

**2022 APPROVED
WORK PLAN AND MEETING SCHEDULE
for the
RURAL ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE**

Members

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Rep. Candie G. Sweetser, Co-Chair
Rep. Anthony Allison
Rep. Gail Armstrong
Rep. Rachel A. Black
Sen. Craig W. Brandt
Sen. Crystal R. Diamond
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Sen. Shannon D. Pinto
Sen. Joshua A. Sanchez
Rep. Nathan P. Small
Sen. Elizabeth "Liz" Stefanics

Advisory Members

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Rep. Rebecca Dow
Sen. David M. Gallegos
Rep. Harry Garcia
Rep. D. Wonda Johnson

Rep. Tara L. Lujan
Rep. Patricia A. Lundstrom
Rep. Antonio Maestas
Sen. Brenda G. McKenna
Sen. Mimi Stewart

Work Plan

The Rural Economic Opportunities Task Force (REOTF) was created by the New Mexico Legislative Council on April 26, 2022. As time permits during the 2022 interim, the REOTF proposes to focus on identifying opportunities for rural development and economic growth, providing oversight of the capacity-building funds for rural infrastructure appropriated during the 2022 legislative session and developing legislative proposals for a systematized state approach to address rural infrastructure needs and promote business and job growth in rural communities. Within those overall goals, the task force proposes to:

- A. examine efforts to improve federal, state and local fire risk mitigation, response and recovery efforts;
- B. learn about the issues affecting rural areas of the state to generate an informed rural relief legislative proposal and long-term plan to address rural needs, including needs for health care systems and infrastructure;
- C. hear about rural issues and needs from rural frontier, small town, unincorporated and Native American communities;
- D. receive reports from various state agencies, including the Economic Development Department's New Mexico Outdoor Recreation Division, the Tourism Department and the Cultural Affairs Department, regarding current programs to grow rural economies;

E. hear reports from various stakeholders regarding rural infrastructure and economic challenges and opportunities, including existing programs or business models that are working;

F. examine the issues identified in the Pivotal New Mexico 2021 Rural Infrastructure Needs Study and the various other state models the study highlighted as having the potential to address rural infrastructure needs in New Mexico, including presentations from various state agencies regarding:

- which agency would best house a general state rural infrastructure program, or alternatively, which agencies would be best suited for service-specific infrastructure programs; and
- agency recommendations for how to design and fund a general infrastructure program or service-specific infrastructure programs;

G. hear status reports on the use of funds appropriated during the 2022 legislative session to increase project planning and management capacity within local governments and regional councils of governments;

H. receive reports from the Rural Equity Ombud; and

I. examine the potential for duplicating the dairy industry's success in developing value-added production in other agricultural product sectors, including:

- receiving analyses from New Mexico State University's Center of Excellence in Sustainable Food and Agricultural Systems and the Economic Development Department about: the potential to grow agricultural business sectors that create baseline jobs within rural communities; the leveraging effects of even moderate increases in family farm incomes; and the efficacy of developing logistics microcenters for food processing, packaging and distribution as a means of generating wealth throughout a rural region; and
- hearing about the New Mexico State University Arrowhead Center collaborative Building Bridges Program with the Cooperative Extension Service to foster entrepreneurial development within rural communities.

**Rural Economic Opportunities Task Force
2022 Approved Meeting Schedule**

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Location</u> |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|
| June 13 | Santa Fe |
| July 28-29 | Fort Sumner (Bosque Redondo Memorial) |
| August 23-24 | Los Luceros Historic Site |
| September 19-20 | Fort Bayard |
| November 21 | Santa Fe |