham has highlighted, no New Mexico student should go hungry. All too many do, however. That is why we will work with legislators to fund healthy, high-quality

breakfast and lunch meals for every K-12 student in New Mexico at no cost, improving nutrition, and removing the burden of meal debt from schools and families. Making sure that all students are fed nutritious meals daily is critical to tackling tough, intractable poverty that exists in every single community across our state. We will expand our collaboration with New Mexico farmers for fresh local fruits and vegetables to do so. This goal is achievable and is a top priority.

Second, we will make the needed investments to finally deliver significantly more affordable housing for ordinary New Mexicans who are struggling every day with the rising costs of living and keeping a roof over their heads. The problem is growing worse, and afflicts huge numbers of families, workers and seniors. As a board member of the state Mortgage Finance Authority, I see how acute the issue is becoming with each passing month. In 2020 we found that almost 44% of renters and more than 21% of homeowners are burdened with costs of 30 percent or more of their

annual income going directly to their rental and housing payments. It's too much. We will take on the related, and worsening problem of homelessness in New Mexico, too, in the 2023 legislative session.

Third, we will continue to strengthen our investments in rebuilding New Mexico's network of behavioral, mental health, psychiatric and substance abuse treatment. Under the Governor's leadership, we have already made remarkable progress during the past four years by eliminating behavioral health copays for hundreds of thousands of residents, and expanding access to care across the state for New Mexicans. There is still much more work to do to expand the delivery of services, especially in rural communities. We will do it this year.

Throughout 2023, I will continue my travels across our state to hear directly from residents, communities and leaders how New Mexico can do better to meet their needs. Now is the time to use our strong fiscal situation to help improve the lives of all New Mexicans, and I look forward to it.

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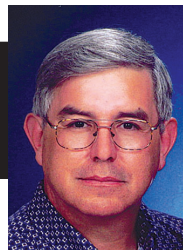
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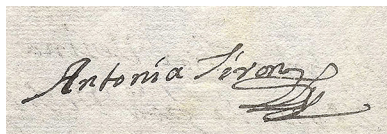
VOICES FROM THE PAST

By Robert J. Tórréz
Former State Historian
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Complaint of Antonia Jirón, 1733

I have often pointed out in these columns and in many of my other publications that our Spanish and Mexican-era judicial records tell us a lot about how the judicial systems functioned but also about the lives of ancestors. Some are made more interesting when the document is incomplete or has other characteristics that cause us to read “between the lines.” So it has been with a complaint filed by Antonia Jirón against the militia officer Miguel Martin Serrano in 1733 (SANM I, #392). What makes this document even more fascinating is that it is written in her own hand and unlike so many documents of the era it is signed, not with the typical “x” but her own signature, complete with rubric. Clearly, Antonia was not only literate, a relatively rare trait for women in that era, but educated enough to compose a well-written, logical complaint.



Antonia Jirón signature and rubric.

This was her story, in her own words. Some punctuation has been added for clarity: “Antonia Jiron vecina (citizen) of the Villa Nueva de Santa Cruz, wife of Francisco Vigil, in the best form there may be within my rights in law and my

own, I appear before your honor and say that I complain civilly and criminally against the Captain Miguel Martín Serrano for having dared come to my home Friday in the middle of the night on the pretext that he had seen some livestock or oxen in my fields; the said field [milpa], not being mine but that of Juan de Dios Romero. The day before [Martin Serrano] named (ordered) my husband to go with the Alcalde Mayor to the Navajo, and the said alcalde told my husband along the way from San Juan to return home because he had left his wheat lying in the field without being cleaned and having seen the said Miguel Martin arrive at that hour as I have said, my husband felt badly of me. I am an honorable woman and have not done anything that can be said about me, as is well known in this jurisdiction; and now because of that daring act I find myself accused [imputada], outside of my house and fearing my life is lost as my husband says he does not want to continue life with me... it is a grave and daring act that the said Miguel Martin has committed. He should and must know that a married woman is a window of [beneficia] and no one has to seek entry at the home of anyone neither by day or night if it is not with the proper intentions and respect towards the

husbands... and I know this was such a daring act and I thus ask for justice and assurances for my life that I might innocently lose because of what I have alleged and swear in due form of my rights and that this petition is not from malice and only for what is necessary. Antonia Jiron [Signature & rubric].”

Antonia’s complaint is undated and addressed to the unnamed alcalde mayor of the jurisdiction and there is no indication when the said alcalde received it or took any action. In this case, the subsequent entry, dated September 19, 1733, is made by Governor Gervacio Cruzat y Gongora in Santa Fe, who acknowledged receipt of the complaint from the assistant alcalde of Santa Cruz, Pedro Sanches, and refers it to Juan Paez Hurtado with orders to proceed to the said villa and “execute the testimony (deligencias) asked for in this writing.”

Paez Hurtado responded quickly. His entry, dated the following day, September 20, is typical of the era. He identifies himself formally as the “General Juan Paez Hurtado Lieutenant [Teniente] Governor and Captain General of this kingdom,” noting that in compliance with the governor’s order, he had gone to the home of the assistant alcalde mayor Pedro Sanches and found Antonia Jirón was there. He asked her why she was there what

reasons made it necessary for her to seek refuge (amparo) at the alcalde’s house. Antonia answered she had no reason other than to seek the alcalde’s protection because militia captain Miguel Martin Serrano had arrived at her home at such an hour of the night with the excuse of removing some livestock that were doing some damage to the fields.

With that, Paez Hurtado ordered that Antonia’s husband, Francisco Vigil, appear before him and presented him with what his wife had said. Unfortunately, the document is missing the subsequent pages and ends with an incomplete response in which Vigil states that he loved his wife and that he would accept and esteem her as he had always done. Such a statement is rare in these documents and it would have been important to see if Paez Hurtado interviewed Martin Serrano and asked him why he showed up at Antonia’s home in the middle of the night knowing her husband was supposed to be on a Navajo campaign. I suppose we can all speculate.

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Governor Announces Investment in High-Quality Tutoring for New Mexico Students at No Cost to Families

Comprehensive, multi-lingual support will target math, reading, and science

By Nora Sackett

Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham and the Public Education Department on December 15th announced a new state investment for the targeted expansion of free high-quality tutoring for math, reading, and science for students across New Mexico.

The tutoring program will focus on mathematics, language arts, and science for New Mexico students from pre-K through 8th grade at Title 1 schools throughout the state. It will be available to all Title 1 schools, including tribally controlled schools. Tutoring delivery will be virtual and can be scheduled before, after or during school. Each student that participates will receive 20 hours of tutoring, free of cost to families. Families can find more information about eligibility and how to sign up here. <https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/free-tutoring-sign-up/>

“Since day one, my administration has been committed to investing in every available tool to deliver every educational opportunity to New Mexico students,” said Gov. Lujan Grisham. “This investment in high-quality tutoring will further support students and families across the state as we continue to build the strongest possible educational foundation for New Mexico children.”

“We know that tutoring can help close gaps for our students who are struggling to master concepts in classrooms alone,” said Public Education Department Secretary Kurt Steinhaus. “This investment in customized support will serve our students efficiently and with immediacy.”

As part of the Lujan Grisham administration’s ongoing efforts and investments to transform and strengthen New Mexico’s public education system, the Public Education Department released a request for proposal (RFP) for the delivery of high-quality outside-of-school tutoring services to students across New Mexico. Paper Education Inc., a leading virtual tutoring company, was selected in the competitive RFP process to provide its virtual Educational Support System to pre-K – 8th grade students across New Mexico. Paper’s highly qualified tutors and instructors are available bilingually in English and Spanish to provide 1:1 tutoring and writing support.

Founded by mission-driven educators, Paper supports approximately 3 million students at hundreds of unique school districts across 34 U.S. states and Canada. This personalized support helps to reduce the achievement and opportunity gaps facing many New Mexico students by providing equitable access to educational tools for all learners at no cost to the students or their families.

“Paper’s mission is to help every student reach their full potential by providing personalized academic support for nearly any subject or assignment, at any time of day, via any device,” said Philip Cutler, Paper co-founder and CEO. “As a former educator, I have seen firsthand the positive impact that 1:1 instruction can have for both high performers and struggling students.”

“This partnership helps underscores the New Mexico Public Education Department’s commitment to helping both students and teachers,” added Cutler. “Paper helps reduce teacher burnout by providing a virtual teacher’s assistant that is on call to answer students’ questions 24 hours a day, seven days a week.”

Students at Jemez Mountain Public Schools have been using Paper since the 2021-2022 school year. Brian Moffett, a special education teacher and coordinator who is helping to facilitate tutoring opportunities, said that students often seek help when their grades drop.

“Everyone has success when they engage in the tutoring,” he said, adding that tutors walk students through the learning, step by step.

This additional investment in supplemental high-quality tutoring will work in conjunction with existing programs and academic interventions at the school and district level while providing New Mexico families with an additional tutoring option. The tutoring program will build on Lujan Grisham administration investments in education proving to be effective across the state, including extended learning time, comprehensive after-school and summer enrichment programs, and the implementation of structured literacy programs in New Mexico elementary schools.

Additionally, in January of 2023 the state will launch the New Mexico Math Tutoring Corps, a tutoring program that will serve Algebra 1 students in grades 8-12 across the state with three sessions per week designed to ensure fewer barriers to accessing academic support.

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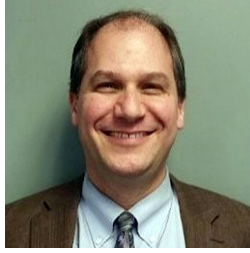
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 READER INSIGHTS

Gov. Lujan Grisham Announces Scott Groginsky as Education Policy Advisor

By Nora Sackett

Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham on December 1st announced the appointment of Scott Groginsky as her education policy advisor.



Groginsky will work alongside Children's Cabinet Director Mariana Padilla and state education department leadership to support Gov. Lujan Grisham's ongoing work to continue improving New Mexico's cradle-to-career public education system and building the strongest possible educational foundation for New Mexico children and families.

Groginsky will focus on improving student outcomes in K-12 education and continuing efforts to bolster access to higher education for all New Mexicans.

"Scott brings invaluable experience in forward-thinking and evidence-based education policies that yield real progress," said Gov. Lujan Grisham. "I feel incredibly fortunate to have him on my team working for the benefit of all New Mexico students."

"I'm grateful to the governor for allowing me to help implement her bold and comprehensive vision for supporting student success," Groginsky said. "The governor is clear that improving the educational system at all levels is a critical step in lifting up all New Mexico children and families, and I am excited to contribute to the effort of reaching that goal."

Groginsky has over three decades of experience across a broad spectrum of education policy and most recently served as the special advisor for early childhood to Colorado Governor Jared Polis. He previously worked for the National Head Start Association as a senior advisor and senior director of state affairs, in addition to time spent working in education policy at the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. House of Representatives. Groginsky also served on a local Colorado school board for seven years.



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By Ami Evans



Employee of the Month- Von Apachito

Von is always courteous to the public and fellow coworkers. He is willing to train and become proficient with any task given to him, keeping safety as his first priority. Von has stepped up to become an herbicide applicator and shared what he has learned with his fellow coworkers.

Von's contributions at the patrol from cleaning and organizing, making barn repairs, and even painting a great image on the bay floor helped Magdalena to win Patrol of the year for District One. Thanks for all you do!

Supervisor- of the Month-Jose Martinez

Jose never hesitates to help his crew when or where needed, always taking the time to pass on his knowledge to his technicians and ensuring they have the proper tools and training to accomplish their jobs. Recognizing that educating and encouraging his technicians is an asset to the Department. Jose's communication with his team, the public, and contractors contributes to efficient project flow and helps to facilitate timely project completion.



Team of the Month-Purchasing Dept



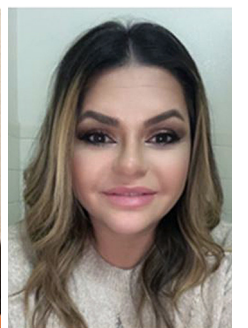
Carmen Reyes,
Puchasing Supervisor



Monica Grado
Purchasing



Hope Logan
Purchasing Operational



Vanessa Maynes
Purchasing Operational

You all go above and beyond every day to assist various crews around the District with purchase orders, invoice payments, research, and with any questions the crews may have. You guide end users and coworkers as needed and take the time explain new procurement procedures. You help crews and district staff understand why and what items are needed within the procurement process.

Your department rarely has down time due to the volume of daily purchase orders requested and processing payments in a timely manner. Your crew strives to keep up with the workload while never complaining. When one team member falls behind or when someone takes time off, the others quickly step up to ensure everything is processed. This crew is truly a department asset, you are appreciated for your faithfulness, commitment, and determination in learning procurement guidelines and procedures.

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Supreme Court Justices Take the Oath of Office

By Beth Wojahn

New Mexico Supreme Court Justices Michael E. Vigil, Julie J. Vargas and Briana H. Zamora took the oath of office on December 14, 2022 during a private ceremony in the Supreme Court courtroom.

Senior Justice Vigil begins a new eight-year term on January 1, 2023 after being selected for retention in the November election.

Justices Vargas and Zamora were elected in November and are serving out unexpired terms ending in 2028 and 2024, respectively. Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham appointed Justice Vargas to a vacancy created by the retirement of Justice Judith Nakamura in January, 2021. The governor appointed Justice Zamora after Justice Barbara Vigil retired in June, 2021.

"I am humbled to have the opportunity to continue to work with exceptional jurists," said Senior Justice Michael E. Vigil.

"Being able to administer the rule of law is an honor and a privilege I take seriously," said Justice Julie J. Vargas.

Justice Briana H. Zamora said, "Serving New Mexicans as a jurist is the most rewarding job I've had, and I look forward to the challenges ahead."

Justice Vigil joined the state's highest court on Dec. 31, 2018, after serving on the state Court of Appeals since 2003. He served as Chief Justice from July 16, 2020 to April 12, 2022 during the global pandemic.



Supreme Court Chief Justice C. Shannon Bacon administers the Oath of Office to Justice Julie J. Vargas. Justice Vargas will serve out her term through 2028.

Justice Vargas served on the state Court of Appeals beginning in 2016 after spending 23 years in private practice. Justice Vargas received her law degree in 1993 from the University of New Mexico School of Law and began her judicial career in 2008 and has served as a judge at every court level — magistrate, district, Court of Appeals, and the Supreme Court.

For more information about the New Mexico Supreme Court, please visit the website at <https://www.nmcourts.gov/>



Supreme Court Chief Justice C. Shannon Bacon administers the Oath of Office to Senior Justice Michael E. Vigil as Chief Court Clerk Elizabeth Garcia holds the Bible. Senior Justice Vigil's term is through December, 2030.

Justice Vargas served on the state Court of Appeals beginning in 2016 after spending 23 years in private practice. Justice Vargas received her law degree in 1993 from the University of New Mexico.

An Albuquerque native, Justice Zamora graduated from the University of New Mexico School of Law and began her judicial career in 2008 and has served as a judge at every court level — magistrate, district, Court of Appeals, and the Supreme Court.



After taking the Oath of Office, Supreme Court Justice Briana H. Zamora gets a congratulatory hug from Chief Justice C. Shannon Bacon. Justice Zamora will serve through 2024.

Governor Appoints Patrick M. Allen as Department of Health Cabinet Secretary

By Maddy Hayden

Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham on December 30th announced the appointment of Patrick M. Allen as cabinet secretary of the Department of Health. Allen will assume leadership of the department Jan. 3, 2023.



"Patrick is a regulator and public health professional with a proven record in improving health care systems, and I have full confidence he will do the same here in New Mexico," said Gov. Lujan Grisham. "He shares my vision of a New Mexico that fosters better health outcomes for every resident of our beautiful state."

Allen has spent more than 30 years in public service, most recently serving as the director of the Oregon Health Authority under Gov. Kate Brown. In that role, Allen significantly improved access to affordable and equitable health care for Oregonians, achieving health insurance coverage for over 95% of residents. He also led the state's health department throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, with Oregon ultimately seeing the second lowest rate of infection in the country.

"I'm grateful to the governor for this opportunity and look forward to working to meet her goal to continue to improve health outcomes for all New Mexicans," said Secretary Designate Allen.

Prior to working at the Health Authority, Allen served in several roles at the state's Department of Consumer and Business Services, including as director. He has a bachelor's degree in economics from Oregon State University.

Acting Cabinet Secretary David R. Scrase, M.D., will step away from the Department and continue in his role as cabinet secretary for the Human Services Department.

"I'm grateful to Dr. Scrase for his service to New Mexicans as secretary of the Department of Health. Because of his leadership throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, our state had a nationally leading response that saved the lives of countless New Mexicans," the governor said. "On top of that, the Department of Health undertook numerous other initiatives that are improving health outcomes around the state. Thank you, Dr. Scrase."

Under the leadership of Acting Secretary Scrase and former Secretary Kathy Kunkel, New Mexico quickly stood up a large-scale testing operation that served as a national model, was among the top states in delivering oral treatments for COVID-19 patients and had one of the country's highest COVID-19 vaccination rates. In the last four years and beginning under the leadership of former Secretary Kunkel, the state reduced the 13-year developmental disabilities waitlist by 84%. Kunkel also successfully resolved the nearly 35-year 'Jackson' lawsuit. The state has also expanded school-based health centers to provide primary care, behavioral health and suicide prevention services for approximately 31,000 students in rural, frontier and socially vulnerable communities.

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General Services Department 1st Quarter Fiscal 2023 Awardees

By Thom Cole

General Services Secretary John Garcia announced selection of the department's employees of the quarter for the first quarter of fiscal year 2023. The recognized employees are:

Dino Apodaca, business operation supervisor for the Surplus Property Bureau of the Transportation Services Division. "Mr. Apodaca works with state



agencies on requests for property disposal and moving services and also is the bureau's lead for online auctions," said James Chavez, deputy director of Transportation Services. "He hit the ground running when he started with the bureau in November of 2020 and hasn't stopped since.

"Mr. Apodaca is an extremely hard worker, knows what he has to do to get the job done and always makes sure it happens," Chavez said. "He is an excellent team player, has great customer service skills and has proven himself to not only be an asset to our agency, but to state government as a whole. Surplus Property is an enterprise operation, relying on sales to meet budget and operational requirements. Mr. Apodaca has managed to keep the bureau in the black despite restrictions on government operations during the COVID crisis, including a pause in in-person Surplus Property sales to the public."

Anthony

Kubasek, maintenance manager for the Facilities Management Division. "When you think about Mr. Kubasek, you think about commitment to FMD. He is there no matter what, in both good and hard times,"



said division Director Anna Silva. "He is an asset not only to FMD, but to all of state government.

"Mr. Kubasek goes above and beyond all the expectations set by FMD and its customers, and he does it in a consistent, professional and thoughtful manner," Silva said. "He does not tire of doing the little things for others. It's those little things that make up the biggest part of what we do at FMD and why we would not be as effective without the hard work, dedication and attention to details that Mr. Kubasek brings to his job. Every structure must have a strong foundation, and he is a cornerstone of FMD."

Rick Motelet, project manager for the Facilities Management Division.

"Mr. Motelet has excelled as a PM at Facilities Management, exhibiting a high level of productivity while consistently maintaining high standards for quality and safety," said division Director Anna Silva. "He has had an extensive career at FMD, starting with operations and maintenance before transferring to project management.



"Mr. Motelet has an unbelievable passion for FMD, and it's his great passion that makes the impossible possible," Silva said. "His expertise is unmatched, and he is a leader who exemplifies a conviction of a strong work ethic and a will to push forward. He does so not with a thunderous voice, but with patience. Mr. Motelet waits for the right time to speak and to act, for the right principles and in the right way. We could all learn from his example."

Vanessa LeBlanc, information technology procurement specialist with the State Purchasing Division. "Ms. LeBlanc works tirelessly to make

sure everything she is charged with is finished with excellence," said Travis Dutton-Leyda, the division's bureau chief for IT and construction procurement. "When she starts something, we are sure it will get finished on time or early."

"Ms. LeBlanc recently managed a re-solicitation for online auction services by NASPO ValuePoint, a multi-state cooperative purchasing program," Dutton-Leyda said. "Her knowledge and expertise guided her on the project, and she was successful in awarding this contract, receiving praise from NASPO for her organizational and other skills. While working on this national re-solicitation, she continued to finish her daily assignments for State Purchasing without missing critical deadlines. Ms. LeBlanc is a valuable asset to State Purchasing, other state agencies and the national procurements she participates in."

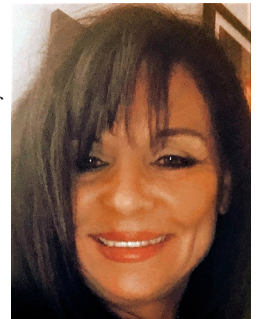


Brandy deLaRiva and Judy Sanchez, purchasing agents for the Administrative Services Division (ASD).

"Ms. DeLaRiva and Ms. Sanchez have primary responsibility for processing purchase orders for Administrative Services and the Facilities Management Division," said Barbara Gurule, business operations bureau chief for ASD. "Both do an amazing job, starting with entering purchase orders accurately for both divisions and ensuring that expended purchase orders are closed timely.



Brandy deLaRiva

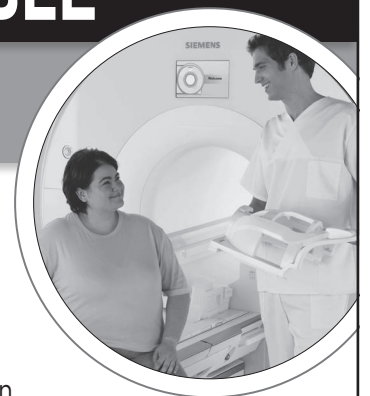


Judy Sanchez

"Ms. DeLaRiva and Ms. Sanchez overcome daily challenges and get the job done properly," Gurule said. "They are stellar employees with outstanding teamwork and great customer service. They are great assets to Administrative Services and the Facilities Management Division."

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Commissioners Named PRC's Employees of the Year for 2022

By Patrick Rodriguez

The New Mexico Public Regulation Commission during its open meeting on December 14 recognized Commissioners Cynthia Hall, Joseph Maestas, Stephen Fischmann, Theresa Becenti-Aguilar, and Jefferson Byrd as the agency's Employees of the Year for 2022. Having served the PRC for a combined total of nearly 35 years, all five of the elected commissioners will leave their respective posts at the end of December as a new governor-appointed commission begins serving on January 1, 2023.

Working together, this group of commissioners balanced the needs of consumers and utility companies through a global pandemic, extreme climate events that affected nationwide gas prices; navigated service issues, arrearage issues, global supply chain issues, and wildfire mitigation issues; established updated rules for interconnection and new rules for community solar service to connect end users with more renewable options; approved transportation electrification plans and oversaw the creation of wind farms; led inquiries and workshops to collaborate with leaders in solar innovation and utility experts; and heard from the public and government leaders.

First elected in November 2016, **Commissioner Hall** began serving as District 1 commissioner in January 2017, including as Chair of the Commission for the second half of 2022. As a commissioner, she initiated a successful rulemaking to require storage be considered as a resource in the Integrated Resource Planning process, and she supports market-based mechanisms that increase the use of renewable energy and reduce rates. She previously served as associate general counsel in the PRC and as associate general counsel, hearing officer, felony insurance fraud prosecutor, and staff attorney for the New Mexico Office of Superintendent of Insurance. She also served as assistant staff counsel for the New Mexico Public Service Commission, the precursor agency to the PRC, and for the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department.

Commissioner Maestas was elected to District 3 of the PRC in November 2020 and has served since January 2021, including as Chair and Vice-Chair of the Commission in 2022. He has served our country as a federal civil servant for over 30 years, working at all levels of the federal government. Before he began his tenure as PRC Commissioner, he worked as a business development manager for a consulting

engineering firm for about four years. He also served as a local elected official for 14 years, including serving as a Santa Fe city councilor and an Española city councilor and mayor. This past year was a busy one for Commissioner Maestas as he led rulemaking and implementation efforts for community solar and spearheaded the transportation electrification plan rulemaking—including a statewide Transportation Electrification Summit involving utilities, members of the public, and multiple state agencies. He also initiated a cybersecurity inquiry to ensure the state's regulated entities are protected from threats, and he worked to continue facilitating the flow of federal funding to erase COVID-related arrearages and further transportation electrification and grid modification.

Commissioner Byrd was sworn into office to represent District 2 on January 1, 2019. As a former Vice Chair of the Commission, he has represented New Mexico on the Southwest Power Pool Regional State Committee, comprised of retail regulatory commissioners from Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Texas. He has also represented the PRC and SPP on the DC Tie Task Force. During his term, he worked with utility providers to ensure ratepayers were protected and had reliable utility service. He recognized the responsibility in balancing and diversifying energy production while moving towards energy independence. Jeff worked every day to represent New Mexico families and businesses to ensure access to reliable and affordable utilities and promote energy independence for our state. His professional experience is broad, having worked as an environmental engineer on a Geoprobe rig, installing micro-monitoring wells at depths of 18 to 20 feet as a geologist and completing site delineation plans of numerous industrial sites from New York to California, and he has installed and completed site remediation systems at various sites around the Southwest. He is also a cattle rancher and works as a wind-miller on his own and neighboring ranchers' wells.

Commissioner Fischmann began serving in January 2019, representing District 5, which is in the southwest quarter of the state. He has been passionate about providing consumers the lowest possible utility costs as New Mexico transitions toward a cleaner, carbon-free energy environment. He has been in public service since moving to New Mexico in 2004. Most recently he co-chaired a coalition that passed legislation to eliminate or put interest rate limits on rip-off small loans. He also co-founded the Children's Reading Foundation of Doña Ana County to promote early childhood literacy and served on the board of Conservation Voters New Mexico, a

leading environmental advocacy group at the New Mexico Legislature. From 2009-2012 he served as a state senator, helping develop and successfully sponsor legislation that requires prompt no-cost/low-cost delivery of state and local government records to any citizen requesting them as well as legislation that promotes greater collaboration between institutions of higher education, state government, and private enterprise in developing new technologies to spur economic growth.

Commissioner Becenti-Aguilar was appointed to the PRC by former Gov. Bill Richardson in July 2010 and elected in November 2010 by the voters of District 4 to serve her first full four-year term. She believes her leadership will support upcoming generations despite the challenging times. She shows a remarkable aptitude for finding common ground and she works diligently and with discretion. While at the PRC, she has demonstrated her unique ability to bring her constituent's concerns to the process of regulating utility, telephone, and

insurance companies. Her qualities as a compassionate leader with a strong work ethic and a concern for the needs of her constituents have helped build better working relationships among all the people she meets. She began her career as an intern with the Federal Bureau of Land Management. She previously worked for the New Mexico Attorney General's Office for nine years and later served as former Congressman Tom Udall's Constituent Services Representative for Tribal Relations. In November 2006, she was appointed as the first Native American Liaison for the five-member Public Regulation Commission. Her experience encompasses critical Tribal issues, and she works tirelessly to promote the general welfare for all citizens. Perhaps most importantly, she is dedicated to bringing to government the qualities of honesty, integrity, ethics, and vision.



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Chief Justice to Receive Award from Albuquerque Bar Association

By Barry Massey

Supreme Court Chief Justice C. Shannon Bacon has been selected as the first recipient of the Albuquerque Bar Association's Distinguished Service Award.

"This award recognizes Chief Justice Bacon's distinguished service and continued determination to make the courts and legal process accessible to all people regardless of means," said Meredith Johnstone, president of the Albuquerque Bar Association. "The Chief Justice's efforts have positively impacted the Albuquerque community and will continue to shape the legal profession."

The Chief Justice will accept the award during a virtual awards ceremony on Friday.

Chief Justice Bacon has served on the Supreme Court since 2019 and became Chief Justice in April of this year. Before joining the state's highest court, she served as a judge on the Second Judicial District Court for nearly nine years and was the presiding civil judge. She is a member of the Commission on Access to Justice, which was established by the Supreme Court nearly two decades ago to improve civil legal assistance for New Mexicans.

The Chief Justice has led the Judiciary's efforts to implement an eviction prevention and diversion program, promote equitable access by all persons to the state's justice system and improve the adult guardianship and conservatorship system.

"I am deeply honored by the award," said Chief Justice Bacon. "The Judiciary is committed to working in partnership with the legal community and others across New Mexico to advance justice for all."



Chief Justice C. Shannon Bacon
photo credit: NM Supreme Court

Cotillion Sneddy of Navajo Nation Appointed as New ECECD Assistant Secretary for Native American Early Education and Care

By Jessica Preston

The New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) on Monday announced that Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham has appointed Cotillion Sneddy as Assistant Secretary for Native American Early Education and Care.

Sneddy was raised in Crownpoint, New Mexico in the eastern region of the Navajo Nation and comes from the Water-Flows Together people and born for the Start-of-the-Red-Streak people. She brings twenty-four years of experience in early childhood to the position, ranging from roles as a teacher assistant and home visitor in Head Start, a supervisor of student/teacher programs at the University of New Mexico, director of early childhood programs and operations in Tlilcho, in the Canadian Northwest Territories, Early Literacy coordinator/coach, and most recently, teaching early childhood classes for Northland Pioneer College. She has also served on the Navajo Nation First Things First Regional Council.



"We are thrilled to welcome Cotillion Sneddy to the ECECD leadership team," said ECECD Secretary Elizabeth Groginsky. "Her extensive and varied education and experience in Native American early education is a huge asset to ECECD as we seek to advance the goals and priorities of New Mexico's 23 Tribes, Pueblos, and Nations and build culturally and linguistically responsive early education and care opportunities for Native American families and young children."

"I feel fortunate to be able to serve in such a forward-thinking administration that has been so successful in establishing the Department of Early Childhood and Care Department and prompting a systemic change in supporting our early childhood professionals, children, and their families in New Mexico," said Assistant Secretary Sneddy. "Additionally, this position partners with the tribes in the state to provide guidance to the department. I am ecstatic to be working with Secretary Groginsky and the department staff."

"Early childhood education is a subject close to our hearts and a top priority for all tribal nations in the State of New Mexico and there is no one better qualified to serve in the role of Assistant Secretary of Early Childhood Education and Care than Ms. Cotillion Sneddy," said Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez. "We have many challenges throughout the state, but we are confident that Ms. Sneddy's 24 years of vast experience and education will serve all communities and children with great compassion, knowledge, and commitment. We congratulate Ms. Sneddy and we also thank Governor Lujan Grisham and Secretary Groginsky for supporting her in this new role."

Sneddy emphasizes the importance of both academic and traditional knowledge within Native American early education and care, placing both spheres of knowledge on equal terms. She holds a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Multicultural Education and a master's degree in Elementary Education with TESOL endorsements and is currently a PhD candidate at the University of New Mexico in the Language, Literacy, and Socio-cultural Studies program. Her focus is on culturally relevant pedagogy, material, and texts in early childhood environments. Sneddy is also enrolled in the Public Health Training Certificate program for American Indian Health Professionals at John Hopkins University.

The position of Assistant Secretary of Native American Early Education and Care, recently vacated by Jovanna Archuleta of Nambé Pueblo who served for the agency's first two years, is mandated by the legislation that established ECECD as a cabinet-level government agency with the goal of ensuring that early education and care in Native American communities is represented at the very top of the leadership structure. ECECD is the first and only state early childhood education department to create this type of position.

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Department of Public Safety Announces Retirements and a Promotion

By Herman Lovato

A stalwart of the Department of Public Safety's executive administration team, **Michele Maxwell**, retired after 39 years and five months on December 30, 2022. Michele's initial

assignment at DPS began on June 20, 1983, at the Law Enforcement Academy. When the 1986 Department of Public Safety Act merged the formerly independent New Mexico State Police, the Governor's Organized Crime Commission, the Motor Transportation Division of the Taxation and Revenue Department, the enforcement division of the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control, and the New Mexico Law Enforcement Academy into a single unified entity, Michele was assigned to work in the Cabinet Secretary's Office. After more than 39 years and 12 cabinet secretaries, the citizens of New Mexico, and the thousands of DPS constituents are indebted for her faithful service.

"This is a date we have dreaded, yet anticipated for years," said Secretary Jason R. Bowie. "Michele's attention to detail, while keeping the broader picture in mind, has been invaluable.

"Her willingness to put in extra time and effort to help us meet deadlines has demonstrated a commitment to excellence that we have come to depend upon," he said.

The Information Technology Division (ITD) at Department of Public Safety also saw the departure of long-time application developer **Sammy Trujillo**, who also retired



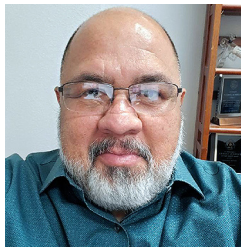
Sammy Trujillo is flanked by his family and staff members of the Information Technology Division. He is pictured with his wife Nicole(c), his sons Nicolas (left) and Sammy (r). Not pictured is his son, Nathan.

on December 30, 2022. A native of Chimayo, Sammy joined DPS in May 2000 as an application developer and eventual bureau chief that managed several mission-critical systems that are used across the law enforcement community. These systems included the Traffic and Criminal Software (TraCS), Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) software, and the New Mexico Criminal Justice Information System (NMCJIS), a repository of criminal history information. A DPS employee for 21 year and five months, Sammy also worked for the Department of Game and Fish, and the City and County of Los Alamos.

"Sammy has been an important part of our department for so many years," said Chief Information Officer Kent Augustine. "Over those years he took on more and more responsibility until he became Bureau Chief. He will be missed, but we are all happy for him."

Forensic Science has been **Pat Chavez'** passion for more than 40 years.

On January 13, 2023, Pat will retire as a forensic chemist from the



New Mexico Department of Public Safety's Forensic Laboratory in Las Cruces, New Mexico.

Pat previously worked as a Criminalist performing testing in controlled substances analysis, shoe and tire impressions, tool marks, and blood breath alcohol at the City of Phoenix Police Department Crime Lab.

Then at the City of Mesa, Arizona, forensic lab performing testing in controlled substances analysis, firearms and tool marks, shoe and tire impressions and blood testing until his retirement in August 2015. While at the City of Mesa, Pat supervised the Firearm and Tool Mark Unit, Controlled Substances Unit and Crime Scene Unit. All these forensic disciplines required testing of evidence for the purpose of providing unbiased scientific results to the courts. He has testified as an expert witness in various courts in Arizona and New Mexico.

Pat joined the Las Cruces Forensic Lab in 2015 after retiring from the Mesa forensic lab. For the past seven years he has performed controlled substances analysis and methamphetamine purity testing. In 2022, Pat, and his Las Cruces Forensic Lab colleagues received the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Outstanding Cooperative Effort Award, a national award.

Regina Chacon, the enduring face of the Law Enforcement Records Bureau



(LERB) at Department of Public Safety accepted a promotion at Department of Military Affairs to serve as the Deputy Director of State Programs effective January 7, 2023.

Regina began her career at DPS on August 5, 2000, as a records clerk where she completed data entry on fingerprints, rap sheets, background checks and in New Mexico State Police records management. When she joined LERB, the bureau managed NMSP records, the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), and processing of records from statewide law enforcement. During her tenure and multiple roles, she became a program supervisor, assistant bureau chief, and bureau chief. The bureau expanded from three core units to more than 30, including sex offender registration, missing persons clearinghouse, concealed carry unit, inspection of public records, expungements, and many more. The Law Enforcement Records Bureau gathers, analyzes, and disseminates criminal justice data used by New Mexico law enforcement, criminal justice, corrections, and courts to ensure public safety.

"The Department of Public Safety is profoundly grateful to Regina for her dedication, leadership, and ingenuity," said Bowie. "She frequently took the road less traveled, and that made all the difference in such a pivotal role."



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NM Public Education Department - Year in Review

Resolve to "Move the Needle" on Achievement in 2023

By Kelly Pearce

This year's focus on mathematics, called Math is Me, led to exciting work in our schools and the notion that everyone can succeed with calculations, manipulatives, and numbers.

As 2022 ends, the New Mexico Public Education Department recognizes our hard-working school employees, staff and many wins for children and families across the state. From competitive salaries for education professionals to balanced assessments for students to increased access to school information for the public, it was a year to remember.

The big education headlines of 2022 paved the way for initiatives that will make a difference in the lives of students in 2023, including enhanced broadband and internet, in addition to free virtual tutoring for many students.

Early in the new year, a proposed \$4.3 billion education budget is primed to lift student achievement and fully fund more time for students engaged with teachers, as well as provide professional learning for school leaders and incentives to retain the workforce.

"First and foremost, I think about our work in terms of short-term gains as well as structural investments," said PED Secretary Kurt Steinhaus. "These investments will create environments where both our students and our teachers thrive."

Students: The department worked tirelessly on their behalf, including the debut last spring of a balanced assessment system for New Mexico learners, providing a baseline for years to come. This system also includes short-cycle tests to increase supports for teachers so they can gather real-time information and better meet the learning needs of those in their classrooms.

To enhance internet capabilities across the state, PED, in collaboration with state and business alliances, extended more than 844 miles of fiber-optic cable to remote areas,

provided more than 7,000 internet-capable devices to homes beyond the reach of fiber, and helped families and schools apply for thousands of dollars in federal funds.

New Mexico Family and Community Engagement Solutions will help prepare community members for the arrival of broadband in their area and position them for stable, high-paying jobs. For the next two years, NM FaCES will enable communities to engage in digital storytelling and support the development of five internet-based vocation training centers.

To increase learning opportunities, free tutoring support was offered to students, including those in grades 8-12 enrolled in Algebra I. Plus, preK-8 students in Title I schools may receive free tutoring in reading, math, and science, too. The multilingual support features tutoring that takes place before, during and after school, as well as on weekends and during school breaks.

Outdoor learning continues to grow, with \$300,000 awarded in 2022 to promote innovation and highlight environmental education.

Educators: Teachers received a salary hike that made them the highest paid in the Southwest, bumping up the minimum salary \$10,000 to \$50,000.

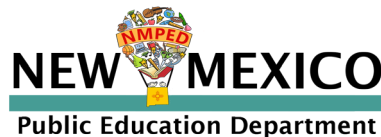
The victory was followed by a PED announcement that it was waiving all fees during February and March related to new licenses and background checks. The decisions made a difference, as the number of people applying for substitute teaching licenses topped 1,000 in the first 20 days.

In addition, the number of teacher vacancies shrunk by 34 percent, with enrollment and graduation from teacher preparation programs tipping upward, according to an October report.

For educators advancing their license from 1 to 2, they were provid-

ed a new pathway: micro-credential courses in five areas that include classroom management and culturally and linguistically responsive teaching and learning.

Teachers were appreciated in other ways, too, including allowing those who had retired to return to the classroom for three years without losing their retirement benefits and providing \$150,000 in scholarships for those applying to be nationally-board certified.



The successes made their way to the administrative ranks, with the fall announcement of certain paperwork being streamlined so that principals and teachers have more time with tasks related directly to students.

A variety of prestigious awards were given to New Mexico's teachers, including the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. Silvia Miranda of Mesa Elementary School in Clovis Municipal Schools received the K-6 mathematics award, and Hope Cahill of El Dorado Community School in Santa Fe Public Schools is the K-6 science awardee. Loving High School science teacher Tyler Finch and Gonzales Community School's Gabrielle Kahawai in Santa Fe received the New Mexico Milken Educator Award from the Milken Family Foundation, considered the Oscar of teaching. Later in the year in Las Cruces, Sonoma Elementary School's Christopher Nunez also made headlines for the same honor.

Ending her stint as New Mexico's 2022 Teacher of the Year is Lorynn Guerrero. When she received the honor, she was teaching high school students at the New America School-Las Cruces, as well as teen parents in a GRADS (graduation, reality and dual-role skills) class. Currently, she is assistant principal at Gadsden High School in Anthony. The state's 2023 Teacher of the Year was named in October. Tara Hughes, who teaches at Nye Early Childhood Center in Santa Fe, is the first ever pre-kindergarten educator to be bestowed with this award.

Members of the New Mexico National Guard stepped up early in the year to help schools remain open, spending time in classrooms as substitute teachers. They responded to a request from Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham, who also volunteered as a substitute during a Covid-19 Omicron

wave.

On the federal holiday that marks the birth of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., the PED went live with the Anti-Racism Anti-Oppression Hotline, allowing students, families and community members to report school-based incidents of racial bias. The effort stems from a 2021 law.

Thanks to a 2020 Senate bill, the department debuted Open Books early in 2022 so New Mexicans can access detailed financial information about state-chartered schools, school districts and regional education cooperatives.

Three New Mexico schools - Acequia Madre Elementary in Santa Fe, Albuquerque School of Excellence in Albuquerque and Texico Middle School in Texico - were honored in the 2022 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program, which recognizes schools for overall achievement.

A focus on education partnerships with families was a theme in 2022. PED and TNTP, formerly known as The New Teacher Project, offered virtual Family Literacy Academy sessions in Spanish and English throughout the year.

A report released by PED and the Los Alamos National Laboratory Foundation highlighted that the state is on track to transform the high school experience and high school outcomes, thanks to educational pathways to college and career and innovative practices.

The 2022 legislative session yielded results for Native American students, tripling money to the Indian Education Fund, ensuring indigenous language and culture teachers certified by tribes, nations and pueblos are paid the same as Level 1 teachers, and expanding tribal libraries.

The session also allowed PED to widen its LETRS training to teachers in grades three through five. Kindergarten teachers, as well as those who teach first and second graders, already have received the professional learning, which provides a deeper understanding of the science of reading and evidence-based strategies to support all students, particularly those who experience reading challenges.

Grants totaling \$7.4 million were awarded to 69 schools to bolster the Community Schools investment. PED would like for the number of these types of transformational schools across the state to top 100 in 2023; \$11.5 million are dedicated to the project in the proposed budget going to the state legislature in January.



New Mexico Child Support Program Receives 2022 Excellence Award from the Western Intergovernmental Child Support Engagement Council

By Marina Piña

The New Mexico Human Services Department (HSD) was recognized during the Western Intergovernmental Child Support Engagement Council (WICSEC) Annual Training Conference in Santa Fe earlier this month with the 2022 Making a Difference Program award.

The Making a Difference Program Award recognizes a child support program that has made a difference and shown exceptional improvement in key aspects over the past three years.

"New Mexico Child Support program is honored to receive the WICSEC "Making a Difference" award, as it recognizes the hard work the program has been undertaking to improve the services provided to parents who are raising children in separate homes," said Betina Gonzales McCracken, HSD's Child Support Program Acting Director. "Those changes range from offering a more convenient online or by phone option to make payments, partnering with the Department of Workforce Solutions for job opportunities and job development for non-custodial parents to meet their monthly obligation, updating the child support guidelines based on parents' actual income and ability to pay, reducing the "look-back" period to 3 years versus 12, and distributing more collections to families first."

HSD's child support program began a concerted effort in 2019 to make a difference through both program and electronic modernization initiatives that positively impact the families and children it serves. In addition, modernization efforts have improved efficiencies for the child support program staff through e-filing with the courts, electronic document management, and upgrading the child support system.

The modernization efforts include a recent administrative order issued by HSD Cabinet Secretary David R. Scrase, directing the child support program to end the inefficient business of establishing a five-dollar a month medical support order for any child in the child support enforcement system who is covered by a public health plan, such as Medicaid.

"The goal of the child support program is ensuring children have the financial and medical coverage they need to grow up happy and healthy and for those low-income households whose children qualify for Medicaid," said David R. Scrase M.D., cabinet secretary for the New Mexico Human Services Department. "Establishing a five-dollar order is not an efficient business practice."

HSD plans to work with a legislative sponsor to amend the Mandatory Medical Support Act to end the practice permanently.

During the WICSEC Training Conference, a non-profit organization is selected to be the recipient of fundraising efforts held during the conference. This year, WICSEC selected the National Dance Institute (NDI) New Mexico to be the recipient of its fundraising efforts through a raffle of dozens of items donated for the fundraising efforts. A total of \$6,970 was collected through the fundraising efforts and given to NDI New Mexico, which served 7,500 children across the state.

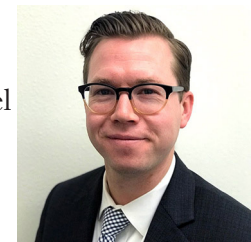
"What a wonderful, amazing amount your generous group contributed to NDI New Mexico," said Mary Gulledge, NDI Director of Advancement. "We are just so touched, and a bit overwhelmed by their generosity."



Governor's Office Announces New Chief of Staff

By Nora Sackett


The Office of Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham announced on January 5th that Daniel Schlegel will serve as the governor's chief of staff. Interim Chief of Staff Courtney Kerster will return to her role as senior advisor to the governor and director of federal affairs.




"Dan has been a trusted and integral member of my team throughout my tenure as governor," said Gov. Lujan Grisham. "His leadership of the Economic Recovery Council throughout the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic was instrumental in our state's economic rebound and continued growth. His strong relationships with legislators, business leaders, and community members across the state has been critical to the successful delivery of key legislative and policy initiatives, and I am greatly looking forward to his service as chief of staff."

"We forged a strong team during the governor's first term, and I am privileged to lead this office to build upon our work in service of New Mexicans," said Schlegel. "I am committed to delivering on the governor's bold vision in the upcoming session and throughout the next four years, as well as deepening our relationships with the Legislature."

Schlegel served as director of strategic initiatives for the governor's office since 2021, where he previously served as small business advisor. He also worked for Gov. Lujan Grisham in her Washington, D.C., office when she served in Congress. Schlegel holds a bachelor's degree from the University of California, Irvine, and a master's degree from Portland State University.




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President Biden Appoints New Mexico's Tourism Secretary to Route 66 Centennial Commission

Tourism Secretary Jen Paul Schroer to represent New Mexico on the 12-person commission

By Cody Johnson

On December 28, 2022, President Joe Biden announced the appointment of Tourism Secretary Jen Paul Schroer to represent New Mexico for the Route 66 Centennial Commission.

Schroer is 1 of 12 members on the commission, which includes representatives from the private sector, federal government and states along Route 66.

"Some of the most iconic locations, settings and images associated with Route 66 are found here in New Mexico," Schroer said. "I'm grateful for this appointment and I look forward to working with our in-state stakeholders and my commission colleagues to commemorate 100 years of New Mexico's Route 66 heritage from Tucumcari to Gallup and everywhere in between."

The Route 66 Centennial Commission was established by Congress to study and recommend in a report to Congress activities that would be fitting and proper to celebrate the centennial anniversary of the Mother Road of the United States, Route 66, in 2026. The Commission shall study activities that may be carried out by the Federal Government to honor Route 66, including potential ceremonies and celebrations, the production and publication of media and other materials, and the issuance of commemorative items.

The New Mexico Tourism Department (NMTD) celebrates the history, heritage and people along New Mexico's stretch of Route 66 through various campaigns. In this previous Route 66 campaign, NMTD highlights feature locations on and off the route, New Mexico's place in the history of Route 66, and a New Mexico True story about the people that keep the heritage of the Mother Road alive and well for future generations of travelers.



The Blue Swallow Motel in Tucumcari, NM. Photo credit: NM Tourism Dept

Department of Health Announces Top New Mexico Baby Names in 2022

By David Morgan

Here is the list of top 10 baby names in New Mexico in 2022 as compiled by the Department of Health's Bureau of Vital Records and Health Statistics.

Trends since the Department of Health began reporting names in 2014:

- Nine of the top 10 girl names from 2021 stayed on the top 10 list in 2022.
- Charlotte dropped off the top 10 list this year and was replaced by Evelyn, making its first appearance among the top names.
- Emma has been in the top 10 since 2014, but this is the first year it is the top-ranking name for newborn girls.
- Eight of the top 10 boy names from 2021 stayed on the top 10 list for 2022. Ezra returns this year to the top 10 for the first time since 2019. James makes its first appearance on the list.
- Falling out of the top 10 from last year are the names Levi and Benjamin.

* Provisional as of 12/21/2022. Provisional data is based on available records that meet data quality criteria at the time of analysis and does not include all births that occurred in 2022. Final data is subject to change.

2022	Top 10 Baby Names in New Mexico*	
	Girls	Boys
1	Emma	Liam
2	Sophia	Mateo
3	Isabella	Noah
4	Mia	Santiago
5	Olivia	Elijah
6	Camila	Ezekiel
7	Amelia	Oliver
8	Luna	James
9	Aria	Ezra
10	Evelyn	Sebastian

Make Healthy Living your 2023 Resolution

Department of Health offers 2023 healthy living tips

By Trevor Dermody

The best new year resolution you can make is taking care of yourself. The Department of Health would like more residents to consider making living a healthy 2023 their New Year's resolution.

"Kicking off the new year focusing on your health is a great start to a healthy lifestyle," said Christopher Novak M.D., Medical Director for DOH Public Health Division. "Make sure to focus not just on your physical health, but your mental health as well."

Making health your New Year's resolution can start your year off on the right foot. Start with a few small, sustainable changes and these will add up over time. The Department of Health wants to lead residents towards a healthy lifestyle with the following tips:

- Make an appointment with a healthcare professional for a check-up, vaccination or screening. Regular medical and oral tests can help find problems before they start. Schedule a COVID-19 vaccine here: <https://goodtimes.vaccinerm.org/stay-ahead-nm/>
- Get active! An active lifestyle is a sure-fire way to live healthy. Start small by taking the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Make healthy food choices. A healthy eating plan includes fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy products. To see if you qualify for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) visit <https://www.nmwic.org/>
- Get enough sleep. Insufficient sleep is associated with a number of chronic diseases and conditions. You can find resources on getting better sleep here. <https://www.cdc.gov/sleep/features/getting-enough-sleep.html>
- Wash your hands with soap and water. This can prevent many common diseases. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer.
- Cut back on alcohol. After the holidays, consider taking a break from drugs and alcohol for a time.
- Be smoke-free. The start of the year is a great time to quit tobacco products. For smoking cessation assistance, please visit <https://www.nupacnm.com/>

The Department of Health hopes all residents have a tremendous 2023 leading healthy lifestyles. For more resources on living a healthy lifestyle, please visit our website at <https://www.nmhealth.org/>

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Red Chile Beef Enchiladas

Ingredients: 14 oz (1 use Bueno frozen red chile), mild, medium or hot, or a combination | 4 cups water, 1 medium onion, minced, 2 garlic cloves, minced, 1 tsp salt or to taste

For the filling and assembly: 1 lb ground beef, 1/2 white onion, finely chopped, 12 corn tortillas (I prefer Albuquerque yellow corn tortillas), oil for frying the corn tortillas, 1 lb shredded mild cheddar cheese (the amount depends on how much cheese you want...some for stuffing and some for topping), salt and pepper to season the ground beef, prepared red chile

INSTRUCTIONS: For the Red Chile Cook your meat in a skillet with salt and pepper just until lightly browned. Place red chile (thaw out day before) into a sauce pan, add water, add ground beef, add the onion, garlic and salt, bring to a boil and let simmer for 25 minutes You want it pourable, not a thick. (add additional water if needed) For the filling and assembly: Heat a small skillet with a little oil. When sizzling, place a corn tortilla in the oil for just a second to soften and remove to a paper towel. Set the tortillas aside. shredded cheese and chop your onions. Preheat your oven to 450 degrees. Get a large baking dish or individual plates if you prefer. Line up all your ingredients. Tortilla, chile, cheese, onion (I like flat enchiladas) Place a tortilla in baking dish or plate, add your desired amount of chile, cheese and onion. Repeat Ladle some of the sauce over the enchiladas, insuring the entire enchilada is covered in a little sauce. You can cover if you really like them cheesy, but remember you have cheese in the filling. Place the enchiladas in the hot oven and cook just until your cheese has melted.

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Governor Appoints Ninth Judicial District Attorney

By Maddy Hayden

Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham on December 30th announced the appointment of Quentin Ray as Ninth Judicial District Attorney. The district includes Curry and Roosevelt counties.

Ray will begin in the position on Dec. 31, 2022. He will fill a vacancy created when the current district attorney did not register for re-election to the position.

Ray currently serves as Deputy District Attorney for the Ninth Judicial District, supervising and managing the Portales branch of the office and prosecuting criminal cases. Ray grew up in Grady, N.M., and holds a bachelor's degree from New Mexico State University. He graduated from Texas Tech University School of Law in May 2011 and was admitted to the New Mexico State Bar in 2012.

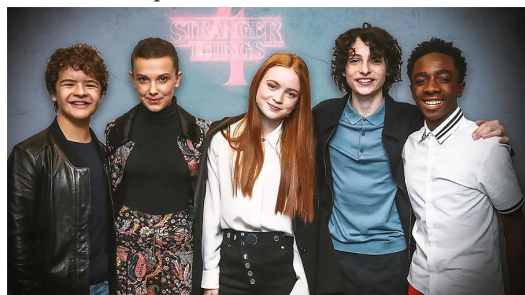
New Mexico Film Office Year in Review

By Bruce Krasnow

New Mexico is coming off two record fiscal years for direct spending from the film and TV industry into the state's economy - \$626.5 million in FY21 and \$855.4 million in FY22, including an unprecedented \$49.5 million in production spend in rural areas. In calendar year 2022, spending will exceed \$760 million with some \$25 million of that outside the Albuquerque-Santa Fe corridor.

Some of the rural communities that saw productions:

- Alamogordo
- Artesia
- Chama
- Gallup
- Las Cruces
- Mescalero Reservation
- Roswell
- Ruidoso
- San Antonio
- Truth or Consequences



Cast of Stranger Things

New Mexico now has three film studio partnerships – Netflix, NBCUniversal, and 828 Productions, all of which include 10-year commitments to the state, creating thousands of jobs, billions of dollars in production spend, and investments in soundstage infrastructure. These commitments include \$2 billion by Netflix, \$500 million by NBC Universal, and \$350 million by 828 Productions

In 2022, Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham announced yet another gamechanger for the film and digital media industry of New Mexico with the establishment of the New Mexico Media Academy (NMMA). The New Mexico Media Academy is a collaboration with the Higher Education Department and 15 of their film and media programs statewide, our film partners - Netflix, NBCUniversal, and 828 Productions, and IATSE Local 480. The NMMA will be the epicenter for New Mexico's film, television, and digital media crew training with state-of-the-art next generation equipment and facilities, fast-tracking New Mexicans into film industry apprenticeships and jobs.

New Mexico Minimum Wage Increase goes into Effect Sunday, January 1, 2023

By Stacey Johnston

New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions' (NMDWS) advises employers and workers that New Mexico's minimum wage is increasing, effective Sunday, January 1st, 2023. This increase is in accordance with an amendment to the New Mexico Minimum Wage Act signed into law by Governor Lujan Grisham on April 1, 2019.

Beginning January 1, 2023:

- State minimum wage: \$12.00 per hour
- State tipped minimum wage: \$3.00 per hour

Minimum wage is the lowest wage that an employer is legally required to pay to workers. NMDWS enforces the state and federal minimum wage. The City of Albuquerque, Bernalillo County, the City of Las Cruces, the City of Santa Fe, and Santa Fe County currently enforce their own minimum wage. Businesses should be aware that the state will enforce the highest available rate.

Employers are required to post the New Mexico Minimum Wage Act Summary Poster in a place where all workers can easily see it.

Additional information about the minimum wage, including PDF version of the Minimum Wage Act summary poster in both English and Spanish, is available on our website at

<https://www.dws.state.nm.us/Minimum-Wage-Information>

New Mexico State Treasurer's Office Earns Half-a-Billion Dollars in Eight Years

By Julie Filatoff

New Mexico State Treasurer Tim Eichenberg announced today that during his eight-year tenure, the State Treasurer's Office earned \$541,538,760 on its investments.

Eichenberg credits the Investment Division for the record-breaking earnings. "Chief Investment Officer Vikki Hanges is ably assisted by Senior Portfolio Manager Anna Murphy and our new Assistant Portfolio Manager Frank Nichol," he noted. "This is an incredible team. They have worked diligently over the past eight years—including some very tough years for investment professionals."

During fiscal year 2022, the division earned approximately \$68 million. At the end of FY2022, the five portfolios it oversees totaled approximately \$14.5 billion. All funds are invested in a manner that conforms to federal, state, and other legal requirements.

"I've charged the investment team to observe three priorities in making investment decisions. First is safety, preserving the principal of the funds to be invested. Second is liquidity, maintaining sufficient cash to satisfy reasonably anticipated, continuing operational requirements. The third and final priority is maximizing investment return, consistent with the higher priorities of safety and liquidity of principal."

Eichenberg's last day as State Treasurer is December 31, 2022.

For more information visit <https://nmsto.gov/investment-division/>.



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NMDVR's Project Search in the News

By Jeff Levine

KRQE-TV ran a feature story on December 5, 2022 about the Project SEARCH program in New Mexico. The story by reporter Madison Conner focused on the interns from Rio Rancho Schools who are participating in the program at Presbyterian Rust Medical Center in Rio Rancho. NMDVR Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Supervisor Hotona Secatero was quoted on air, along with one of the interns.

A link to the story can be found at: www.krqe.com/news/new-mexico/project-search-helps-new-mexico-graduates-with-disabilities-earn-work-experience/.

In addition, the Albuquerque Journal reported about the Project SEARCH location at the Embassy Suites in Albuquerque in a feature article in November: www.abqjournal.com/2546933/interns-with-disabilities-mas-ter-workplace-skills.html

Project SEARCH has eight workplace sites around the state. More information about Project SEARCH in New Mexico can be found on the NMDVR webpage at <https://www.dvr.state.nm.us/project-search/>



Governor Announces Remaining \$8.5 Million In Law Enforcement Recruitment Fund Awarded

By Nora Sackett

Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham on December 8th announced the remaining \$8.5 million from the Law Enforcement Recruitment Fund has been awarded to 39 law enforcement entities in communities around the state. The funding caps off a \$50 million investment by the governor in the last legislative session to provide resources to law enforcement to recruit and retain law enforcement officers.

"We know that law enforcement agencies around the state need additional officers and lack the local resources to do so," said Gov. Lujan Grisham. "This much-needed funding is bridging that gap and empowering communities to get hundreds more officers on the streets. I'm committed to continuing our strong support for law enforcement, and I will pursue additional funding for this initiative in the upcoming legislative session."

All together, the Law Enforcement Recruitment Fund is supporting over 400 additional officers around the state.

"The funding supports officers and agencies committed to their respective communities and awards them with incentives to continue their commitment. This is another great example of the support which we've received in this state for law enforcement," said Department of Public Safety Secretary Jason R. Bowie.

New Mexico Department of Public Safety administers the Law Enforcement Recruitment Fund in partnership with the Department of Finance and Administration.

Law enforcement departments may use awards for salaries, benefits, recruitment incentives, and other personnel expenditures related to recruiting and training certified law enforcement officers in New Mexico. The Law Enforcement Recruitment Fund is part of a nonrecurring appropriation secured during the last legislative session in House Bill 68.

The following agencies are being awarded through this round of funding:

Acoma Police Department
Artesia Police Department
Bernalillo Police Department
City of Alamogordo Police Department
Curry County Sheriff's Office
Deming Police Department
Dona Ana County Sheriff's Department
Española Police Department
Farmington Police Department
Grant County Sheriff's Office
Grants Police Department
Isleta Police Department
Las Vegas Police Department
Lincoln County Sheriff's Office
Los Lunas Police Department
Loving Police Department
Lovington Police Department
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Santa Clara Police Department
Santa Fe County Sheriff's Office
Santa Fe Police Department
Silver City Police Department
Taos Police Department
Taos Pueblo Department of Public Safety
Tatum Police Department
Tesuque Tribal Police Department
Torrance County Sheriff's Office
Truth or Consequences Police Department
Zia Police Department
Zuni Tribal Police Department

TOURISM Santa Fe Honored As 2022 Platinum Choice Award Winner By Smart Meetings Magazine

By Joanne Hudson

TOURISM Santa Fe was honored as one of the best destinations in the United States in Smart Meetings magazine's 2022 Platinum Choice Awards, "Reader's Choice" section. This annual meetings industry award, now in its 20th year, recognizes the best cities and meeting venues as nominated by meeting planner readers of the publication.

"The Smart Meetings Platinum Choice Award is an incredibly meaningful honor for our team at TOURISM Santa Fe and the Santa Fe Community Convention Center, as it comes directly from industry professionals who have experienced the exceptional service our team provides," said Randy Randall, executive director of TOURISM Santa Fe. "Having Santa Fe on this annual list highlights that we are one of the best cities for groups to host their meetings in and it will encourage more meeting planners to bring business to The City Different."

Each year, Smart Meetings asks their readers to share the hotels, venues and destinations in the United States and abroad that have made a significant impact on their work of planning meetings and conferences. The full list of 2022 Platinum Choice Awards winners will be published in the December 2022 print issue of the magazine and can be found online at smartmeetings.com/platinum-choice-awards-2022.

Smart Meetings is a premier meetings industry publisher and voice of inspiration for meeting professionals. In addition to the Platinum Choice Awards, Smart Meetings publishes cutting-edge meetings content in print and digital magazines 12 times per year, hosts networking events, produces CEU-accredited webinars and offers a myriad of digital resources.

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State Personnel Office Launches New Course for Managers and Supervisors

By Jaime Phillips



The State Personnel Office Training and Development Bureau recently launched a new course intended to help managers and supervisors understand the mechanisms available to use with classified employees to assist with recruitment and retention. Titled “State Personnel Tools for Employee Recruitment and Retention,” the course covers key concepts relating to compensation and classification in the State of New Mexico classified personnel system, including salary schedules, appropriate placement, and internal equity, as well as tools such as temporary retention differentials and in pay band adjustments. Managers and supervisors will learn more about recruitment incentives such as “total rewards,” encompassing the full compensation value of all benefits available to State employees in addition to their rate of pay, and will take away a better understanding of and ability to work with their HR team to utilize the mechanisms provided in State Personnel Board Rules for purposes of employee recruitment and retention. If as a manager you’ve ever wanted to know more about how starting pay is set when making a job offer to a prospective employee, or wondered what can be done to help retain a valuable member of your team, this course might appeal to you. View class dates on the State Personnel Office Training Calendar at <https://www.spo.state.nm.us/training/training-calendar/>, or register directly using the Enterprise Learning Management (ELM) system at <https://elm.share.state.nm.us/>. Learn more about training offered by the State Personnel Office on their website at <https://www.spo.state.nm.us/training/> or email them with questions at personnel.training@spo.nm.gov.

State Awards Multi-Million Dollar Grant to Socorro Coop for Broadband

By Renee Narvais



From l to r: Socorro Electric Trustees- Ron Burnett, District 5 Luis Aguilar, District 3 Leroy Anaya, District 3, Chairman District 5 Socorro County Commissioner-Antonio Ray Martinez, GM of Socorro Electric Cooperative, Inc.- Joseph Herrera, NM Broadband Director-Kelly Schlegel, GM of Continental Divide Electric -Robert E. Castillo, Magdalena Mayor-Richard J. Rumpf, Field Rep. from the Office of the US Senator Ben Ray Lujan - Nicholas Maestas Photo credit: Ellena Tapia, Dir of Communications and Public Affairs for SEC

The Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE) visited the rural community of Magdalena to celebrate the recently announced grant award to Socorro Electric Cooperative, Inc.

The grant award is funded through the Connect New Mexico Pilot Program, which involves a \$123 million grant program to foster the deployment of broadband access across unserved and underserved areas in New Mexico through sustainable, scalable networks. Funding is provided by the Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021 and authorized by New Mexico House Bill 2.

SEC is an electric cooperative providing electricity to 13,000 meters. Several electric cooperatives across the U.S. have ventured into broadband deployment when their service areas lack high-speed broadband solutions. SEC will receive \$5.09 million from the Pilot Program and will match the funding with \$2.38 million for a total project budget of \$7.47 million.

The Pilot Program enables SEC’s initial entry into the broadband market for its existing customer base of electric customers in the Village of Magdalena, where residents and businesses have less than 25/3 Mbps (download/upload). Customers are largely dependent upon DSL, fixed wireless, satellite, or their mobile data plan. This project will leapfrog speeds to at least symmetrical 100 Mbps (download/upload), and also offer symmetrical 1 Gbps at the inception of commercial service. The fiber network will also connect Magdalena Municipal School District to greatly improve broadband connectivity for students.

Socorro Electric will build about 31 miles of middle-mile fiber between the Socorro and Magdalena substations, and then another 19 miles of fiber within the Village of Magdalena to create a future-proof fiber to the premise network. The investment positions Socorro to extend the project further west along U.S. 60 and connect several other unserved or underserved communities in the future, as well as the Very Large Array Radio Telescope facility – one of the world’s premier astronomical radio observatories located near Magdalena. The middle-mile fiber can provide enhanced backhaul to current and new towers hosting mobile networks.

“Socorro Electric and Continental Divide greatly appreciate the funding support from OBAE and the state. This project is a game changer for the Village of Magdalena,” said Joseph Herrera, GM of SEC. “Approximately 300 homes, businesses, and institutions that are currently unserved will leapfrog from speeds less than 25/3 Mbps to symmetrical 1 Gbps, and potentially faster in the future as demand for high bandwidth-consuming applications grows. This project will foster momentum to build throughout the unserved areas of Socorro with future proof technologies like fiber-to-the-premises. In doing this SEC and Continental Divide continue the tradition of cooperation among cooperatives in bringing critical services to the unserved.”

“This project kickstarts the State’s broadband investment into Socorro County and brings connectivity to the currently unserved community of Magdalena. Its 300 residents will have access to a future-proof, scalable fiber-to-the-premise network,” said OBAE Director Kelly Schlegel. “This project’s middle-mile span will further spur Socorro’s fiber expansion into other communities in Socorro County. We can only imagine the innovation that will be stimulated by this generational investment, especially in the region’s growing space economy.”

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Governor Appoints Three to Public Regulation Commission, Signs Executive Order Creating Tribal Advisory Council

By Maddy Hayden

Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham on December 30th announced the appointment of Gabriel Aguilera, Brian Moore, and Patrick O'Connell to the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission (PRC).

They will begin in their roles at the PRC on Jan. 1, 2023.

"These appointees are experienced professionals who have the skills needed to oversee an energy transition that is affordable, effective and equitable for every New Mexico community," said Gov. Lujan Grisham. "I'm grateful to each of these individuals for providing their expertise in service of our state."

In addition, the governor on Friday, December 30th signed an executive order creating a Tribal Advisory Council to provide input to the commission. The executive order proposes the selection of one representative from the eight northern Pueblos, one from the 10 southern Pueblos, one from one of the Apache tribes and one from the

Navajo Nation. In the executive order, the Governor strongly encourages the PRC to meet with the Tribal Advisory Council on a regular basis and consult with its leadership at PRC meetings.

"It's extremely important that we ensure tribal voices are heard on issues before the PRC, regardless of who is appointed to the commission now and into the future, including the continued implementation of the landmark Energy Transition Act in tribal communities," said Gov. Lujan Grisham.



Gabriel Aguilera has worked for the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission since 2007, most

recently serving as Senior Policy Advisor for the Commission's Office of Energy Market Regulation western region. He is a graduate of New Mexico State University and holds a

Master of Business Administration from the University of Maryland. His term of appointment is 4 years.



Brian Moore is a former state legislator representing eastern New Mexico counties. He is

the President and CEO of Ranch Market supermarket in Clayton, N.M. Moore previously served as the legislative team leader for the New Mexico Association of Counties, as well as on the state's Renewable Energy Transmission Authority Board and Gov. Lujan Grisham's Economic Recovery Council. He attended the University of Denver. His term of appointment is 2 years.



Patrick O'Connell is a professional engineer with more than 28 years of experience

in New Mexico utilities. He is the Clean Energy Program Interim Director at Western Resource Advocates. He previously worked for the Public Service Company of New Mexico, New Mexico Gas Company and the Sangre de Cristo Water Company. He holds a civil engineering degree from the University of New Mexico. His term of appointment is 6 years.

Prior to these appointments, members of the PRC were elected to office. In 2020, the New Mexico voters ratified the Legislature's proposal to amend the state constitution to change the makeup of the Commission from a five-member elected body to a three-member governor-appointed panel starting in January 2023.

The governor selected the three new commissioners from a group of nine individuals vetted and submitted by the PRC Nominating Committee. This process was established in the 2020 constitutional amendment reforming the commission.



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EDD Initiatives Support 13,000 Jobs in Four Years

2022 saw new film partnership, higher wages, strategic investments to diversify the economy

By Bruce Krasnow

The Economic Development Department reported on December 28th that its key job-creation initiatives, JTIP and LEDA, helped create approximately 13,000 jobs since Jan. 1, 2019, the beginning of Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham's administration.

In the past four years, the New Mexico Economic Development Department (EDD) has utilized the Local Economic Development Act (LEDA) to make investments in 60 businesses, supporting more than 8,500 new jobs at an average wage of \$64,756. - up 20% from 2019.

The LEDA assistance will result in \$7 billion in new capital investment across New Mexico and a 10-year economic impact of \$34 billion.

EDD reports that the Job Training Incentive Program (JTIP) has assisted 176 companies since Jan. 2019 in 34 communities with 9,945 trainee awards.

The average wage for JTIP-supported hires hit a new all-time high in the last 6 months with an average wage in fiscal year 2023 to date of \$27.51, up 52% from about \$18 four years ago.

The wage data tops off record fiscal year performance for direct spend by the film industry of \$855.4 million in FY2022. New Mexico is also seeing a significant jump in the average wage for film industry workers, growing 12% to \$31.79 an hour or \$66,123 annually in 2022 from \$28.33 hourly or \$58,935 in 2021.

"The Economic Development Department, under the leadership of Gov. Lujan Grisham, is delivering on our commitment to invest in strategic job-rich industries that can diversify New Mexico's economy and generate family wealth with higher-paying jobs," Cabinet Secretary Alicia J. Keyes said.



Universal Hydrogen picked New Mexico for major manufacturing hub

The Santa Fe Railyard Community Corporation Celebrates 20th Anniversary at SITE Santa Fe

By Brooke Scarborough

Many friends of the Santa Fe community gathered Tuesday December 6 at SITE Santa Fe to celebrate the Santa Fe Railyard Community Corporations' (SFRCC) 20th anniversary party. Noted speakers Mayor Alan Webber, former Mayor David Coss, and Board President Steve Robinson, all spoke to the Railyard's unique history, its successful and integral working relationship with the City of Santa Fe, and SFRCC's achievement of fulfilling and maintaining the Railyard Master Plan. Other speakers included former Executive Director, Richard Czoski, Director of Events and Marketing, Sandra Brice and current Executive Director, Christine Robertson.

Steve Robinson has been involved in the Railyard's revitalization since 1992 and the Board President since SFRCC's founding in 2002. He gave a special thank you to former Mayor Debbie Jaramillo, who in 1995 as Mayor, made the bold move to buy the land to provide a new community gathering place for Santa Feans.

Richard Czoski explained that what he thought was a temporary position with a project that would be completed in two to three years, turned into a seventeen-year career with SFRCC. He noted that two of the hardest times for the Railyard were in 2005 when Hurricane Katrina caused construction costs to double and the 2008 recession which constrained construction financing.

Sandra Brice announced her retirement as Director of Events and Marketing after being with SFRCC since 2008. She developed key partnerships for the Railyard, such as the Santa Fe Farmers' Market, the Santa Fe Artists Market and AMP Concerts which provides the free Summer Concert and Movie Series. She is credited with creating a gathering space for local Santa Feans and a destination for visitors from around the world. Brooke Scarborough who has been with SFRCC for the past two years will be taking over the position in January 2023.

Christine Robertson expressed her excitement and gratitude for the opportunity of continuing SFRCC's mission. She enthusiastically announced that the Railyard is 100% leased with three remaining buildings left to construct. Along with her staff, Robertson is looking forward to new ways to engage with SFRCC's tenants and the community.

SFRCC is excited to announce that Shoofly Station, a new 18-unit apartment building in the Baca Railyard should be available for lease in early 2023.

Andy Rogers, the owner of the Railyard Flats apartment building, announced that the equipment needed to fix the electrical issue that closed the building has arrived, and management is hoping to reopen the building by the end of 2022.

Melissa Mann, International Folk Art Market CEO, announced that the world-renowned market will be making its new home in the Railyard. From Steve Robinson: "The presence of IFAM in the Railyard brings to a full circle the original intention for the use of the Railyard. We are very excited to add another keystone event to the Railyard". SFRCC will work closely with the IFAM team to create a successful market for 2023 and many years to come.

SFRCC would like to publicly acknowledge and thank its key partners, the City of Santa Fe, the Santa Fe Conservation Trust, the Railyard Park Conservancy, local entrepreneurs, and the citizens of Santa Fe for their contributions to the Railyard.

Learn the history of how thousands of Santa Feans came together to create the vision for a new community center for all at the Railyard.

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Governor Appoints Second Judicial District Attorney

By Nora Sackett

Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham on January 3rd announced the appointment of Albuquerque litigator and former prosecutor Sam Bregman as Second Judicial District Attorney.



Bregman will begin in the position immediately. He will fill a vacancy created by former Second Judicial District Attorney Raúl Torrez's election as Attorney General.

Bregman is an experienced litigator with nearly three decades of trial experience. He previously served as an Assistant District Attorney for the Second Judicial District, as well as Deputy State Auditor for New Mexico. He has most recently operated his own firm in Albuquerque, practicing both criminal and civil law. Bregman also previously served on the Albuquerque City Council.

"A former prosecutor with extensive experience in litigation and case oversight, Sam Bregman will bring a fresh perspective to the Second Judicial District Attorney's office," said Gov. Lujan Grisham. "I am confident that he will serve as a dedicated and effective District Attorney focused on improving public safety and supporting the people of Bernalillo County."

"I am honored to be appointed as Second Judicial District Attorney. I realize the great responsibility of the role and am committed to relentlessly pursuing justice for the residents of Bernalillo County," said Bregman. "I look forward to joining the hardworking staff of the DA's office and will prioritize fully staffing the office to support their ongoing critical work. Together we will serve the people of central New Mexico and deliver real results and improve public safety."

Bregman will serve the remaining two years of the existing term. He will not run for re-election to the office, focusing on the office's work to combat crime and build stronger, safer communities.

Bregman previously served as chair of the Crime Analysis and Policy Partnership, a group created by the governor to identify trends and gaps in the criminal justice system, crime, and law enforcement in New Mexico and make policy recommendations. The group's recommendations led to the governor's creation of the Fugitive Apprehension Unit in 2019, which works across jurisdictions to locate and arrest individuals charged with violent crimes who have failed to appear for judicial proceedings or have outstanding bench warrants.

Bregman is a member of the American Association of Justice, the New Mexico Criminal Defense Lawyers Association, and the New Mexico Trial Lawyers Association. He holds a bachelor's degree from the University of New Mexico and a juris doctorate from the University of New Mexico School of Law.

50th Anniversary Of Hunter Training Act

By Darren Vaughan

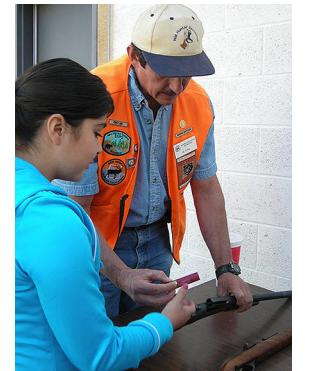
The state's first mandatory hunter education law — the Hunter Training Act — turned 50 this year. The act has served a major role in ensuring the safety of hunters and hunting activities since its inception.



The New Mexico State Legislature passed the Hunter Training Act in 1972. This act allowed the State Game Commission to adopt regulations requiring all hunters born after Jan. 1, 1958 to complete a hunter education course and possess a certificate in order to hunt with or shoot a firearm.

The law originally required hunter education in order to shoot a firearm under any circumstance, even in a supervised program or on a certified range. The law was amended in 1976 to limit the education requirement only to hunting for those under 18.

Since the Hunter Training Act was established in 1972, 121,202 students have successfully earned their New Mexico Hunter Education Certification. Today, 315 active instructors take part in New Mexico's Hunter Education Program by teaching classes and leading youth hunting camps. Instructors include both volunteers and department staff.



"The department's hunter education efforts since the passage of the Hunter Training Act 50 years ago have helped hunting become and remain a safe outdoor sport for New Mexico's families to enjoy," said Michael Sloane, director of the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish. "Such an accomplishment would not be possible without the tireless work of our volunteer and staff hunter education instructors who have helped ensure safe hunting for past, current and future generations." Please visit the Hunter Education Program's webpage for more information about the department's Hunter Education Program or to enroll in a class. <https://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/education/hunter-education/>

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Gov. Lujan Grisham Releases FY24 Executive Budget Recommendation

By Nora Sackett

Amid an unprecedented fiscal outlook for the state, the New Mexico Department of Finance and Administration on Tuesday released the FY24 Executive Budget Recommendation from the administration of Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham, totaling \$9.4B in recurring spending, an 11.9% increase from the last fiscal year. The executive recommendation will maintain reserves at 34.9%, among the highest in state history, while increasing investments in priority areas like housing and homelessness, health care and behavioral health, education and child well-being, public safety, and economic development and tax rebates.

"Today, we have a historic opportunity for change in the state of New Mexico," said Gov. Lujan Grisham. "This budget builds upon the immense progress and success of the last four years, continuing to improve the lives of the people of New Mexico by funding programs, policies and initiatives that we know are working. It also empowers the state to continue to take on new and innovative strategies

that are disrupting the status quo, that help our children, our families, our schools, our small businesses and our entire economy to grow and prosper."

The FY24 budget recommendation aims to create a stronger foundation for the future of New Mexico, investing in the safety, education, and well-being of all New Mexicans.

Highlights from the budget recommendation include the following:

Housing and Homelessness

- \$25M for rental assistance and eviction prevention
- \$13M to incentivize development and zoning updates
- \$10M for the state's Home Ownership Down Payment Assistance Program
- \$6M for a new comprehensive landlord support program
- \$4M for mobile homelessness response teams at the Department of Health

Care Delivery Fund

- Health Care & Behavioral Health
- \$200M to establish the Rural Health
- \$28M for the Health Professional Loan Repayment Program
- \$10M for the New Mexicare senior caregiver support program

- \$10M for a full-spectrum reproductive health clinic in southern New Mexico
- \$5M for additional support for alcohol abuse prevention and treatment
- \$32.5M for graduate medical education programs across the state
- \$7.7M for nursing programs at New Mexico's higher education institutions
- \$5.8M to maintain existing school-based health centers and expand access to more than 25,000 students

Education and Child Wellbeing

- \$220.1M for extended in-classroom learning time
- \$30M to provide healthy universal school meals
- \$2.9M to the Children, Youth and Families Department for 60 new protective services staff, to be supported by additional federal matching funds
- \$277.3M for continued investments in affordable, high-quality childcare
- \$131M to maintain and expand access to high-quality pre-k education
- \$40.4M for the continued expansion of early childhood home visiting
- \$111.1M to provide a four percent salary increase for all school personnel
- \$100M for health care premium costs for public school personnel

- \$157.4M for the Opportunity Scholarship

Public Safety

- \$100M for continued law enforcement recruitment funding
- \$4M for Law Enforcement Survivors Benefits
- \$4M for Firefighter Survivors Benefits
- \$2.2M to create two hotshot forest fire crews

Economic Development & Infrastructure

- \$1B in economic relief through tax rebates
- \$128M for water infrastructure improvements
- \$146M for continued statewide broadband expansion
- \$35M for Local Economic Development Act funding
- \$75M for the Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund

The executive budget also includes \$91.3M to provide a four percent pay raise for all state employees to ensure New Mexico's workforce is competitively compensated.



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State Assists Five New Mexico Companies in November and Nine Companies in December with Trainee Funding

By Bruce Krasnow

Economic Development Cabinet Secretary Alicia J. Keyes announced on December 7th that five companies have received Job Training Incentive Program (JTIP) awards for November 2022. The agency approved a total award amount of \$320,604.36 during their monthly JTIP board meeting.

JTIP funds are allocated monthly to companies who request assistance training new employees. The funds will cover a portion of trainee wages (50-75% depending on location) for up to 6 months. Jobs must meet specific requirements and must be for New Mexico residents. More information about program specifics can be found on the Economic Development Department website.

The JTIP recipients for November are:

- **Advanced Manufactured Power Solutions (AMPS)**, Albuquerque, 2 trainees at an average wage of \$42.85 for a total award of \$50,264.68. AMPS provides custom, high-quality and high-reliability battery packs for the defense and space industries.
- **Parting Stone, LLC**, Santa Fe, 7 trainees at an average wage of \$24.29 for a total award of \$76,440. Parting Stone offers families choosing cremation an alternative to conventional ash.
- **Sceye, Inc.**, Moriarty, 5 trainees at an average wage of \$38 for a total award of \$135,613.28. Sceye is a manufacturer of High-Altitude Platform Stations (HAPS) for the stratosphere at 65,000 feet.
- **The Verdes Foundation**, Albuquerque, 3 trainees at an average wage of \$20.83 for a total award of \$24,032. The Verdes Foundation is a nonprofit organization and one of the longest-operating production and dispensaries in New Mexico.
- **Universal Hydrogen Co.**, Albuquerque, 1 trainee at an average wage

of \$57.70 for a total award of \$34,254.40. Universal Hydrogen is making hydrogen-powered commercial flight a near-term reality.



Parting Stone of Santa Fe is preparing about 5,000 solidifications annually. Each solidification produces 40 to 60 stones that range

The final tranche of Job Training Incentive Program (JTIP) awardees for the calendar year includes nine companies throughout New Mexico, New Mexico Economic Development Department Cabinet Secretary Alicia J. Keyes announced. Program funds will assist in training as many as 42 new employees.

“The companies awarded represent both the economic and geographic diversity of the program. The final 2022 JTIP awardees hail from Albuquerque, Deming/Silver City, Placitas, Red River, and Santa Fe,” EDD Secretary Keyes said. “These companies will continue to grow jobs for New Mexicans in part due to the extra funding provided through JTIP to help train employees to learn new skills and earn higher wages.”

The JTIP board awarded a total of \$662,783 in this month’s allocations. The nine companies approved in December are:

- **Build With Robots, Inc. (BWR)**, Albuquerque, 1 trainee at \$24 per hour for a total award of \$13,730. BWR has built a sanitizing robot named Breezy One that provides autonomous disinfection at large facilities such as the Albuquerque International Sunport, St. Mary’s School in Albuquerque, Houston Airport, and George Bush National Airport, along



Little Toad Creek Brewery provides canned beer, ready-to-drink cocktails, and bottled spirits to 400 retail locations in New Mexico, Colorado, Texas, and California. Photo credit: Gabriella Marks



TS-Nano team on location in Hobbs. The company hopes to bring on new staff as they expand into a larger office suite and laboratory in Albuquerque.

with other large facilities throughout the country.

- **Little Toad Creek Brewery and Distillery**, Silver City/Deming, 10 trainees at an average wage of \$19.75 for a total award of \$125,260. Little Toad Creek currently operates a nano-brewery and distillery, a seasonal rural hotel/restaurant/tasting room, and a year-round restaurant/tasting room in downtown Silver City, with a distillery and production project underway in Deming.
- **LoadPath, LLC**, Albuquerque, 5 trainees at an average wage of \$57 for a total award of \$164,520. LoadPath specializes in the development and delivery of advanced engineering products and services. **Red River Brewing Company, LLC (RRBC)**, Red River, 1 trainee at \$19 per hour for a total award of \$10,370. RRBC was founded to build and operate a brewery, distillery, and full-service restaurant.
- **RefractAR LLC**, Santa Fe, 2 trainees at an average wage of \$33.75 for a total award of \$38,430. RefractAR is an independent Extended Reality (XR) Studio. **SupplyOne Albuquerque**, Albuquerque, 11 trainees at an average salary of \$18.62 for a total award of \$52,190.80. SupplyOne designs and manufactures

packaging products, offering custom corrugated products, plastic thermoforming, vacuum pouches, packaging films, trays, containers, stock paper, packaging and shipping supplies, and equipment.

- **Terra Vera**, Placitas, 2 trainees at an average wage of \$47.48 for a total award of \$70,380.88. When the needs of the cannabis industry to control biological contamination were paired with the new capabilities of the water treatment technology, Terra Vera was conceived.
- **TS-Nano Sealants (TS-Nano)**, Albuquerque, 9 trainees at an average wage of \$34.59 for a total award of \$172,035.40. TS-Nano is a New Mexico startup company focused on designing, manufacturing, and applying very durable nano-modified sealants that bond extremely well to a variety of sub-surfaces to seal against Green House Gas (GHG) emissions.
- **Vibrant Corporation**, Albuquerque, 1 trainee at \$30.05 per hour for a total award of \$15,866.40. Vibrant Corporation was formed to license Process Compensated Resonance Testing (PCRT) technology (a high-speed automated system for Tier 1 suppliers to the big three auto makers) for application to new markets.

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Capitalize on IRS Gift Tax Exclusion Increase and 529 Education Savings Plan Contributions

By Carolyn Fittipaldi



Effective January 1, 2023, the federal annual gift tax exclusion increased to \$17,000 for a single individual and \$34,000 for married couples. For 529 plans, contributions of up to \$85,000 for a single contributor (or \$170,000 for married couples) can be made in a single year and applied against the annual gift tax exclusion equally over a five-year period. This is another great way to jumpstart a child’s or grandchild’s college savings account while utilizing gifting exclusions.

“This increase by the IRS comes at a pivotal time when tuition rates are increasing, and many are discussing and planning for the rising costs of higher education,” said Natalie Cordova, Executive Director of Education Trust Board of New Mexico, the organization that administers The Education Plan®, New Mexico’s 529 education savings plan. “With this change, parents, grandparents and loved ones can now invest more for the next generation.”

Studies show that students with as little as \$500 saved for education are three times more likely to attend college and four times more likely to graduate, and with higher education linked to higher salaries, greater employment opportunities, and increased future success, saving for education expenses is a vital investment. The Education Plan can also be used as a tool for estate planning while empowering future generations and helping to eliminate student loan debt. Contributions to a 529 account for a beneficiary are considered gifts, however the account owner retains full control over the account throughout their lifetime.

The Education Plan offers additional tax benefits. Earnings grow free of state and federal taxes, and withdrawals are tax-free when funds are used to cover qualified education expenses. Funds can be used to pay for a variety of education expenses including tuition, room and board, books, fees, and computer equipment at universities, community colleges, trade schools, or vocational schools across the United States. The State of New Mexico also offers state income tax deductions for New Mexico residents for any contributions made to The Education Plan when funds are used to pay for qualified expenses.

To learn more about The Education Plan® or to open an account today, visit <https://theeducationplan.com/>

NMSD Students Making a Difference

By Keri-Lynn McBride

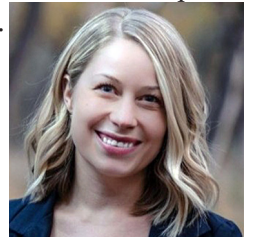
Members of the NM School for the Deaf’s Jr. NAD organization held a food drive in November and December. They delivered the non-perishable items to St. Elizabeth’s Shelter and the Food Depot. Staff from both non-profits expressed deep gratitude. The NMSD Community is proud that students understand the importance of community service and are doing what they can to make a difference in the lives of others. A powerful and beautiful thing!



Gov. Lujan Grisham Announces Communications Team Promotions

Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham on December 2nd announced the promotion of two members of her communications team.

Maddy Hayden has been appointed director of communications. She served as deputy director of communications from September to December of 2021 and as acting director of communications since January 2022.



Nora Meyers Sackett has been appointed deputy director of communications. She has served as the governor’s press secretary since January 2019.

Sackett will remain the media contact for the governor’s office until a press secretary is appointed.

New Mexico Film Office Announces Filming of “The Curse” and “Dark Winds” in New Mexico

By Dolores Martinez

Amber Dodson, the New Mexico State Film Office Director, announced January 3rd that “**The Curse**,” a SHOWTIME® comedy series produced by A24, completed filming in and around Santa Fe.

“The Curse” is co-created by Benny Safdie (“Good Time,” “Uncut Gems,” “Daddy Longlegs”) and Nathan Fielder (“Nathan for You,” “The Rehearsal”), who also serves as director. The show stars Fielder, Safdie, and Oscar® winner Emma Stone (“La La Land”), who executive produces alongside Dave McCary and Ali Herting through their Fruit Tree banner. Josh Safdie and Ronald Bronstein also serve as executive producers.

“The Curse” is a genre-bending scripted comedy that explores how an alleged curse disturbs the relationship of a newly married couple as they try to conceive a child while co-starring on their problematic new HGTV show. The series’ guest stars include Oscar nominee Barkhad Abdi (“Captain Phillips”), Emmy® nominee Corbin Bernsen (“L.A. Law,” “City on a Hill”), and Constance Shulman (“Orange Is the New Black”).

The production employed approximately 150 New Mexico crew members, 30 New Mexico principal actors, and 500 New Mexico background talent.

New Mexico Film Office Director, Amber Dodson additionally announced the series “**Dark Winds**” began principal photography in November and will continue through 2023 in and around Santa Fe and Tesuque Pueblo.

Directed by Betsy Burke (“Teardrop”), produced by Robert Redford (“The Mustang”), George R.R. Martin (“Game of Thrones”), and Vince Calandra (“Sharp”), and starring Zahn McClarnon (“The Son”). “Dark Winds” is based on the iconic book series, “Iconic Leaphorn & Chee,” by Tony Hillerman. Set in the 1970s on a remote outpost of the Navajo Nation, “Dark Winds” tells the story of Lieutenant Joe Leaphorn and Deputy Chee as they uncover crimes and mysteries, not only in work, but also within themselves.

The Hollywood Reporter has declared “Dark Winds,” “Perhaps the most ambitious Native-led TV show ever made.” “This once-in-a-lifetime creative team and cast have delivered something truly special with ‘Dark Winds,’” Dan McDermott, president of entertainment and AMC Studios for AMC Networks, said. “We can’t wait to share the rest of this thrill ride of a first season with the fans and follow Joe Leaphorn and Jim Chee into a second season on AMC and AMC+ next year.”

The production will employ 18 New Mexico crew members, 10 background/extras, and 5 New Mexico principal actors.



Scene from Dark Winds

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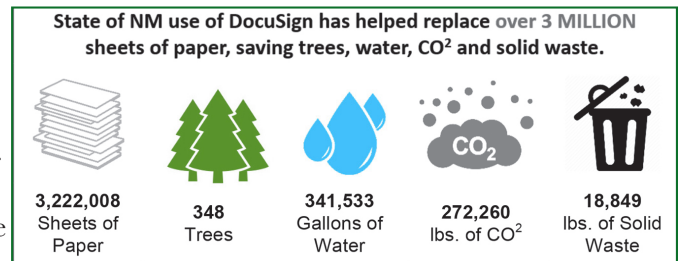
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State of NM Agencies Are Making a Positive Impact on the Environment with DocuSign E-Signature

By Renee Narvais

Since 2019, the Department of Information Technology (DoIT) has been providing E-Signature services to State of



New Mexico agencies. We are excited to report that over the last three years, agencies have replaced over 3 million sheets of paper by using DocuSign. This has conserved hundreds of trees and hundreds of thousands of gallons of water, and has resulted in a massive reduction of solid waste and carbon emissions.

A majority of SoNM agencies including the Educational Retirement Board, the Public Education Department, the Department of Transportation, the General Services Department, and the Office of the Governor.

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North Central RTD Introduces New Logo and Branding for the Blue Bus

By Jim Nagle



The North Central RTD today introduced the new look for its RTD Blue Buses. Now simply known as the Blue Bus, the newly branded buses will begin rolling out throughout the District over the coming months and over the next couple of years.

As part of the rebranding, the District will modify referencing to itself as North Central RTD rather than North Central Regional Transit District. Over the years, users of the service have commonly referred to it as the Blue Bus or RTD Blue Bus and the new branding will make use of that naming with the simple brand as the Blue Bus.

The new logo and vehicle branding was created by Studio Six Branding after a series of Discovery sessions with area stakeholders. It incorporates elements of the land and presents a celebration of cultural diversity and inclusivity that has been inspired by the majestic and awe-inspiring northern New Mexico landscape and symbols at the heart of the communities it serves.



The new bus design incorporates mountains, mesas and blue skies so prominent in the northern New Mexico landscapes. It also incorporates elements of eagle feathers, symbols that were raised by area Pueblos during a Discovery session with the North Central RTD Tribal subcommittee and members of their Pueblos.

Along the top of the bus are translations of the word Blue in various languages commonly spoken in the region with Spanish, Tewa and Tiwa, as well as French and German. The Tewa translations were provided by Nambè Pueblo and Ohkay Owingeh, and the Tiwa translation by Picuris Pueblo.

North Central RTD is in the process of purchasing 19 new buses including ten electric vehicles (which will have its own unique Blue Bus branding). All of the buses will feature the new branding. In the past bus purchases would have roughly a nine-month delivery time, but today due to supply chain issues that window has extended to one to two years.

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Can you identify the location of this picture? If so, you may be a winner of \$25 Gift certificate from **Joe's Dining, 2801 Rodeo Rd.**



Please submit the photo location to rroundhouse@gmail.com with the email title of *Photo Contest*. All correct entries will be placed into a drawing to select a winner. Entries must be submitted by January 6, 2023. Look in January's 'Round The Roundhouse for the winning announcement along with another photo contest to enter. Good luck!

Congratulations to the December's winner, Lynette E. Guevara, NMED. Her name was selected in the drawing of correct entries. December's photo location was downtown Santa Fe on the corner of Grant and Federal. Bon Appetit!

Department of Finance and Administration Recognizes 2022 Local Government Budget Conference Winners

Six New Mexico local governments were recognized for outstanding achievement

By Baylee Rawson

The New Mexico Department of Finance and Administration's Local Government Division (LGD) held its annual Budget Conference this November.

The conference provided budget and finance-related training to local governments, finance staff, and officials, from 33 counties, 106 municipalities, and over 300 special districts throughout the state. It is a yearly testament to the LGD Budget and Finance

Bureau's mission in assisting officials and employees of the local public bodies in New Mexico in maintaining or ensuring budget and fiscal integrity.

A highlight of the conference are the recognition awards given to the state's local governments. These awards honor those who have demonstrated teamwork, exceptional communication, strong leadership, and who strived for excellence in advancing their entity's mission and goals to better serve their communities' needs while meeting statutory budget and finance requirements.

The 2022 Award Winners are

The LGD Director's Award:

- Lincoln County
- Village of Reserve
- Upper Rio Grande Watershed District

The LGD Director's Award recognizes the local governments that have exhibited high-performing standards, outstanding budgets, and financial reporting, setting a standard for their peers.

The Rising Star Award:

- Sandoval County
- City of Artesia
- South Central Regional Transit District

The Rising Star Award recognizes the local governments that have demonstrated progress in budget management standards, improved quality of budgets, and financial reporting. It also recognizes significant strides in overcoming budget and financial challenges.

"Congratulations to all the 2022 local government budget award winners. Your commitment to budget and financial excellence continues to benefit your local communities in countless ways," said DFA Secretary Debbie Romero.



Department of Game and Fish Releases Young Bears Back Into The Wild Bears Released

By Darren Vaughan

Three young bears who were orphaned earlier this year were released by New Mexico Department of Game and Fish staff into the Sangre de Cristo Mountains in San Miguel County on Saturday, Dec. 3.

Two of the cubs were found earlier this year after their mother was hit by a car and killed on Interstate 25 in the Glorieta Pass area. The other was found near the Calf Canyon/Hermits Peak fire area this past spring. Since their rescue by department staff, the cubs had been under the care of Dr. Kathleen Ramsay with New Mexico Wildlife Center, an Española-area non-profit specializing in the rehabilitation of sick and injured wildlife.

On the morning of Dec. 3, Ramsay and department staff prepared to transport the bears to their new home. The bears were sedated, weighed and examined before being ear-tagged. Prior to release, they were estimated to be approximately one year old and weighed between 89-120 pounds.

The bears were then transported to the mountains near South San Ysidro. As the doors to the cages opened, the young bears sprinted into the forest, eager to explore their new surroundings.

Ramsay estimated that she has worked with the Department of Game and Fish to rehabilitate and release approximately 700 bears over the past two decades. For more information visit <https://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/> and <https://newmexicowildlifecenter.org/>



The young bears sprinted into the forest, eager to explore their new surroundings.



Department of Game and fish wildlife veterinarian Elin Crockett and Nick Forman, the department's carnivore and small mammal program manager, prepare rescued bear cubs for transport to their new home.







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New Mexico Tourism Department Supports Refurbishment of Picuris Pueblo Interpretive Center Through \$50,000 Grant

Tourism Department grant to support museum, walking trail and more
By Cody Johnson

The New Mexico Tourism Department is supporting Picuris Pueblo with the creation of an interpretive center and walking trail through a \$50,000 Rural Pathway Program grant.



The grant will support the rehabilitation and expansion of a building that previously served as the Pueblo's museum, making way for a new museum, grill, gift shop and artifact storage facility.

"When it comes to the memorable features that make New Mexico an appealing destination to visit, our cultural heritage and amenities are second to none," Tourism Secretary Jen Paul Schroer said. "Supporting tribal communities with the tourism infrastructure they need to grow tourism in a way that meets their goals is an important priority for the New Mexico Tourism Department."

"I am thankful for the Rural Pathway grant awarded to Picuris Pueblo through the New Mexico Tourism Department," Picuris Pueblo Governor Craig Quanchello said. "Our history shows us as the longest, continuously inhabited Native community in the southwest, as seen across the landscape and verified through the archeological record. Our community is small, but our story is not. The interpretive center will showcase our rich history and bring to light the origin and leader of the Pueblo Revolt, Tuu Pa Tuh."

The museum will feature permanent and rotating exhibits tracing the history of Picuris Pueblo and highlight recent archaeological finds. The gift shop will feature art, souvenirs and other items for sale produced by the Picuris community and other artisans. Construction is currently underway to rehabilitate and expand the museum and create new spaces for the exhibits, grill, gift shop and collections.

The planned walking trail will connect the interpretive center to traditional homes of the Pueblo and the mission church through a one-mile loop. Future visitors will be able to hike the trail for a more immersive experience that will connect them to the sights, sounds and history of the land and the people of Picuris Pueblo. The walking trail is expected to be complete by July 2023.

Other partners for this project include SMU-Taos, Barnard/Columbia University, University of Arizona, Peñasco Independent School District, Picuris Pueblo Tiwa Language Program, New Mexico MainStreet, U.S. Forest Service and Picuris Pueblo residents.

Moose Spotted Near Ski Santa Fe

By Darren Vaughan

A bull moose was spotted recently near Ski Santa Fe. This is one of the southernmost sightings of a moose in New Mexico.



Photo courtesy of Theresa Ronan

There have been almost a dozen confirmed sightings of different moose in New Mexico over the past 10 years. This year, in particular, the department has received reports of multiple sightings and vast movements by this large mammal in the north-central portion of the state.

Moose require a cool climate and wetland habitat next to rivers and streams. This type of habitat is more abundant in Colorado where it supports a robust moose population. Most sightings in New Mexico are younger males emigrating from Colorado in search of new habitat and breeding opportunities. Females have been observed in New Mexico as well, but there are presently no known breeding populations of moose in the state.

Residents are reminded that moose can be dangerous and should not be approached for any reason. If a moose charges you or otherwise shows signs of aggression, run as fast as you can and try to put a boulder, car, tree or other large object between you and it. An aggressive moose can show signs such as having its ears laid back, licking its snout or having hairs raised on its neck. The moose spotted near Ski Santa Fe is presently safe and appears healthy. The department continues to monitor the moose and anticipates it will continue to explore New Mexico.

Moose are a protected game animal in the state of New Mexico. New Mexico does not have an open hunting season for moose, and it is unlawful to harvest them in the state.



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SFCC, Santa Fe County, Stagecoach Foundation, Inc., and Santa Fe Film Office Announce Applications Now Open for Free Training Program to Become a Film and Television Production Assistant

PROTEC will offer free training on weekends, February 11 – 26. Applications due by January 31, 2023. Qualified applicants will get up to 160 hours paid work experience.

Santa Fe Community College in partnership with Santa Fe County, Stagecoach Foundation, Inc., and Santa Fe Film Office announce applications are open for a free training program to become a film and television production assistant. Qualified applicants will get up to 160 hours paid work experience.

The Professional Readiness for Technical Careers (PROTEC) program will run on weekends and begins on Saturday,

February 11 and continues through Sunday, February 26 at Santa Fe Community College. Applications are due on Jan. 31. More information and applications are available at protecsantafe.com.

The partners have teamed up to provide a multilevel, detailed Production Assistant (PA) training program. This program will provide participants with training in on-set safety, on-set etiquette, production office skills, OSHA-10 certification, interview and résumé building skills, exposure to industry standard equipment, effective communication skills and more.

Elizabeth Kianu Stahmer of Stagecoach Foundation, Inc. said, "This is an amazing opportunity and pathway into the rapidly expanding film industry here in New Mexico. It's been an honor to work with so many wonderful folks across so many institutions to make this dream into a reality."

Classes will begin the weekend of February 11 and continue for three weekends concluding on February 26. There will be a mix of in-person at Santa Fe Community College and online classes. Instructors are industry professionals who will bring current experience to their classes. See the class schedule at protecsantafe.com.

The Production Assistant program offers an on-the-job training component for Santa Fe County residents. The program serves to incentivize productions to provide Production Assistant opportunities to participants who complete the Production Assistant training. Santa Fe County will provide 50 percent reimbursement of the qualifying participants' \$15 an hour wages for up to 160 hours physically worked by the participant. Production companies are approved by Stagecoach Foundation, Inc., Santa Fe County, and SFCC.

Milton Riess, co-chair of the SFCC film program said, "Working as a Production Assistant is one of the best ways to gain experience on film and television sets. Being a PA allows you to be exposed to every craft in this industry and see exactly what may interest you and how to move into these specific fields. A PA is a demanding job, and this training program is a great way to prepare yourself for this exciting industry and an even more rewarding career."

Participant requirements: No prior workforce training is required. Participants must be a high school graduate or equivalent, aged 18 years old or older, have a valid driver's license, and be a Santa Fe County resident. For applications visit <https://www.protecsantafe.com/>



Santa Fe Community College film students.

New Mexico Film Office Announces the Multimedia Expansion of Meow Wolf Grapevine

By Dolores Martinez



Amber Dodson, the New Mexico State Film Office Director, announced December 13th that the growing new media project Meow Wolf will expand its immersive experience to Grapevine, TX.

Led by Senior Creative Director Spencer Olsen, (Omega Mart) and produced by Show Manager Joshua Davisson (Convergence Station), Meow Wolf Grapevine will be the fourth permanent immersive experience from the New Mexico-based art enterprise. The exhibition will include 70 rooms with hundreds of installations working with artists across New Mexico.

"Expanding the Meow Wolf universe, the Grapevine exhibition will be the next major chapter following Convergence Station which opened in Denver during September 2021. We can't wait to invite everyone to a new journey of exploration and art with new characters and exciting connections to our past stories and the far future" said Dale Sheehan, Executive Creative Director of the Grapevine and Houston Meow Wolf exhibitions.

"The growth and innovation of the Meow Wolf experience is remarkable. We are thrilled to see this New Mexico-based venture continue to employ so many of our world-class creative workforce," Amber Dodson said.

The installation will employ approximately 165 New Mexico crew members, 25 New Mexico principal artists, and 50 New Mexico background artists.

For more information, contact kati.murphy@meowwolf.com.

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