

Interim Economic and Rural Development
Legislative Committee
Meeting at Ruidoso and Mescalero,
July 26 and 27, 2017



SCMEDA
South Central Mountain Economic Development Association

The regional blueprint for 21st century economic
development in the mountains/high plains of southcentral
New Mexico

SCMEDA – created August 2015 to build economic cooperation between Lincoln County, Mescalero and Otero County communities for the next 5-10 years



The Planning Process

- Approached May 2015 by USDA Rural Development and NMSU College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, to apply for USDA economic development planning program. SET - Stronger Economies Together
- Plan must include three counties or more. This case – two counties and the Mescalero Apache Nation
- Partners: Carrizozo Works [a 501(c)(3)], the Village of Ruidoso, the Mescalero Apache Nation, the City of Ruidoso Downs
- Began planning process October 2015 at Inn of the Mountain Gods; completed by October 2016. Approved by USDA April 2017.
- 300 residents from Lincoln County, Mescalero Nation and Otero County participated



The Plan's Overall Focus

- Creation of new, economic base, sustainable jobs – full-time with benefits
- Transformation of the regional economy with “Outside of the Box” thinking
- Increased regional cooperation –using SET guidelines
- SET - Stronger Economies Together – USDA Rural Development
- Encourage California business relocation to southcentral mountain region
- Working closely with the Borderplex Alliance on business development w/the Border
- <https://borderplexalliance.org/>



5

Regional Challenges

- Historic inability to work across community boundaries, County lines and County/Community/Reservation lines
- Reliance on declining tourism industries, i.e. horse racing, golf, and gaming.
- Diminished ski industry due to less snow
- Regional population decline since 2010, particularly young families, singles - reflected in school and college enrollment decline, and workforce shortages
- Infrastructure shortages – housing, high speed broadband, water systems



6

Regional Assets

- Vast natural resources
- Countless outdoor recreation opportunities
- Established reputation as state and national tourism end-destination
- Rich and diverse culture and history. Hundreds of years of Apache, Hispanic and Western culture.
- A temperate year-round climate
- A regional abundance of leaders. Numerous NM organizations have had Lincoln County resident leadership . . .
- Border Proximity and transportation corridors



7

Four Targeted Sectors for Potential Economic Diversification

- Tourism, Recreation and Cultural Heritage
- Agriculture, Forest and Wood Products, Energy Production
- Light Industry, Small Corporation Development
- Biomedical and Biotechnical [Full Spectrum Wellness, Medical and Behavioral Health Services]



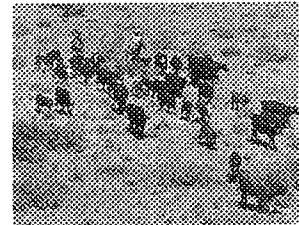
8

1. Transforming Tourism, Recreation and Cultural Heritage

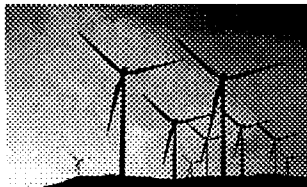
- Getting people to stay longer and to do more things in the region
- Developing new recreation venues for young singles and families such as mountain "hiking and biking," fishing, hunting & boating
- Developing new events and activities at Inn of the Mountain Gods, the Ruidoso Convention Center and private entertainment/meeting venues
- Providing new visitor amenities such as EV charging stations, 4G cell service and CNG fueling stations, plus transit and ride sharing



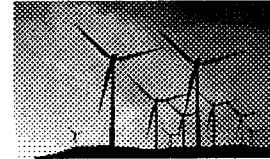
2A. Transforming Agriculture



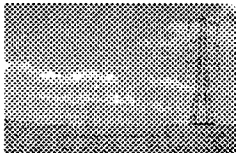
- Developing potential new high value, low water crops such as nuts, grapes, etc.
- Expanding ranching through new technology adaptations
- Expansion of NMSU Corona Range and Livestock Research Center specializing in patent development/adoption and research
- Diversifying ranching's primary revenue driver to include energy production and transport



2 B. Wind Energy Comes to the Wild West of Lincoln County.

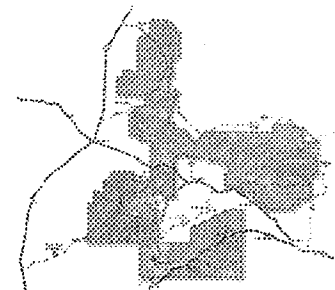
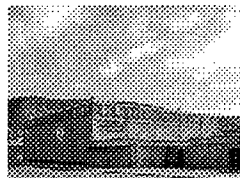


- Southwest Power Pool, Pattern Energy and Clean Line Energy Partners will build two transmission projects and an estimated 1400 wind turbines in the Corona region beginning in late 2017
- The largest industrial project ever in Lincoln County



2 C. Transforming the historic Forest Products Industry

- Transforming use of small diameter wood/slash through landscape-scale forest restoration and watershed improvement projects
- Southern Sacramento Watershed and Forest Restoration Strategy Plan Adopted
- Northern Sacramento Watershed and Forest Restoration Strategy Plan in Design/Development
- Providing raw wood supply for out-of-region businesses like Custom Crates of Canutillo, Texas



3. Attracting Light Industry and Small Corporations to the Region

- Attract California – based light industry seeking to relocate to a less regulated environment with potential to establish border and southern New Mexico energy, defense or other markets
- Attract California-based small corporations, again seeking to relocate to a less regulated environment, taking advantage of the region's high quality of life, low crime, and temperate climate which is good for business and their employees
- Attract other light industry/small corporations that can serve the agriculture, defense and energy industries



13

4. Transforming Wellness, Biomedical and Biotechnical Services in the Region

- Restore Behavioral Health and drug [opioids/meth] treatment services
- Foster greater coordination and cooperation between regional medical service providers and Mescalero Community [IHS]
- Build communication between full spectrum service and traditional medical service providers
- Expand specialty services in Lincoln County such as dialysis, cardiology, oncology, etc.
- Develop new health care provider training
- Build new Hospital in Ruidoso

14

How the Legislature Can Help

1. Continue to fund/increase Game and Fish and State Forestry forest thinning projects
2. In potential 2018 tax code revision, consider forest products facility/transportation credits
3. Increase infrastructure investment for water, Tribal, wastewater, road projects
4. Invest in/ extend high speed broadband for rural areas w/o and areas w/older infrastructure
5. Continue support for rural development and tourism programs like Frontier communities, NM MainStreet, & NM True Programs
6. Job training – speed up \$\$ and application process for training in wind energy, transmission and distribution and water system operations. Rural shortages exist.

Closing Comment: Give legislative and staff attention to reducing the growing complexity of regulations & funding applications. Has been increasing.



Your Comments and Questions, please ?



- Thank you for your interest in and support of the Southcentral Mountain Region

