



# CONNECTING THE DOTS

NORTHWEST NEW MEXICO  
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



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# 4 CORNERS POWER INITIATIVE

The Northwest New Mexico COG collaborated with San Juan College to secure two federal grants under the US Administration's "POWER" Initiative (*Partnership for Opportunity, Workforce & Economic Revitalization*). This inter-agency collaborative program provides funding to historically coal-dependent communities and regions, with the intent of generating proactive and adaptive economic strategies going forward as the world transitions from coal-based to other forms of power generation.

The COG received a \$327,300 planning grant for the purpose of conducting a regional assessment study on economic impacts related to changes in the global coal economy, to include recommendations on strategies and investments that continue to build on the region's historical natural and human assets, while diversifying the regional economy to build long-term sustainable prosperity based on local strengths and regional competitiveness in the global marketplace.

In conjunction with the COG planning grant, San Juan College was awarded a \$1.4 million public works grant, which will fund equipment upgrades in the new School of Energy facility geared to enhance the School's world class energy training programs in light of 21st century technologies and opportunities in the energy field.

Together, these EDA-funded projects comprise the "Four Corners POWER Initiative," tapping current and future public funding while partnering with the private sector to "move the region" forward. Current and Upcoming Steps:

- **Coal-Reliant Communities Innovation Challenge:** related and supportive of the POWER Grant, the National Association of Counties (NACo), National Association of Development Organizations (NADO), and Economic Development Administration (EDA) accepted the Four Corners/NWNM Team into this program structured to guide counties and regions to design solutions

tailored to their communities' needs and identify implementable projects. Several area representatives attended its kick-off conference in Charleston, WV in mid-November 2015.

- **Staffing Support:** the Council of Governments is investing its grant funding to hire an Economic Development Program Manager and Energy Economy Consultant Team to assist in meeting the grant deliverables.
- **POWER Publicity Event:** a major event is scheduled December 9th (10AM) at the School of Energy in Farmington with EDA-Austin Regional Director Jorge Ayala and other EDA brass.







# THE "RISTRA" MODEL

The New Mexico Association of Regional Councils (NewMARC) is partnering with software development firm Paladin Data Systems to explore the use of the cloud-based **Panoramic** software. Over the past year the Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments has continued to spearhead and serve as the pilot region for the Panoramic web-based "program knowledge organizer" in the State of New Mexico. The program is designed to organize, track, and share information about projects and programs. With the Panoramic cloud-based platform and unique feature set, agencies can better communicate the purpose, activities, locations, and accomplishments of their programs. The programs allows agencies to be transparent and accountable, and provides real-time reporting and collaboration. One of the most utilized features of the Panoramic program will be the mapping of projects through various categories, lenses and coding, making it a visually powerful tool for presentation and collaboration purposes.

**Panoramic** serves as the core software in the statewide program collaboration model named "Ristra" - reflecting the traditional New Mexican symbol of green and red chiles bound together for use in our kitchens.

The Northwest COG has partnered with the North Central Economic Development District (NCNMEDD) to develop the program and tailor it to the State of New Mexico's various agencies. The program has received funding support from New Mexico Departments of Transportation and the Aging & Long-term Services. In recent months the Panoramic Program has been presented to various agencies, organizations, and committees throughout the state and has seen tremendous support.

In the coming months the **Panoramic** team will continue to refine the program to make it optimal for all types of users, and all 7 members of NewMARC will soon be able to input their information and projects onto the portal. There will also be continuous efforts to promote and market the program to various state agencies with hopes that the Panoramic program will be the future of project development, tracking, and data.

The New Mexico Associate of Regional Councils is seeking legislative funding support to help staff the program going forward as both the Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments and the North Central New Mexico Economic Development District have helped build the project thus far with in-kind contributions.

North Central was especially instrumental in the technical development of the **Panoramic**/Ristra website.

*Thanks to the NCNMEDD staff for the Great Work*

# ANNUAL LUNCHEON

This year's Annual Meeting and Luncheon of the Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments was held on August 26th at the La Ventana Steak House in Grants, NM. The Luncheon was well attended, as over 75 friends and colleagues from the great state of New Mexico were present.

Following the opening remarks from Executive Director Jeff Kiely, renowned Economic Developer Mark Lautman presented the keynote presentation addressing the very heart of the COG's current workload. Lautman's presentation covered all elements of economic development but was concentrated on economic-base jobs. Lautman also presented his recent work with the three counties that make up our region and discussed the estimated number of jobs the region needed to create and replace to reach pre-recession economic levels.

Executive Director Kiely then provided an overview presentation on the "State of the COG," noting the wide range of services and partnerships constituting the robust COG work program. Through the use of a newly published annual report, Mr. Kiely proceeded to highlight some of the year's accomplishments and activities, which included:

- The COG's Relocation
- Economic Development Activities
  - Navajo Nation Inland Port
  - Gallup Energy & Logistics Park (GLP)
  - Stronger Economies Together (SET)
  - Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)
- Transportation
  - 4 Corners Intermodal Transportation Equinox
  - Regional Transportation Plan
  - Zuni Mountain Trails Master Plan & Environmental Assessment
- Community Development Block Grant
- City of Gallup's Metropolitan Redevelopment Area/Arts & Cultural Plan

As usual, the highlight of the luncheon was presentation of the COG's annual "Regional Champion" awards, recognizing leaders, colleagues, friends of the region that assist the COG in "moving the region".



# REGIONAL CHAMPIONS

Tom Taylor



Tom Taylor has long been in the forefront of visionary leadership and public service in the Four Corners region – and more recently statewide, as he served for 16 years in the New Mexico House of Representatives, including 6 of those years as Minority Leader.

Tom has always been a regional thinker, recognizing that our communities and economies reach far beyond the governmental boundaries we have drawn in the sand. He has been a strong supporter and partner of the Council of Governments and a true mentor to the region and the state on how to lead, serve and work with people across the many diversities we encounter in public life.

Paul Milan



In 1995, the COG the NWNM Community Development Corporation (CDC). The COG sounded the call for leaders, and Paul Milan answered becoming CDC Chairman. During the CDC's heyday and under Paul Milan's leadership, the CDC provided individual development accounts to a series of low-income folks in our region, who in turn used them to purchase a home, invest in a business, or enroll in college. Paul Milan was then appointed onto the Governor's Advisory Committee for Individual Development Accounts.

Paul Milan reminds us all that there is always more to do and always more to give. His legacy of service to our region makes Paul Milan an institution of Northwestern New Mexico.

Billy Moore



Throughout the last five years, Chairman Moore has led the COG through the Great Recession and now out the other side by building our member relationships. In the last year, the COG staff has appreciated his leadership and “can-do” attitude in helping us gain new financial management tools, including management of our insurance benefits, and in working with us on the relocation of the COG offices and rehabilitation of the COG's new building in downtown Gallup. Chairman Billy Moore understood at a young age how a regional hub can improve lives and families, and he has seen the COG change and evolve along with the region. His leadership will continue to be crucial in leading our organization and region into the future.

# RTPO UPDATE

**Regional Transportation Plan:** The RTPO staff completed the final document for the Northwest New Mexico Regional Transportation Plan. The RTPO Committee approved and adopted the final plan on October 14, 2015. The Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments Board of Directors also passed a supporting resolution for the plan on August 26, 2015. The final plan is posted on the Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments' website, under the RTPO Program site.

**Inland Port Analysis:** The RTPO staff helped finalize this report, in consultation with JBA & Associates, the Navajo Nation and the New Mexico Economic Development Department. This report provides an assessment of sites within the Navajo Chapter communities of Rocksprings, Manuelito, and Tsayatoh. This project was presented to the New Mexico Indian Affairs Committee on August 20th, 2015. Navajo Nation Division of Economic Development will be the lead agency for this project.

**Transit Applications:** The COG received 6 transit applications for FY2017 from the Village of Milan, the Navajo Nation, the Pueblo of Zuni, the Pueblo of Laguna, the Gallup Community Pantry, and Coyote Canyon. The RTPO scheduled a Transit Application Prioritizing Meeting for December 9th where each applicant will have the opportunity to briefly present their applications before the RTPO Committee.

**Central Federal Land Highways:** The New Mexico RTPO planners met with Elijah Henley from the Federal Highway Administration on October 6th in Albuquerque. The workshop focused on identifying mutual interests regarding transportation needs (programmatic & projects) from each region. The federal agency wanted to gain a better understanding of regional/local transportation needs as to make better informed decisions for investments of the Federal Lands Transportation Program (FLTP) and the Federal Lands Access Program over the next 20 years.



**RTPO Quarterly Roundtable:** The RTPO program managers from around the state met in Albuquerque to discuss the Regional Transportation Plan process (what worked and what didn't work or what needs improvement). Concerns about the federal tier system for project funding were discussed at this meeting. In addition, NMDOT is interested in piloting our region for data collection practices and processes, to include use of the *Panoramic* software.

## Northwest New Mexico Regional Transportation Plan

The development of a long-range transportation plan provides an opportunity for elected officials, organizations, and individual citizens to determine how the transportation system in their area should be structured to better serve future needs effectively and efficiently. The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) for Northwest New Mexico is an integral part of the New Mexico Transportation Plan, a federal requirement for the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT). The purpose of the RTP is to apply the State's vision, goals, objectives and strategies at the regional level. Under federal law, long-range transportation plans must look ahead at least 20 years, although the State of New Mexico chose to look ahead 25 years for its transportation planning. The Northwest New Mexico RTP provides a framework for thinking about the region's transportation system over the period of 2016 to 2040.

The plan was developed at the regional level with the establishment of Regional Working Groups (RWG), which helped guide the development of the plan. Our region was composed of 67 RWG members representing a very diverse group of stakeholders. The RWGs met consistently at each phase to provide key input into the plan. They identified regional challenges, opportunities, and developed regional actions. The plan primarily serves to provide a visionary, transparent, predictable, performance-based, and strategic framework to guide decision-making at all levels within the New Mexico Department of Transportation and by New Mexico's RTPOs.

The State of New Mexico provided a template with an articulated vision statement, along with five established goal statements. The Northwest RTP is directly consistent with these five goals, and the plan fits within the parameters outlined by the State of New Mexico. Our strategy for each goal was also consistent with the State, but we also included local strategies were also included to address local issues along with actions items assigned to NMDOT, Northwest RTPO, Local and Tribal communities. The State also provided performance measures, which were based on federal guidelines, to help ensure compliance. Our performance measures remained consistent with those provided by the State.

The final Northwest New Mexico Regional Transportation Plan was completed and was posted to the Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments RTPO website.



## RTPO MEETINGS

12/09/15  
RTPO Meeting  
Parks & Rec Office  
Milan, NM

01/13/16  
RTPO Meeting  
Convention Center  
Cibola County

02/10/16  
RTPO Meeting  
Chu Chu's Restaurant  
Pueblo of Zuni

03/09/16  
RTPO Meeting  
NMDOT Dist. 6 Office  
Milan, NM

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Jeremy Seaton  
RTPO Program Manager  
NWNM Council of Governments  
106 West Aztec Avenue  
Gallup, NM 87301  
phone: (505) 722-4327  
fax: (505) 722-9211  
email: [jseaton@nwnmcog.org](mailto:jseaton@nwnmcog.org)

## 4CITE Four Corners Intermodal Transloading Equinox

With construction underway on completing the four-laning of US 491 and the recent funding of \$4.5 million for the Allison Bridge & Road Corridor project, the plans invested in developing efficient networks of multi-modal transportation infrastructure that would support heavy, local, transporting economic opportunities are coming to fruition. Earlier this year, the Northwest New Mexico Regional Transportation Planning Organization (NWRTPO) received funding from the New Mexico Department of Transportation to plan for a "Four Corners Intermodal Transloading Equinox" (4CITE).

The region's strategic location, transportation infrastructure, and energy resources have led to plans for rural transloading outposts along BNSF's transcontinental rail ("transcon") corridor. The Northwest New Mexico region communities is geographically located in equal proximity to the ports in Long Beach and the Global Logistics Hub in Alliance, TX and in Chicago. The 4CITE Initiative is a combination of planned freight-related and rail-related infrastructure, along with industrial developments that interconnect with the Four Corners energy and agricultural clusters and the BNSF TransCon Line.

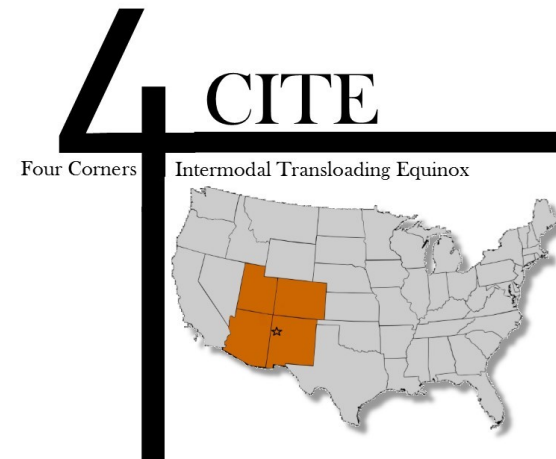
With the promising potential of viable economic opportunities that 4CITE will bring to our region, there is also a need for a balanced approach to development that will help expand business activities in balance with smart-growth principles. The need to conduct a comprehensive assessment will provide high-quality planning for the purposes of preparing vital infrastructure that will support a first-class multi-modal network serving an emerging economic boom in Northwest New Mexico.

In May, the NWRTPO issued a Request for Proposals from qualified firms regarding the development of a master plan, and consultant selection proceeded. The 4CITE Master Plan will be a multi-site comprehensive approach to coordinate the planning and delivery of projects that would improve access to the Gallup Industrial Park with rail service, the Navajo Inland Port, and transportation infrastructure serving sites throughout our region. The contract was finalized with Wilson & Company, Bohannon Huston, and with Souder, Miller and Associates in October 2015.

Although there are numerous deliverables the NWRTPO would like to achieve in the process, some of the highlighted primary objectives of this project are to:

- Provide an understanding of the 4CITE study area and transportation planning issues in the multi-jurisdictional "checkerboard" lands;

- Assist in the gathering of land use, environmental, population, and socio-economic data as a component for transportation and site development planning;
- Assist with the forecast of future conditions, evaluate impacts of growth, and identify future transportation system improvement needs within the 4CITE study area;
- Analyze current and projected traffic, freight, and rail counts from which to model and build scenarios of land use and transportation system impact. Provide visual models through video, mapping, and other visual mediums;
- Evaluate the existing inland ports and BNSF "rural outposts" and transportation systems with respect to current and future demand and the infrastructure necessary to handle expected future growth. Review public and private agreements regarding the development and maintenance of road and bridge infrastructure within the defined boundaries of these facilities;
- Develop a comprehensive and prioritized assessment of transportation needs in the 4CITE study area, including the BNSF switch yard in Downtown Gallup and subsequent active rail spurs, Gallup Industrial Park with Rail Service, and Navajo Nation Inland Port; and
- Develop and implement a framework for ranking & prioritizing short-, mid-, and long-term projects (e.g., roads, highways, & railways).





# NOTES FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

As we move into the holiday season, we are reminded to give thanks. I personally have many things to be thankful for, including being bestowed the honor of becoming the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) President. I appreciate everyone's support over the years to get me here, and the "COG family" who joined me in New Orleans to celebrate this achievement. I look for opportunities to invest national best practices in our COG's continuing pursuit of excellence, as well as opportunities to move our region through this service. Other major items that I am thankful for:

**Audit:** thanks to our strong financial staff, systems, and management, which are reflected in a near flawless FY15 audit.

**Gallup Veterans Day Event:** thanks to Bebe Sarmiento and the Gallup-McKinley Veterans for another respectful and top-notch program honoring those who fought for our freedom.

**Regional Plans:** thanks for the huge planning effort resulting in completion of several regional plans in Economic Development, Transportation, and Water (to name a few).

**POWER Grant:** thanks for our partners at EDA, who have provided us with an avenue to lift our region's energy economy and add capacity to our COG team.

**Panoramic & Ristra:** thanks to the COG staff, consultant Jim Glover and our NewMARC and Paladin partners for the excitement growing in New Mexico to invest in a project portfolio management tool and our Ristra Project to tie it all together at the regional level.

Again, I am thankful for all our members, partners, supporters, and communities that keep us driving towards excellence and most of all, my deepest thanks to my many dear friends and colleagues who have offered me their prayers and best wishes as I tackle the cancer challenge in the coming weeks & months.



# NORTHWEST NEW MEXICO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



106 WEST AZTEC AVENUE GALLUP, NM 87301 | PHONE: (505) 722-4327 | FAX: (505) 722-9211 | [WWW.NWNMCOG.COM](http://WWW.NWNMCOG.COM)