

San Miguel County

Comprehensive Plan

2004-2014



Adopted June 8, 2004
Board of County Commissioners

Prepared By
The People of San Miguel County
with assistance from

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

San Miguel County, located in northeastern New Mexico, stretches over 4,717 square miles. The terrain varies widely from 11,800 peaks in the beautiful Sangre de Cristo Mountains in the west to broad, flat plains at an elevation less than 4,000' in the east. The County Seat is in Las Vegas. The County's population is just over 30,000. Though sparsely populated, the County is feeling the beginning pressures of growth and development spilling over from Santa Fe into the prime farm and ranch lands and traditional historic villages of the Pecos River Valley.

The Comprehensive Plan is written in five parts:

1. Community Vision
2. Existing Conditions
3. Analysis and Projections
4. Plan Policies and Implementation
5. County Residents' Guidebook

The Plan Policies reflect the overwhelming consensus on the part of County residents, staff, appointed and elected officials that the rural lifestyle, small farms and large ranches, traditional historic villages, cultural heritage and extraordinarily scenic setting of San Miguel County should be celebrated, honored and preserved. All of the policies contained in this document embrace this strong, grass-roots direction.

The Guidebook is simply a compilation of information, how-to's, and contact names for a variety of topics of general interest to County residents. The Guidebook does not represent "official policy," nor is it formally adopted as part of this Plan.

The Plan Policies are such that the County can grow in population, expand its local employment base, and improve the range of retail services, and increase housing opportunities without squandering its precious natural and cultural resources.

The historian, Arnold Toynbee, in *“A Study of History,”* published in 1947, identified *“true [economic] growth”* as *“the ability of a society to transfer increasing amount of energy and attention from the material side of life to the nonmaterial side, thereby advancing its culture, capacity for compassion, sense of community, and strength of democracy.”* True Growth, in the Toynbee sense, is what County residents desire.

San Miguel County is not a wealthy place in strictly monetary terms, but it enjoys a cornucopia of natural resources, a rich cultural tradition; strong-willed, independent, hard-working and community-minded residents; dedicated staff and progressive local leaders with the vision to recognize that true wealth is indeed all of these intangible notions encapsulated in the phrase *“Quality of Life.”*



Conchas Lake Residential Area

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The San Miguel County Comprehensive Plan provides a policy framework for making decisions on development proposals, determining how and what public services to provide, and expending public funds on such things as road improvements and trash collection. Federal and State agencies require an updated Comprehensive Plan as a basis for providing certain funds and grant programs to local agencies. Counties are empowered to create and adopt Comprehensive Plans under state law, and subdivision regulations, zoning codes and development regulations must be consistent with an updated Comprehensive Plan. Development Impact Fees are an example of one particular type of funding mechanism allowed to Counties under state law, contingent upon adoption of a Comprehensive Plan.

The San Miguel County Commission requested an update to the 1986 Plan that would better inform the development decisions they need to make on a regular basis. County staff applied for, and received, a grant through the Local Government Division of the State of New Mexico in order to update its 1986 Comprehensive Plan. Anne Condon, AICP, along with Communitas Architecture & Planning and the North Central New Mexico Economic Development District provided planning consulting services to San Miguel County staff to prepare this update.

Planning Process

San Miguel County received a Community Development Block Grant through the Local Government Division of the State of New Mexico to update its Comprehensive Plan. The planning process began in January 2003 with introductory meetings held between the consultants, County staff and County Commissioners. Next, county residents shared their concerns, values, goals and hopes for the future in a series of public forums (including a radio call-in show) held in a variety of locals including Trementina, Las Vegas and the Village of Pecos from January through April 2003.

Communitas Tierra y Gente (Communitas) spent the late spring and early summer months gathering and analyzing existing conditions data, preparing the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data base and maps; projecting future conditions and drafting policies to implement community goals. County staff reviewed a preliminary draft Plan in late-June. By early fall 2003, Communitas had incorporated new information and staff comments in a Final Review Draft submitted to staff and the County Commission.

A second series of public review meetings were held in Trementina, Pecos and Las Vegas, with El Creston Mutual Domestic Water Consumers Association, and with the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce. Communitas revised the draft plan based upon the comments received, with support and direction from County staff.

Although differences of opinion remain regarding details such as density and zoning, staff, elected officials, business and property owners and local residents share common interests regarding agricultural and ranch land conservation, historic preservation, environmental resource protection and improving housing and economic opportunities.

A Public Review Draft was circulated among residents, business and property owners for review simultaneously with the County Commission. The Plan was adopted on June 8, 2004 following two public hearings before the Board of County Commissioners.

PART ONE: COMMUNITY VISION

The vision for our community is:

- *To create a better quality of life for our citizens*
- *Better jobs to retain our children in the community*
 - *Planned, focused “smart” growth for our area*
- *Include all of the stakeholders in the decision making process*
 - *Create an integrated plan for our future*
 - *Preserve our cultural heritage*



Canadian River Escarpment

Community Values and Concerns

Throughout the extended series of public forums held in the spring and winter of 2003, and again in the winter of 2003/2004, local residents were repeatedly asked to define the goals and values that best reflect their reason for choosing to live in San Miguel County.

Many spoke of their deep pride in their Hispanic heritage, with its strong family ties and community spirit. Regardless of the time they have spent in San Miguel County, all affirmed a strongly held ethic of self-reliance, independence and an eagerness to pitch-in and help others.

Residents, property owners and business owners, County Commissioners and staff all place a high value on preserving their rural way of life, *in the context of providing continued economic growth and opportunity*. The community consensus is that economic development is essential. Furthermore, economic development can and must sustain rural communities, local culture, ranching, farming and outdoor recreation as a way of life.

When it comes to economic development, residents want County government to address local needs and quality-of-life concerns through heritage, “inspirational,” and recreational tourism that provides good jobs and income producing opportunities while respecting local values and customs.

County residents clearly value their wide-open spaces, unrestricted views and pristine natural setting. Residents want to preserve (and re-use) historic buildings, protect their villages from haphazard growth and incompatible land uses, but they want to do so while providing opportunities for their young people to build new homes and find better job opportunities in San Miguel County.

Many residents see themselves as “weekend” farmers or ranchers - commuting to work at desk jobs in Santa Fe and Las Vegas during the week, and returning to manage family landholdings and care for elderly parents on their days off. It is a demanding lifestyle, but one which they warmly embrace out of love and respect for their elders, their cultural heritage, and for the land itself.

Existing residential neighborhoods are primarily concerned with juxtaposing industrial and heavy commercial uses with established residences. They would like to see a greater separation of these types of uses.

Local small business and property owners want to protect their economic opportunities from over-regulation and other artificial constraints. Everyone agrees that good paying jobs are desperately needed to keep young people living in their communities. County staff, appointed and elected officials actively seek greater clarity and direction from this Comprehensive Plan update, but do not want to create policies that are impossibly difficult or too costly to implement.

Community Comments

The following text summarizes actual statements made by County residents, business and property owners during the series of community forums held to develop this Comprehensive Plan. Relative priorities were assessed by frequent, informal voting on the part of those present at public forums. Where necessary, Communitas derived statements pertinent to the fundamental components of a Comprehensive Plan as mandated under state law and the Community Development Block Grant program which funded the development of this Plan.

I. San Miguel County Residents Value and Want to Preserve Their Rural Way of Life and Traditional Cultures

Wish List:

- Open Land, Aesthetics and Views Protected
- Agricultural Land and Water Rights Maintained
- Acequias Remain in Use
- Spanish Language Remains in Use
- Community Traditions History Shared and Taught
- Historic Land Grants Recognized
- Historic Buildings Re-Used
- Traditional Villages, Shrines Protected
- Archeological Resources Identified and Protected
- Libraries Display Local History
- Local Schools Record Oral Histories
- Rural Character Replicated in New Development
- Incentives Approach to Preservation:
 - Conservation Easements
 - Transfer and Purchase of Development Rights (TDRs and PDRs)
- More Community Meeting Places & Activities

II. County Residents Want to Ensure an Adequate Water Supply for Current Residents and Businesses, for Agricultural Uses, Recreation, Economic Development and Environmental Sustainability

Wish List:

- Hydrological Reports and Studies
- Water Conservation
- Relate new growth to water availability
- Water Rights Banking
- Xeriscaping and Rainwater Catchment Systems

III. County Residents Welcome New Development that is Compatible with Existing Residential Neighborhoods and Traditional Villages

Wish List:

- New Developments Have Open Areas and Parks
- New Development Sensitive to Rural Densities
- Village Concept” Cluster and Preserve
- Heavy Industry Separate from Residential Areas
- Encourage Innovation
- Support Rural Uses and Activities
- Support Community Land Trusts
- Keep the Pecos River Wild and Scenic

IV. County Residents Welcome and Seek to Attract New Development that Provides Good-Paying Jobs, New Business Opportunities and Affordable Housing

Wish List: Housing Opportunities

- Participate in the “Housing Coalition”
- Affordable Housing – More Home Ownership
- Housing Diversity in Master Planned Communities
- Solar and Adobe Housing Assistance Programs
- Revitalize Empty Homes and Buildings
- More and Improved Housing for Seniors

Wish List: Jobs and Business Development

- Las Vegas Extraterritorial Zone Economic Center
- Revitalized, Mixed-Use Village Cores
- Community Gardens and Local Farmers’ Markets
- Highlight Local Building Trades –

- An “adobe factory”
- Wood Working – Architectural Details
- Furniture Making
- Small Business Clusters Village Cores
- Shared Access, Plazas and Parks
- Small Business Incubators
- Apartments and Senior Housing in Villages
- Entertainment and Services in Village Centers
- Promote Forest Thinning for Water Conservation, Timber Sales and Fire Suppression
- Wood Bank for Elderly and Poor
- Public/Private Investment Partnerships
- Windfarms and Solar Generated Electric Power

V. Essential Services are Important to County Residents

Wish List:

- Fire Safety Education for Tourists and Visitors
- Community Centers in Outlying Villages
- Improved Public Safety, Emergency Services
- Improved Elder-Care Services and Programs
- Programs Combating Alcohol Abuse
- Programs Combating Domestic Violence
- Extend East Pecos Sewer Service to West Pecos
- Underground Electrical and Utility Lines
- More and Better Fiber Optics and Internet Service
- Improved Access for Fire Protection Vehicles
- Community Water Projects for Improved Fire Protection
- Clear Road and Speed Limit Signage
- More Extensive Sheriff Patrols in Small Communities
- Improved Animal Control Services
- Improved Road Maintenance Throughout County

VI. County Residents Care About the County’s Appearance

Wish List:

- Fewer Junked Cars and Debris
- Improved Recycling and Trash Pick-Up
- Reduce Litter through Education
- Clear and Visible Night Skies

- Lighting and Signage Control
- Scenic Byways on I-25, Hwy 50 and 63
- Ridgetops and Steep Slopes Undeveloped
- Cell Tower Aesthetics Controlled
- Buildings that Blend in Well with Rural Areas
- Limit Development of Ridgetops and Steep Slopes
- Expansive Views and Open Spaces



PART TWO: EXISTING CONDITIONS



Home and fields northwest of Las Vegas

HISTORY, SETTLEMENT AND TRADITIONAL LAND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

San Miguel's rich tri-cultural history has left an indelible stamp on its present-day physical form, local economies, land management practices, and cultural traditions.

Native American

The record of human events in San Miguel County begins circa 1100 A.D., the estimated date of the settlement of Pecos Pueblo near the modern day Village of Pecos. Over the next two centuries, the Pueblo become a vital regional trading center for people of the southern High Plains (i.e. Apaches) and the Puebloan Southwest. By the beginning of the fifteenth century, Pecos Pueblo was the area's most important settlement, acting as both a center of commerce and a fortress for the region.

The first Spanish explorers met with the Pecos in 1540. There was intermittent contact between the Pueblo and the *conquistadores* over the next forty years. Conquest occurred in 1580 and, aside from a ten-year span after the Pueblo revolt in 1692, was continuous until the last remaining seventeen residents abandoned the Pueblo at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Disease, occupation, shifting trade routes, and intra-tribal conflict had combined to deplete the community of its resources, deprive it of its strategic position, and diminish its cultural cohesion.

Spanish Colonial Settlements

Spanish settlements in San Miguel County, separate from pueblo occupations, began in the late 1700's. By the early 1800's Spanish families were petitioning the provincial government for land grants to allow them to settle on large tracts in the area. These land grants resulted in the establishment of Las Vegas and in consolidated ownership of vast areas of County

At the outset of the U.S-Mexican war in 1846 the US Army established its military headquarters in Las Vegas. Settlers traveling on the Santa Fe Trail were already familiar with the region and its strategic location and natural resources. The Santa Fe Trail established trade between the eastern United States and New Mexico in the early to mid-1800s. When Mexico lost the Mexican-American War, it ceded the territory of New Mexico to the United States. Although the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo with Mexico outlined the rights of settlers already living in ceded territories, their landholdings eroded away, into the hands of the United States government and powerful Anglo political and financial players.

The Anglo economic system quickly supplanted the rural Hispanic way of “living day-by-day and of taking where and when one needed” as described by David Remley in his history of the Bell Ranch. Between 1870 and the early 1880s, frontier violence was common throughout the New Mexico territory. Cattle rustling and Indian raids were common occurrences, and Spanish settlers were systematically disenfranchised. By the late 1800’s, owning great herds of cattle was the norm, and overstocking combined with drought laid waste to vast expanses of rangeland in San Miguel County and throughout the arid southwest.

Territorial Period

The end of that war in 1848 signaled the official end of the Spanish colonial period. The war had brought prosperity to the region around Las Vegas, which continued in the Territorial period, especially after the arrival of the transcontinental railroad in 1879, which brought with it the Industrial Revolution. During the 19th century, San Miguel County was one of the most prosperous agricultural counties in New Mexico, and one of the most prosperous, with an economy that was highly depended on barter and subsistence living. While the coming of the railroad brought boom years to Las Vegas and San Miguel County, it also brought the seeds of the local economy’s demise. The introduction of a way of life and goods made available by railroad introduced demand for a “better” life

and a greater variety of expensive goods than subsistence living provided. (See San Miguel County Housing Study Draft, Appendix A.)

Statehood and the Modern Era

With statehood achieved in 1912, the modern era in San Miguel County's history began. That history is largely indistinguishable from the history of the state as a whole. Development and population increases in New Mexico, spurred by world wars and technological development, however, passed over San Miguel County.

Record breaking droughts and a deep depression in the cattle market in the early twentieth century added to the degradation of rangeland. An annual report from the Bell Ranch in 1937 notes a twenty-five to forty percent "loss of turf" on "substantial areas of the Ranch."

Ranching gradually made the shift to more sustainable land management practices, including the development of water resources, balancing the size and distribution of the herd with weather and range conditions, shipping cattle to market via the railroad, and improving western bloodlines to address changing market preferences. Supplemental feeding to carry a herd through the winter and extensive fencing to rotate pasture land have helped the rangeland begin to recover from the overgrazing of the mid 1800s.

Not only did the coming of the railroad in the mid 1800s radically change ranching practices; it exerted a tremendous impact on towns and cities in New Mexico as well. The railroad precipitated an economic boom for the city of Las Vegas. However, in 1908, the railroad built the Belen cut-off which rerouted the trains and major rail facilities to Albuquerque. This was the start of a long period of economic decline in Las Vegas and in San Miguel County.

By the end of World War II, a mass exodus had begun that would leave San Miguel County – once the breadbasket of the

state – largely empty, with high unemployment and low per capita income for those remaining behind.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Environmental Setting

San Miguel County has an area of 2.7 million acres (roughly 4,700 square miles) in northeastern New Mexico. The southern Rocky Mountains extend north to south across western San Miguel County, with elevations ranging from 6,500' to 11,600'. The western part of the County contains nearly all of the federally protected conservation lands in the County - Santa Fe National Forest, Pecos Wilderness and Pecos National Monument.

Glorieta and Rowe Mesas' prominent escarpments define the southern edge of the Interstate 25 corridor, which parallels a major railroad line. The many small, traditional, valley settlements characteristic of Northern New Mexico are concentrated in the western part of San Miguel County. River valleys in this region, and the Pecos River in particular, provide a stable surface water supply. Their narrow floodplains and rich alluvial soils have long supported irrigated fields and pastures. Lower elevations are characterized by desert scrub, mid-range elevations host piñon and juniper woodlands, and upper elevations are forested in aspen, spruce and ponderosa pine up to the tree-line.

The City of Las Vegas sits on a high plateau (the Las Vegas Plateau) in a transitional area lying between the western mountains and the eastern plains. Las Vegas National Wildlife Refuge is located just east of Interstate 25 on the outskirts of the city. A large, grassy plateau extends east of Las Vegas to the Canadian River Escarpment – a nearly vertical, rocky cliff that drops over 100' from the high plains to a similarly flat, but lower plateau that extends south and east to the County line.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Environmentally sensitive areas include rivers - their floodplains and valleys, valleys, arroyo corridors, steep slopes, prominent ridges, rock outcroppings, natural landmarks, vistas

and forests. These are identified on Map 2: Environmental Resources. Environmental problem areas include old strip mines and contaminated sites and are also shown on Map 2.

Timber

Logging operations in San Miguel are concentrated in the northwestern portion of the County, northeast of Las Vegas and north of the town of Pecos. The scale of logging operations increased into the early 1990s, but recent timber sales indicate a steady decline in timber sales over the last ten years. Recent logging operations in the last three years tend to be smaller covering fewer acres than operations in the early 1990s. These more recent operations average 140-acres with the smallest being 35-acres and the largest being 700-acres. Sales of logging permits in the last few years indicate an increase in small-scale logging operations. Many of these recent logging operations occur along creeks

Two operations near Upper Rociada have been active between 2001 and 2003, one occurring along Maestas Creek and the other in the area of the Upper Rociada town site. A third operation is currently planned east of Rociada along Dairy Creek. Since 2000, three salvage-logging operations have been active in the area burned by the Viveash fire north of the town of Pecos. They include the northern area east of Barillas Peak, the area extending from Chaperito Knob to the northwestern bank of the Rito de la Osha, and a small operation in the Valle de la Osha. Three other recent logging areas in the Las Vegas land-grant include a small operation north of the village of Las Dispensas northwest of Las Vegas, an operation along Tecolote Canyon north of the village of Mineral Hill west of Las Vegas, and an operation on the eastern portion of Canyon del Medio near the village of Trout Springs west of Las Vegas. There are three small sawmill operations in the County at present: 2H Timber, Barela Timber Management and Airlock.

Fire Safety

According to a presentation made by Brad Ball of Southwestern Environmental Consultants on a Community Fire Plan (still in process) for the Pecos area in October 2003, there are a total of 671 dwelling units (537 year-round occupancy and 116 summer homes) in the fire planning region encompassing Pecos and Gallinas Canyons.

The fire plan will recommend a separation of about 200 feet between homes and 'heat sources' such as treed areas. The plan will also make zoning recommendations.

Forest thinning and restoration can cost the Forest Service between \$500 to \$1000 an acre, but private land owners may find it advantageous to partner with the Forest Service in thinning properties and selling their timber.

Wind

New Mexico Wind Speed Maps for 2002 provided by the Energy Conservation & Management Division of the New Mexico Energy, Minerals & Natural Resources Department indicate wind speeds in the far southwestern portion of the County to be between 16.8 and 17.9 mph, with a small portion at the southwestern most tip of the County with wind speeds as high as 19.0 to 20.1 mph (8.5 to 9.0 meters/second). While most wind power electrical generation is currently limited to wind speeds of 19.0 to 20.1 mph or higher, referred to as Class Four wind speeds, recent developments in windmill technology would allow Class Three wind speeds (between 16.8 and 17.9 mph) to be utilized for power generation.

Precipitation

Annual precipitation in the Las Vegas area ranges from a low of 5.41" recorded in 1956 to a high of 23.19" recorded in 1972. Average annual precipitation remained relatively high throughout the 1970's and 80's (between 19 and 23 inches annually), then began to decline in 1989 with a recorded

14.42". The average annual precipitation in San Miguel County is 16 inches.

Flora and Fauna

San Miguel County's ecosystems nurture many of the grasses, wildflowers, shrubs, and trees that grow throughout the state. Prairie grass, Indian paintbrush, scrub oak, piñon, and ponderosa pine proliferate in their respective zones. State and federal listings are relevant to state and federally financed projects. They are identified here only to describe the resources present within the County, and as additional justification for the County's desire to preserve open space and natural resources where appropriate. Seven species of flora native to San Miguel County have been either state or federally listed as threatened and endangered.

They are the Pecos mariposa lily, the Sapello Canyon larkspur, the Pecos fleabane, the Spiny aster, the New Mexico stickseed, the Holy Ghost ipomopsis, and the Weatherby's spike moss. All of these threatened and endangered species with the exception of the Spiny aster are found in the northwestern portion of San Miguel County.

Native animal species from elk and black bears to minnow, bass, and common sparrow share the habitats of San Miguel County with non-natives including various well-adapted cattle and fish. Six species of fauna native to San Miguel County have been either state or federally listed as threatened and endangered. They are: one mammal, the American Marten, two fish species, the Arkansas River Shiner and the Suckermouth Minnow, and three species of mollusks, the Lake Fingernail Clam, the Long Fingernail Clam, and the Paper-shell Mussell.

Water

*“Water rights are the soul of Pecos.”
County Resident.*

San Miguel County is in the Tierra y Montes Water Planning Region established by the State of New Mexico. The Tierra y Montes Water Planning Region includes Mora County. The *Mora-San Miguel Regional Water Study and Forty-Year Plan* has been proceeding in phases beginning in the early 1990's. The final report will be available some time in 2004. The following information on water resources in San Miguel County is derived from the interim reports.

The effect of the current drought, which began in the mid- to late-1990's and which many experts predict could last for twenty years or more, can not be overstated. The water levels and productivity of private and community wells are falling throughout San Miguel County. A diminishing in annual snowfall has reduced surface water flows, which in turn reduces the amount of water available for irrigation. Range land already depleted by centuries of over-grazing produces less and less biomass as the drought continues. Ranchers are struggling to provide herds with supplemental feed and water both. The expansive pinon die-off causes fire hazards, impacts grasslands and soils, detracts from the scenic quality of the landscape and will ultimately result in changes to run-off patterns.

Surface Water

Surface water originating the mountain region and carried through rivers, creeks, acequias, lakes, natural and artificial ponds provide for recreation and irrigation uses throughout the County. Surface water provides the municipal water supply for the City of Las Vegas.

The largest lake in San Miguel County is Conchas, with a surface area approximately 34,226 acres. Storrie Lake has a surface area of 1,034 acres; Lake David - 150 acres; McAllister Lake - 3,000 acres; Ferdinand Lake - 22 acres; and Bently Lake

- 20 acres. The total surface acreage of lakes in San Miguel County is 1,216 acres.

Historically, more than 90% of the surface water utilized in the region was, and still is, used for irrigation. Community ditch associations, private ditches belonging to one or two individuals, and the Storrie Project Water Users Association continue to dominate use of available surface waters for irrigation. Other uses of surface water include recreational, for a fish hatchery near Pecos, for wildlife preserves, and for some sand and gravel mining operations. These non-agricultural uses account for less than 10% percent of the surface water available in the County.

Groundwater

Groundwater is the primary source of municipal and domestic water in San Miguel County, outside of the City of Las Vegas. A hydrological assessment of groundwater in the water plan area prepared by Glorieta Geoscience Inc. and James W. Siebert and Associates estimates that 11.5 million acre-feet of groundwater exists in the San Miguel County – Mora County study area. The study projects that as much as 10,000 acre-feet will be appropriated by the year 2030. The forty-year cumulative sum of groundwater appropriated in the year 2030 is approximately 360,000 acre-feet, amounting to approximately 3% of the total groundwater resource in the study area.

The city of Las Vegas has experienced difficulty in meeting water-demand for several consecutive years and has instituted severe water use restrictions as a result. The apparent conflict between the City's use of the Taylor Wells and county resident/domestic well water users could have a negative impact on both the City and County.

Residents report declining water levels in domestic and community wells throughout San Miguel County. The County continues to seek grant funding in order to quantify and map its groundwater resources.

Municipal Use

The City of Las Vegas is mainly dependent on surface waters from the Gallinas River to supply its customers. In drought years, the city draws groundwater from four wells in the Taylor Well Field to supplement the surface water. Las Vegas functions as the commercial center for San Miguel and much of Mora County and is the only location with a major industrial facility. Other large institutional water users in Las Vegas and the surrounding area include New Mexico Highlands University, Luna Community College, the Armand Hammer World College, and the Las Vegas Medical Center.

Acequias and Irrigated Lands

The *Mora – San Miguel Regional Water Study and Forty Year Plan* reports a total of 52 Acequia Associations in San Miguel County and 70 domestic water systems in the region.

There are 8,854 irrigated acres in the Upper Pecos River Basin during the 1989 calendar year. Surface flooding is the single most used method of irrigation throughout the County. The study identifies seven ditch sections in the Pecos River Basin. Section I running from the headwaters of the Pecos River to the confluence of Indian Creek and Pecos River irrigates approximately 40 acres by means of surface flooding. Section II, ranging from the confluence of Indian Creek and Pecos River to the confluence of Cow Creek and Pecos River provides irrigation to approximately 580 acres. Section III ranging from the headwaters of Cow Creek to the confluence of the Pecos River and Cow Creek provides irrigation to 140 acres with farms ranging from 3 acres to 55 acres. All 9 of the farms in this area are irrigated by surface flooding.

According to Phase II of the Water Plan, no land is being irrigated in Section IV between the headwaters of Sebadilla Creek and confluence with the Pecos River near the village of San Juan. The 16 ditches in section IV ranging from the confluence of Cow Creek and the Pecos River to where the Pecos River exits San Miguel County irrigate approximately

2,107 acres with 9 plots ranging from 110 acres to 325 acres. All plots are irrigated by surface flooding. Section VI ranging from the headwaters of Tecolote Creek, a tributary of the Pecos River irrigates a range in size from 0.5 acres to 100 acres.

According to a hydrographic survey conducted by the New Mexico State Engineers in 1991, it is estimated that a total of 4,540.3 acres of land are being irrigated in section IV of the Pecos River that stretches between the headwaters of the Gallinas River through the City of Las Vegas and ends at the San Miguel County Line. Of these 4,540.3 irrigated acres in this section, the Mora/San Miguel Regional Water Plan visually estimated that 4,323.5 acres are being irrigated by the 21 acequia and Storrie Project Water Users Association. Of a total of 24 farms in the section, 17 are between 20 and 80 acres and are run by 1 to 5 people. All irrigated land of less than 190 acres rely on surface flooding as the only method of irrigation. Only land irrigated by the Nordhause ditch, the Farmers ditch and the Storrie Canal are irrigated with sprinklers in addition to surface flooding. These three ditches, however, supply water to 4,811 acres irrigated land in the section.

The Sapello River and its tributaries located in the northwestern part of the county are tributaries of the Mora River, which is a tributary of the Canadian River which flows into the Arkansas River in the State of Texas. All of the 21 ditches in San Miguel County that divert water from the river, irrigate by means of surface flooding. Of the 3,642 acres irrigated in this section only the 342 acre golf course, irrigated by La Acequia Madre del Canyon, is watered by means of a sprinkler system. 15 of the 21 ditches in the County supply water to irrigated fields of 100 acres or more.

Additional irrigated acreage was identified in the Wagon Mound area. Irrigated acreage in the Wagon Mound area is located on several ranches including the Wagon Mound Ranch, Daniels Ranch, Earl Berlier Ranch and the S & S Ranch total of 315.5 acres. All 7 farms in this section are operated by part-time farmers.

Water Quality and Supply Issues

According to the *Mora-San Miguel Regional Water Plan*, developed by Daniel B. Stephens & Associates, Inc. The following issues are of concern in Mora and San Miguel Counties (the three top issues are listed first):

- Variability of surface water supply, drought vulnerability
- Efficiency of agricultural water delivery and use, especially during drought periods
- Impairment of groundwater users in undeclared groundwater basins (where wells are not regulated.)
- Throughout San Miguel County, and rural New Mexico in general, groundwater quality is threatened by possible contamination from septic tanks.
- Water quality in the Gallinas area is impaired.
- Wildfires are a threat to water supply and quality. Mines, such as the Terrero Mine in Pecos, may adversely impact water quality.
- Concerns have been raised regarding the amount of water consumed by the Church of Scientology near Trementina.
- Agricultural lands are being converted to development use and other domestic types of uses.
- Proposed biomass conversions use large amounts of water
- Acequias are not metered, so it is not clear how much water is being consumed.
- Use of groundwater to fill lined ponds is adversely impacting downstream wells.
- The shoreline at Conchas Dam is about 50% lower than average.

Water Consumption

The highest annual water consumption (or “depletion”) in the year 2000 in San Miguel County was the 45,000 acre-feet attributed to reservoir evaporation, as reported by Daniel B. Stephens and Associates, Inc. Compared to that, irrigated Agriculture consumed just over 15,000 acre-feet;

public/domestic uses consumed under 5,000 acre-feet, livestock consumed approximately 1,000 acre-feet; and industrial and mining operations each consumed under 1,000 acre-feet.

Adjudication

The state of New Mexico is involved in a lawsuit (the Lewis Case) with property owners in the Carlsbad area over water rights in the Pecos River. The New Mexico state legislature recently approved spending \$40 million for the purchase of water rights in the Pecos River basin. Private domestic well users adjacent to the City of Las Vegas' Taylor wells have in the past filed an injunction against the City's use of this well field due to its potential negative impact on their private wells.

Crops

Alfalfa is the primary crop, comprising 77.1 % of all crops in the County and 55.1% and 83.7% in the Pecos River Basin and the Canadian River Basin respectively. Alfalfa sells for \$120.00 to \$200.00 per ton. Mixed Hay is the second most produced crop in San Miguel County, accounting for 9.1% of the total crops produced in the County and 14.5% and 7.5% of the irrigated agriculture in the Pecos River Basin and the Canadian River Basin respectively. The current market price for Mixed Hay is approximately \$120.00 to \$200.00 per ton. Permanent pasture comprises 8.7 % of the total crops grown making up 18.3% of crops in the Pecos River Basin and 5.8% of crops in the Canadian River Basin. All three primary crops are used to provide feed for livestock and other domesticated animals.

Ranching – Animal Husbandry

Livestock values from 1990 are shown on Map 4. The carrying capacity of lands in San Miguel County range from 43/acres per animal unit (or head of cattle) in the eastern portion of the County to 71/acres per animal unit on the Las Vegas plateau. Market values range from \$4.50/acre to \$5.40/acre accordingly.

Scenic and Recreational Resources

As is common throughout the western Rockies, lands under federal and state protection in San Miguel County tend to include the county's most scenic resources. The Sangre de Cristo Mountains, Santa Fe National Forest, Las Vegas National Wildlife Refuge and Pecos National Monument are prime examples. Many private land holdings, however, include areas of tremendous scenic beauty.

The I-25 corridor parallels a major railroad line, sections of historic Route 66 and the historic Santa Fe Trail. This scenic and historic transportation corridor links the state capitol, Santa Fe and Las Vegas with southern Colorado. Views along I-25 remain essentially unspoiled, with very little development, few billboards and few cell phone towers. The view shed of the I-25 corridor in the Pecos area stretches from the ridgeline of Glorieta Mesa to the south to the ridge line defining the Pecos River basin to the north.

The Pecos River is a state-designated Scenic River corridor. Other scenic resources include the Canadian River Escarpment, the Canadian River Basin and Conchas Lake.

Other recreational resources include golf courses located at Pendaries, New Mexico Highlands University and Conchas Lake. Cross Country skiing, hiking, mountain biking, hunting and fishing are popular activities within the Pecos Wilderness Area. Storrie Lake State Park, McAllister Lake, Villanueva State Park, Gallinas River Canyon Recreation Area, and Conchas Lake offer fishing and boating.

Las Vegas National Wildlife Refuge has 18,750 acres of grassland, cropland, marshes, canyons, ponds and streams where migratory birds take refuge as a central "flyway" area, including sandhill cranes, long-billed curlews, rough-legged grouse, geese, ducks, hawks, eagles and numerous shorebirds.

Minerals

Mining in San Miguel County consists primarily of small gravel-mining operations and sandstone and flagstone excavation. Zinc was intensively mined in the Pecos area in the 1920's and 30's. Coal, widely distributed throughout New Mexico, was mined in San Miguel County. Turquoise mining occurred in San Miguel County as well, although the center of activity was in Santa Fe County in the vicinity of Cerrillos.



Conchas Dam

Socio-Economics and Housing

*“People don’t need things. They need work.”
San Miguel County resident*

Population and Its Distribution

San Miguel County, like much of New Mexico, is sparsely populated. The 2000 Census shows 30,126 people living on 2,700,000 acres. Its 2000 population ranked 15th out of 33 counties in the state. A straight-line growth pattern from 1920 to 2000 shows an average overall growth of 32% (from 22,930 to 30,126), consistent with state-wide trends in rural counties. Within that span, there was both a notable decrease of residents between 1940 and 1970 and a notable increase from 1970 to 1990.

Within the County there are population clusters reflecting historical, climactic, and employment characteristics of the region. Just over half (53%) of all County residents live in the two incorporated communities of Las Vegas and Pecos. The City of Las Vegas accounts for 48.3% (14,565); the Village of Pecos another 4.8% (1,441). Las Vegas declined in population (by 188 persons) while the small village of Pecos, gained in population (by 429 persons) between the 1990 and 2000 Census.

The western region of the County, in and around the town of Pecos, is experiencing the most growth, as it spills over from the City and County of Santa Fe. Much of the growth is in East Pecos, an unincorporated area surrounded by National Forest. Housing is more affordable in this region and is convenient to I-25, a commuting corridor.

In the extraterritorial zones and the County contiguous to these communities are additional clusters. Other clusters exist as well around Sapello, Rowe, Tecolote and Villanueva. In the eastern

reaches of the County the population is much sparser with one cluster, largely seasonal, at Conchas Lake.

The eastern part of the County, which is predominantly ranching, is experiencing slow growth and has lost population relative to the Rio Grande Corridor, as evidenced by legislative redistricting in 2000.

The County ranks high in poverty, low in per capita income, and low in the percentage of high school graduates while close to state and national norms for college.

Ethnicity, Age, and Education

The ethnic make-up San Miguel County population is predominantly Hispanic or Latino at 65%, Hispanic Mexicans make up 13%, and all others comprise the balance of 22%. In San Miguel County, the total Hispanic population as a percent of the overall population decreased from 80% to 78% between 1990 and 2000.

According to the 2000 census, the average age of San Miguel residents has increased since 1990. In both males and females significant increases in the groups aged 35 to 59 occurred, and significant decreases in groups aged 25 to 34. There was also a decline in the group aged 0 to 9 years.

This data likely indicates that the age increase is due to immigration of retirees and other older residents, some not originally from San Miguel County, the exodus of young adults, and a low birth rate.

In educational attainment San Miguel County has a lower percentage of residents 25 years of age and older who have graduated from high school (74.5%), when compared to New Mexico (78.9%) and national statistics (80.4%). The percent of County residents who have received Bachelor's degrees (12.2%) and graduate or professional degrees (9.0%), however, compares favorably with New Mexico (13.6% and 9.8% respectively), and the U.S (15.5% and 8.9% respectively).

Occupations, Employment, and Income

The largest industries in 2000 were state and local government, 46.3 % of earnings; services, 22.2 %; and retail trade, 11.2 %. Of the industries that accounted for at least 5 % of earnings in 2000, the slowest growing from 1999 to 2000 was retail trade, which increased 5.0 %; the fastest was construction (5.8% of earnings in 2000), which increased 15.9 %.

Labor Force Data New Mexico 1999 and 2000						
	1999 Annual Average			2000 Annual Average		
	Civilian Labor Force	# of Unemployed	Unempl. Rate	Civilian Labor Force	# of Unemployed	Unempl. Rate
San Miguel County	11685	826	7.10%	12,061	748	6.20%

San Miguel County is ranked ninth out of 33 counties in New Mexico for poverty in 2000. Of the 30,126 people in the county in 2000, poverty status was determined for 29,125 people (97%). Some people, such as those in the military or institutional group quarters, are not included in the poverty determination. Of these 29,125 persons, 24.4% or 7,110 individuals, fall within poverty levels. Of these, 3,873 reside in Las Vegas, and 241 in Pecos. The remaining 2,996 individuals in poverty are dispersed throughout the County.

According to the Bureau of Business and Economic Research:

“In 2000, San Miguel [County] had a per capita personal income (PCPI) of \$16,205. This PCPI ranked 25th in the State, and was 74 percent of the State average, \$21,931, and 55 percent of the national average, \$29,469. The 2000 PCPI reflected an increase of 6.8 percent from 1999. The 1999-2000 State change was 4.7 percent and the national change was 5.8 percent.

In 2000, San Miguel [County] had a total personal income (TPI) of \$489,904. This TPI ranked 17th in the State and accounted for 1.2 percent of the State total. The 2000 TPI reflected an increase of 7.2 percent from 1999. The 1999-2000

State change was 5.5 percent and the national change was 7.0 percent.

Total personal income (TPI) includes the earnings (wages and salaries, other labor income, proprietors' income); dividends, interest, and rent; and transfer payments received by the residents of San Miguel. In 2000, earnings were 56.3 percent of TPI; dividends, interest, and rent were 14.9 percent; and transfer payments were 28.9 percent. From 1999 to 2000, earnings increased 8.6 percent; dividends, interest, and rent increased 5.6 percent; and transfer payments increased 5.5 percent.

[Total] earnings by persons employed in San Miguel [County] increased from \$233,492,000 in 1999 to \$254,087,000 in 2000, an increase of 8.8 percent. Extrapolating from employment data showing a civilian labor force of 12061 in 2000 and unemployment of 748, the wage earners numbered 11313 and earned an average of \$22,460.”

Triggered in part by the tremendous loss of population from San Miguel County following World War II, the economic capabilities of the County lowered and spun into a long depression that has proved difficult to reverse. Jobs are a premium, with the most stable being in government or small businesses. Agriculture consists primarily one of large ranch operations (often owned by out-of-state corporations) and tiny farms that provide supplemental income to families whose main employment is in government, the schools or small business. (See San Miguel County Housing Study Draft, Appendix A.)

(The Following is Excerpted from San Miguel Housing Study, Draft, by NNMEDD, Appendix A.)

Median Household Income in San Miguel County was \$26,524 in year 2000, as compared to \$34,133 state-wide and \$41,994 nation-wide. San Miguel County's Household Income is 78% of the statewide figure, and 63% of the national level. A rule-of-thumb is that households are virtually shut out of the homeownership market if their income falls below 80% of Median.

The income bracket with the greatest number of households is that of \$15,000 - \$24,000 and the second largest is within the Less than \$10,000 bracket.

The percent of households in San Miguel County making under \$35,000 a year is 63%, compared to 51% at the state level and 41% nationally. Clearly, a significant majority of first-time home buyers in San Miguel County would be eligible for government assistance.

Median Family Income in San Miguel County was \$31,250 in 2000; compared with \$39,425 state-wide and \$50,046 nationally. This equates to 79% of the state-wide median, and 62% of the national median. However, unlike household income, the bracket with the second largest percentage is \$35,000 - \$49,999.

Per Capita Income for San Miguel County was \$13,268 in 2000. Again, this figure is quite low in comparison to the state per capita income of \$17,261, and is just 61% of the national figure of \$21,587.

The number of individuals living below the poverty level in San Miguel County was 7,110, or 24% of the total County population, according to the 2000 Census. This is double the national level of 12%, and quite a bit higher than the state level of 18%.

The largest concentration of individuals living in poverty is in Las Vegas – with 28%. Poverty statistics for the Village of

Pecos show that only 16% fall below the poverty line. This disparity may be due to the fact that residents in the Pecos area have access to jobs in Santa Fe, and the spill-over effect of residents moving out of Santa Fe and Santa Fe County. The Village also has a few high profile, high income residents which skews income data.

San Miguel County ranked 14th among all 33 New Mexico counties in terms of unemployment, according to the New Mexico Department of Labor, in 2002 and again in 2003. San Miguel County has an unemployment rate of 7% compared to 5.9% state-wide and 5.8% nationally.

The majority are employed in “management, professional and related occupations” at 34%, followed by “sales and office” at 25% and “services” at 22%.

The following chart shows that San Miguel is more heavily dependent on government than the US as a whole, and the state of New Mexico, which also exceeds the national average.

Class/Work	San Miguel	NM	US
Private	52.8%	68.5%	78.5%
Government	35.6%	22.7%	14.0%
Self-Employed	10.7%	8.4%	6.6%
Unpaid/family	0.6%	0.4%	0.3%

Farming, Ranching, and Recreation

According to a summary of New Mexico Department of Agriculture statistics provided by NNMED, there were a total of 11 businesses in the combined fields of agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting in Sam Miguel County in 2001. These businesses employed a total of 57 persons for an average weekly wage of \$302. There were 295 farms and ranches, and the average size was 4,000 acres. The top four commodities were cattle and calves, hay and silage, horses and ponies and

nursery crops. The combined cash receipts in 2001 were \$20,340,000.

Housing

According to the Northern New Mexico Economic Development District's report "San Miguel County Housing Study, Draft" (Appendix A) notes that persons under age 20 makes up 31% of the total population. If this cohort is to remain in the County, as many current residents would like to see happen, it is a group that will need housing over the next 10 – 20 years as individuals establish their own families.

The two largest age groups are 35-44 and 45 –54, comprising 29% of the total population. This age group most likely already owns or rents homes. Their future needs will involve housing repair and rehabilitation. Over a 10-20 year period, renovations to accommodate aging, assisted living and other life style arrangements will come into demand.

The Northern New Mexico Economic Development Division (see Appendix A) has determined that:

- The housing stock in San Miguel County is aging. About 30% dates from pre-1940.
- Residents of older housing stock – particularly the elderly - need financial assistance with weatherization, heating, updating and completing bathroom, kitchen and plumbing.
- Residents are paying a disproportionate amount of their income for mortgages.
- Approximately 1/3 of the housing stock consists of mobile homes. Manufactured homes are built outside of the County, creating more economic leakage.

Infrastructure

Water and Wastewater

With the exception of the City of Las Vegas, all potable water supplied in San Miguel County comes from underground aquifers. The Village of Pecos has community water and wastewater systems. Several master planned communities have, or are planning, community water systems. The majority of county residents rely on domestic wells and septic tanks. The County does not provide water and/or wastewater services.

Solid Waste

San Miguel County partners with Mora County for regional solid waste collection services. Residents take their household solid waste to 13 transfer sites located throughout the County.

Utilities

Public Service Company of New Mexico provides electric and gas service to the incorporated areas of Pecos and Las Vegas. The Mora San Miguel Electrical Cooperative provides electricity outside of PNM's service areas. Rural residents purchase gas/propane, or use wood for heating.

Communications

The Railroad District in Las Vegas has high-speed internet cable access. Qwest provides DSL service within three miles of the central office. Cable or satellite internet service is available in the more rural parts of the County. Cell phone service is provided along the I-25 corridor and in some parts of the County around Las Vegas – and not in others due primarily to the topography and sparsely settled conditions.

Transportation

I-25 circles around the northwest corner of San Miguel County. I-25 provides a commuter route for residents concentrated in the Village of Pecos and city of Las Vegas and in the outlying villages that dot the north-central and westernmost part of the county.

AMTRAC service continues to be available along the railroad line that parallels I-25, linking the city of Las Vegas with Santa Fe (indirectly via Lamy), Albuquerque, Raton and southern Colorado.

There is a viable and growing general aviation airport in service on the northeastern boundary of Las Vegas.

U.S. Route 84, a two-lane paved roadway, connects I-25 just south of Las Vegas to I-40 to the south. State routes (two-lane paved roadways) extend to many of the small villages scattered throughout the county. State Routes 50, 22 and 63 are among the most heavily traveled, serving the Villages of Pecos and Rowe and providing access to the recreational backcountry. State Route 518 is another heavily traveled route that connects Las Vegas and Mora and loops northwest to Taos and Santa Fe. County roads, generally unpaved but graded and graveled, provide access to outlying residences.

There is no bus service in San Miguel County. The average commute to work time for San Miguel County residents is 24 minutes. In addition to the time-costs of driving, national statistics show that the less income a family makes, the greater is the percentage spent on transportation – 36% for the poorest wage earners, and 14% for the wealthiest American households. Spending on transportation does not build wealth because vehicles are depreciating assets.

Public Safety and Community Services

Public Safety

The County Sheriff's office provides crime prevention in San Miguel County. The County Sheriff is an elected position. Staffing includes one Undersheriff, six deputies, one office manager and one Dispatcher.

The County Manager's Office oversees the DWI Program and manages grants and services related to DWI prevention.

The County Fire Marshal coordinates and distributes state funds to 13 Volunteer Fire Departments (VFDs). The VFDs provide Emergency Medical Services (EMS) linked to the County's rural addressing and 911 emergency services. VFDs are located in:

1. Sapello/Rociada
2. Gallinas
3. Conchas
4. El Pueblo
5. Ilfeld
6. Cabo-Lucero
7. Sheridan
8. Trementina
9. Bernal-Tecolote
10. Pecos Canyon
11. Tecolotito
12. La Placitas
13. Rowe

Community Services

The Armand Hammer World College of the American West, Luna Community College and New Mexico Highlands University are located in Las Vegas. There are three regional high schools: one in the Village of Pecos, and two in the city of Las Vegas, which has two separate school districts. Regional junior highs are located near Villanueva and Las Vegas, with elementary schools more dispersed throughout the County. The County serves as a pass-through agency for the El Valle Foundation which provides scholarships for youth education.

Senior and youth services are provided by the state of New Mexico. The County has Community Centers in San Juan, Bernal, Tecolote and San Jose. The County manages a small Recreation Fund for special events and programs.

The County manages a regional detention center located just south of the city of Las Vegas. Participating counties include Taos, Santa Fe and Mora. The County manages the Bureau of Justice Assistance, providing legal services for indigent County residents.

San Miguel County oversees the distribution of HUD Section 8 housing funds to County residents; and acts as a pass-through agency for local Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding distribution from the state.

The County serves another important role as the pass-through funding agency for Medicaid (the Indigent Fund) and the San Miguel County Health Facility located in Las Vegas, which was constructed with state funds.

San Miguel County also provides the following services to local residents:

- County Clerk's Office – Recording and Filing
- Bureau of Elections
- Collections
- County Assessor's Office

- Animal Control
- Planning and Zoning
- Public Works – Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation

Land Use, Land Ownership and Zoning

San Miguel County is a rural county characterized by small, traditional villages located along river corridors, large open rangeland, and forested lands under federal protection. Population is concentrated in the city of Las Vegas and the Village of Pecos. Federal and state lands together make up 19% of the land area of San Miguel County. The remaining 81% is in private ownership. According to the *Mora-San Miguel Regional Water Plan* of 1994, a total of 8,854 acres of land were irrigated in the Upper Pecos River basin in 1989.

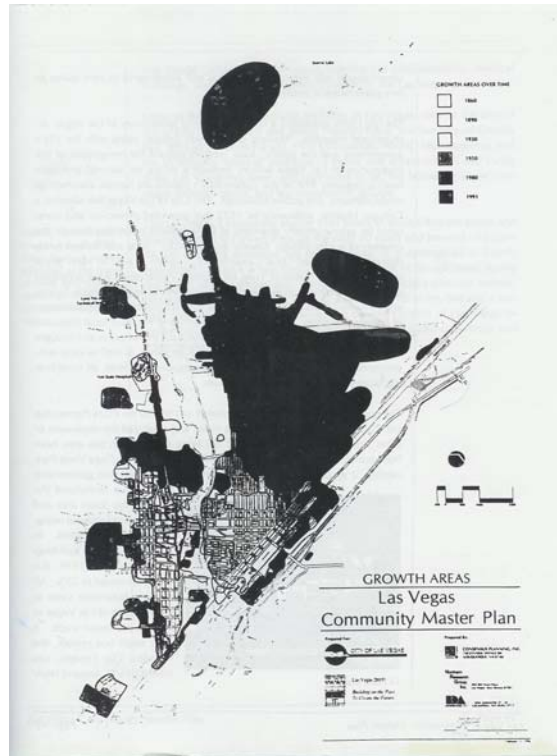
The total estimated irrigated acreage in the Canadian River Basin was estimated at 26,555 acres. The study did not estimate irrigated acreage along the lower Pecos River, however, one can infer from aerial photography that an additional 6,000 acres are under irrigation. The total amount of irrigated farm and pasture land in San Miguel County is estimated to be 41,400 acres. Recreational uses are significant in San Miguel County. Recreational use tends to coincide with federal and state lands, and occurs around the several lakes mentioned earlier.

Extraterritorial Zone – City of Las Vegas

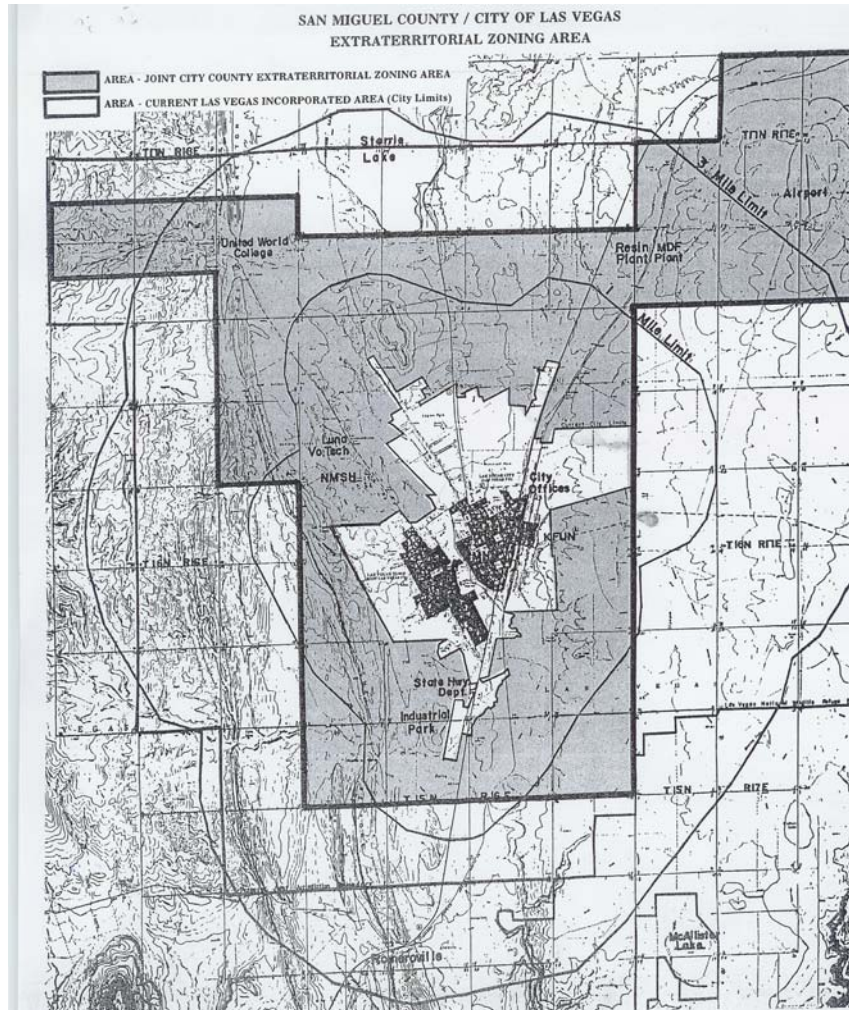
The Extraterritorial Zone (ETZ) surrounding the City of Las Vegas is subject to a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) between the City and San Miguel County. The JPA establishes an Extraterritorial Zoning Commission and a Joint Municipal-County Zoning Authority. The Commission and the Authority consist of City Council and County Commission representatives.

Development within the ETZ is subject to the Comprehensive Policy Plan and Extraterritorial Zoning Area Ordinance. The Community Master Plan of the City of Las Vegas (1997) gives

clear preference for infill and redevelopment occurring within existing City boundaries over development in the ETZ.



City of Las Vegas Growth Areas



City of Las Vegas, ETZ

Existing Land Uses in San Miguel County

Land Use	Percent
Federal/State Protected Lands	19%
Farm and Pasture Lands	2%
Developed - Village & City	1%
Ranch Lands	78%

Land Ownership in San Miguel County

Federal	13%
State	6%
Indian	0%
Private	81%

Zoning

Every parcel of land in San Miguel County has zoning attached to it under one of the following categories:

Zoning Category	Purpose	Uses/Density
R1	Single Family Residential	1du/0.5acres
A1	Residential Agricultural	1du/lot
A2	Residential Agricultural	1du/2 acres
TC	Traditional Community	1du/0.5acres
R-H	Rural Holding Zone	1du/0.5ac, 1du/5ac

County Operations, Revenues and Expenses

San Miguel County derives the majority of its revenues from Intergovernmental Grants – generally in the form of special state appropriations. Because the County’s revenue income is limited, the services the County can offer are also limited. The County engages in capital improvements primarily through state appropriations (Intergovernmental Grants 38%). The next largest source of funds is Property Taxes at 26%, followed by Charges for Services (16%) and Gross Receipts Taxes (GRT) at 12%. GRT revenues go towards fire safety and environmental services.

San Miguel’s share of Lodgers Tax Receipts each year is about 1/10 that of Santa Fe County and 1/6 that of Taos County.

The County’s major expenditures (figures taken from the 2001/2002 Budget) primarily reflect pass-through spending of state funds: In descending order:

Major County Expenditures

1. Detention Center	\$2.2m
2. Public Safety (Sheriff/VFD/EMS)	\$1.4m
3. Public Health	\$0.8m
4. Road Projects	\$0.5m
5. Debt Service (Bonds)	\$0.5m

Potential additional revenue sources for San Miguel County include:

- An additional ¼% GRT for County Capital Outlays
- Special State Authorized GRTs
- Impact Fees
- Increased User Fees and Other Charges

CHAPTER THREE: ANALYSIS AND PROJECTIONS



Montezuma Castle – United World College

History, Settlement and Traditional Land Management

San Miguel County's rich tri-cultural history is evident in the physical form of its villages and major city – Las Vegas; in its rural lifestyle, local economies and cultural traditions still practiced today. San Miguel's land grant history is such that what were once communal lands managed by Hispanic farmers and ranchers are now primarily under federal and state ownership and protection. Local farmers and ranchers have had to adjust their business practices to accommodate this loss of communal grazing lands, often by leasing back federal and state lands.

The implications for Comprehensive Planning are:

- San Miguel County retains much of its historic fabric as defined by a settlement pattern of dispersed, semi-autonomous villages strung along permanent water sources such as springs and river corridors and linked by narrow, rural roads; transitioning (in a west to east direction) to a more broadly dispersed pattern of clustered ranch home sites surrounded by vast acreages of rangeland.
- Hispanic cultural traditions and social values remain strong in San Miguel County. A clear distinction can be anticipated between the values and economic pursuits of new immigrants into the county when compared with those of long-term county residents.
- The County has untapped heritage tourism potential.
- The significant concentration of commercial, industry and employment is in the City of Las Vegas. Las Vegas is a transportation hub where rail, air, the interstate and most major state roadways connect. Las Vegas serves as the hub for education and government for the north central region of the State.

- Recreation in the form of hiking, hunting, boating and fishing, ranching and small-scale farming contribute to the economy, the lifestyle and the scenic character of the County.
- The farming and ranching economies of longstanding Hispanic families were marginalized in the 1800's. These economies continue to struggle today.
- The state and federal governments own and manage prime timber and grazing lands.
- Several land grants are represented by heirs who continue to pursue their claim to their ancestral property rights.
- There is a longstanding cultural tradition of clustered village development combined with communal ownership and management of grazing and timber lands, of maintaining agricultural use in irrigable lands and in managing local resources, such as water, on a communal basis (ie. the acequia/mayordormo system.)

Natural Resources

San Miguel County's sparse population and dispersed settlement pattern, distance from major metropolitan centers and scarce surface water supplies in the western part of the County have all contributed to the preservation of tremendously scenic natural resources. The implications for Comprehensive Planning are:

- San Miguel County remains primarily rural in character.
- There are many opportunities for view preservation and maintaining scenic transportation, recreational and habitat corridors.
- San Miguel County has untapped timber resources that will become increasingly available with planned thinning of national forests.
- San Miguel County has mineral resources – gravel, flagstone and lime – that are underdeveloped.
- The County has wind-generation potential, particularly where there are Class Three wind speeds transmission lines with additional capacity in the southwestern portion of the County.
- The County has a supply of irrigable farm land that remains intact.
- The County and City of Las Vegas have significant untapped recreational tourism potential.

According to Daniel B. Stephens & Associates, Inc., San Miguel County faces major planning challenges regarding water rights and their use, including:

- Preservation of acequia culture and water rights
- Impoundment of surface water in stock ponds
- Watershed management

- Potential forest fire hazards

According to Daniel B. Stephens & Associates, Inc. the County should consider the following water management alternatives:

- Reduce urban and agricultural water demand through conservation
- Develop new water supplies
- Protect or improve water quality



Pecos River

Socio-Economics and Housing

“All everyone talks about here is culture. I want to know what kind of culture sends its young people away because it can’t provide any jobs? Do you see anyone besides me in this room who’s under 35?” San Miguel County Resident.

Affordable housing and good jobs are the two primary issues San Miguel County residents care most about. These are the concerns they most want local government to address. Providing affordable housing and good jobs are the marching orders for this update to the Comprehensive Plan. The Community Vision of fostering environmental and cultural conservation and preserving a rural lifestyle establish the context in which these two primary needs – housing and jobs – are to be provided.

The County ranks high in poverty, low in per capita income, and low in the percentage of high school graduates while close to state and national norms for college. Demographic trends charted from 1990 to 2000 show that young people of college and working age have been leaving the County, while people over 40 tend to return or migrate into the County at that age.

By far, the largest industry in San Miguel County is state and local government, followed by services, then retail trade. Ranching and farming, two land uses comprise the majority of the land resources in the County, do not even factor into the state reporting system on regional economies.

San Miguel County grew a total of 20% in population between 1990 and 2000, a rate of 2% annually. For comparison, Santa Fe County grew 31% and Taos County grew 30% during the same decade.

According to the NNMEDD summary of Year 2000 Census data, the Village of Pecos grew an astonishing 42.4% over the last decade; the city of Las Vegas lost population, as did the village of Mosquero, on the eastern border of the County. The west side of the County saw a decrease in the percent of

Hispanic population while Las Vegas saw an increase. County residents are commuting long distances to work, with the greatest number commuting 35 to 60 minutes each way.

San Miguel County has an aging housing stock with low market value. County residents are paying higher mortgages than the norm. Mobile homes make up 1/3 of the current housing stock.

Population and Housing Projections

According to projections made by the U.S. Census Bureau, San Miguel County should plan to absorb an increase in population of about 2,000 by the year 2014. While it should be acknowledged that the 2040 projected population used in the *Mora-San Miguel Regional Water Plan* is 44,000 to 54,000 for San Miguel County, Comprehensive Plans typically adopt a ten-year, rather than a forty-year, planning horizon. Population projections beyond the ten-year horizon are not highly reliable.

Using the U.S. Census Bureau projections and NNMEDD’s summary of household characteristics data, approximately 775 new dwelling units would be needed by the year 2014. This target amount provides a high-end planning horizon for the Comprehensive Plan.

However, as NNMEDD points out, according to the 2000 Census, there presently exist 3,120 vacant dwellings in the County. Improvements to existing housing stock would clearly reduce the need to convert land from agricultural or rural uses.

NNMEDD/US Census Bureau Population Projections

Population	Year
30,126	2000
31,479	2010
32,000	2014 Planning Horizon Year
33,398	2020
35,000	2030

Residential Growth and Water Demand

Using the City of Santa Fe's water use estimates, a dwelling unit is expected to use on average 0.2 acre feet of water per year or less. Given the projected 775 new dwelling units required by 2014, this would result in an increase demand of 155 acre feet per year.

Non-Residential Growth

The population increase (2,000) projected for the Plan's 2014 horizon year would be marginally sufficient to support one additional, neighborhood scale commercial center. According to the Urban Land Institute Shopping Center Handbook, a population of between 2,500 and 5,000 is needed to support a neighborhood shopping center providing convenience commercial services, which could be located on as little as 5 acres of land.

Again using Santa Fe metro-area statistics as a planning guide, a ratio of 1.0 jobs/dwelling unit may be desirable in San Miguel County as well. The 775 projected new dwelling units then could reflect a parallel demand for 775 new jobs. Using the Santa Fe metro-area model, it would be reasonable to plan for 58% of all new employment to be office related, 33% to be retail services and 9% to be industrial. This corresponds to 15 acres of new office development; 13 acres of new retail development; and 7 acres of new industrial development. The combined total would be 35 acres of new, non-residential uses.

Non-Residential Growth and Water Demand

Non-residential uses such as office and retail do not typically generate large amounts of new water demand, compared to residential uses. Hotels are highly water consumptive, with a single hotel room (in a full service hotel) being roughly equivalent to one dwelling unit in annual water consumption.

Industrial/manufacturing uses that require water as an input in the production process will also place large demands on local water supplies.

Implications

The implications for Comprehensive Planning are:

Growth

- The projected population growth of roughly 2,000 by the year 2014 will not require a significant land area to serve, particularly if a portion of the vacant housing stock can be upgraded to serve projected needs.
- The projected future increase in water consumption of 155 acre feet per year could place a strain on current resources.
- The related projected growth in non-residential uses could require up to 35 acres of land – a fraction of the land area of San Miguel County, but a significant amount in a small village such as Pecos.

Jobs

- The local economy is dependent on government jobs.
- The local activities that hold the greatest cultural significance – ranching and farming - generate little reported income.
- Local residents spend a disproportionate amount of their time and income on commuting to jobs in Santa Fe and Las Vegas.
- Young people leave the County to seek greater educational and employment opportunities.

Housing

- Local residents are paying high mortgages.
- The housing stock needs rehabilitation and code updates.
- Some local residents are finding that mobile homes meet their housing needs and budgets: all of which indicate that local residents are having difficulty building wealth through home ownership.
- According to the U.S. Census Bureau projections, San Miguel County should plan for another 775 new dwelling units over the next ten years – the planning horizon for the Comprehensive Plan update.
- At current County densities, this could translate into 775-1550 acres of land converted from rural to urban use.
- At clustered housing densities, this could translate into 310 acres of land conversion or less.
- At either density, the amount of land required to accommodate projected growth is between 0.01% to 0.06% of the total land area of San Miguel County.
- With over 3,000 vacant dwelling units, revitalizing the current housing stock in San Miguel County could reduce the pressure on converting agricultural land to housing.
- New housing is most likely to continue to be constructed in the vicinity of the Village of Pecos and the City of Las Vegas.
- The number of houses needed to serve the local population is small – the issues are affordability and the opportunity to build wealth through home ownership – building local wealth is a key component of economic development.

- The Village of Pecos may require state assistance in upgrading its water and wastewater facilities to accommodate the surge in growth; and San Miguel County will be called upon to provide better roads, sheriff and fire protection and emergency medical services in East Pecos.

Economic Development

- High poverty rates and low per capita income may give a distorted picture of quality of life issues. Residents who attended planning forums feel they have a high quality of life even though incomes tend to be low.
- While the County can be highly proactive in choosing the location of new development from a land resource and community values perspective, it needs to also be highly proactive in ensuring that housing be affordable and that housing is developed in synch with new jobs that locals (and young people in particular) can compete for on a level playing field with newcomers; and with retail and other services that reduce the need to commute long distances.
- Homeownership builds local wealth and creates construction jobs. The County should do all in its power to help local residents achieve home ownership – in a manner that is conducive to the property increasing in value over time.
- San Miguel County could capitalize on its cultural and recreational assets; and on three significant educational institutions in Las Vegas – Armand Hammer United World College of the American West, New Mexico Highlands University, and Luna Community College – to retain its resident young professionals and to attract the “creative class” - individuals who depend on flexible thinking to perform their jobs, as defined by Dr. Richard Florida, professor of Economic Development at Carnegie Mellon University. This spectrum of the economy seeks out high quality-of-life-locations with clusters of educational, cultural, recreational and research institutions and

opportunities. High-speed internet connections, telecommunications, good airport access are the key infrastructure components to attracting the “creative class” to an area. Dr. Florida asserts in his book, *“The Rise of the Creative Class,”* that this component of the economy is expanding faster and returns more value to local economies than the traditional manufacturing and extractive industries which tended to locate in rural areas.

- According to an article in the Santa Fe New Mexican, January 30, 2004, Congress has appropriated \$373,000 for a study of highway safety in the Pecos Valley with the intent of restoring the Glorieta Battlefield and opening it to public. The study will most likely consider realigning state road 50. San Miguel County stands to benefit from the study, any subsequent road improvements and an increase in tourism. The County should adopt land use and design policies to preserve the scenic qualities of the roadway, in order to encourage tourists to include Pecos Village, the Pecos Mountains, Las Vegas and other County areas in their cultural tourism itineraries.
- San Miguel County could capitalize on, and foster expansion of, the economic activities that residents currently engage in. These include recreational and cultural tourism, ranching, farming, small business entrepreneurship, traditional arts and crafts, forestry, mining, and timber processing. It is important to add-value to these basic industries, and to expand beyond their extractive aspects by planning for sustainable yields. Possibilities include highlighting the consumption of locally grown and processed food in local restaurants, groceries, farmers’ markets, bed and breakfast accommodations and tourist shops. Mining operations should be combined with processing industries to produce high-end building materials sold from outlets located within the county.

Infrastructure

San Miguel County, as a rural County, is neither accustomed to, nor prepared to provide public infrastructure suitable to support urban densities. The County is in the process of quantifying the groundwater supply, but indications are that existing domestic and community well water levels and production volumes are declining throughout the County and that the trend is likely to continue due to drought and continued new development. Telecommunications services are available, but cell phone service is spotty.

Commuting to work is a way of life for many San Miguel residents, where the mean travel-to-work time is 24 minutes. In round numbers, 8,000 out of 11,000 (75%) employed residents of San Miguel County drive alone to work. This percentage is not uncommon, but when the vast size, dispersed population and low wages of the County are taken into account, it points towards County residents shouldering unusually heavy transportation-related costs. These costs detract significantly from the already limited purchasing power of County residents and businesses, as reflected in the County's poor performance in terms of gross receipts tax revenue.

The implications for Comprehensive Planning are:

- New development must be self-sufficient regarding basic infrastructure.
- Current domestic well users require protection from loss of supply due to drought and new development.
- In order to direct development to certain desired locations, the County may need to partner in providing infrastructure and/or telecommunications capabilities or other incentives.
- The Extraterritorial Zone surrounding the City of Las Vegas is a logical location in which to concentrate new development due to the public infrastructure already in place. Infill and new development in desired locations

within and surrounding the Village of Pecos would be a second suitable location for appropriately scaled and designed new development due to the level of public infrastructure already in place.

- New and better employment opportunities are needed in and around the city of Las Vegas to reduce commuting time for local residents.
- Local residents would benefit from a shop-local-first awareness campaign that would identify the true personal costs of commuting to outlying communities for basic goods and services.
- The two-lane, narrow country roads and state routes support the historic and rural character of the county.

Public Safety and Community Services

*“Fire safety education is critical – one cigarette thrown from a car and it’s all lost!”
County Resident.*

San Miguel County’s size, low tax base, and dispersed population make providing public services difficult. The County relies on state agencies and local nonprofits to provide community services. Implications for Comprehensive Planning include:

- Locating new development within reach of existing sheriff offices and volunteer fire departments makes good fiscal sense.
- The County may need to partner with the state and local nonprofits to provide a higher level of community services to areas of concentrated population, such as the Village of Pecos and Las Vegas Extraterritorial Zone.
- Impact fees can help pay the costs associated with providing public facilities and infrastructure required by new development, but can not be applied towards rehabilitating or upgrading existing facilities. The County will need to look towards other funding sources.
- Community Centers would be beneficial in outlying villages, but beyond the County’s staffing and budget capabilities
- Public safety, emergency services and elder-care are community priorities.

Land Use, Land Ownership and Zoning

The current land uses in the County are a good reflection of community values and goals. Land ownership indicates that the private sector is largely in control, but the large lot and ranch sizes make governmental regulations more feasible. Current County zoning has established a potential development threshold that current market conditions and growth projections will never require.

Implications for Comprehensive Planning:

- The Comprehensive Plan must address critical needs - for affordable housing, for new and better jobs and goods and services for the local population – through the allocation of land use and regulatory policies.
- The Comprehensive Plan can also address the discrepancy between actual growth projections and the potential development permitted under current zoning. The County can establish more realistic densities and land uses in the Comprehensive Plan, and proceed to rezone accordingly.
- World-wide, we are losing 1-2% of agricultural land annually to erosion and development. This loss is an exponential or geometric progression and could have an adverse long term economic development impact on San Miguel County. Rio Arriba County, which has the second largest number of acequias in New Mexico, has been proactive in initiating an ordinance that limits development of irrigated land to protect it for future generations. *Commentary by Michael A. Coca, Rio de Las Gallinas Acequia Association*

Revenues and Expenses

San Miguel County's major expenditures cover the:

- Detention Center
- County Sheriff
- Public Health
- Road Projects, and
- Debt Service on prior bond issues

The majority of these major expenses are covered by state funds. San Miguel's local revenue sources currently are GRT and property taxes. The priority expenditures are in keeping with community goals and values, with the exception of:

- Providing affordable home ownership
- Generating new and better paying jobs for local residents
- Generating economic development that provides housing, jobs, goods and services for local residents to reduce commute times
- Preserving open space and views, and
- Preserving agricultural land, particularly irrigated acreage
- Providing a greater diversity of Elder Care programs more geographically dispersed throughout the County.

Implications for Comprehensive Planning are that the County needs to identify additional revenue sources to cover new expenses related to these community values.

PART FOUR: POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION

“We need to have plans and zoning. It is important to guide us, but we must be careful that the Comprehensive Plan does not discriminate against our community...if our kids and brothers want to move back to Pecos and be able to afford to live here.”

San Miguel County Resident.



Introduction to Policies

The policies that follow necessarily flow from the community values expressed in an earlier chapter. The most over-arching of these is the value County residents place on preserving their rural way of life. Specifically, County residents want to sustain rural communities, local ranching, farming and outdoor recreation.

Tourism, growth and development can be harnessed to support rural communities and enhance residents' quality-of-life by offering opportunities for better housing and jobs. The question is one of balance and of sustainability.

Jobs, Housing and Economic Development

Vision

The vision for our community is:

- To create a better quality of life for our citizens
- Better jobs to retain our children in the community
- Planned, focused “smart” growth for our area
- Include all of the stakeholders in the decision making process
- Create an integrated plan for our future
- Preserve our cultural heritage

The Approach

Las Vegas San Miguel Economic Development Corporation, the City of Las Vegas and San Miguel County combined efforts and developed a “Strategic Plan” that with the objective of improving the economics of the area consistent with the needs of the community. A three-pronged approach will be used as follows:

- Nurture and expand “Existing” businesses
- Encourage new “Home Grown” businesses.
- Attract new “Targeted” businesses.

The tools we will use include:

- A Blue Ribbon Panel of the community’s leaders to plan the future of economic development.
- The “strategic planning process” to set the direction and priorities for development.
- Include all stakeholders in the “process”.
- Include accountability and timelines in the plan.

Objectives:

- We envision a vibrant, self-sustaining economy for the Las Vegas area. It will be an economy of a rich diversity of clean industry that is consistent with our cultural heritage.
- A strong variety of small business ownership opportunities and high quality jobs will result from strengthening and expanding existing businesses and developing new businesses in tourism, light manufacturing, e-commerce, trade with Mexico, small-diameter timber, retirement, health care and education.
- We will capitalize on and preserve our history, culture and geography by restoring and preserving historic places and reusing them for affordable space for commerce and housing that maintains our small-town atmosphere and contains sprawl.
- With superior education institutions, we will be a well-trained community with students ready to pursue challenging and rewarding careers.
- A thriving arts community and assortment of entertainment choices will complement our great schools, low crime and good jobs.
- The resulting overall quality of life will be reflected in our strong community pride – we will be very proud to live, work, play, attend school, operate businesses and participate in the civic and social culture of Las Vegas and San Miguel County.

Policy One: Economic development will be approached as a partnership effort with all the stakeholders working together to encourage and facilitate economic development within the County.

The partners will include:

- Las Vegas San Miguel Economic Development Commission
- Las Vegas San Miguel Chamber of Commerce

- Governments of San Miguel and surrounding counties, City of Las Vegas and other communities located in the County.
- State and National Representatives and Senators
- State New Mexico economic development Department and other state agencies
- Local educational institutions
- Local financial institutions
- Local real estate professionals
- National Park Service
- National Trust for Historic Preservation
- Local land grant organizations
- Los Alamos and Sandia National Laboratories
- Other Federal agencies
- Any other stakeholders that can impact economic development in the county

Policy Two: The County will consider new and better paying jobs for local residents; affordable housing for local residents; quality health care and goods and services that address the needs of local residents; furthermore, the County will do so in the context of preserving environmental and cultural resources because County government recognizes that these directives are mutually supportive.

Policy Three: Until a detailed economic development plan is developed for the County, public economic development grants and funds will be prioritized as follows in support of:

- Existing, locally-owned businesses
- New businesses that are locally-owned
- New businesses that will serve a community need within San Miguel and adjoining counties.

Definitions:

A business is “**locally-owned**” if the owner or a majority of shareholders maintain a principle residence within San Miguel or neighboring counties.

A business serves a “**community need**” if it provides or involves:

- Job retention/creation that matches the skills and educational attainment level of local residents or is tied to an education/training program to improve the same;
- Enhanced educational opportunities for local residents;
- Agricultural – farming and ranch - related retail, services, products and processing;
- Enhanced opportunities for local home ownership;
- Businesses and training related to construction and building trades
- Businesses related to forestry, forest thinning, wood and lumber processing;
- Tourism and recreation-related businesses such as bed and breakfast establishments, rooms for-rent within local residential homes and businesses, locally owned and operated restaurants and retail;
- Financial institutions who are sensitive to and strive to meet local needs;
- Training opportunities, manufacturing establishments and retail outlets featuring local arts and handcrafts.
- Farmers markets and food co-operatives
- Local electrical co-operatives.
- Health care services
- Businesses providing services to youth and to the elderly
- Information-based businesses that hire a majority of their workforce locally;
- Catalogue sales and other retail/wholesale suppliers that hire a majority of their workforce locally and agree to pay local gross receipts tax on a voluntary basis if not otherwise required by law.

Policy Four: The County will encourage economic development that supports tourism that is recreational, cultural, historical and/or agricultural in its focus.

Policy Five: The County will seek state and federal assistance in order to establish partnerships with Luna Community College and New Mexico Highlands University to encourage

these institutions to develop economic, financial and investment-oriented literacy programs to teach local residents entrepreneurial skills, management and organizational concepts, career enhancing computer skills, and sound financial investment practices and opportunities.

Policy Six: The County will support and promote grass-roots initiatives to provide economic opportunities based on locally available resources, small-scale, low-environmental-impact production technology, traditional skills and cultural values. Examples: forestry products, forest thinning, sales of wood and lumber, agricultural products, traditional construction technology, building skills, wood-working, furniture making, wool textile production.

Policy Seven: The County will continue to seek state and federal funds to invest in alternative energy production.

Policy Eight: San Miguel County will require amenities such as landscaping and tot-lots to be included in housing developments.

Policy Nine: The County will provide meeting space and forums to encourage the establishment of self-help organizations, community non-profits and public partnerships. To be accomplished through:

- Partnering with the University of New Mexico, Santa Fe Community College, Luna Community College, Armand Hammer United World College and New Mexico Highland University to establish curriculums and field schools involving area youth and tradesmen on construction and rehabilitation demonstration projects located within San Miguel County.
- Partnering with Habitat for Humanity to upgrade and/or replace low quality housing stock to meet current standards and the needs of residents.

- Partnering with state agencies to provide weatherization assistance and code upgrades to housing owned and occupied by elderly residents.
- Partnering with entities such as the New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority, which funded the Housing Needs Assessment component of this Plan, to achieve the goal of local home ownership.
- Providing technical assistance and grants to local communities organizing self-help networks for the repair, upgrade and new construction of equity building, low-fixed cost, and locally-owned housing.



Environmental and Cultural Resource Protection

Water – Domestic and Agricultural

Policy One: San Miguel County will ask state and federal land management agencies to restore higher elevation vegetative zones and forests to reduce risk of catastrophic fire and restore watershed yield.

Policy Two: County residents are encouraged to take responsibility for reducing the risk of fire on their property.

Policy Three: The County will encourage new development to capture storm water on-site in order to enhance aquifer recharge and minimize run-off.

Policy Four: San Miguel County will partner with the State Engineer's office to protect senior water rights, spring flows and in-stream flows.

Policy Five: The County will support new development that is consistent with the goals and policies of this plan.

Policy Six: The County encourages development to acquire water rights and to limit individual domestic wells by providing community water systems.

Policy Seven: The County will support development and economic activities that allow agricultural water rights and uses to remain in-place.

Policy Eight: The County will discourage high water consumptive new uses.

Policy Nine: The County will seek state technical assistance and/or funding to monitor and reduce contamination from septic tanks in areas where water quality is deteriorating.

Policy Ten: The County will continue to seek funding for hydrological zone mapping.

Policy Eleven: San Miguel County will assist in any way possible the many Water and Sanitation Districts operating within its borders regarding detecting and repairing leaks in storage and delivery systems.

Policy Twelve: The County will support Acequia Districts seeking state funding assistance.

Policy Thirteen: San Miguel County will approve new subdivisions that address its affordable housing goals.

Policy Fourteen: Upon completion of hydrological mapping and the Mora/San Miguel County Regional Water Plan, the County will establish a Management Threshold for water use for hydrological zones.

Policy Fifteen: The County will investigate funding assistance and tax incentives to encourage water conservation and the use of rainwater collection devices and drip irrigation.

Scenic Resources

Policy One: San Miguel County will seek Scenic Byway designation and state and federal funding assistance for protecting land resources and vistas within the I-25/Railroad Scenic Transportation Corridor and the Pecos River Valley Recreation Area.

Policy Two: Cell phone towers proposed within any identified Scenic Corridor (i.e. the Pecos River Valley and the I-25/Railroad Corridors) and/or visible from a Scenic River or Byway or traditional historic village could be restricted in height, color and location to the extent allowed under federal law in order to minimize visual impacts.

Policy Three: San Miguel County may develop and adopt a Night Sky Ordinance, to limit light pollution and protect its ecological tourism potential and the quality of life for local residents.

Policy Four: San Miguel County may adopt land use policy and prepare and adopt zoning district regulations to protect the scenic corridor while encouraging economic development that supports heritage tourism, agri-tourism, and ecological tourism.

Policy Five: The County may develop regulations supportive of new development that:

- Maintains natural vegetation or provide heavily landscaped buffers adjacent to public roads and adjoining residential uses.
- Limits signage according to the sign ordinance.
- Screens service areas and dumpsters
- Is complimentary to the scale and architectural character of surroundings

Cultural Resources

Policy One: San Miguel County will work in partnership with the National Park Service to establish the Northern New Mexico Heritage Conservation Area within the County borders.

Policy Two: San Miguel County will work in partnership with the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the State Historic Preservation Office to continue to identify, preserve and encourage local residents to adaptively re-use historic buildings.

Policy Three: San Miguel County will carefully monitor and control new development adjacent to traditional historic villages to encourage a scale and intensity of use compatible with the existing character of the village. Village boundaries will remain compact and agricultural and range land will be preserved.

Policy Four: The County will encourage new development that provides landscaped or transitional uses that are appropriate in proximity to historic moradas, shrines and churches. is out of character or incompatible with their traditional use.

Public Infrastructure

Policy One: San Miguel County will require that all new development contribute the infrastructure necessary to serve it, at the developer's cost, and contribute to maintenance costs.

Policy Two: San Miguel County desires to retain its rural, scenic and historic character. Existing public rights-of-way will be used where feasible to provide pedestrian, bicycle and equestrian-ways.

Policy Three: San Miguel County will seek state and federal assistance to plan and construct bicycle, pedestrian and equestrian trails throughout the County; and to improve bicycle, pedestrian and equestrian safety in and around traditional villages.

Policy Four: San Miguel County will continue to improve its Solid Waste services and transfer site locations.

Public Safety and Community Services

Policy One: The County will seek partnerships with state and local nonprofits to provide a higher level of community services to areas of concentrated population, such as the Village of Pecos and Las Vegas Extraterritorial Zone, and improved outreach to sparsely populated rural areas.

Policy Two: The County may enact an impact fee ordinance to assist developers in covering the cost of new facilities required as a result of new development.

Policy Three: The County will continuously update and improve upon its Rural Addressing project using GIS.

Land Use, Development and Community Character

Policy One: The County adopts the land use designations illustrated on Map 3, and defined below, to promote preservation of the County's rural lifestyle, open and scenic character, cultural and natural resources. The Land Use Map will guide all future discretionary development reviews conducted in San Miguel County.

- **Federal and State Protected Open Space:** these lands have scenic, recreational, environmental and cultural values that San Miguel County will protect by approving only low-impact residential and small-scale commercial uses adjacent to them, and by requiring that substantial, naturally landscaped setbacks and buffers be maintained on private lands adjacent to these protected lands.
- **Scenic Corridors:** native vegetation, steep slopes, large open vistas, rock outcroppings and cultural resources will be preserved within the I-25/Railroad scenic corridor. Permitted uses will be limited to low-visual impact, small-scale service retail, lodgings, and clustered or large lot (20-acres or more) residential. In addition, State Routes 63 and 50, which bisect the Village of Pecos, are to be treated as Scenic Corridors.
- **ETZ/City of Las Vegas:** the City of Las Vegas serves as the major "*center of gravity*" for attracting economic development to San Miguel County. The Community Master Plan for the City of Las Vegas, adopted December 1997, prioritizes infill and redevelopment within the city limits over new development within the Extraterritorial Zone. San Miguel County supports this vision and will work cooperatively with the City to implement it. Development projects that bring a clear and strong public benefit will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the ETZ Commission.
- **Villages:** the compact form and small-scale, mixed-use character of traditional historic villages will be

maintained. Irrigable farmland and prime rangeland and pasture will be preserved from development. Traditional historic villages will also serve as “*centers of gravity*” attracting economic development, mixed-use, retail and commercial uses, and higher density residential to their cores.

- **Farm and Range:** these are private land holdings nestled between Federal and State protected open space lands, traditional villages and the city of Las Vegas, and the I-25/Railroad Scenic Corridor. These lands are to remain open and undeveloped except for farm and range purposes. Any development proposal would require a Comprehensive Plan amendment and justification that addresses the goals, values and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.
- **Ranch Lands:** permitted uses include ranching and residential and commercial uses incidental to ranching. Recreational uses and housing are encouraged in the Conchas Lake area.

Policy Two: The County encourages the following types of land use development proposals by land use category:

- **Properties Adjacent to Federal and State Protected Open Space:**
 - Single and multi-family residential uses with preference given to cluster developments that maintain substantial (i.e. 500’ to 1000’ deep) landscaped buffers adjacent to protected lands.
 - small-scale heritage and recreational-tourism related commercial uses such as Bed & Breakfast establishments, restaurants, arts and crafts, recreational outfitters; in well-landscaped settings that maintain substantial (i.e. 500’ to 1000’ foot) landscaped buffers adjacent to protected lands and public rights-of-way.

- **Properties Located Within Scenic Corridors:**
 - Conservation easements are encouraged to preserve native vegetation, steep slopes, large open vistas, rock outcroppings and cultural resources within scenic corridors.
 - Small-scale service retail and lodgings serving heritage and recreational tourism
 - Clustered or large lot (20-acres plus) residential developments which are well landscaped and which screen parking and service areas from public rights-of-way.
 - Strict signage, fence and wall design and lighting controls are desired in these corridors.

- **Properties Located Within the Extraterritorial Zone of the City of Las Vegas:**
 - As a matter of general public policy, both the City of Las Vegas and San Miguel County encourage urban infill within the existing city limits over new development in the ETZ.
 - Development projects that bring a clear and strong public benefit will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the ETZ Commission.
 - Development projects that provide jobs for the surrounding region will be given due consideration.

- **Properties Located Within or Adjacent to Existing Villages:**
 - The County will encourage new development proposals that include conservation easements and/or other measures preserving irrigable farmland, prime rangeland and pasture.
 - The County will encourage new mixed-use development within village core areas, such as projects that combine housing with retail and office uses.

- The County will encourage clustered and attached residential development projects in village core areas.
- The County will not approve new industrial development adjacent to existing residential uses.
- **Properties Located Within Farm and Range Designated Land Use Areas:**
 - The County prefers that these areas remain open and undeveloped except for farm and range related uses.
 - Development proposal for projects such as residential subdivisions, industrial or commercial uses (beyond those that serve farm and ranch production) will require a Comprehensive Plan amendment and justification that addresses the goals, values and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.
 - The County will not approve new industrial development adjacent to existing residential uses.
- **Ranch Lands:**
 - The County wishes to preserve these land areas as working ranch lands and encourages only those development projects that provide recreational, housing and commercial uses incidental to ranching.
 - Recreational uses and housing in a variety of forms and densities are encouraged in the Conchas Lake area.
 - The County will not approve new industrial development adjacent to existing residential uses.

Policy Three: The County will contact officially-designated representatives of land grants with notices of proposed development projects within or adjacent to land grant holdings.

Policy Four: The County will prepare and adopt revised zoning regulations to protect existing neighborhoods from

incompatible new development (or re-development) occurring adjacent; and until such time, shall exercise its full discretionary review authority to protect existing residential neighborhoods by disallowing adjacent development that is of an incompatible scale, intensity or type of use – such as industrial uses, gravel mining, heavy manufacturing or heavy commercial.

Policy Five: The County will exercise its review authority to protect agricultural and range lands.

Policy Six: The County will adopt agricultural land development policies.

Policy Seven: The County will support and cooperate with nonprofits in the acquisition of conservation easements designed to protect agricultural and range lands, environmentally sensitive lands, scenic and cultural resources, to provide visual separation and open space between traditional villages, and to protect scenic corridors.

Policy Eight: The County, in coordination and partnership with the city of Las Vegas, will direct new manufacturing, wholesaling and distribution facilities to locate in Extraterritorial Zone surrounding Las Vegas, close to rail, air and interstate transportation systems.

Policy Nine: The County, in coordination and partnership with the city of Las Vegas, will recommend new e-commerce related businesses locate in the Railroad District of the city.

Plan Implementation

Implementation Steps

The County Manager will be responsible for incorporating the following activities into the County's annual budgetary process.

Years One to Three

Step One: Investigate Impact Fee Ordinance.

Step Two: Begin Land Conservation Measures

- Establish funding source(s) and public/private partnerships to acquire land to:
 - Preserve open space
 - Preserve views
 - Preserve environmentally sensitive lands
 - Provide for trails and recreation
 - Preserve agricultural lands
 - Preserve ranch lands
 - Buffer historic buildings, villages, landmarks and shrines from development

- Possible funding sources include:
 - Earmarking a portion of the County's Gross Receipts Tax revenues
 - Increasing property taxes

- Possible partnerships include:
 - Trust for Public Lands
 - Santa Fe Conservation Trust
 - Nature Conservancy
 - Community Land Trusts
 - Conservation Oriented Development

Step Three: Update the County Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances:

- Bring them into consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. Specific revisions include:
 - Protect, separate and buffer residential uses from industrial and heavy commercial uses.

- Corrective rezoning to reflect the land uses adopted in the Comprehensive Plan.
- Protect agricultural land
- Establish clear physical limits to village core business areas to prevent strip development and dilution of a village's economic base.
- Allow small-scale mixed-use, mixed densities in all County areas. Mixed uses must be compatible with existing residential:
 - Work activities are conducted indoors and during regular daytime hours
 - Work materials are stored in enclosed structures
 - Structures comply with residential height/setback requirements and community design guidelines.
 - Work activities generate no more than 10 vehicle trips per day on average.

Step Four: Prepare an Economic Development Plan: Using the framework proposed in the Economic Development Policy section.

Step Five: Water Plan: Upon completion of *the Mora/San Miguel County Regional Water Plan*, propose policy updates if needed to the Comprehensive Plan, and to zoning and subdivision review regulations. Seek funding for implementation activities.

Special Projects

The following special projects were specifically requested by County residents during public forums for the Comprehensive Plan. These projects are listed below so that the County can request special state appropriations, grants or partner with non-profits in order to implement them.

1. Provide a Small Business Incubator in the Pecos area.
2. Provide Community Centers/Libraries/Historical Centers in outlying villages to provide community services, preserve Hispanic language and culture and serve as a community meeting place.
3. Acquire old school house in Trementina for this purpose
4. Improve Main Street through Pecos Village to prevent storm drainage from damaging adjacent properties and to improve pedestrian/bicycle access.
5. Extend current sewer service in Pecos Village.
6. Address litter problem and code enforcement problems.
7. Upgrade roads serving Conchas Lake residential areas.

Plan Evaluation and Update

Population and economic projections in this Plan are based upon trends established over the past decade. County Commissioners and staff should review the efficacy of the Plan and the accuracy of the demographic projections approximately every two years and anticipate making periodic amendments and updates as needed.

County Planning staff will review and report on the efficacy of the plan to the County Commission as part of the County's budgetary process, providing brief updates annually and a more thorough report on a bi-annual basis. If the Commission concludes at any point that amendments are necessary, the Commission can direct the County Manager to propose a budget to do so, and approve said budget through the normal process.

Amendments should follow a process that is similar, but more stream-lined, than the original process used in revising the plan, beginning with a public input meeting, followed by formal hearings before the County Commission. Depending upon the complexity of any proposed amendment, the County Commission could hold one or more workshops prior to taking formal action.

COUNTY RESIDENTS GUIDEBOOK



AGRICULTURAL AND SCENIC LAND PRESERVATION

Creating A Community Land Trust: A Land Preservation Tool

Residents of San Miguel County have expressed a great deal of concern about losing large areas of open space, agricultural land and culturally significant areas to residential development. Many of these residents have stated that without policies to control growth, many village communities like Pecos, Glorieta and Bernal will eventually lose their rural character and begin to resemble distant subdivisions of Santa Fe. In order to prevent this rapid development scenario from occurring, San Miguel County government and resident organizations need to work together and implement policies that help control growth and focus future development in areas that residents determine to be the most suitable for development. Establishing a Community Land Trust could be one possible option for preserving San Miguel's agricultural and culturally significant land.

Community Land Trusts (CLT) have been successful in several states, including New Mexico, as an effective means of maintaining the desired local character, ranging from the community scale to larger regional and county scales. They have proven to be a successful means of protecting farms, wetlands, wildlife habitat, forests, ranches, watersheds, river corridors, and trails while also ensuring access to land and housing for low-income people and preserving family farms. CLTs established in other parts of New Mexico* have helped local residents by increasing home ownership and educating potential homebuyers on establishing credit, applying for a mortgage, and maintaining a home.

What Is a Community Land Trust?

Typically, CLTs are local, regional, or statewide non-profit organizations that are directly involved in helping protect

natural, scenic, recreational, agricultural, historic, or cultural property. This Land Trust/non-profit organization creates a legal means for allowing private land to be transferred into public ownership, making it an effective way of preserving open land, often in the face of rapid development.

As a non-profit corporation, all decision-making is handled through a democratic approach with an open membership of community members and an elected board of trustees. While members have a say in the policies and activities of the CLT, there is no personal ownership of any portion of any assets which the CLT may own or control. Community land trusts are, by design, a way to link the individual members of a community with that community's resources and challenges.

There are a few different ways land can be put into public ownership. It can be purchased by the Land Trust, it can be acquired through donations, or it can be designated as a conservation easement. This last method allows for resource and habitat monitoring within the terms of the conservation easement. Each of these measures is accomplished by working in partnership with private landowners, county government and other governmental conservation agencies. In both land donations and conservation easements, donors can receive significant tax benefits based on the value of the donated land or easement.

Funding for land purchases often comes from contributions from members and individual donors in the community, as well as from government agencies, foundations, and corporations. Land trusts are also entitled to borrow money from banks, foundations, and individuals to buy land. Loans from financial lenders are repaid either through fund raising, sales to conservation buyers or, in the case of advance acquisitions for local, state or federal conservation agencies, when public funds are available and the property is repurchased by the government.

Steps in creating a Community Land Trust

As a first step in setting up a community land trust, residents of San Miguel County should establish a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization. If a well-established non-profit organization already exists, additions can be written into the organization's bylaws that would allow the non-profit to act as the legal body for the community land trust. *(I'm not 100 percent certain about this but I should have this verified by Debbie O'Maley – Sawmill Community Land Trust.)*

The six steps in establishing a 501 (c) (3) organization are:

1. Designate a mission statement that is broad enough so the organization can apply for varieties of funding from many sources, a narrow mission statement can handicap the organization over time. Mission statement should be two or three sentences max.
2. Consult with a lawyer or nonprofit professional to formulate Articles of Incorporation to file with the State Corporation Commission. (A minimal filing fee is required). Articles of Incorporation will set up the organization to do business, and makes the organization legal to begin promoting services, etc. These are the working documents of the organization. It is best to have a lawyer review this prior to finalization. The Articles of other Community Land Trust's could be used as a model.
3. Set-up organizational Bylaws. These are necessary to define how the Board of Directors must operate to oversee agency operations and direct the Executive Director. These also dictate Board membership, attendance, annual meetings and frequency of regular meetings, quarterly, monthly, etc, and Board officer elections. The bylaws and Articles should be submitted to the State Corporation Commission and to the IRS for exempt status.
4. Once the above items are in place the next step is to go to website IRS.gov to get all forms needed to complete the 501 (c) (3) status application process with the Federal government.

IRS processing can take up from 6 months to two years to handle. The forms that need to be filled out include:

- form 1023-application for recognition of exemption
- form 8718-user-fee for exempt organization determination letter request (a \$150 application fee was required with this form)

Send these to: Internal Revenue Service Center

P.O. Box 192

Covington, Kentucky 41012-0192

5. The organization can begin to operate and raise funds if they set up as a temporary project of another well-established nonprofit such as the New Mexico Community Foundation that will handle and process all funds raised. This organization could act as an umbrella for the CLT for a fee between 5 and 10 percent. Many funding sources could begin to grant monies to the CLT with this arrangement.

6. A Board of Directors should be formed at this time as well, and begin acting “as if” the agency is already fully functioning on its own, then it’ll be ready when the 501 (cc) (3) IRS determination letter arrives.

This process for applying for 501 (c) (3) status could be done simultaneously with the process of determining potential lands that residents would like to see preserved, as well as which lands could potentially be developed. Before deciding which lands are most well suited to be transferred into public lands, it is useful to perform an inventory of the various natural as well as economic resources of the land. It is also important to determine the pressures to develop each of the parcels in question in order to prioritize which parcels are most likely to be developed in the short term. With background information on each of the properties, members of the CLT can make well-informed decisions about which properties are most appropriate to be transferred into public ownership. With the necessary

background information collected, community meetings can be held for residents and other stakeholders to discuss the various land purchase options. Future land use for the public land should be determined prior to purchase or transfer.

Establishing a Community Land Trust could help ensure that communities in San Miguel County maintain their character and that much of the future development is kept in suitable areas.

Additional information about Community Land Trusts

Land Trust Alliance (LTA)
1319 F Street NW, Suite 501
Washington, DC 20004-1106
202.638.4725
Fax: 202.638.4730

Trust for Public Land (TPL)
116 New Montgomery St.
Fourth Floor
San Francisco, CA 94105
415.495.4014
1.800.714.LAND

Michael A. Coca
Rio de Las Gallinas Acequia Association
C/o0 New Mexico Legal Aid
PO Box 1454
Las Vegas, NM 87701
Phone: 505-425-3514

Partners Land Trust (Grasslands Initiative)
Ellen Henderson
505-421-2998

Scenic ByWays
NM Department of Transportation
Andrew Villamonte, Deputy Secretary

505-827-5127

BUY LOCAL PROGRAMS AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Santa Fe Independent Business-Citizen Alliance: Support Sustainable Community

The Santa Fe Independent Business and Citizen Alliance is a non-profit coalition of locally-owned, independent businesses, religious and charitable organizations and individual community members. The SIBCA is dedicated to using the market place to respond to the needs of the local community rather than strengthening the interests of multinational corporations. The SIBCA is part of a growing national movement called the American Independent Business Alliance, whose main purpose is to keep money local.

Contact Information:

Santa Fe Independent Business-Citizen Alliance

510 ½ Don Gaspar

Santa Fe, NM 87505

Tel: 505-9989-5362, and 505-992-3465 (David Kaseman) or
505- 988-9708 (Elaine Sullivan)

Email: info@santafealliance.com

American Independent Business Alliance

1510 5th St.

Boulder, CO 80302

Tel: 303-402-1575

Email: info@AMIBA.net

The New Rules Project of the Institute for Local Self Reliance

1313 5th St. SE

Minneapolis, MN 55414

Tel: 612-379-3815 (Stacy Mitchell)

Email: smitchell@ilsr.org

Web address: www.newrules.org

“Going Local” by Michael Shuman

Co-op America: Celebrating 20 Years of Building Economic Alternatives

Co-op America's mission is to harness economic power—the strength of consumers, investors, businesses, and the marketplace – to create a socially just and environmentally sustainable society. Co-op America is a national nonprofit membership organization celebrating 20 years of service to people and the planet.

Individual membership costs \$20; Business membership is \$60. All members receive Co-op America's quarterly publication and access to services.

Contact information:

Co-op America
1612 K Street NW Suite 600
Washington, DC 20006

Tel: 800-58-GREEN and 202-872-5307
Email: info@coopamerica.org

American Independent Business Alliance
1410 5th St.
Boulder, CO 80302
Phone: 303-402-1575
Email: info@AMIBA.net

Local Foods

See New York Times Magazine article by Russel Shorto, January 11, 2004, “A *Short-Order Revolutionary*” regarding Tod Murphy, a small businessman who opened the Farmers Diner in a Barre, Vermont, which spawned a number of related food growing and processing industries in rural Vermont as a result.

“You see the challenge, right?” Murphy asks. ‘All these food facilities...the creamery, the local butcher – they’re gone. You have to build them yourself.’”

The article mentions Investors’ Circle, a venture-capital group with more than \$90 million invested in socially responsible businesses as one possible funding source for this type of entrepreneurship.

Northern New Mexico Local Harvest Project

The Northern New Mexico Local Harvest Project combines the New Mexico Agricultural Products in the Schools Project with the Santa Fe Family Farmers’ Cooperative and the Upper Rio Grand Delivery Network, Friends of the Farmers’ Markets to provide nutrition education and supply fresh vegetables to public schools through a USDA CFS grant.

The Farm Connection provides local farmer education and technical assistance.

The Santa Fe Farmers’ Market was established 25 years ago. It has grown from 35 vendors in 1990 to over 200 in 2000 with an average of 5,000 shoppers on peak market days. Vendors gross more than \$1 million during its six month season. Check for websites for the following organizations:

Friends of the Farmers’ Markets
Pam Roy, Executive Director

Farm to School Programs Coordinator
Le Adams

Health and Wellness Coordinator for Friends of the Farmer’s Markets
Jackie Imamura

The Farm Connection
Lynda Prim

Upper Rio Grande Delivery Network
Colleen Baker

**Tierra Wools
Los Ojos Handweavers, LLC.**

Tierra Wools in Los Ojos, New Mexico, is one example of small-scale, local economic development that builds upon traditional skills. For information:

Tierra Wools
PO Box 229
91 Main Street
Los Ojos, NM 87551

p) 505-588-7231
888-709-0979
www.handweavers.com

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

New Mexico Community Development Loan Fund

Founded in 1989 by members of the New Mexico Conference of Churches, this fund is a private non-profit lender dedicated to the economic empowerment of lower income people. The fund provides loans and technical assistance for the creation and preservation of jobs, for the development of affordable housing, and for the provision of basic human services.

This is a well-established alternative for those who choose to “put their money where their hears are, aligning their financial resources with their sense of social responsibilities. A minimum investment of \$1,000 for one year is required.

New Mexico Community Development Loan Fund

PO Box 705

Albuquerque, NM 875013-0704

Phone: 505-243-3196 (Kathleen Connors)

FAX: 505-243-8803

Email: kcnmcdlf@aol.com

Website: www.nmcdlf.org

Las Vegas/San Miguel County Chamber of Commerce

Antoinette Gallegos, President

PO Box 128

Las Vegas, New Mexico

Phone: 505-425-8631

FAX: 505-425-3057

Pager: 505-949-2311

Email: lypres@zialink.com

Website: www.lasvegasnm.org

State of New Mexico Economic Development Department

Donnie J. Quintana, Deputy Director

Economic Development Division

Joseph M. Montoya Bldg

1100 St. Francis Drive]

Sana Fe, NM 87505-4147

Phone: 505-827-0089

Las Vegas San Miguel Economic Development Corporation
New Mexico Highlands University
School of Business Administration
Luis Ortiz, Ph.D., Executive Director
901 University Ave.
PO Box 85
Las Vegas, NM 87701

Tel: 505-426-2051

Fax: 505-426-2059

Email: lortiz@nmhu.edu

Website: www.lvsmedc.org

Accion New Mexico

The mission of ACCION New Mexico is to increase access to business credit, make loans and provide training, which enable emerging entrepreneurs to realize their dreams and be catalysts for positive economic and social change.

ACCION New Mexico
20 First Plaza NM Suite 417
Albuquerque, NM 87102

Phone: 505-243-1551
800-508-7624

FAX: 505-243-1551

Email: info@accionm.org

Website: www.accionm.org

ELDER CARE

Contact: North Central NM Economic Development District for information:

PO Box 5115

Santa Fe, NM 87502

Phone: 505-476-0107

Area Agency on Aging
SF Community College
Santa Fe, NM
Phone: 827-7313

Information Center for New Mexicans with Disabilities
435 St. Michael's Drive Bldg D
Santa Fe, NM 87505
Phone: 800-552-8195
Phone: 505-827-7596

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Northeastern New Mexico National Heritage Area

Excerpts from 12/2002 Concept Paper

“A National Heritage Area is a place where natural cultural, historic and recreational resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally distinctive landscape arising from patterns of human activity shaped by geography. The U.S. Congress created the National Heritage Area program to protect larger geographic cultural landscapes. The National Park Service is the administering federal agencies.

Designation by Congress as a National Heritage Area provides important recognition and incentives for community-based efforts to preserve the distinctive character of local cultural landscapes and heritage resources. The Heritage Area is managed locally by communities according to a management, or business, plan. Each National Heritage Area is eligible for up to \$10 million in federal support over a 10-year period, but funding is not guaranteed and must be authorized by Congress.

The proposed National Heritage Area for northeastern New Mexico manifests the timeless themes of crossroads, commerce, and cultural confrontation matched by *unforgettable landscape vistas of high integrity*. The proximity of the Pecos National Wilderness area, Santa Fe National Forest and the Kiowa grasslands all provide visitors with natural and recreational resources of “incomparable value.”

The cultural and transit patterns, which have forged this unique cultural landscape, seem to be bounded by the great transportation corridors of Coronado, the Santa Fe Trail, the railroad and Route 66. A logical geographical framework for regional discussions would be San Miguel, Mora, Union, Harding, Colfax and the eastern part of Santa Fe counties.”

Contact the National Park Service for More Information

Other Historic Preservation Contacts:

Janice Varela
Director of Administration
Great American Station Foundation
615 E. Lincoln Avenue
Las Vegas, NM 87701

Phone: 505-426-8055

FAX: 505-426-8057

Email: jvarela@transact.org

HOUSING ASSISTANCE

New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority

First Time Home Buyers Program

Income eligibility levels in San Miguel County:

- Households with 1-2 family members: \$43,800 annual income
- Households with 3 or more: \$50,700 annual.

Permaculture Credit Union

The Permaculture Credit Union is dedicated to the ethics of permaculture. The PCU is currently offering loan discounts for fuel-efficient automobiles; for energy conservation through second mortgages loans that encourage solar heating, photovoltaic energy systems, building weatherization, rainwater collection, conservation, organic farming and gardening.

Permaculture Credit Union
4250 Cerrillos Road
PO Box 29300
Santa Fe, NM 87592-9300
Phone: 505-954-3479
FAX 505-424-1624
Website: 222.pcuonline.org

Weatherization Assistance

Contact North Central NM Economic Development District for Information:

PO Box 5115
Santa Fe, NM 87502
Phone: 505-476-0107

Federal Housing Programs for Rural Areas

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Loans to eligible home buyers for the purchase of a primary residence.

New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority

Funded approximately \$4.1 million in projects in San Miguel county from 2001 through 2003. Of that, the largest portion, \$1.259K went to develop rental properties. Other programs include

- MortgageSaver Program
- Tenant Rental Assistance Program
- Weatherization Assistance Program
- Emergency Shelter Grants
- Down Payment Assistance

SMALL BUSINESS START-UP AND ASSISTANCE

New Mexico Community Development Loan Fund “Lending to small businesses and non-profits throughout New Mexico.”

The New Mexico Community Development Loan Fund is a private, nonprofit organization that provides loans, training and technical assistance to business owners and non-profit organizations throughout the state. Their services support the efforts of low-income individuals and their communities to achieve self-reliance and control over their economic destinies. The Loan Fund was established in 1989 by members of the New Mexico Conference of Churches to address poverty in New Mexico. The Loan Fund places particular emphasis on helping low-income people, women and minorities. The Loan Fund also assists businesses and non-profits that provide positive social benefits but are unable to access loans from traditional sources, such as banks.

Owners of established businesses; individuals who want to start their own businesses; and non-profit organizations can borrow from the Loan Fund. The Loan Fund offers favorable interest rates and flexible payment schedules.

Contact Information.

New Mexico Community Development Loan Fund
PO Box 705
Albuquerque, NM 87103-0705

Tel: 505-243-3196
Fax: 505-243-8803
Email: nmcdlfgn@aol.com
Web address: www.nmcdlf.org

Small Business Development Center
Luna Community College
PO Box 1510
Las Vegas, NM 87701
Phone: 505-454-2582

800-588-7232, ext. 1759

Las Vegas-San Miguel Chamber of Commerce
PO Box 128
Las Vegas, NM 87701
Phone: 800-832-5947
505-425-8631
FAX: 505-425-3057

New Mexico Small Business Development Center
6401 Richards Ave
Santa Fe, NM 87508-4487
Phone: 505-428-1362
Phone: 1-800-281-7232
FAX: 505-428-1469
Website: www.nmsbdc.org

Other groups to contact:

Ganados del Valle, Rio Arriba County
Rural Resources Group, Maria E. Varela
Sangre de Cristo Growers Co-op
High Value Specialty Crops grant program: State Department
of Agriculture

WIND FARMING

A case study of the Mesa Redonda wind generation power plant in Quay County, nine miles south of Tucumcari, identifies several practical steps toward implementing a wind generation power plant. These include following the necessary standards and procedures for conducting environmental assessments at potential wind power plant sites, estimating the total construction costs, estimating the cost of electric line extension and interconnection costs, and performing economic assessments of potential development projects, including financial costs and benefits to all stakeholders.

Another useful resource for anyone interested in the viability of wind power generation in San Miguel County is the New Mexico Wind Plant Site Screening Model. This model was developed to provide a means to economically screen potential sites for wind plant development in New Mexico. If a wind power plant in San Miguel County is determined to be economically viable, another useful resource is the New Mexico Wind Development Handbook. This handbook provides an overview of the development process for large wind-turbine projects and key factors that would indicate whether or not a site may be suitable for large-scale wind.

Contact the Rural Electric Co-op for Mora and San Miguel County which serves more than 8,000 customers (387-2205) and the Tri-State Transmission and Generation company for more information.

“Harvesting Wind Energy as a Cash Crop: A Guide to Locally Owned Wind Farming”, Dan Juhl, Harvey Wasserman
www.danmar.us

Energy Conservation and Management Division

Michal McDiarmid, MS, PE

1220 South Saint Francis Dr

Santa Fe, NM 87505

Phone: 505-476-3319

FAX: 505-476-3322

Email: mmcdiarmid@state.nm.us