



Connecting the Dots

Volume 10, Issue #2
February — August 2017

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The Connecting the Dots Quarterly Newsletter is a product of the Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments



Director's Corner

Dear Friends,

In early November, we enjoyed co-hosting the Four Corners Future Forum with San Juan College, Four Corners Economic Development and Arizona Public Service/Four Corners Power Plant. Over 140 friends and neighbors from across the four states of the Four Corners region came together on the San Juan College campus in Farmington to find common ground for building and sustaining a regional economy for the future.

This event was a year in the planning, and it took tremendous effort and cooperation to pull it off. The contributors were too many to list here, but I would especially like to give a shout-out to our key partners who were instrumental in making this happen:

From Four Corners Power Plant, Arvin Trujillo, Suzy Baldwin and Joanne Bryant, who invested many hours and loads of talent in helping lead the process, as well as bringing in significant dollar contributions from the APS Foundation;

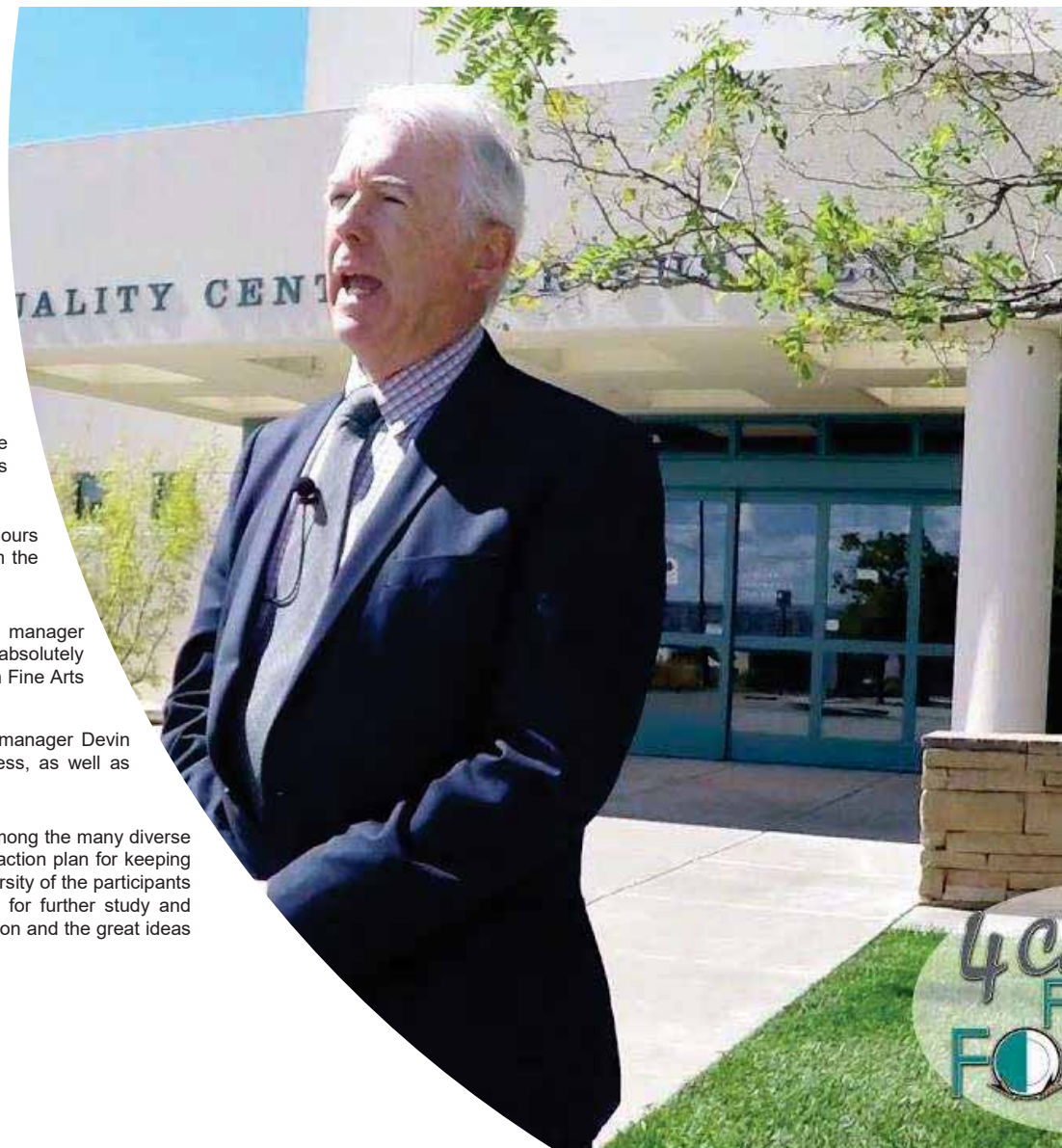
From San Juan College, President Toni Pendergrass, and her able assistant and "POWER" program manager Melissa Meechan, as well as Vice President David Eppich, whose generous, wise and able support were absolutely essential from start to finish, and who provided the perfect venue for the event at the College's Henderson Fine Arts Center;

From Four Corners Economic Development, CEO Warren Unsicker and his get-it-done administrative manager Devin Scott, who hosted our many planning meetings and performed countless services to the whole process, as well as bringing in important financial contributions to the overall Forum.

As you'll read in this newsletter, the Forum generated a wealth of ideas and fostered new connections among the many diverse players of the region – all of which is being worked into a Forum Report, which in turn will generate an action plan for keeping the "momentum of collaboration" moving forward. The presentations and conversations revealed the diversity of the participants – with some ideas ready for collaborative action, and others remaining with disagreement or a need for further study and consultation. But as one of the Forum's participants said, "Even more important than the factual information and the great ideas was the spirit of cooperation and mutual respect that was strengthened by this Forum process."

So ... more to come. As I told the crowd in the closing comments, "Power on!"

Jeff Kieley
Executive Director



Transitioning from a Coal-Reliant Economy

In early November, over 140 thought leaders from throughout the 4-Corners region gathered at the San Juan College campus to address impacts on the regional economy of current sea-changes in the coal and other energy economies.

THE FORUM:

*“Thinking Locally—
Acting Regionally”*

This forum provided an opportunity to assemble a number of regional planners, government (local, state, federal tribal) leaderships, industry professionals, and representatives of public and private sector agencies, to discuss issues and strategies surrounding the economic downturn of coal-reliant communities within the Four-Corners region.

While well-intended, planning alone cannot eliminate all socioeconomic slumps and sociocultural distresses, but “commitment and organization can advance a vision for the region...to help create a fertile environment for regional investment...and develop strategies to address the shortfalls.”

Key industrial sectors and community capacity factors listed below were identified as subject areas to organize strategic discussions around:

- Energy
- Tourism
- Manufacturing
- Agriculture
- Healthcare Systems
- Infrastructure
- Technology
- Transportation
- Education
- Capacity Building
- Creative Economy
- Location-Neutral Work

Ideas, strategies, and planning approaches were considered and assessed within each breakout session that further developed into a broader, integrated understanding of existing local and regional economic concerns.

These activities are working conversations that is met to develop into decision-making strategies, create synergies and resources, and to establish regional support for funding initiatives.



November 1-2, 2017
San Juan College
Farmington, New Mexico

Transitioning from a Coal-Reliant Economy

BEST PRACTICES & WISE COUNSEL from the IRON BELT

The Forum welcomed two special guests from central Minnesota's Region 5 Economic Development District: Executive Director, Cheryal Lee Hills and her colleague Arlene Jones, Director of the Sprouts Food Hub. The highly successful food hub operation is a result of Region 5's *Resilient Regions Initiative*, an economic development plan established in 2012, backed by HUD's *Sustainable Communities Grant*, to counter acute economic problems experienced within the region.



Arlene Jones

The Region 5 Team stressed the importance of defining what success looks like, and in identifying the *community champions*, "the movers and shakers", who are committed to collaborating—an approach that effectively brought economic opportunities back into their region. These approaches are the foundation of the *WealthWorks* methodology.

WealthWorks is a development and planning program organized by a network of professionals, from Yellow Wood Associates, the Heartland Institute, the Aspen Institute, and the Ford Foundation, who created a systematic approach — identifying 8 factors of community assets (e.g. social, political, natural, etc.) — that helps to recognize dynamic opportunities within communities.

The result of their efforts to date...

- Over \$40 million in new public and private investments empowered Region 5 communities, and
- A "coalition of the willing": over 600 individuals, of diverse interests, from public and private agencies across the region

Moreover, their story had a strong impression on participants at the national 2015 POWER Seminar, held in West Virginia, including Forum Co-Chair, Arvin Trujillo (Four Corners Power Plant), who suggested to invite the duo as guest speakers for our regional forum this year. Cheryal and Arlene were very encouraged by what they saw and heard at the Four Corners Future Forum, and pledged their support for our efforts going forward.

The Four Corners Future Forum Report will be finalized and published in the near future, to be housed on the internet website for public access, as well as being accessible via the COG website: www.nwnmcog.org

<https://www.wealthworks.org/>



Cheryal Hills

Transitioning from a Coal-Reliant Economy

POWER FORWARD:

Emerging from the Four Corners Future Forum was a broadly-shared commitment to continue the strategic effort together—as a region.

Next Steps:

- Complete a full report of the proceedings of the Forum and disseminate broadly; use the report for further communication, study and advocacy.
- Meet with the four Congressional Delegation offices to present and discuss the report and start building a “Four Corners Caucus” approach to unified strategy and development.
- Convene Strategic Theme Working Groups around Energy; Manufacturing; Agriculture; Infrastructure; Local/Regional Capacity-Building; Tourism; the Creative Economy; Technology; and Location-Neutral Work.
- Building upon – and in concert with – the work of existing regional associations, work on formalizing and launching a Four Corners Regional Economic Consortium that speaks for the interests of the region’s communities and that sustainably carries forward the goals and initiatives from the Forum.
- Develop, publish and manage a Website for the regional initiative.
- In March 2018, convene the group leaders of the Strategic Theme working groups.
- In July 2018, convene Forum 2.0 to report in on progress to date, set goals and targets going forward and galvanize broader participation in the regional effort.

“Goal: A Diversified Economy

Closure of power plant and coal mine unite Navajo, area universities”

That was the Gallup Independent headline on November 10th, just one week following the Four Corners Future Forum. In this case, the subject at hand was the scheduled closure of the Navajo Generating Station (Page, AZ), reflecting a national trend with respect to markets and regulations around coal-fired power plants.

The article announced a meeting scheduled for November 14th at the Northern Arizona University, to involve Navajo President Russell Begaye and leaders from NAU and Arizona State University “to explore opportunities for collaboration to create a diversified Navajo economy.”

These strategic conversations are timely and in-sync with efforts by the communities of the Four Corners states to deal with the economic impacts of coal mine and power plant closures, and to figure out new and collaborative strategies for diversifying the regional economy—including the specific economies of Native American tribes, municipalities, and counties of the region.

A Memorandum of Understanding between Navajo Nation and the universities has created a collaborative mechanism to support the Navajo Nation’s work pursuing renewable energy development and associated job creation. The MOU lays out a number of potential areas in which the universities may assist the NN in exploring promising development avenues.

In the more immediate Four Corners region, partnerships with colleges and universities are also being developed to carry out similar explorations. Lots of opportunity for synergy and collaboration!



San Juan College Enterprise Center



San Juan College receives the "Star of the Southwest" Award. From left to right: San Juan College President, Dr. Toni Pendergrass, Enterprise Center Director, Judy Castleberry, and COG Director, Jeff Kiely.

Navigating the New Norm"

Southwest Regional Economic Development Association Conference
Baton Rouge, Louisiana, July 26-28, 2017

The **2017 Star of the Southwest** was awarded to the San Juan College Enterprise Center, at the SWREDA conference, for its efforts in developing creative economy programs responding to the region's downturn in coal-based industries.

In partnership with the NADO Research Foundation, and supported by EDA grants, SWREDA held a conference addressing several topics surrounding:

- Food systems/food security
- Economic development
- Freight mobility
- Business development

Further discussions encompassed ways to link gaps between workforce and economic development, creative strategies for achieving innovation, managing organizational cultural change, economic diversification, managing digital information, and strengthening regional resilience.

EDA recently invested \$275,000 to expand and upgrade a mixed-use incubator development, based on campus, that was initially upstarted in 1999. This initiative resulted in the creation of 250 jobs, with business tenants served by the Enterprise Center. Federal funds leveraged over \$5 million in annual revenues for the local tax base.

Today, approximately 82% of the operating expenses of the Enterprise Center are paid for by rents from on-site client businesses and affiliates, while San Juan College continues to provide the balance of the operating costs.

The Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments, with an office with the Enterprise Center, served as the EDA's field partner in bringing these grants into the region.

<https://www.nado.org/events/2017-swreda-conference/>
<http://swreda.com/about-2/awards-and-recognitions/>

CDBG Updates

Based on the Community Development Block Grant Implementation Workshop, held on October 24, 2017 in Albuquerque, the following is critical information and changes that applicants should review prior to this year's cycle:

- **The Purge**

Due to much confusion with the SHARE system, DFA purged Local Entity W9s. Local entities are advised to work with LGD staff to review CDBG status, and implement appropriate remedies.

- **Separate Bank Account**

Local entities are **required** to establish a separate bank account for their CDBG projects. It was formerly a suggestion, but now it is **MANDATORY**.

- **Uniform Grant Guidance**

The State revised amendments to **Part 2, CFR 200 Federal Regulations**. UUG need to be in compliance with the new standards, including Risk Assessments of Grantee/ Grant Administrator (e.g. COG, engineering firm). The State's 4-Star Rating System is a scorecard that rates a local entity's performance: 0-star (worst), 4-star (best). The four-areas of review are:

- Communication: proactive communication with State staff
- Progress & Financial Reports: correct and on-time submissions of reports
- Administration Capacity: ability to complete and deliver projects in a timely manner
- Timely Expenditures: completing projects within or under budget

The purpose is to ensure **accountability** amid Local Entities. In the previous round of CDBG applications, communities given low scores were asked what corrective actions need to be in place to perform better in utilizing and being stewards of such federal funds.

- **Annual CDBG Requirements**

To comply with CDBG requirements: COG recommends that each Local Entity adopt a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) in January (every year), after scheduling previous annual requirements.

Each procedure require separate actions, as outlined in the CDBG Implementation Manual. There are several **templates available** for use.

http://www.nmdfa.state.nm.us/CDBG_Implementation_Manual.aspx

- **Cooperative Purchasing Agreements (CPA)**

Grantees **CANNOT** use CPAs for CDBG funds and/or projects.

- **Local and State Procurement Preferences**

Since these are federal funds, local entities **CANNOT** provide additional points or preferences for Procurements (e.g. Veteran's preference, NM-based companies).

- **Environmental Review — Tribal Consultation**

HUD has created interactive maps to assist Local Entities in identifying which Tribe/Pueblo to consult with. <https://egis.hud.gov/tdat/>

Consultation letters must be sent government-to-government with official letterheads. Final ER Report packets should be organized in 3-ring binders with tabs prior to delivery.

- **Consistency in Scope-of-Work (SOW)**

The SOW should be consistent throughout the application process:

Starting an application → Exhibit 1-A → RFP/BID → Contract → Implementation

- **Pre-Construction Meeting**

As recommended by LGD Staff, Local Entities are advised to invite Project Managers to pre-construction meetings, to ensure all State/Federal requirements are reviewed and understood, including prevailing wages, etc. Feel free to invite COG staff as well.



Making it rain for the Village of Milan! @NWNMCOG #CDBG
4:43 PM - Sep 13, 2017



Chapters encouraged to plan projects ahead of water pipeline service daily-times.com/story/news/loc... via @TheDailyTimes
8:05 AM - Sep 19, 2017



Chapters encouraged to plan projects ahead of water pipeline ...
Work continues on a 280 mile pipeline to deliver San Juan River water to communities on the Navajo Nation.
daily-times.com



After a season of devastating Western wildfires, glad McKinley County, NM is taking proactive steps to prevention, ow.ly/d/6OUd
1:22 PM - Sep 26, 2017



Gallup awarded funds for life-saving & life-changing services via Indian Health Services \$1.5M grant. PR: ow.ly/d/6PvN #BHIZ
11:02 AM - Sep 28, 2017

Regional Highlights

Recent Tweets...

Let's go around the horn on local and regional issues, successes, and other news via Twitter



Gallup Solar Park

"Gallup Solar is collaborating with communities, elected representatives, utilities and industry to bring solar power to all peoples in our area."

After a decade of commitment and hard work in kickstarting this project, Gallup Solar introduced the City of Gallup's first solar farm in August 2017.

The City Council approved a Power Purchase Agreement with Mangan Renewables, LLC, who is authorized to construct and operate an 8-megawatt photovoltaic generating facility. The solar farm is built on a 35-acre property owned by the city. The project is expected to be completed by the end of December 2017. The finished product will include 28,896 340-watt photovoltaic modules.

In its initial year, the city will roughly save \$20,000 in energy costs, and approximately \$785,000 in the next 8-years of operation. The solar park will generate enough electricity to provide power to 2,500 residential homes, and offset production of 3.5-million pounds of carbon dioxide annually.

The city will eventually have the option to purchase the facility any time after the 7th-year of commercial operation at fair market value.

<http://www.gallupsolar.org/>

<http://www.gallupsolar.org/about1>

Zuni Mountain Trails Project

NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN AREAS OF MCGAFFEY

From ribbon cutting to on-the-ground planning...

Through adventure tourism, the Zuni Mountains Trail System is an economic catalyst for jobs and business opportunities. Planning efforts for such projects help determine the costs of developing, constructing and maintaining trailheads. Overall planning initiatives for ZMTP is to incorporate a total of 238-miles of (a) single-track, (b) multi-use (equestrian), and (c) non-motorized trail operations. These efforts will be in continual development for the next several years.

The northern portion of McGaffey:

COG staff commenced the developing phase of trail prescription for the Milk Ranch/East Hillso sections, in October 2017. 18-miles of trail prescription and GIS mapping was recently completed, as required for trail design preparation.

The Milk Ranch Trail Head and parking lot was surveyed by Scot Bingham (USFS Enterprise Program, Saint George, UT).

The southern portion of McGaffey:

Trail prescription for Grass Hopper Springs was assessed by Sean Gwin (USFS Enterprise Program).



COPE Program

The COG is an active and ardent supporter of sustainable agriculture and our local food systems within our rural communities.

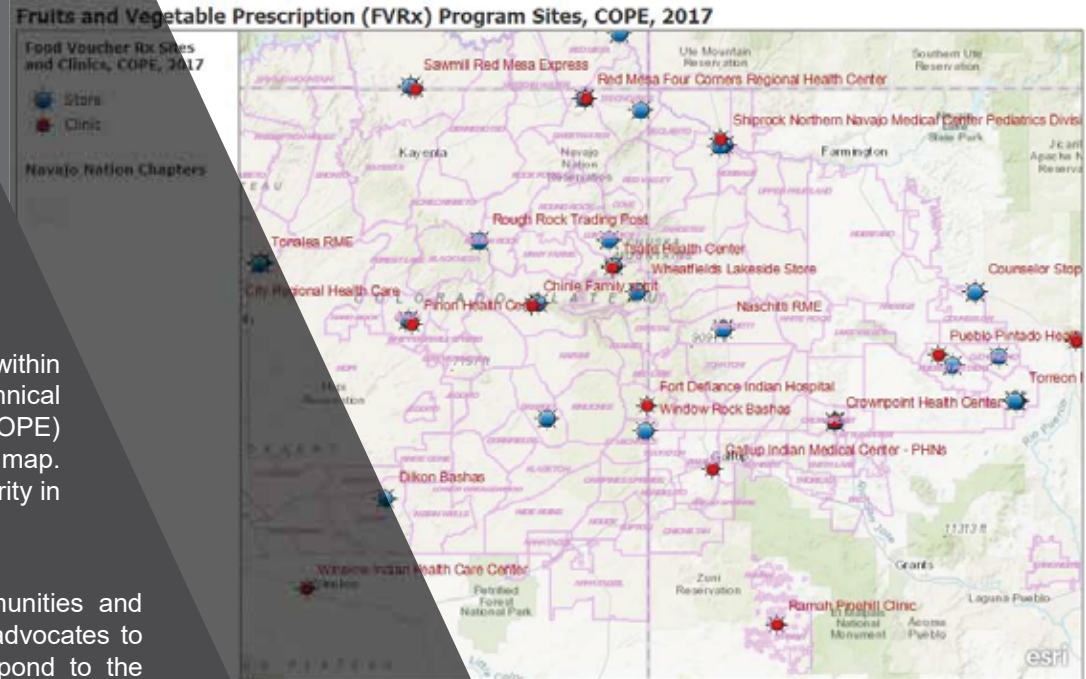
As an ardent supporter of sustainable agriculture and local food systems within our rural communities, COG broaden its local efforts by providing technical assistance for the Community Outreach and Patient Empowerment (COPE) Program, of Gallup, NM, in creating a useful food and health system map. Local agriculture, microenterprise, and food systems are an important priority in developing a SET, Stronger Economies Together, initiative.

Such commitments establishes strength and resiliency for local communities and partners alike. COPE partners with “health care teams and community advocates to develop programs that address structural barriers to good health, respond to the burden of disease and bridge gaps in the health care system identified by providers, patients and families.”

More recently, COPE and its partners have developed the **Community Data Collaborative**, an online interactive map that illustrates Food Voucher Rx Sites (stores) and Clinics on the Navajo Nation, using ArcGIS. The public map gallery continues to be updated.

<https://nmcddc.maps.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=fc7af01efd484845a5d3ab70c6fb05f8>

<https://www.copeprogram.org/>





22nd Annual NMIFC

October 25-27, 2017

Santa Fe, NM

<http://www.nmifc.com>



Buckman Direct Diversion Water Treatment Plant (BDD)

Through intense and dedicated collaborative efforts, stakeholders and investors successfully initiated a state-of-the-art water treatment plant, one of the first in the nation. Watershed drainage from the San Juan River in Colorado is diverted through New Mexico's Rio Chama/Rio Grande tributaries, where BDD station pumps begins phases of technical and chemical treatments (i.e. ferric chloride, orthophosphate, oxidation) that provides the Santa Fe region with quality fresh water.

<http://bddproject.org/>

Conference Highlights

Joe Guillen Award is endowed to outstanding community development planning achievements. This year's award was given to the late lamented Andrew Othole (Pueblo of Zuni), for his passion and dynamic work in his community. His fervor should be inspirational to our local and regional planning initiatives.

Best Practice in Economic Development was presented to the City of Las Vegas MainStreet Program for restoring and rehabbing historic downtown structures, with the help of New Mexico Main Street (NMMS) funding opportunities.

Best Practice in Finance was presented to the City of Sunland Park for the development of several communities facilities: senior center, public health center and a city park. Projects were achieved through the collaborative work with local stakeholders and agencies.

Best Practice in Housing was presented to the Pueblo of Acoma Housing Authority for a 60-unit housing development for the elderly and the disabled. This project was made possible through several funding opportunities with LIHTC, NMFA, etc.

Best Practice in Planning was presented to the El Creston MDWCA (Las Vegas) for the development and installment of safe and reliable rural water sources.

Best Practice in Tribal was presented to the Pueblo of Santa Ana for the development of several community service facilities, including a fire station, community wellness center, water systems, etc.

Catalina Muñiz Award (Utilities) was presented to Karen Nichols and the Lower Rio Grande Public Works Authority for the development of the Del Cerro Water System Improvements Project (Berino-Mesquite). This project was funded through the USDA Rural Development opportunities.



Transportation Best Practices

The **Pueblo of Acoma Planning & Engineering** was presented the *Best Practice in Transportation Award* for initiating and finalizing several Construction Manager General Contractor (CMGC) projects, as designed by the FHWA.

The CMGC development process facilitates accelerated project development through weekly meetings between key construction contractors, and local government management.

As a result, the Pueblo was able to complete 9 projects in a 2-year-period, with just under \$1 million in savings that went to additional projects. Most of our rural governments are fortunate to complete one or two projects in the same amount of time, given the limited funding available to rural America, and the regulatory constraints on the time it takes to complete a project.

Congratulations to the Pueblo of Acoma along with RTPo members Dave Deutsawe and Monica Felipe. Both are pictured receiving the award, with Lt. Governor Raymond Concho Jr. and a NM-DOT staff member.

<https://www.infrastructureengineers.com/acomaphotogallery.html>





Regional Transportation Planning Organization

NWRTPO members continue to support the maintenance and development of our regional transportation infrastructure needs. Highlights for this past period are as follows:

TECHNICAL

Regional Transportation Plan updated to include new sections on Infrastructure Resilience and Active Multi-Modal Transportation Options associated with health benefits.

Ongoing development of our RISTRA-Panoramic website that provides real-time reporting for regional project development.

Ongoing GIS mapping of regional transportation infrastructure.

TRAILS

Funding of \$3.7 million was approved for recreational and multi-modal trail development within Farmington and the Pueblo of Laguna, including 66-miles of new trails for the ZMTP.

NM Tourism awarded \$3,500 to the **4Corners Geotourism** website to help market/promote the Trail of the Ancients Scenic Byway, and other contributions to our tourism-related economy.

WORKSHOPS

The FHWA Southwest Regional Transportation Workshop was held at the NNDOT in Tse Bonito, NM, on August 22-24.

COG staff completed the FHWA-NHI 151052 “Basics of Transportation Planning” webinar series, receiving certificates of completion.

RTPO Orientations for elected members and leaders were completed for all member governments, with the exception of the Pueblo of Zuni.

Ongoing collaborative meetings between 4-Corners counties (NM, AZ & UT), including Navajo Nation, BIA, and NNDOT entities. Leroy Gishi (Director, National BIA Transportation) attended several meetings to help seek alternate methods of cost and time efficiencies for cross-jurisdictional regions.

MEETINGS

There are two major national grant opportunities that RTPO members are eligible to apply for:

1. Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA), and
2. Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER)

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

RTPO members and regional public transportation providers are gearing up for our annual *Public Transportation Funding Application* evaluative ranking session at our December 13th meeting in Ramah, NM.

Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments



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