

Revised: September 4, 2026

**TENTATIVE AGENDA
for the
FOURTH MEETING
of the
ECONOMIC AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND POLICY COMMITTEE**

**September 8-9, 2026
Villanueva Victory Club
Stan Fulton Athletics Center
New Mexico State University
1815 Wells Street
Las Cruces**

Tuesday, September 8

- 9:00 a.m. **Call to Order and Introductions**
—Representative Doreen Y. Gallegos, Chair
—Senator Angel M. Charley, Vice Chair
- 9:30 a.m. (1) **Welcome and Highlights on Projects and Needs**
—Valerio Ferme, Ph.D., President, New Mexico State University (NMSU)
—Mónica Torres, Chancellor, Doña Ana Community College
- 10:15 a.m. (2) **Sustainable Agriculture Training and Business Incubation for At-Risk Youth in Rural Areas**
—Jose Terrones, Superintendent, Anthony Water and Sanitation District
- 11:00 a.m. (3) **How to Streamline Housing Development in New Mexico**
—Johanna Gilligan, President, Homewise Inc.
—Veronica Toledo, Senior Director, Policy and Advocacy, Homewise Inc.
—Natalie Green, Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization Administrator, City of Las Cruces
- 12:30 p.m. **Lunch**
- 1:00 p.m. (4) **El Paso Electric: Updates and Highlights**
—Rico Gonzales, Regional Vice President, El Paso Electric
- 2:15 p.m. (5) **Converting Wildfire Risk to Economic Opportunity**
—Laura McCarthy, State Forester and Director, Forestry Division, Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD)
—Ward Hendon, General Partner, Dangerous Ventures
—James Pittman, Ecological Economist, Real Value Group
—William Foster, Forest Markets Coordinator, Forestry Division, EMNRD

3:15 p.m. (6) [Homeland Security and Emergency Management Issues](#)
—Ali Rye, Deputy Secretary, Homeland Security and Emergency
Management Department

4:00 p.m. (7) [Impact of Athletics on the Local Economy](#)
—Joe Fields, Director, Athletics, NMSU

4:30 p.m. **Recess**

Wednesday, September 9

9:00 a.m. **Reconvene**

9:15 a.m. (8) [Updates and Highlights on Projects and Needs](#)
—John L. Hummer, M.H.A., President and Co-Founder, Burrell College of
Health Sciences

10:00 a.m. (9) [The Business of Child Care](#)
—Ray Jaramillo, Director, Alpha School for Young Children
—Lupe P. Nevarez, Co-Founder, The Children's Garden Child Development
Centers
—Angela Garcia, Chief Executive Officer and Owner, The Toy Box Early
Learning and Child Care Centers
—Daisy Lira, Founder, The Hive Education

11:30 a.m. (10) [Horse Racing Industry in New Mexico: Updates and Challenges](#)
—John Buffington, Vice Chair, New Mexico Racing Commission (NMRC)
—Amber Trujillo, Chief Financial Officer, NMRC
—Fred Heinrich, President and General Counsel, Sunland Park Racetrack
and Casino

12:30 p.m. **Lunch**

1:00 p.m. (11) [Recruiting Businesses to Southern New Mexico, Port of Entry
Challenges and Benefits and Santa Teresa Update](#)
—Jerry Pacheco, President and Chief Executive Officer, Border Industrial
Association; Executive Director, International Business Accelerator
—Eric Montgomery, Director, Economic Development, El Paso Electric;
Chair, Board of Directors, Mesilla Valley Economic Development
Alliance

2:00 p.m. (12) [Spaceport America Update](#)
—Scott McLaughlin, Executive Director, Spaceport Authority

2:45 p.m. **Public Comment***

3:15 p.m.

Adjourn

*Members of the public may make virtual public comments during the public comment period of the meeting by following the instructions under the "Additional Information" section of the Economic and Rural Development and Policy Committee [web page](#).

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