

# ... Connecting the Dots ...

quarterly newsletter of the  
**NORTHWEST NEW MEXICO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**  
Volume 12, Issue #1  
March 2019

The Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project  
Working Together in the Water Commons  
"Real Water ... For Real People ... in Real Time"



# From the Director

Dear Friends of the Region,

So ... the time has come for me to pass the torch of leadership for your Council of Governments.

In consultation with family and many friends and colleagues, as well as with the COG executive committee, I have taken the step of setting my retirement date at the end of April of this year.

It's been a longer-than-expected journey – about three decades' worth – as a part of the COG family. I started in January 1990 when then-Director Patty Lundstrom hired me to direct the "Fighting Back" regional substance abuse prevention initiative. With the help of dozens of partners throughout northwest New Mexico, we spent a couple of years putting together a comprehensive plan to impact substance abuse in our communities, we got a local detox center (NCI) funded and built, and The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation committed \$3 million for a 5-year regional "Fighting Back" implementation program.

At that time (1993), as Fighting Back spun off as a nonprofit, the COG leadership invited me to stay on with the COG as Deputy Director – expanding my role to include work across all the disciplines, initiatives and challenges affecting our region and our local governments.

I served as Patty's Deputy Director until her retirement in Spring 2010. The Board appointed me interim Executive Director, and in December of the year, confirmed me as full-status Director. It has been my honor to serve as your Executive Director for these past 9 years. It's been quite a ride!

It's hard to describe just what the COG work entails, because there really is no one like us. We're not "the same as" local government, but it's the local governments who are our #1 customers, our members, and our directors.



We're not the same as state government, but we're qualified as a sub-state, quasi-governmental "state planning district" formed by state statute – and our employees are members of PERA.

We're not the same as federal government, but we're founded under federal law and designated by the US Department of Commerce as an "economic development district," serving to design regional economic development plans, develop and disseminate data, and assist in funding and implementing economic initiatives.

We work on all kinds of issues and projects – depending on local needs and on the resources available from local, state, federal and philanthropic sources. In our offices, the topic of work or conversation may change every half-hour, and we're always having to think at multiple levels, and across many different domains of concern. We are called upon to be keepers of the vision and thought leaders, helping everyone in our circle to both "Think Locally/Act Regionally" and "Think Regionally/Act Locally."

My "ride" was temporarily interrupted in early 2016 when I underwent successful surgery for prostate cancer at the MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston. As I recovered from this life-threatening event, it was the love and support of my COG family and friends that pulled me back in and put me back at the wheel for these last three years.

In reflecting on my COG years, I can see many initiatives – large and small, local and national – that we've had a hand in. We're proud of the COG's role in the planning that went into the \$1 billion Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project currently being built to provide sustainable water supply to over 50 communities and up to 250,000 people in the future. We're proud of our "projecteering" work and the many millions of dollars in funding we've been able to leverage with the generous annual membership dues provided by our local governments. We're proud of our work as strategists, advisors and liaisons with the State Legislature. And we're proud of our leadership in forging a "4 Corners" regional collaborative that will help secure a sustainable economy in this magical part of the world.

Also in reflection, I think of the COG leaders I have worked with – most notably my first COG boss Patty Lundstrom, for 18 years now a State legislator and in recent years an award-winning economic developer in Gallup. I remember with fondness my past Board Chairs: Ron Morsbach; Charlie Chavez; the late Warren Mathers; and most profoundly, the late Dr. Bill Hall, with whom I experienced a strong father-son type of relationship. Thanks, Doc, for believing in me and letting me stand on your shoulders to see what I needed to see.



I cherish the memory, as well, of the late Jeff Condrey, whom I first met in the early 1990s when he was Gallup City Manager, and with whom I enjoyed working in his various roles as NM Local Government Division Director, USDA-Rural Development State Director and itinerant manager of local counties and municipalities across the state. My notes and messages often referred to him as "Jeff<sup>2</sup>." Jeff<sup>2</sup> worked for us at the COG in 2016 and 2017 as our economic development program manager, but in his retirement this past year he succumbed to cancer. Godspeed, Jeff<sup>2</sup>, and thanks for the memories.

Because of the support I received from all of you, for 29 years I've been able to lift up the Northwest New Mexico voice in national forums and in the halls of power in Washington, DC — peaking in 2015-16 with my Presidency of the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO), and culminating in my recent visits on Capitol Hill this past month. At this year's NADO Washington Conference, I was again able to call on leaders in the Federal agencies to work with us COGs to build a sustainable future in Rural America. And I now call on all of you, my partners in this work, to keep sending that message loud and clear!



I also greatly appreciate the support and friendship ... and patience (!) ... of my staff and my Board of Directors. Special shout-out to Board officers Billy Moore, Louie Bonaguidi, GloJean Todacheene and Martha Garcia, who have been a source of great strength and support throughout.

Going forward, the COG has a strong Board and strong staff – although we definitely need additional staffing resources in order to carry out all the work we could do in our ideal spot — at the **nexus** of federal, state and local government! Our budget is lower than in past (more flush) years, but it's pretty stable. For us to help the region "innovate itself into the future," we will need to tap new resources and new opportunities.



Your Deputy Director Evan Williams is well prepared to take the reins during the transition, and beyond. But he'll need support from all of our partners, as he and the COG staff team face the challenges of the future. I know I can count on all of you in the COG circle to lend that support.

As for me, I will remain professionally active, but in a different mode and with a different work-life balance. I have a couple of grandkids to help keep me young, and some new adventures to look forward to with Helen, my family and my circle of friends and companions on this life journey. I'll enjoy seeing many of you in future days and years, and cheering you on as you continue to "move the region"!



New trails and adventures await!

With love, respect and gratitude to all,





# United States Census 2020

## COG Leadership on the 2020 Census

The nation nears the one-year-out milestone from **2020 Census Day**: **Wednesday, April 1, 2020** is the day to be counted by everyone, only once and in the right place.

At stake for America? Over \$675 billion in federal funds annually for infrastructure, programs, and services. Important statistics on people, places and economy are essential to allocate Federal dollars to communities for such essentials as senior centers, schools, road improvements, health services, and more. Every household will have the option of responding online, by mail, or by phone. Collected data is used for statistical purposes only, and every survey of information is CONFIDENTIAL by law (Title 13 of the U.S. Code). The Census will never identify a person individually in a way that can be accessed from the outside, and information is protected by law.

The US Census Bureau requests reviews and updates from Tribal, State, County, and Local governments. Each government and its liaisons — for example, your Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments — report addresses, maps and boundaries, and initiate “complete counts” throughout communities. The process:

- 1) Boundary & Annexation Survey (BAS),
- 2) Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA),
- 3) Participant Statistical Areas Program (PSAP),
- 4) Be counted.

The COG is partnering with Complete Count Committees in our three-county region. In 2020, volunteers will be needed to assist with encouraging community members to participate in the 2020 Count. Currently the COG is utilizing several software systems — ArcGIS, QGIS, GUPS — to assist with US Census updates.

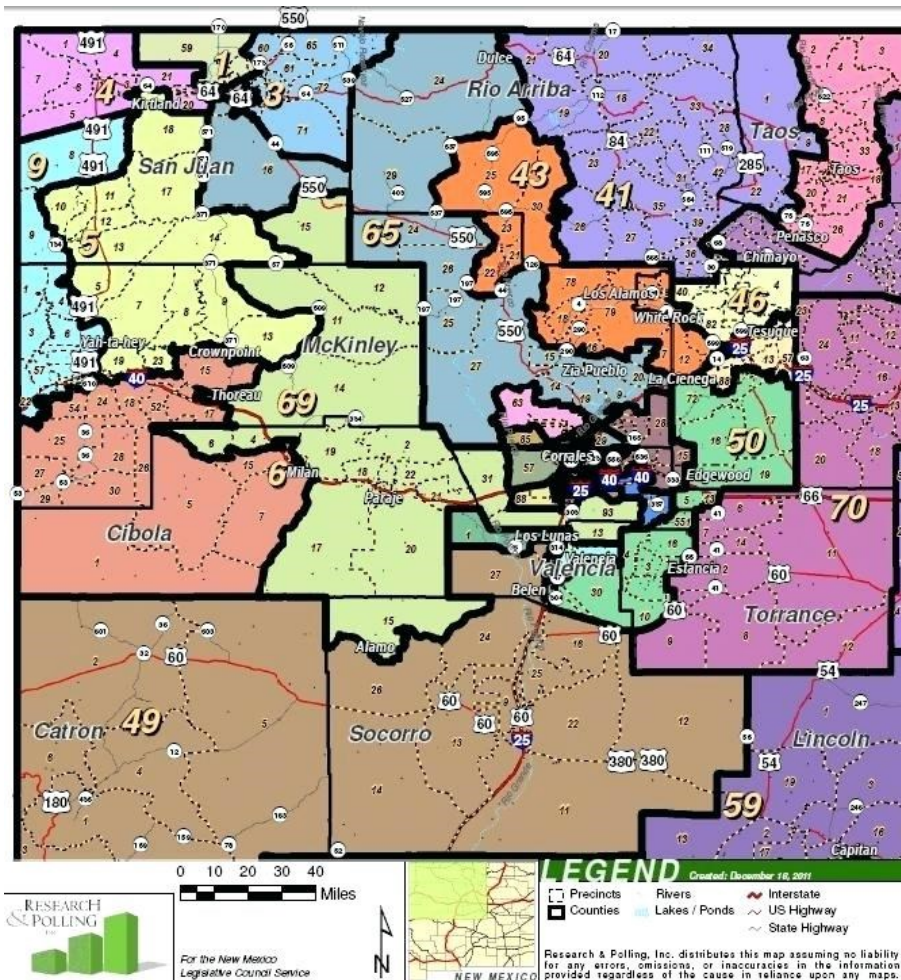
The COG is also an active member of the statewide “DASH” (Data Across Sectors for Health) initiative coordinated by the New Mexico Public Health Institute, as well as of the “VIDA” Frontier Communities Initiative, which is working to implement Senate Joint Memorial 2 (2018) to develop a rich database in small New Mexico communities as a step toward increasing resource investment.

New Mexico US Census Employment Opportunities:

<https://www.census.gov/about/regions/denver/jobs/new-mexico.html>

For Census-related questions and activities, contact Carrie at the COG:

[chouse@nwnmcog.org](mailto:chouse@nwnmcog.org); (505) 722-4327.





# Zuni Mountains Trails Project



## Connecting people & nature Connecting communities Connecting economies

The COG is helping connect the dots in the world of recreation and adventure tourism—one trail segment at a time!

With federal funding administered by the New Mexico Department of Transportation, and in collaboration with McKinley and Cibola Counties, the Mt. Taylor Ranger District of the Cibola National Forest, and Southwest Conservation Corps, the COG has been out on the land and in the map room to guide and support the work of SCC crews. COG Planner Carrie House is our trail-design expert and project lead, working in tandem with our iconic trailblazing consultant Strider Brown.

Now that Spring is here, more work is on the horizon. Plans are to hold a Zuni Mountains Trails Project Summit to inform all the partners and the general public on our progress and the next steps, followed by a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Milk Ranch Trailhead in the McGaffey area on ***National Trails Day***, June 1st,



# NWRTPO

## Northwest Regional Transportation Planning Organization

### \*\*\* Facilitating Mobility Investments to Move the Region \*\*\*

#### Gallup Safety/Part 1:

#### *Gallup Transportation Safety Plan*

A collaborative effort by the City of Gallup, NMDOT and Wilson & Company

The **Gallup Transportation Safety Plan** has gone through a number of stakeholder and public meetings for its development from February 2018 up till now, with the final draft under review with NMDOT at this time. We anticipate its release to our stakeholder participants within several weeks for finalization. The process has included a community survey which details recommendations for:

- Enforcement and Patrolling
- Public Education
- Sidewalks and Crosswalks
- Bike Facilities and Infrastructure
- Design and Infrastructure
- Signage needed
- Lighting
- Traffic Signals and Design
- Driver Awareness
- Animal Control

Key corridors and intersections of concern include:

#### Roadways:

- NM118/Old Route 66 (main in-town east-west corridor)
- I-40 pedestrian deterrent and safe crossing guidance opportunities
- US 491 – with Road Safety Audit recommended to analyze potential safe pedestrian crossings

#### Intersections:

- I-40 /US 491 Interchange
- I-40 north / south interchanges at a) east NM118 intersection, b) mid town intersection at Miyamura overpass to Montoya Blvd. south or Ford Drive north, c) mid town intersection at US 491, and d) west NM 118 intersection
- Examine all City-limit Rail crossings for multi-modal safety improvements

The Safety Plan will also address safety issues around vehicle traffic, pedestrian issues, bicycles, and commercial truck traffic. Reference the accident density map below for alcohol-involved crashes. This safety plan comes as a result of the high incidence of traffic accidents for the Gallup area, compared to the rest of the state.



#### Crash Geography – Maps

Map 6: Location and Density of Alcohol-involved Crashes in Gallup, 2016<sup>5</sup>

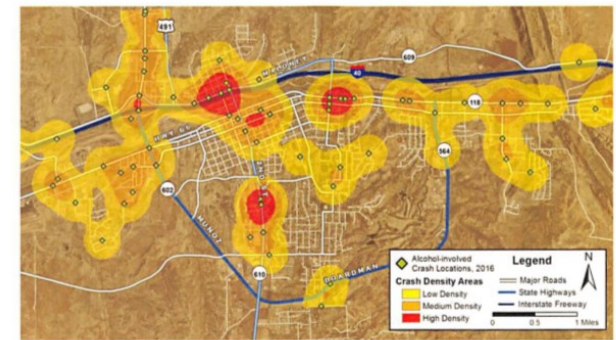


Figure 8: Pedestrian involved crashes to include alcohol involvement and location  
(These are crashes involving both Pedestrians and Alcohol where either the motor vehicle driver or the pedestrian was alcohol-involved)





NMDOT recently conducted a road safety audit for Gallup's downtown 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street rail crossings, at the intersections between NM118/Old Route 66 and Maloney Avenue to the north. Identified issues and recommendations for these rail crossing intersections and corridors between NM118 and Maloney Avenue include:

- 



# NWRTPO

## *Training Opportunities*

New Mexico LTAP Center

<http://ltap.unm.edu>

NMDOT is collaborating with the University of New Mexico for delivery of **Local Technical Assistance Program** (LTAP) training services, available to statewide transportation professionals from local, tribal and county government transportation departments and services. Under UNM's oversight, the LTAP program has a more robust program of training opportunities as follows:

ADA Compliance Program	Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Measures
AutoCAD Best Practices	Roadway Drainage Structure Inspection & Repair
Grant Writing	Road Safety 365
Introduction to Geospatial Survey	Roadway Safety Audits and Road Safety Audit Reviews
Introduction to GIS	Roadway Safety Data Collection and Safety Plan Development
Introduction to Online Mapping	Roadway Safety & Temporary Traffic Control
Introduction to MUTCD and Work Zones	Safety on the Job
Introduction to Unmanned Airborne Systems (UAS) Mapping	Succession Planning in Public Works
NHI Traffic Signal Design & Operation	Traffic Signal Design and Operation
NHI Transportation Performance Management for Pavements	Transportation Asset Management
Open Source and Free GIS Software and Applications	Unpaved Roads Maintenance and Design
Pavement Preservation and Maintenance	

Many of these trainings will include costs to participants or their respective governments in order to help sustain this more robust training program – which can be brought to any region of the state.

The UNM LTAP Center is also providing free training on NMDOT 's new 2019 ***Tribal & Local Public Agency (TLPA) Handbook***, which provides guidance on development (or maintenance) for every type of transportation infrastructure or services including process, costs, timeframes, steps and phases, regulations and required certifications / documentation needed to keep projects on time and on track – avoiding delays, higher costs, or penalties. The training is offered in our region March 26 at NMSU in Grants, and March 27 at San Juan College in Farmington.



# NWRTPO

## *Response to the “Call for Projects”*

The Northwest Regional Transportation Planning Organization (NWRTPO) undertook a biennial update to its Regional Transportation Improvement Program Recommendations (“RTIPR”), proposing ongoing or new projects for potential funding in the 2020–2024 timeframe.

The total documented need for transportation infrastructure improvements in our region has been estimated at \$777 million. However, most of our rural roads in northwestern New Mexico - considered “minor collectors” or “local roads” - do not qualify for Federal funding. Only infrastructure associated with “functionally classified” roadways are included in the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP), which means they must be at the level of Major Collector (2,600 -3,000 average daily traffic count for rural) or higher to qualify for federal funding through the State.

As a result, the Northwest RTIPR includes only functionally classified projects, totaling \$64.6 million. Even at this more “qualified” level, average biennial funding levels available to the Northwest RTPO region range between \$6 and \$10 million, depending on federal funding trends and the ability of local governments to leverage matching revenues.

This year’s “Call for Projects” ran from June 2018 thru March 2019. The process began with the submission by RTPO members of “Project Feasibility Forms” (PFFs) for proposed projects, which then went through a review process with NMDOT Districts 5 and 6. When judged to be feasible, projects were then further detailed on “Project Prospectus Forms” (PPF’s). In December, the RTPO reviewed final PPFs, and approved and prioritized projects for possible inclusion in the updated RTIPR for Federal Fiscal Years 2020 to 2024. The Northwest RTPO further reviewed its RTIPR entries in January and then finalized them in February.

In March, the District 6 RTIPR was consolidated with project entries from McKinley, Cibola, Catron and Sandoval Counties. Northern Navajo projects in San Juan County will be incorporated into the District 5 RTIPR in the near future.

The Northwest RTIPR now includes a total of 27 projects , including 4 roadway improvements, 7 planning & studies, 2 transportation alternative projects, 3 recreational trail projects, 2 bridge projects, one Federal Lands Access Program project, and 8 safety projects.



## Farmington MPO

### *Keeping it Going/Seeking Talent*

Under contract with the City of Farmington, the COG took on the task this year of administering the Farmington Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), supporting monthly meetings of the Technical and Policy Committees, participating in statewide MPO quarterly meetings, keeping plans and amendments up to date in the NMDOT system, and ... trying hard to hire up with the professional personnel needed to fulfill the goals and tasks of the MPO. For most of the first 5 months of the contract, COG Director Jeff Kiely assumed the role of MPO Officer, working closely with MPO Administrative Assistant June Markle.

In February, the City of Farmington and the COG agreed to invite the City’s Community Development Director Mary Holton to transfer into the MPO Officer role, while the COG continued its search for an MPO Planner. A responsive candidate was found, and an employment commitment made, but at the last minute he experienced family circumstances causing him to withdraw from the opportunity. As of this newsletter, the MPO Planner position remains open.



