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## **Economic & Rural Development Committee Meeting**

**July 26, 2017**

**Ruidoso Valley Chamber of Commerce**

# Ruidoso Valley Chamber of Commerce

## A Bright Future

### What is affecting our economy?

We are building a new replacement hospital. This is one of the only new replacement hospitals in the State of NM. Ruidoso is known for being a wonderful place to retire making reliable medical services vital to our economy. Lincoln County owns the Medical Center and Presbyterian Healthcare leases the facility from the County. Due to the great relationship between Lincoln County and PHS along with the voting residents agreeing to increase property taxes if necessary, this project will come to fruition.



A rendition of what the new lobby will look like upon completion of the new hospital

ENMU-Ruidoso is remodeling their entry. This building was previously a hardware store and the entrance looked like a hardware store. The new

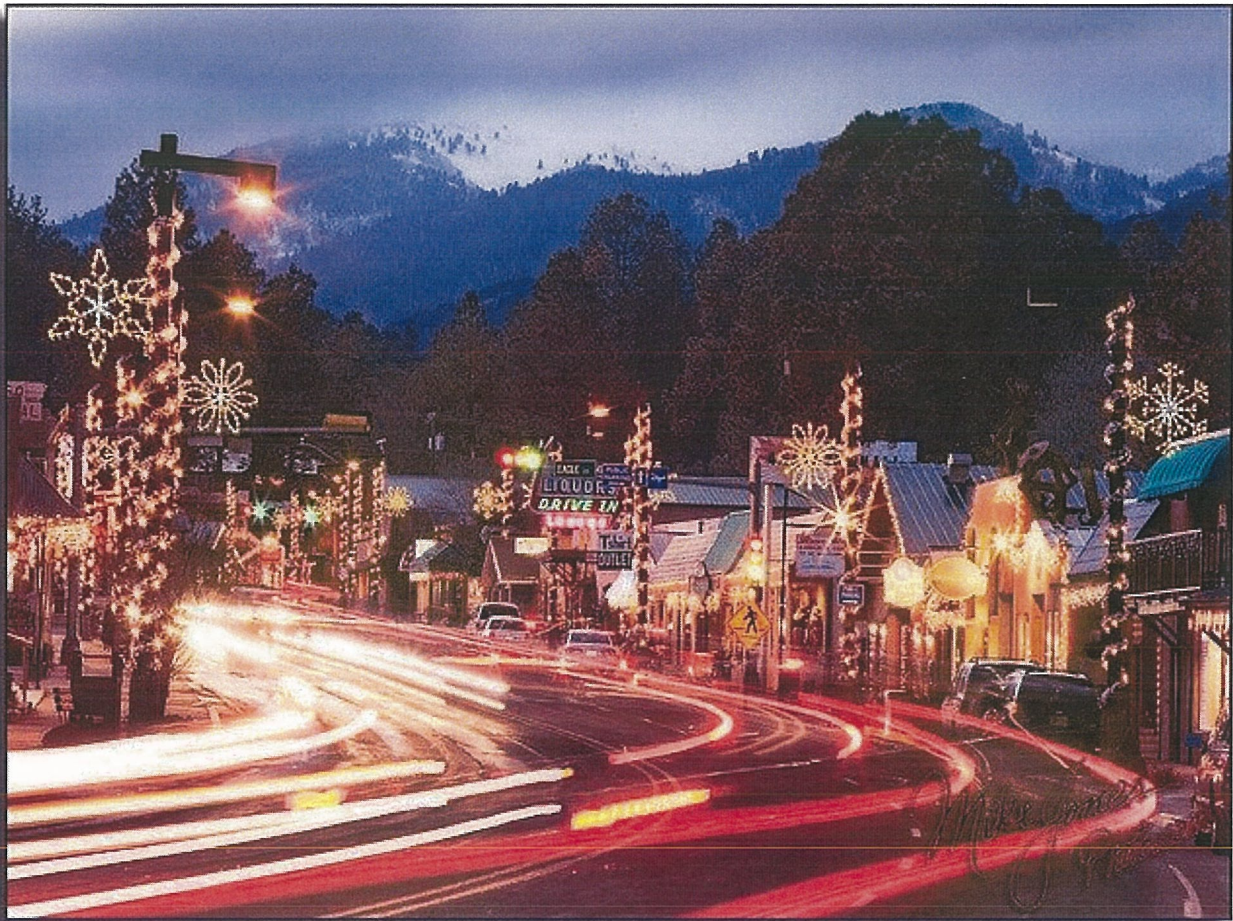
entry remodel is under way. ENMR-Ruidoso is vital to the growth and welfare of our economy and during last year's session we were concerned by the legislation and budgetary threats to higher education. We need to make sure that you understand the importance of higher education in rural communities. This campus provides affordable education to our local workforce who does not have the opportunity or finances to attend a larger institution. Those workers can maintain a job and work towards necessary certifications to increase their earning potential. In addition, ENMU-Ruidoso works very closely with the local schools throughout the County to provide dual credits for high school students, giving our youth a head start on a college education. Aside from various certifications and associates degrees, the University serves our retired community with the Creative Aging Resource Center.



Graduation 2017 at ENMU-Ruidoso

Ruidoso was recently accepted into the NM MainStreet Emerging Communities program. The Ruidoso Midtown Association has their 501-c3

status from the IRS and has formed a Board of Directors. They have an approved Scope of Services agreement with the Village of Ruidoso and have projects lined up for the near future. This is already increasing the vitality and energy in the MainStreet district and we are convinced it will stand to improve the prosperity and possibilities for the rest of the community. Please keep in mind the importance of the State MainStreet program to the economic development of the rural communities in New Mexico.



Our MainStreet District

Historically, our youth felt there were very little if any opportunities to make a living in our community and once they graduated school, they left to seek a better future for themselves. Today, we have more young professionals than we have had since the late 70s. They account for the emergence of numerous retail stores, a winery, a brewery, several restaurants and some upscale automotive repair businesses. They are creating new jobs and

adding vitality to the community. Many of these young people grew up here and have returned with the skills to breathe new life into our community. Small businesses are the backbone of our economy, we ask that you keep this in mind when considering and voting on bills that affect rural economic development.

The emerging wineries and breweries in our area have brought to light some of the roadblocks the New Mexico State Laws have in place that hurt this growing industry. The craft beverage sector, also known as the alcohol manufacturing industry, is one of the most regulated and taxed industries across the globe. New Mexico currently has the 5<sup>th</sup> highest excise tax on alcohol producers in the nation. We ask that our legislators calculate and consider the existing tax burden before adding any more. It may be possible for large, out-of-state wineries to cover an increased tax, but our many local producers would suffer tremendously, if not go out of business.

New Mexico wineries, breweries and distillers account for over 3,500 full-time jobs with a combined economic impact of over \$420 million. The craft beverage industry has tripled in size over the past decade and many companies are looking to open or expand their business.

The effect this industry has on our economy goes beyond the sales of alcohol to the growers of the ingredients and even the possibilities for tourism growth. Agritourism is the family fun that comes when agriculture and tourism intersect; it encourages new tourism offerings with “hands on” experiences and education. New Mexico has the ability to grow both the craft beverage and Agritourism industries as they go hand in hand.

- **We would like to see LEDA funds available for Agritourism.**
- **We ask that our legislators not increase taxes on beverage crafters.**
- **We ask that wineries be allowed to re-cork a partially consumed bottle of wine.**
- **Currently Sunday sales start at 11am for restaurants but not until noon for local brewpubs and wineries. We ask for parity.**
- **We ask that breweries and wineries be allowed to have a “Private Celebration Permit” in addition to the “Public Celebration Permit”.**

Beverage crafting is a very old industry that has evolved into a modern economic generator. Local brewers, wineries and distillers all create jobs, contribute taxes, attract tourists and are the basis for significant hometown pride, in both rural and urban towns. New Mexico needs to continue to leverage the organic growth of this industry and reap the benefits of being recognized nationally for our growth in the industry.

The Ruidoso Valley Chamber of Commerce strives to make this a better place to live, work and play. That is what will make our economy strong and our community lively. I am personally extremely proud of the growth we are seeing and how bright our future looks. So, please be ever mindful of how your voting decisions affect us.