

**2006 APPROVED
WORK PLAN AND MEETING SCHEDULE
for the
ECONOMIC AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND
TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**

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Work Plan

The Economic and Rural Development and Telecommunications Committee has evolved from its initial assignments. In the early 1990s, the committee's predecessor was the Science, Technology, Energy and Defense Conversion Committee because the state was facing some potential base closures or realignment prospects. The closure of Walker Air Force Base in Roswell in the 1960s was still fresh in people's memories, and there were fears that New Mexico could experience additional significant losses of federal installations. There was also frustration over the migration of Microsoft to Seattle and New Mexico's apparent inability to exploit the presence of national laboratories. The national laboratories were spinning off small high-tech startups that would move to California or Washington and not create jobs and tax revenues in New Mexico. As the committee began to focus on concepts such as technology transfer, people in rural parts of the state felt left out, and suggestions were made to create a committee on rural affairs. The Legislative Council assigned rural development to the committee and changed its name accordingly. Simultaneously, the internet was beginning to make itself felt, but New Mexico was seen as being left out of this development. Telephone service was undergoing a significant metamorphosis economically and institutionally as well. Hence, telecommunications was added to the committee's duties and name. Space development has also been part of the

committee's scope of work, partly because of the presence in New Mexico of the White Sands Missile Range and the threat in the early 1990s that the role of White Sands might be diminished if new missions were not forthcoming. Now, space, the next frontier, may be a significant player in New Mexico's future economy.

These trends and others continue to challenge New Mexico, and the Economic and Rural Development and Telecommunications Committee will likely be taking on these and other issues as economic possibilities continue to evolve.

A. The Economic and Rural Development and Telecommunications Committee proposes to explore and discuss the following topics during the 2006 interim:

1. availability of high-speed internet access throughout the state, including discussions of the Governor's "Wire New Mexico" program and the status of the rural extension fund;
2. stimulation of small business entrepreneurship, including art trails and main street programs;
3. expansion of the role of colleges and universities in economic development within their respective regions, including review of business school programs, such as the Arrowhead Center at NMSU, and the status of the Small Business Development Centers;
4. regulation of the payday lending industry;
5. effectiveness of tax incentive policies;
6. the GRIP II project;
7. energy issues, including adequacy of transmission line network and alternative energy opportunities;
8. obstacles to business development, including testimony from the Department of Environment, the Construction Industries Division of the Regulation and Licensing Department and the Oil Conservation Division of the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department; and
9. the status of the economic partnership program, budget and needs.

B. The committee will coordinate, as needed, with other committees regarding presentations of subject matter of common concern.

2006 APPROVED MEETING SCHEDULE

The Economic and Rural Development and Telecommunications committee proposes to hold six meetings on the following dates in the following locations:

| <u>Dates</u> | <u>Location</u> |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| June 13 | Santa Fe |
| July 24-25 | Gallup, Grants |
| August 24-25 | Tucumcari, Santa Rosa |
| September 27-28 | Ruidoso |
| October 25-26 | Deming, Las Cruces |
| November 13-14 | Santa Fe |