



San Miguel County

Comprehensive Plan Update

Report on Community Conversations and Community Survey



December 2017



Architectural Research Consultants, Incorporated

With Quixote Productions

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Report on Community Conversations and the Community Survey

Introduction

This report presents a summary of public input from a set of early public meetings and community surveys, and a compendium vision statement for San Miguel County's comprehensive plan update.

San Miguel County conducted seven public meetings involving community conversations between August 29 and October 4, 2017. The conversations were part of an effort to gather public input for the update of the comprehensive plan. The planning process uses this public input to help shape the direction of development in the county.

In addition to the public meetings, the County conducted a survey and received several letters during the early stage of developing the plan update. The report incorporates the results.

Organization of the public input reporting is by individual meetings and according to countywide themes.

Schedule of Meetings

The County held the following community conversations from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.:

- Pecos area meeting, Pecos Village Hall, August 29
- Gallinas area meeting, La Placita Fire Station, September 7
- Conchas Lake area meeting, Conchas Fire Station, September 13
- El Valle and Tecolote area, Valley Middle School, September 14
- San Geronimo, Mineral Hill area meeting, Sheridan Fire Station, September 21
- Trementina area meeting, Trementina Fire Station, September 28
- Sapello-Rociada area meeting, Rociada Fire Station, October 4

The appendix to this report contains the sign-in sheets.

Meeting Design and Facilitation

Architectural Research Consultants, Incorporated (ARC) facilitated the meetings. The County Commissioner representing the area and/or the County Manager gave the welcome address to each meeting, and participated in the discussion. ARC kicked off each meeting with self-introductions of the participants and a presentation about existing conditions in the county and subarea for context for the discussion. For meetings with relatively large attendance, participants were divided into small groups to better allow more people to speak. The County Manager, County department heads and towards the end of the meeting, participants could ask questions or discuss issues and ideas with County staff.

At each meeting, the facilitator asked participants:

1. How should your community grow and change?
2. What do you see as the major strengths and assets of the county, and specifically of your subarea?
3. What are your hopes and dreams for your subarea? For the county?
4. What are the county's challenges in moving forward during the next 10 years? What would you like to see change?

How should Your community GROW and CHANGE?

Please join us for a Community Conversation in your area! Snacks will be provided.

San Miguel County is updating its Comprehensive Plan & needs *your* input to develop policies guiding long-term growth and development in the county.

COUNTY OFFICIALS WILL BE ON HAND TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS

Pecos Area	Pecos Village Hall August 29, 6 to 8 PM	San Geronimo/ Mineral Hill Area	Sheridan Fire Station September 21, 6 to 8 PM
Gallinas Area	La Placita Fire Station September 7, 6 to 8 PM	Trementina Area	Trementina Fire Station September 28, 6 to 8 PM
Conchas Area	Conchas Fire Station September 13, 6 to 8 PM	Rociada/ Sapello Area	Rociada Fire Station October 4, 6 to 8 PM
El Valle/ Tecolote Area	Valley Middle School September 14, 6 to 8 PM		

QUESTIONS? CONTACT:
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VISIT WWW.SM-COUNTY.NET FOR MORE INFO



Synopsis/Vision Statement

We, the residents of San Miguel County, love the natural beauty of this large, diverse county, its forests, mountains, grasslands, rivers and watersheds and abundant wildlife, its history and culture, and its communities of caring people. San Miguel County is arguably the richest county of New Mexico in natural beauty, history and culture, while economically it is a poor county. We treasure our heritage and living connection to land grants, acequias, and the public lands.

We strive to improve the economy with tourism, ecotourism and cultural tourism (history and prehistory). We support the cities of Las Vegas and Santa Fe in their provision of employment, but also desire more economic development in rural areas. We support agriculture and encourage greater crop diversity and value-added agricultural products, such as from the community kitchen in Ribera Community Center. We support small businesses, which provide goods and services to the communities.

We want to continue to protect the high quality environment, enhancing our watersheds and improving forest health. We should connect watershed health, forest thinning, farming and surpluses of produce, meat or wood with sharing with our neighbors and addressing the needs of financially challenged residents.

We need better communication within the subareas, with the County, and between the County and State. Local networking organizations, more frequent meetings with County officials, use of the County web site and better use of newsletters, newspapers, radio and the web could improve communication.

The county needs better and higher levels of infrastructure for roads, Internet, and water systems. All communities need potable water. We need to address drainage problems that frequently wash out roads. We especially value public safety, which includes the services of fire departments and the Sheriff's department. Emergency response in rural areas requires EMTs and paramedics, ambulances, and sometimes helicopter evacuations. We value the medical clinics and want to improve health care and the health of our residents. Education is extremely important and should continue to improve.

Communities will benefit from better funding and improving grant-writing capabilities. Institutions at the county and sub-county level need to be strengthened with greater capacity.

The younger generation will thrive with strong communities, continuing our rich culture, healthy activities, employment opportunities, and education.

Themes

The following matrix shows the major themes that emerged in the community conversations. Statements from the meetings articulate some of the community's ideas and concerns. The detailed meeting results, reported in the next section, provide a more complete record of the discussions and present many additional points.

Themes from San Miguel County Subarea Meetings

Themes	Meetings Where Expressed	Sample Statements From the Meetings				
Love of the Beauty and Tranquility of My Community	All subareas	Forests, mountains, rivers, and streams are our major assets (Pecos)	The beauty of the natural landscape and the river. El Valle has a special rural lifestyle that should be protected (El Valle)	Preserve the beauty, clean air and clean water (Rociada)	Beauty of the lake and area, recreation, and nice community are a fine secret (Conchas Lake)	“True” prairies (Trementina)
Strong Communities	All subareas	We want “genteficación not gentrification! (El Valle)	My dream is that Pecos becomes a more prosperous community, stays clean and quiet, people invest more and parents are better to their kids (Pecos)	Sense of community = wanting to help each other (Rociada)	We are a diverse and supportive community (San Geronimo)	
Appreciation of Our History/ Potential for Cultural Tourism	Pecos, El Valle, Rociada, Conchas	“Pecos is not Santa Fe”....the community is attractive and is proud of its own identity (Pecos)	There are several key historic churches in the Valley which anchor the communities (El Valle)		Historically the Conchas Dam project was an effort of the New Deal’s Federal Emergency Relief Act to create jobs in the 1930s (Conchas Lake)	
Need for Economic Development	All subareas					
Small Communities Tourism	All subareas	Tourism economy – largely based on visitation to National Forest (Pecos)	Eco-tourism could be a viable strategy for Gallinas Canyon, including camping, fishing, and school groups (Gallinas)	Economic development may be possible based on historic preservation along Highway 3. Historic assets, such as Hispanic villages, Pueblo ruins, and Camino Real from Anton Chico should be protected. (El Valle)	Vibrant resort contributing GRT for San Miguel County (Conchas Lake)	Refurbish closed North Dock restaurant/bar and marina, especially selling fuel for boats (Conchas Lake)
Jobs in Las Vegas and in Santa Fe	Pecos, Gallinas, El Valle, San Geronimo, Trementina, Rociada	Conveniently close to Las Vegas for shopping, services and jobs (Gallinas)	It is very expensive to commute from Trementina to Las Vegas or Tucumcari, so it is also challenging to hire in people who want to commute here (Trementina)	There are few high paying jobs in area that are not specialists such as at Behavioral Health. Positions usually do not become available, so there are few opportunities for talented individuals to move up (San Geronimo)		
Forest Products and Forest Health	Pecos, Gallinas, Rociada	Opportunity for forest thinning, fire wood gathering and sales (Pecos)	Douglas Fir disease has left the forest a tinderbox (Rociada)	San Miguel is a poor county, has overgrown forests, plus propane is expensive. Could thinning and making firewood available meet several needs? (Rociada)		
Exchanges and Assistance to Cash-Strapped	Gallinas, Rociada	A barter exchange system existed in former years where people traded their produce - hay, apples, pears, corn, beans and squash - should be reestablished (Gallinas)		Surplus vegetables should be made available to people who don’t have money (Rociada)		
Disappearance of Local Stores in Small Communities	Pecos, El Valle, Gallinas, Conchas,	Village of Pecos retail includes a Dollar General Store, a Family General Store, and bank but unfortunately no grocery store (Pecos)		Several key businesses have closed in the past few years, raising issues of economic sustainability. (El Valle)		The Villanueva General Store provides a market and also a meeting place (El Valle)
Agriculture	Pecos, Gallinas, El Valle, Rociada, San Geronimo	Sustainable agriculture, including more gardens and small farms (Gallinas)	Much of the land is fallow and unproductive. It was over-farmed in the past (El Valle)	We need more crop diversification (El Valle)		County Fair (4-H) needs to be promoted (Rociada)

Themes from San Miguel County Subarea Meetings

Themes	Meetings Where Expressed	Sample Statements From the Meetings				
County Communications, Cooperation, and Representation	All	Improved County website (Pecos)	Open communications among the parties (Pecos)	Village of Pecos increases its advocacy with the County to secure more funding and services (Pecos)	We need a stronger El Valle community voice in the county and state	A partnership with San Miguel County would be advantageous, especially in the Youth Farm to Market project and Bueno Para Todos (El Valle)
	County roles in planning for Sabinoso include coordination with the BLM (Trementina)		The land grant or similar local group can build capacity in collaboration with County to provide local services and build infrastructure (El Valle)		Residents appreciate the meeting and having access to County officials. There should be a more formalized process for follow-up on the Comprehensive Plan. The County website and the Comprehensive Plan survey were mentioned as tools for community input. (El Valle)	
Community Networking	Pecos, El Valle, Rociada	Communications should be improved within the community as well as between the community and the County (Rociada)	Community communications through websites or a newspaper or other means (Pecos)	Community organizations are lacking. Besides the Water Alliance, very few community groups and venues for getting together (El Valle)		
Public Services and Facilities						
Littering and Transfer Stations	Trementina, Rociada, Gallinas	Trash collection is a sore point, as the County has no program, process or facilities to manage trash in the eastern county - too expensive. (Trementina)	Littering and public dumping are problems. More signs along the highway for Fines/Littering would help. (Gallinas)			
Code Enforcement	Conchas Lake, Pecos, Rociada	Derelict mobile homes – when the wind kicks up, aluminum pieces blow into others’ yards. Those neighbors have to pick it up and don’t like it. (Rociada)	The County needs to enforce regulations regarding “problem” businesses that dumping toxic materials and polluting natural resources near Pecos (Pecos)	Big Mesa has abandoned structures and unmaintained lots (Conchas Lake)		
Appreciation of Fire Departments	All	The Placitas Fire Station is an important facility and resource in the Canyon (Gallinas)	Have a nice fire department with volunteers keeping it going (Conchas Lake)			
Health Care	Gallinas, San Geronimo, Conchas Lake, Pecos	The County should offer first responder training for Fire Department volunteers to be able to assist in ambulance runs (Conchas Lake)	Pecos Health Clinic/Community Health Center offering quality medical care and is expanding its facility (Pecos)		Alta Vista Regional Hospital has eliminated some services (most importantly obstetrics). Sometimes there are no cars in the parking lot, as if it is empty. A community hospital may better serve residents	
Community Centers	Pecos, El Valle, Trementina	El Valle community center in Villanueva has needs that are not being met (El Valle)	No senior center, even with so many elders living in area. Seniors also need transportation. (El Valle)		Community center(s) offering healthy activities for youth is needed. The Pecos Senior Center might be able to be serve both elderly and young population (Pecos)	
Inadequate Internet and Cellphone Service	Pecos, Rociada, El Valle, Trementina	Cell phone service is spotty (El Valle)	Improved telecommunications, understanding that the ability to serve a small rural population may be limited due to economic feasibility (Rociada)			

Themes from San Miguel County Subarea Meetings

Themes	Meetings Where Expressed	Sample Statements From the Meetings			
Public Safety and Emergency Response	Trementina, Conchas Lake, San Geronimo	What if some gets hurt in Sabinoso? What if a driver hits a cow? (Trementina)	First responder training should be offered for Fire Department volunteers to be able to assist in ambulance runs (Conchas Lake)	Sheriff can't get an officer to live here. The Quay County Sheriff is willing to respond to calls if the San Miguel County sheriff cannot answer. Tucumcari is closer than Las Vegas (Conchas Lake)	
Need for Volunteer Firefighter Training	Conchas Lake, Gallinas, San Geronimo	We are interested in developing a fire training academy here that focuses on volunteers in northeast New Mexico. The closest fire training academy is in Socorro and the county doesn't have the funds to send all the volunteers there for training (San Geronimo)		EMS is very much lacking in the area, ambulance services in city and county often get overloaded and can't keep up (San Geronimo)	
Roads and Drainage	All subareas	The main problem for Big Mesa roads is drainage coming off the mesa. Storm water should be conveyed away from the village. (Conchas Lake)	We want higher level of maintenance of both county and non-county public access roads (El Valle)	First time in 20 years repairs for some roads – over years grading had lowered road level to that of bar ditches. The county built road level up so the roads drain properly (Rociada)	
Wildfire Hazard	Trementina (grass fires mostly), Pecos, San Geronimo, Gallinas, Rociada)	The San Miguel County Community Wildfire Protection Plan includes recommendations for hazards mitigation, roads, and access (Gallinas)		Trampas Fire in 2005 was on the ridges above Rociada, threatening (Rociada)	
Water	San Geronimo, El Valle, Gallinas, Rociada, Pecos	"Outsiders" are buying up water rights in the County and transferring them elsewhere (such as Strickling Ranch south of Pecos) and the Imus Ranch near El Valle)(Gallinas)	During the recent drought (about five years ago), water availability in Gallinas Canyon became an issue as the City of Las Vegas tried to press its claim to the watershed water rights, seeking the oldest priority date before acequias were established. Las Vegas claims were established in 1835, but some water claims in Gallinas Canyon may be older. (Gallinas)	Dependable potable water for San Geronimo area is needed through coordination between El Creston Water Association, San Miguel County and City of Las Vegas to develop dependable water projects. Residents are hauling water. (San Geronimo)	Water issue – want to be sure that there's enough groundwater and more drilling doesn't draw down current residents' wells (Rociada)

Detailed Meeting Results

Pecos Area

What do you see as the major strengths and assets of the county, and specifically your subarea?



- Forests, mountains, rivers, and streams
- Camping, fishing, and hunting
- Greenery
- Pecos National Historical Park including the Pecos Pueblo and Glorieta Pass Battlefield
- Conveniently close to Santa Fe and Las Vegas
- Community is loving, friendly and has great camaraderie
 - Younger generation is vibrant and wanting more activities and opportunity
 - Culture of ranching, fishing, mining
 - Musicians and artists
- “Pecos is not Santa Fe” ... the community is attractive and is proud of its own identity
 - Rural charm with great views and scenery
- Pecos Health Clinic/Community Health Center offering quality medical care
 - Expanding its facility and services
 - Has organized a Youth Suicide Task Force to address the problem of recent youth suicides
- Pecos Schools
 - The local schools are improving with better facilities and better teachers
 - Sports teams
 - Pecos Schools System has a five year Facilities Master Plan. Reference it for schools needs and also youth needs
- Tourism economy – largely based on visitation to National Forest
 - Upcoming Fishing Derby event (September ?) has attracted many collaborations and support
- Campgrounds
 - Jacks Creek is the premiere campground in Pecos Valley with equestrian facilities, campground, trailhead
- Village government services
 - New Senior Citizens Center (built 2010) is an excellent facility. The community also has a Meals on Wheels program
 - Village government has leveraged about \$15 million federal and state capital outlay, grants and loans for community projects
- Village of Pecos retail includes a Dollar General Store, a Family General Store, and bank but unfortunately no grocery store. The Village also has churches.
 - Local stores such as the businesses in Pecos and Terrero Store
- Improved County website
- Pecos Business Association website – more tied to Santa Fe than to rest of San Miguel County – stronger connection in the Pecos Subarea to tourists and tourism activities out of Santa Fe
- American Legion
- Acequias and farming in Pecos Subarea, while more in El Valle
- Opportunity for wood thinning, fire wood gathering and sales

- No commercial logging in subarea now
- Study by Highlands University found 19 (?) years of thinning needed, lack of sawmills and difficulty of transporting wood
- Partnering with PNM for biofuel electric generation opportunity?
- \$20-30m. potential sawmill project by Johnson Timber, but funds not available
- Seasonal housing mostly up the Canyon – 600 units – largely vacant inventory – asset?
- History
- String of dude ranches where visitors stayed for a week or longer, a few are in business, mostly closed now

What are your hopes and dreams for your subarea? For the county?

- My dream is that Pecos becomes a more prosperous community, stays clean and quiet, people invest more and parents are better to their kids
- Stronger, growing tourism economy
 - Campgrounds catering to RV camping
 - Extended stay tourism, hotel
 - Roads improved for RVs and bigger rigs to get up the Canyon
 - More high quality camping offered
 - More mountain biking
 - Winter sports – including sledding, snowmobiling and cross country skiing
 - Wayfinding
 - Enhanced Gross Receipts Tax revenues
- Focus on resources – forest thinning, logging
- Open communications among the parties
 - Collaboration with county and nearby municipalities
 - » Including unified vision and priority projects
- Community communications through websites or a newspaper or other means
- Grocery store – fresh food for locals and visitors
- Village of Pecos increases its advocacy with the County to secure more funding and services
 - This meeting is a good start
 - Enhanced Village grant writing capacity
 - Expanded water and sewer services
- Walking trail to school
- Community center(s) offering healthy activities for youth Pecos Senior Center might be able to be serve both elderly and young population
 - Dance hall
 - Funding restrictions if funds came from feds and Area Agency for Aging (AAA), but if County funds are used to build an extra room and it has access, it can be all-ages (Senator Stefionics)
 - East Pecos School could be renovated and used as a community center
 - American Legion is building a community center in Pecos
- Farmer's market/ food trucks
- Sustained and expanded community events and festivals , some events every month
- Satellite university
- Upgraded Internet – improving educational opportunities
 - Wireless may be most feasible

- CenturyLink extending fiber optic to the Health Clinic
- More affordable housing ... It is hard to find a good place to live!
- Food and security issues in Pecos
 - The medical center supports a Food Bank that serves 80 families
- Treatment is needed for diabetes, hypertension and obesity in the community

What are the county's challenges in moving forward during the next 10 years? What would you like to see change?

- If we do not develop retail and services, then we will become a bedroom community where virtually no one buys anything here
- No way to find out what's going on
- Tourists drive right through Village of Pecos hardly noticing the community or anything to stop for, just angling to get through and go up the Canyon
 - Most tourists bring everything they need, might stop for cigarettes or candy bar
- Limited what Terrero Store sells enough of to keep in stock. Don't sell beer – that might be popular if they did.
- Losing culture of ranching, fishing, mining
- Limited campgrounds
- Limited wayfinding
 - See travelers in big RVs heading up the Pecos Canyon, no idea if they know where they're going, road conditions, if they find a place to stay and whether it's a good experience for them
- Limited places for ATV – entirely restricted from the Wilderness Area, which is most of the country around Pecos River and NM 63 – more opportunities in Cow Creek drainage on Forest Service Roads
- Local opposition to recreational tourism
- Off road vehicles legal ability to use paved roads in Village and in County – recent ordinances passed
- 100-day season limits investments in vacation housing
- Work with Forest Service on closed roads for snowmobiling – address concerns about disturbing wildlife
- Trails such as Glorieta Battlefield near Pigeon's Ranch – tourists and locals don't know they are there and free
- RVs and campers do not have a place to dispose of black water in area
- Roads – B 62 in bad shape in East Pecos
- Pecos' proximity to Santa Fe has perhaps resulted in it's being ignored or underserved by San Miguel County
- Funding extremely limited
 - Pecos has had to "fight" for its share of San Miguel County Lodgers Tax Funds
 - San Miguel County has not provided any funding for Pecos Community Health Care services, while Santa Fe County has provided \$50,000
- Pecos needs to coordinate land use planning and infrastructure development with San Miguel County
- The County needs to enforce regulations regarding "problem" businesses that dumping toxic materials and polluting natural resources near Pecos
- San Miguel County should embrace Industry ... Renewable Energy seems to be a good option
- Lack of opportunities for youth - jobs, education, crime and drug use, youth suicide
- Lack of private property limits development opportunities

Gallinas

What do you see as the major strengths and assets of the county, and specifically your subarea?

- We cherish the rural character of the area
 - Health of the land and watershed are critical
 - The land is resilient - it recovers from drought, flooding and wildfires
 - We have abundant wildlife
 - Rivers, wetlands, and floodplains should be preserved
 - » The flood zones and wetlands are critical if there is a catastrophic fire to filter the water. This should be considered in the plan.
 - Encourage agriculture and harvesting of small diameter trees
 - » Encourage more sustainable agriculture such as family gardening
- Conveniently close to Las Vegas for shopping , services and jobs
- The Placitas Fire Station is an important facility and resource in the Canyon.
- Most campgrounds in the canyon are appropriately small; they attract weddings and family reunions
- There is some hunting in the Canyon, but very few lodging for overnight stays.



What are your hopes and dreams for your subarea? For the county?

- Eco-tourism could be a viable strategy for Gallinas Canyon, including camping, fishing, and school groups.
 - Mountain bike trails from Las Vegas up to and through Gallinas Canyon are being planned.
 - » Better signage is needed to protect cyclists. The road is narrow.
 - Special events like matanzas may help promote the area.
 - » Arturo Sandoval of Center of Southwest Culture should contribute to the eco-tourism discussion in the plan
 - County website lists some recreational opportunities; information might be added to further promote Gallinas
 - Winter activities could include a rehabilitation Montezuma skating pond, historically a great facility and attraction, now sitting idle. The pond needs to be cleaned, and properly managed. The County is trying to work with the City to address these concerns.
- A barter exchange system existed in former years where people traded their produce - hay, apples, pears, corn, beans and squash - should be reestablished
- Sustainable agriculture, including more gardens and small farms
- We don't aspire to look like Santa Fe, nor want a large increase in traffic, RVs, and ATVs
- Renewable energy industry in the County could be incentivized with a 5% rebate of project costs. Perhaps the rebate could be a credit on property taxes.
- San Miguel County is trying to encourage the forest industry.
- County Commission is considering adopting a Resolution to adopt the Paris Energy Accord.

What are the county's challenges in moving forward during the next 10 years? What would you like to see change?

- The land is overgrown and fewer cattle and horses are grazing than in years past
 - Wildlife has prospered. More state game wardens needed.
- The San Miguel County Community Wildfire Protection Plan includes recommendations for hazards mitigation, roads, and access
- Water is a big issue
 - "Outsiders" are buying up water rights in the County and transferring them elsewhere (such as Strickling Ranch south of Pecos and the Imus Ranch near El Valle)
 - During the recent drought (about five years ago), water availability in Gallinas Canyon became an issue as the City of Las Vegas tried to press its claim to the watershed water rights, seeking the oldest priority date before acequias were established. Las Vegas claims were established in 1835, but some water claims in Gallinas Canyon may be older.
 - Forest thinning may not increase the watershed yield.
 - El Valle Plan, prepared by Parametrix, addresses protection of water and water rights that may be appropriate for whole County.
 - County used language out of the old plan to protest the practice of water rights transfers
 - County should urge the Office of State Engineer to not allow transfer is still in basin, and the Office of State Engineer (OSE) determines how much can be pumped out
 - Wetland restoration requires
- Gallinas unfortunately has lost businesses such as two small stores
 - Could be a seasonal store
- Lots of people are land wealthy and cash poor, have to sell off pieces of their land, makes it hard to put in restrictions on subdividing
 - Families are selling off traditional homesteads as younger generation relocate to urban areas
 - The plan should consider limiting large subdivisions
- People are leaving the Las Vegas area and the County because of real estate concerns.
 - Available properties for young families are expensive and not easily accessible.
- Gallinas River flood zones are on private property; consequently access to the river is limited
- The County should consider offering volunteer fire department training courses to small rural fire departments
 - Would like to build a fire fighting training center, the closest one is in Socorro, which is focused on aid paid fire fighters; a new center in NE NM should focus on training volunteer firefighters
- There have been some larger scale developments considered in recent years, but sewage management has been a critical concern
- Gallinas Canyon roads can be dangerous, especially because of "partyers" who get away with extreme behavior. More policing and DUI checkpoint would help.
- Some of the forest hiking trails need more maintenance
- Littering and public dumping is a problem. More signs along the highway for Fines/ Littering would help.
- The Christian Camp at El Porvenir attracts about 100 kids per weekend in season.
- Road maintenance in the upper Canyon is an issue - potholes and winter snow management
 - Not so much landslides, but do have rock falls. There are like 3 alternate routes out.
- Healthcare concerns in Las Vegas revolved around the Boarding Homes for outpatients of the NM Behavioral Health Institute (former State Hospital).

- Regulations for the Boarding Homes are lax. Some facilities just provide shelter and little else. Some abuses reported, and some Boarding Home managers/owners were sent to prison recently due to some deaths which occurred.
- NM Department of Health should develop more restrictive guidelines or requirements
- Some boarding houses are unlicensed; Some do not monitor administering of prescription drugs.
- Duplication in tourism/ economic development organizations and insufficient funds to go around
 - Cooperation between city and county is key, they're really trying, but they need to get together and limit the number of EDC entities, tell them to unify, don't duplicate efforts
 - Lodger's Tax - City should raise to 5%
 - Plan should examine options to improve cooperation and efficiency and make a recommendation
- Narrow NM 329 with a few blind curves, generally safe road
 - Some drive the road too fast
 - Rarely gets closed in winter – but need 4-wheel drive or chains if snow heavy
- County road maintenance – some roads in poor shape with crumbling edges
- Problems with the Planning and Zoning Commission mentioned.
 - Currently San Miguel County only has a volunteer P & Z Board, which is advisory only.
 - There is a lack of training for P & Z board members.
 - Their responsibility is only to review variances, and their recommendations are sometimes overturned by the County Commission.
 - P & Z Board should be salaried, trained and elected not appointed.
- Concerns about health care and the Alta Vista Regional Hospital. It has eliminated some services (most importantly obstetrics). Sometimes there are no cars in the parking lot, as if it is empty Perhaps the Hospital should be publicly owned. Reference to Sandoval County, Guadalupe County and Grants that have community hospitals.
 - More stress placed on EMS
 - Commissioner Ulibarri reported that the County is considering some strategies for a County owned hospital.
- Drug and alcohol abuse is a major problem in San Miguel County.
 - It is estimated that 30% of the local work force can't pass a drug test.
 - The Memorial Middle School in Las Vegas (now vacant) could possibly be converted to a rehab facility/ Detox Center.
- Lobby state government to preserve programs and positions at Highlands University, such as the music program
- Quality of schools is a deterrent to economic development and growth
- US Forest Service, State Game and Fish and others should make presentations to the high schools to tell students about available jobs. US Army is the only jobs recruiting now

Conchas Lake

What do you see as the major strengths and assets of the county, and specifically your subarea?

- Love how quiet it is
- Beauty of the lake and area, recreation, and nice community are a fine secret
 - Even though Conchas Lake is not well advertised, fishermen, boaters, campers and others enjoy coming to Conchas Lake
- Assets of Conchas Lake, history of people having fun at the lake, nice facilities and a thriving community for residents and visitors - gives hope that it can turn a corner to improve to a much higher level
- If Conchas Lake were a real resort, it could extend the season and support a small restaurant to serve locals as well as visitors
- Have a nice fire department with volunteers keeping it going



What are your hopes and dreams for your subarea? For county?

- Regain the status of the resort area of Conchas Lake, which will drive property value back up and lead to improvement of abandoned and trashy properties
- Vibrant resort contributing GRT for San Miguel County
 - The Adobe Belle Resort is a concessioner using the historic residences at the dam site for lodging, and are offering a major commercial service at the Lake
- More events, such as fishing tournaments
 - Conchas Lake used to host lots of tournaments. It had the bass pro world tournament, and participants came from Texas and other states in addition to New Mexico
 - Limitations on lodging stymie large events
- Economic development
- Enhanced County role in economic and community development
- Spur Army Corps of Engineers, owner of Lake, dam, and campground areas mostly leased to New Mexico State Parks, to upgrade facilities, work closer with lessees/concessionaires for their success, expand leases, or, alternately, dispose of federal property for private parties to develop and operate
 - Refurbish closed North Dock restaurant/bar and marina
 - » Marina needs to sell fuel for boats - this was lost several years ago
 - Refurbish closed historic South Dock lodge if feasible - work with public on re-purposing of this asset if it cannot be reopened
- Improved collaboration between the community, Army Corps of Engineers and State Parks
- Improve emergency response capability in the community
 - Offer first responder training for Fire Department volunteers to be able to assist in ambulance runs
- Improved roads, particularly in Big Mesa, and improved drainage
- Consider municipal incorporation of the Conchas Lake community
 - With tax revenues, the community could push for more public facilities. It would be a big challenge, and a financial challenge. An incorporated community tax base probably needs businesses paying Gross Receipts Tax.

- Participants said property values are relatively high here, higher than Albuquerque . They may have a property tax base if a municipality were willing to assess a fairly large property tax.

What are the county's challenges in moving forward during the next 10 years? What would you like to see change?

- Seasonal population makes it difficult to keep up facilities - peak demands in on-season, then very little use in off-season
 - Ute Lake has much more tourism, while Conchas Lake is arguably the more scenic of the two lakes. Conchas Lake could be marketed more positively and have more amenities. Quay County and Tatum County have more actively promoted economic development including Conchas Lake than San Miguel County'
- Conchas Dam and Conchas Lake are managed by the Army Corps of Engineers for irrigation first and recreation second
 - Conchas Dam supplies water to the Arch Hurley Conservancy District near Tatum County
 - Historically the Conchas Dam project was an effort of the New Deal's Federal Emergency Relief Act to create jobs in the 1930s
 - The Army Corps of Engineers have limited specialties in operating such recreational facilities such as campgrounds and lodges. Building docks and ramps are within their areas of expertise.
- Federal government holds property and buildings here and will not release them for private development
 - Residents are upset about how the concessioner operating the South Dock lodge approximately 15 years ago was treated by the Army Corps of Engineers - when their contract was broken due to incremental, increasing requirements by the Corps to upgrade the property more than was feasible
 - In the mid 1970s, the lodge was packed all the time, you had to have reservations to get dinner
- Very few local businesses at Conchas Lake, consequently residents and visitors have no opportunities to spend their money here.
 - Economic stimulus is needed to spur growth in existing and new businesses
- People have to go to Tatum County. Tatum County and Quay have a very active economic development. San Miguel County don't pay enough mind. Could Conchas be more involved with the people in Quay, Tatum County.
- One participant said I moved to Conchas Lake full time in 1999 and it's been going down hill ever since
- An economic and policy assessment study of municipal incorporation should be conducted if there is sufficient interest.
- Residents want greater political leverage with state and county to bring tax revenues to benefit the community
- Difficulty of getting police protection given the remote location.
 - Sheriff can't get an officer to live here. The Quay County Sheriff is willing to respond to calls if the San Miguel County sheriff cannot answer. Tatum County is closer than Las Vegas
- County roads need additional maintenance
 - Dirt roads get washed out by the rains
 - Mowing is needed to keep weeds down
- Non-county public roads (e.g., roads used for public access that have never been adopted by the County) need additional maintenance
 - County should prepare a map of Conchas Lake area showing county dedicated and other roads
 - Home-owners association or individual owners can petition the County to adopt some currently non-county roads. Roads have to be in pretty good condition in order to be accepted by the County. The applicant for County road adoption needs to demonstrate that the road serves a significant number of properties and has some traffic volume. The community members benefiting from road adopt need to

- go to the Board of County Commissioners meeting when they vote for it.
- » County Road Supervisor recommended that the community approach road adoption in a prioritized fashion, utilizing an asset management priorities approach. The County is not in a position financially to be able to accept many new roads into its inventory.
 - » A lot of problems with existing roads lead back to the developer who had really bad drainage design when he sold all these places out here. The NM Subdivision Act now requires counties to have more stringent requirements for studies and disclosure
- The main problem for Big Mesa roads is drainage coming off the mesa. Storm water should be conveyed away from the village. The land on the mesa belongs to T4 Ranch, and the County has not been able to secure an easement from the property owner to be able to make drainage improvements.
 - » A drainage master plan should be prepared to Then they could get all the roads up to specs and they would last through these rains.
 - Big Mesa has small lots and no sanitary sewer; consequently individual lots cannot be developed in compliance with the New Mexico Environment Department's 3/4 acre/house septic tank requirements
 - Big Mesa has abandoned structures and unmaintained lots
 - Big Mesa has some houses that are dilapidated and owners need financial help in refurbishing those houses or removing structures
 - » One participant has a house overrun by rodents and needed assistance to make it habitable again, trying to get assistance from USDA – but was not successful
 - County code enforcement in Big Mesa is difficult in part because the County has trouble finding property owners or owners of some derelict properties are dead. Some do not pay their property taxes.
 - » Demolition of blighted properties requires "just compensation" based on an appraisal in compliance with State laws. Demolition is typically expensive. The Board of County Commissioners and county attorney must give their approval to demolitions, which is sometimes difficult to obtain

El Valle and Tecolote

What do you see as the major strengths and assets of the county, and specifically your subarea?

- The beauty of the natural landscape and the river El Valle has a special rural lifestyle that should be protected
 - Residents treasure their gardens
 - People relationships are rich
 - Community pride and community strength
- There are several key historic churches in the Valley which anchor the communities
- Lots of incredible projects going on, including the Youth Farm to Market project, the Health Care Co-op, two community kitchens (Villanueva and Ribera), the new Ribera Community Center (opening in September), the Bueno Para Todos Agricultural Co-op, and a micro-lending program, the United World College has been involved getting students to participate in local farms
- The Villanueva General Store provides a market and also a meeting place
- El Valle has a strong advocacy base
 - The community “saved” the Post Office from closing down recently through a very effective campaign
- Historic architecture: rock walls and formations
- Clinic
- Valley Elementary and Middle School (asset in subarea that didn’t get mentioned in meeting)
- Villanueva State Park (asset in subarea that didn’t get mentioned in meeting)



What are your hopes and dreams for your subarea? For county?

- We want “genteficación not gentrification!”
 - Young people stay in the community
 - We want to see kids stay in El Valle, but only after they have gone away to school or a job, received some education and training and bring their skills back to El Valle. We need to value our kids, instill strong values in them. Good youth programs are critically needed. The new Ribera Community Center can play a role
- Stronger El Valle community voice in the county and state
- More crop diversification in El Valle
 - Network of small organic farms growing a broader range of fruits and vegetables
 - An agricultural co-op is beneficial to share knowledge, tools, resources and equipment
- A partnership with San Miguel County would be advantageous, especially in the Youth Farm to Market project and Bueno Para Todos
- Solar energy and wind power
 - Solar powered farms and solar-lighted bike paths
 - Wind farm
 - The Community Center has the infrastructure to support a solar energy project
- Access to high speed Internet
- Higher level of maintenance of both county and non-county public access roads
 - Access road to La Cuesta Cemetery through BLM property (would require BLM approval)
- Land grant or similar local group builds capacity to provide local services and build infrastructure

- Historic preservation and economic development
 - Economic development may be possible based on historic preservation along Highway 3. Historic assets, such as Hispanic villages and Pueblo ruins should be protected. Camino Real from Anton Chico. Tourism potential should be investigated.
 - El Camino Real Trail from La Cuesta (Villanueva) through El Cerrito to Anton Chico should be preserved, including road repairs
 - Example of recent loss of historic resources: Imus Ranch had a pony express station that was demolished

What are the county's challenges in moving forward during the next 10 years? What would you like to see change?

- Much of the land is fallow and unproductive. It was over-farmed in the past, and it needs regenerating
- El Valle needs strategies for crop diversification, developing value-added products, and growing crops in cool climates
- It seems that climate change is affecting local growth patterns in El Valle; some fruit trees are not producing as well as in the past. Also a harsh drought just a few years ago had serious effects. The climate does not seem to be stable for productive agriculture
 - Mostly grow alfalfa,
- Several key businesses have closed in the past few years, raising issues of economic sustainability. These closed businesses include Madison Winery, Arrowsridge Bed and Breakfast, the Pueblo Bar (no gas service), the Sunshine Station, and La Risa restaurant
- There's a vacant public housing project from the 1970s near Ribera. It needs to be razed and returned to land. There are vagrants and drug addicts living there and creating a nuisance
- Availability of community water to all members of the community
 - Not everyone has water – one individual hasn't been hooked up because of \$500 fee to the water association required
 - Water lines were laid in 1950s, some pipes are asbestos – need to be investigated
 - » Fear of liver cancer caused by water
 - » Need for filtering system
- Lot of poverty and a lot of wealth in the area
- Need additional representation/voice in the County
 - No path for bringing concerns forward
 - No commissioner who lives in and exclusively represents El Valle on the Board of County Commissioners. Two commissioner districts divide the Valle
 - Need a formal voice from El Valle to the County
 - County budgets are really tight, not much financial support, but the County will try its best to provide technical assistance
 - Lack of communication between the County and State
- Community organizations are lacking. Besides the Water Alliance, very few community groups and venues for getting together
- Land Grant has not been supported
 - If County removes gravel from Land Grant, the Land Grant should receive payment. County Road Supervisor said all county gravel comes from a county pit
 - San Miguel del Bado Land Grant lost 300,000 acres – it's a human rights issue
 - » If not pay taxes due to loss of land grant and property is lost, violation of human rights
 - » No money out of development in Land Grant for the Land Grant – not fair

- Road maintenance
 - Paved roads after a storm become dirt roads again – debris
 - Road to El Cerrito has a lot of potholes
 - Roads that branch off from the main roads are in poor condition
 - School routes are the major roads – parents have to drive their kids to designated school bus pick-up spots on the main roads
- Drainage issues – culverts get plugged or are undersized – canyons come right out onto roads
- Maintenance of non-county roads
 - If property owners pay county taxes, County should find a way to grandfather in the roads for County maintenance
 - Let us repair roads! Whether land grant or community organization
 - If land grant could get a grader, it could maintain roads in area
- Poor emergency response to storm damage
 - FEMA Emergency Preparedness didn't help residents
 - El Valle Community Center didn't qualify for FEMA funding to address hail damage. It is not a small business – so didn't fit into category
 - Acequia Association didn't qualify for FEMA funding to address storm damage
- El Valle (Villanueva) community center has needs that are not being met
 - No Head Start program in El Valle for young children. Had one in the past – would like one now.
 - No after school program – would like to host.
 - County gave building to community center. Center could service as a sheriff substation, if have fiber optic, could be computer lab for GED
 - El Valle Community Center needs roof repair, windows.
- No senior center, even with so many elders living in area. Seniors also need transportation.
 - El Valle is lacking a senior center. There seems to be some collaboration between San Miguel County and the City of Las Vegas, but it is unclear who is really responsible and if adequate services are being provided
- Utilities – Internet and cell phone service
 - Cell phone service is spotty
 - » The County Fire Chief is working with Planning and Zoning Commission for approval of a tower at El Valle Fire Station
 - » County received an application for cell tower. County has tried to recruit cell phone service to the County – for lease build. This was the only “bite”. Low density and usership concern of providers. Topographic challenges of many valleys and hills where to locate towers.
 - Slow Internet service in the valley. There is simply unreliable Internet service and lack of facilities to access the Internet.
- Safety, security, and emergency preparedness concerns
- Housing
- Empty houses
- Summary General Group Conversation
 - Two or three residents raised concerns about county road repairs, potholes, washed out portions of roadway, etc. County officials present responded to resident concerns by pointing out that the County, though underfunded and trying to maintain over 500 miles of county roads has been attentive to El Valle road maintenance. Sometimes it is not possible to adequately repair an entire stretch of roadway due to sub-road conditions and materials. The County produces its own crusher materials at its own

yards and trucks the crusher base to problem areas. Also the County has a website where residents can report problem road conditions.

- A couple residents spoke up and said they appreciated the meeting and having access to County officials. They would like to see a more formalized process for follow-up on the Comprehensive Plan. The County website, the Comprehensive Plan Survey were mentioned as tools for community input.
- It was suggested that a serious effort be given to involve young people in the planning process.

San Geronimo/Mineral Hill

What do you see as the major strengths and assets of the county, and specifically your subarea?

- Great climate
- Quality of life in general, including the scenery, mountains, natural environment
- Slow pace of life
- Historic and cultural areas, history
- Strong sense of community
- Diverse and supportive community
- Interstate access, for further growth, should be taken advantage of



What are your hopes and dreams for your subarea? For county?

- From economic development standpoint, focus on natural resources, forestry, wood biomass businesses
- Dependable potable water for San Geronimo area through coordination between El Creston Water Association, San Miguel County and City of Las Vegas to develop dependable water projects
 - Water Trust Board-promotes regional cooperation Working to get water in the area. Not feeling a sense of cooperation in dealing with state officials, representatives
 - Explore the possibility of linking El Creston and City of Las Vegas' wells in the Taylor wellfield to supplement each other
 - Consider possibility of San Geronimo residents becoming customers of the City water utility
 - Water to the Sheridan Fire Department
 - Operational fire hydrants in San Geronimo area subdivisions served by El Creston
 - Water distribution systems in all the little communities in San Geronimo area for fire suppression - if feasible and desired by potential customers (people are very independent)
 - » Have thought about applying for grants to put in
- Leading the world in showing how to make maximum usage of potable water - such as using rooftop collection and cisterns
- Cooperation between the City of Las Vegas and the acequias to assure delivery of irrigation water
 - Some acequias have ended up suing the city
 - No plan, agreement worked out between city and acequias
- Continuing big ranches, most are 10,000 acres, many are historic family plots, or part of a land grant

What are the county's challenges in moving forward during the next 10 years? What would you like to see change?

- Difficulties in coordination among parties to make progress on water, waiting for permission,
- Can't practically export sand and gravel long distance because it's too heavy. Maybe flagstone
 - The majority of rock resources come out of the land grants and they have a lot of restrictions
- Housing shortage in City of Las Vegas and nearby unincorporated area
 - Hinders professional recruitment
 - Development of affordable housing maybe on the edge of town
 - Affordable housing should be included in new developments

- » For example a subdivision was proposed north of Las Vegas with lots selling at \$300,000. This is too expensive for most locals
 - » Availability of Internet in the San Geronimo and Mineral Hills area along with State and County road improvements may have led to recent sales of houses
- Houses in area without potable water except through hauling
 - Home values for such houses are low - more affordable, but difficult
 - To subdivide now an applicant has to have proof of water supply for 40 years and get that approved by the Office of State Engineer. Family transfer land divisions are exempt from subdivision regulations
- Not adequate access to health care
 - St Vincent's brought in a clinic, but its women's cardiology
 - Used to have 3, all shut down
 - Emergency response, EMS, very much lacking in the area, ambulance services city and county at the same time, often get overloaded and can't keep up. State Hospital pulls in a lot of calls.
 - A lot of the EMS are from Albuquerque and they get lost on calls, PD or Fire has to help them
 - Closest trauma center is Albuquerque
 - Easy hour and a half drive
 - Often trauma incidents are the result of weather and you can't get a helicopter in and when they transfer the patients they take away another ambulance
 - Superior has the only transport license, fire, police can only transport if it's a BIG emergency, otherwise they can't transport people at all
- Not adequate education
 - Education system is one of the main issues here- people won't move here because the education system is bad, can't recruit
 - Luna Community College programs have gone down, they tried to start an EMT program but Luna won't pay instructors enough and the program died.
 - » That alone could assist with the lack of first responders and Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) which is also a big problem
 - Promise Neighborhoods, US Department of Education grant is available for \$35m. San Miguel County only missed it by 6 points and reapplied. The grant supports education, to develop early childhood through college, also health care for the kids (dentists, etc). The county should hear back early next year
 -
- Need for fire training
 - Interest in developing a fire training academy here that focuses on volunteers in northeast New Mexico. The closest fire training academy is in Socorro and the county doesn't have the funds to send all the volunteers there for training
- The essential question for the County is how to sustain what they have now including emergency response
 - 7 sheriff deputies to serve the whole county (Sheriff and his Deputies)
- Roads
 - I-25 and US 85 well maintained
 - County has been doing a great job taking care of the main county roads
 - » A lot of the smaller rural roads are really bad and they're never going to get better
 - » Road A-16C has one really bad spot and the intersection of A-16C and A-18A has issues. Arnold is working on it, looking for funding.
 - » Some roads are in such poor conditions that the Fire Department can't get the fire engine down

- Wildland fires are difficult to fight
- Tecolote Creek has flooded, but the last time was 5 or 6 years ago
 - Village of Tecolote gets affected the most
 - Culverts get clogged and cause issues
- Internet service has gotten faster in this area
- In the local job market, upward mobility is a challenge. It's hard to find jobs higher up, they're all taken ("you have to wait for someone to die or retire to get a promotion here")
 - Doctors, nurses other professionals working at State Behavioral Health are in highest earning group in San Miguel County. Those jobs are only available to those with specialized credentials. Some may be long term locals, others not local.
 - There are few high paying jobs in government administration and other less specialized areas. Positions usually do not become available, so there are few opportunities for talented individuals to move up
 - » Note: in an industrial economy, without highly specialized skills, there are more opportunities to move up – true for a service economy too
 - » Limited opportunities for upward mobility affects locals to consider options outside the community/ not stay in the community, resulting in out-migration
 - » Lower paying jobs in area are the most typical and those employees likely stay at approximately the same job and pay level
 - Employment opportunities are mismatched with local qualified and available employees
 - » Behavioral Health Institute has over 100 job openings right now
 - » Sodexco was just hiring 50 new people - for positions supporting Highlands and Luna
 - » Low pay in this area, for example, Santa Fe Fire Department pays \$4 more per hour for starting firefighters
 - Can't pull back on any services, if the Sheriff's Department loses a deputy, the Department has to replace the deputy. The main priority is to provide services to county residents
 - Plan has to be realistic!

Trementina

What do you see as the major strengths and assets of the county, and specifically your subarea?

- Ranching
- Grazing land
- “True” prairies
- Peace and Quiet
- Sabinoso Wilderness Area
- Trementina Fire Department



What are your hopes and dreams for your subarea? For county?

- Continuing rural qualities and high environmental quality
- Survival of small ranches and big ranches
- Healthy range land
- Wind power
- Positive economic activity from establishment of Sabinoso Wilderness Area
- Reestablishment of trash facilities in the eastern county
- Road maintenance is a high priority especially for emergencies
 - Road maintenance prioritized for safety, school bus routes, and usage (population density)
 - » One participant offered to point out the bad sections of a road – with the idea that he understands the county doesn’t have the resources to upgrade the whole, long road. Was put off by a “doesn’t take a rocket scientist” reply
 - » C53 road in the Maes area is always problematic after snows and rains
 - Improvement to the road system in the Maes area, specifically reestablishing vacated County Road C53B and access to the restored Iglesia de Santiago
- Improved public safety provided by the San Miguel County Sheriffs’ Officers and State Police Officers
 - Maes area
- Use of old school building as a community center

What are the county’s challenges in moving forward during the next 10 years? What would you like to see change?

- Some economic development
 - Before the County’s oil and gas ordinance, there was some oil and gas exploration going on, maybe about \$600,000 worth of activity that generated some jobs and spending. The ordinance has had a negative impact on economic development in the Trementina area
 - » The County Commission established “setbacks” to protect waterways and arroyos within which oil and gas exploration and drilling is not allowed
 - » Concerns about “taking” of privately-owned mineral rights
 - Practice of “fracking” was the major concern, as it is water intensive, and the area has poor access to water. The disposal of fracking waste water was a huge issue. Unregulated “man camps” were another

concern

- Unfortunately, population is decreasing in the Trementina area.
 - There are lots of abandoned (or “not lived in”) homes,. houses that no one lives in permanently, still in family
- Planning for Sabinoso
 - Vehicular access to the Sabinoso Wilderness is a major concern for local residents, as the roads cross private property. No contact from federal agencies concerning road access, improvements or maintenance
 - On the recent visit by Secretary Zinke, County Commission Chairman Ulibarri was “embarrassed” by condition of the County roads
 - Speculation that perhaps the federal government will build a road to the Sabinoso
 - County Rd 353 (north of Sabinoso) getting some use, but there is no access to the wilderness area from the north
 - What about safety? What if someone gets hurt in the Sabinoso? BLM has conducted meetings with residents in the area. BLM does not appear to have plans for managing the wilderness area. BLM says it’s a wild area, so without cell phone service and other amenities/protections, people entering are on their own.
 - Concern about whether someone hits a cow on open range private property - loss of a cow would have major financial impact on rancher
 - County roles in planning for Sabinoso include coordination with the BLM
 - More signage is needed on the access roads to Sabinoso, for example signs warning of wildlife (deer, antelope, etc.). An accident involving a motorist and deer could leave the County liable. Also the poor conditions of the road (CR51A) could also impact the County if there is an accident
 - Tourism benefits for the Sabinoso are questionable. Previous attempts at ecotourism development in the area met with disappointment or failure, as tourists didn’t buy anything from locals, they brought their own food, beverages and supplies
 - Maybe a part-time local guide could have some work
 - Fishing is also limited as a tourism resource on the Canadian River. There are few good fishing spots, and the access is through private property
 - » One spot on river within Sabinoso Wilderness area
 - In the past access to the river was recognized and available to local residents as a registered trail. Everyone respected the rules and all enjoyed access to the river. Perhaps this system is not viable anymore.
 - Trespassing has become an issue. People trespass on private lands for hiking or arrowhead hunts
- Hunting is another loosely regulated activity. Hunting is allowed during season and with a permit, but of course poaching is fairly common.
- Ranching and grazing are the traditional land uses. 2017 has been a good year because of the plentiful rain. The pasture land is still difficult around here. Lots of snakeweed infests the range. Not many people run cattle anymore. Ranchers were forced to de-stock their herds a few years ago because of the drought. Over 100 acres per livestock unit were required to sustain a herd. Supplemental feed was required. It is no longer possible to purchase land with the expectation that ranching profits will pay for it. Going rate today is \$250 per acre of ranch/grazing land.
- Big ranches like the Bell Ranch can survive. There has been an influx of outside interest looking at consolidating or purchasing large tracts of land in the area.
- The Trementina Fire Department has lost 6 jobs in recent years (not clear why, perhaps County cutbacks)
- It is very expensive to commute from Trementina to Las Vegas or Tukumcari, so it is also challenging to hire

in people who want to commute

- Conchas Lake has seen many businesses close down
- Jobs on ranches have also diminished because of the costs of Workmen's Comp and other benefits. Ranchers can no longer afford extra help
- Salaries on ranches are too low to raise a family, and so many younger people have left the area
- Mora/San Miguel Electric Coop has a 10 acre solar farm near Las Vegas
- The Church of Scientology maintains a secret and protected archive facility near Trementina complete with an airstrip. They are perceived as good neighbors, maintaining their road in good condition
- Trash collection is a sore point, as the County has no program, process or facilities to manage trash in the eastern county (too expensive)



Rociada

What do you see as the major strengths and assets of the county, and specifically your subarea?

- Preserve the beauty
- Clean air and clean water
 - Keep the water clean – rivers and groundwater
 - Protect environment but balance with some growth
- Recreational tourism
- History and culture
- Sense of community = wanting to help each other
 - Community network



What are your hopes and dreams for your subarea? For county?

- Healthy population- healthful environment
- Healthy forests, with more thinning, some harvesting and controlled burns
- Agriculture continues – with some youths staying in ranching and farming, and more diverse production
- Strong community that stays networked
- Wind and solar energy
 - Get creative on alternative energy
 - Opportunity for wind energy – not big turbines here, possibly small home units – consider incentives for homeowners. Eastern county is where big turbines might go
- Public safety, safe and well maintained roads
- Improved telecommunications, understanding that the ability to serve a small rural population may be limited due to economic feasibility

What are the county's challenges in moving forward during the next 10 years? What would you like to see change?

- Communications should be improved within the community as well as between the community and the County
 - More community meetings focusing on problem-solving should be conducted
 - Conducting a survey online would be very helpful
 - Facebook is another means for communication
 - » Postings to promote County Fair
 - » Posting such as Mora Pickers – for free firewood or excess vegetables (see below)
 - Community networking is essential in order to share resources
 - Communication is needed to identify creative ways to solve economic issues
- The County needs to stay vigilant to protect the environment
 - The oil and gas ordinance is in place which will keep oil and gas industry out of the eastern side of the county

- » Commissioners listened to the people and acted on this complex subject
 - » A recent earthquake occurred near Capulin. Speculation is that it could be caused by fracking in Colorado or elsewhere in NM. NM historically has small earthquakes.
- Need for study of alternative energy technologies that would work here and taking actions to advance alternative energy development
- Forests are not healthy
 - Trampas Fire in 2005 was on the ridges above Rociada. Threatening
 - “Dominio publico” – common lands of land grants – historically forests were healthy, but with fire suppression, forests are not healthy now
 - Residents came to the Rociada valleys in the 1840, Sapello River, Manuelitas River and Mora River are part of the Canadian River Watershed
 - Douglas Fir disease has left the forest a tinderbox, ready to burn
 - Bring back prescribed fires
 - » Pursuing funding for private land to have prescribed fires
 - » Prescribed burning needs to be managed. It is not wise for individual property owners to conduct their own.
- Trails need to be cleared
- Thinning and Lumber Harvesting
 - - Ralph Varela has done a lot of thinning but currently the harvest is not marketable
 - - Some ranchers use only standing dead for all their firewood needs – plenty available
 - - John Bartley operates the only lumber mill (a gist mill) in the area and also has a machine to split wood for firewood – in Gascon of Mora County
 - Fred Garcia in Mora County had a mill
 - Lumber mills have been going out of business all over the country due in part to small diameter trees and air pollution from operations
- San Miguel is a poor county, has overgrown forests, plus propane is expensive. Could thinning and making firewood available meet several needs?
 - Firewood for people who don't have money is appropriate community development
 - Surplus vegetables should be made available to people who don't have money
 - Old Wood in Las Vegas is making flooring, bundles of fire wood and wood pellets at the old Medina Plant. This operation could create more demand for thinning and timbering and create jobs. Commissioner Padilla thought it promising
- Healthy rivers and streams
 - The County and Hermit Peak Watershed Alliance work to encourage private landowners to keep the foliage growing in order to keep the sediments out of Sapello and Manuelitas Rivers
 - » Clean up the river of debris
 - » Get the prisoners out there \$\$\$
 - » Concern about wetland regulations – leave out federal regulations – they hamper agriculture and are costly
- Agriculture is the key to rural economy
 - More support of agriculture
 - County has hired Center of Southwest Culture , led by Arturo Sandoval, planning consultant team to work on greenhouse to grow food for restaurants
 - Alfalfa is the traditional crop (2 cuttings per year) and hay
 - » Typically farmers do not sell the hay, rather use to feed their own animals

- Can grow some vegetables
 - » With hoop house/greenhouse of course can grow more
 - » Many Rociada residents have own gardens, sometimes with surplus – not reliably maybe. Some sell at farmer’s market in Las Vegas or Mora (no more?).
 - » Property owners in this area have land – lots of land
 - » High elevation but can grow great squash and pumpkins
 - » Can also grow garlic, herbs, and mushrooms
- Raising game birds is a possibly
- Value-added agriculture
 - Luna Community College has a community kitchen
 - Residents can start businesses packaging and canning
- Cattle production
 - Ranchers use- ~100,000 acres of grazing lands in the Pecos Wilderness Area
 - Fewer cattle now than in past
 - Sales barns – used to have one in Las Vegas, now the closest are in Clayton, Belen and Delhart, TX – its expensive to transport – discourages raising cattle
- Need to introduce kids to ranching and farming early if next generation is going to take over the ranch or farm
- County Fair (4-H) needs to be promoted
 - Sponsors, such as the banks and the electric coop, are not coming as they had to buy 4-H Club members’ animals at higher prices
 - » If kids do not earn much, their incentive drops
 - Fairgrounds are not in good shape
 - » County should contribute more funding towards
 - Alex: had \$5,000 from Lodgers Tax fund available and Fair organization didn’t apply for it – County had informed him that funds are still available.
 - The County Fair should be advertised through the Chamber of Commercial, Las Vegas Optic and magazines
 - The Fair should have a grant-writer
 - » For example, in Pagosa Springs/Archuleta County downtown businesses close and signs are posted: gone to the County Fair – trying to get people involved
 - Could the County Extension Agent play a bigger role in promoting County Fair and supporting 4-H or FFA?
 - USDA supplies seeds from their office on 7th Street in Las Vegas
 - » Discs, plows, etc. are available to loan
 - » USDA incentives/programs are not publicized or promoted and should be
- Lack of reliable telecommunications in the Rociada/Sapello area
 - AT&T has applied to put up a cellphone tower in corner of 105 and Ledoux Rd.
 - » AT&T took over Plateau
 - Concerns for emergency response
 - Landlines are not reliable in some areas
 - Sapello has CenturyLink
- Code enforcement is lacking
 - What are the codes on yard clean-up?

- Junked cars and trash
- Derelict mobile homes – when the wind kicks up, aluminum pieces blow into others’ yards. Those neighbors have to pick it up and don’t like it
 - » All over the county
- Location in Rociada was identified as almost a dump
- Commissioner Padilla had been the County code enforcement officer for 5 years. As a commissioner he supports code enforcement, funding, and county attorney actions in support of code enforcement. They need the tools to be successful
- Concerns with development activity
 - Water issue – want to be sure that there’s enough groundwater and more drilling doesn’t draw down current residents’ wells
 - Some growth in Rociada has increased traffic and the speed that drivers drive
- Roads safety issues
 - Dangerous for bicyclists and walkers. A cyclist got hit and killed. More and more people are walking now
 - High incidence of accidents on State Highway
 - Narrow state highway roads and increase traffic and speed – should be widened – this is NMDOT’s responsibility
 - Perhaps shoulders should be added without widening lanes – for use by cyclists and pedestrians
 - Participants complimented County road crew on making some good improvements
 - » First time in 20 years repairs for some roads – over years grading had lowered road level to that of bar ditches. The county built road level up so th roads drain properly
 - » Need a plan for rotating improvements and maintenance
 - More law enforcement is needed to reduce speeding, but catch the other guy, not me ...
 - Fire protection is provided by three fire departments – Sapello (in Manuelitas), Rociada and San Ignacio (new, with a lot of volunteers now) – population has grown in area
 - Helicopter landing for medical emergencies? Where do they land? In a road if that is the safest place
- Senior needs are increasing with an aging population, especially in Pandaries
 - Transit for seniors for shopping and services
 - Medicaid provides some transit

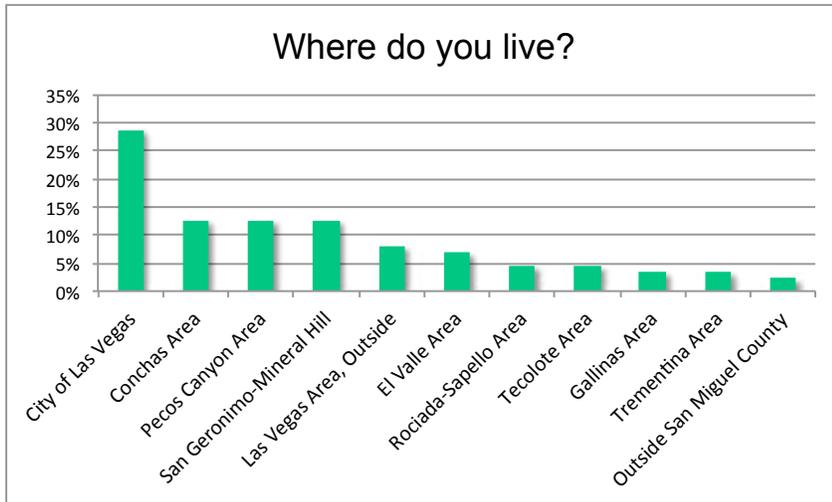
Community Survey Results

San Miguel County posted a survey on its website and distributed hard copies to individuals who attended the subarea meetings or visited the planning and zoning office during the period of August to December 2017. Respondents filled out the survey using SurveyMonkey. Hand written responses were entered by ARC onto SurveyMonkey in order to have a complete record in one place. ARC designed the survey to elicit preliminary information from respondents on issues and opportunities facing the county.

Eighty-seven respondents completed surveys. In addition to the multiple choice survey questions, the survey included several opportunities for respondents to write in additional information.

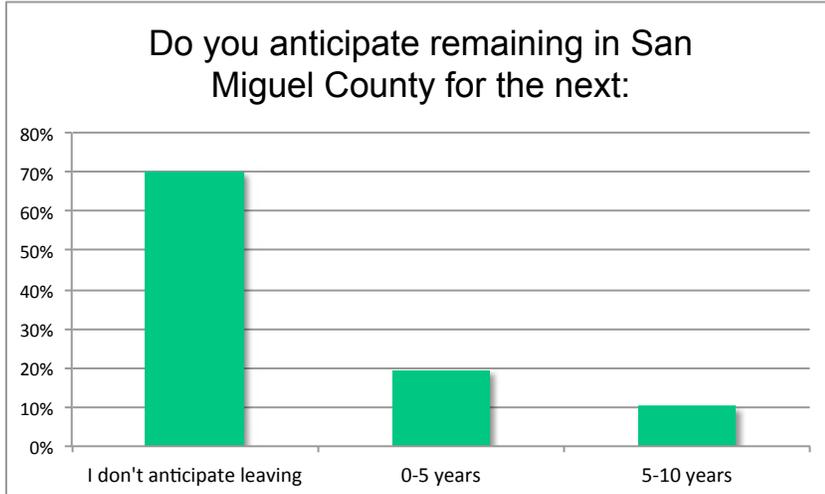
Question 1: Where do you live?

The largest portion of respondents, 29% (25 respondents) live in the city of Las Vegas. Eleven respondents, or 13% from each community area are from the Conchas, Pecos Canyon and San Geronimo-Mineral Hill areas. Residents from all the subareas submitted completed surveys.



Question 2: Do you anticipate remaining in San Miguel county for the next?

Most respondents, 70%, indicated that they do not anticipate leaving San Miguel County.



Question 3: What issues are most important to you for the future of San Miguel County?

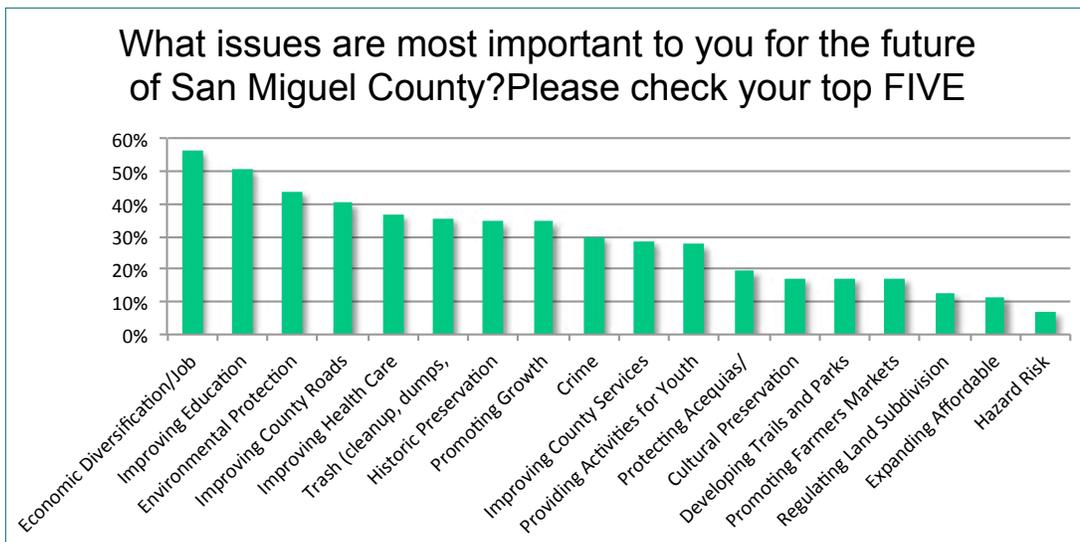
Respondents rated the importance of a wide range of issues. The top four issues of importance were:

- Economic diversification (56%)
- Improving education (51%)
- Environmental protection (44%)
- Improving county roads (40%)

Comments from participants offer other insights into issues that concern them:

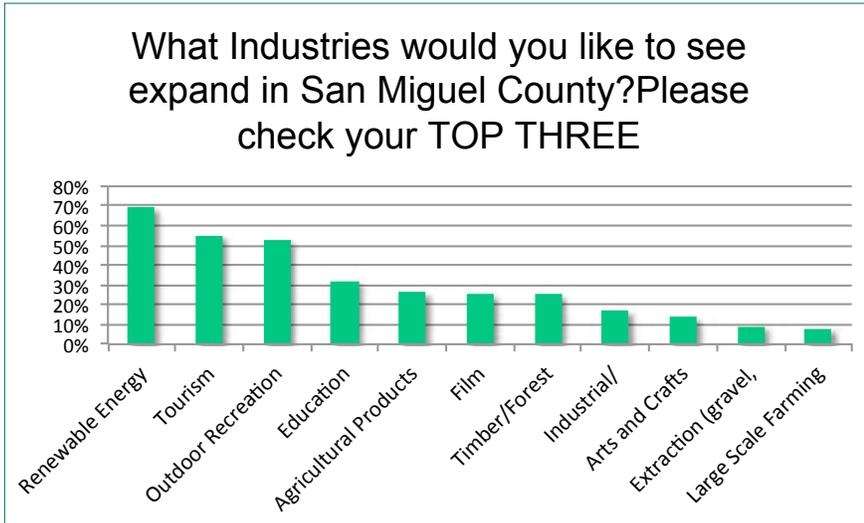
- Promoting agricultural development/farming
- Assisted living facility
- More convenient trash pick-up or management
- Other important concerns and values: maintaining unique qualities of the county, e.g., cultural preservation while valuing diversity; open land preservation for future generations; activities, employment and mentoring, acknowledgment of the value of youth in community life.
- Fracking and the contamination of potable water; the earthquake in Mora County is a good example of fracking.
- Community involvement and assistance programs
- My number one concern is not on the list. Substance abuse is causing much of the crime and destroying our population; we need prevention just as much as enforcement, incarceration, and rehabilitation ... maybe more.
- Enforcing laws as they are written until they are changed. Lobbying for changing the laws is good ... closing your eyes to lawbreakers is not.
- Providing fire protection and first responder availability in rural areas where such emergencies may require these services due to hazardous road conditions and increased residents and visitors to these remote areas
- Emergency services

- If there were only a single item for this list, it would be improving education. I am sure many people who live here have no idea how bad the education and work ethics are here in regard to competition from other Americans.
- Diversifying the county:-we need more people and more outside educated and experienced people who have been in the real world.
- Encourage and install HONEST County and City governments; do away with the rampant cronyism, nepotism, and inbreeding; clean up the towns and villages
- I would like to see cultural murals, acequia and river clean-ups, dance and physical fitness activities for youth.
- Our county needs more doctors, especially in Las Vegas.
- Preventing fire
- Creating or Enforcing efforts and regulations to remove or have removed abandoned structures.
- Provide improved roadways around Conchas.
- Communication
- Maintaining the character of area against pressures of incoming residents, i.e., thoughtful improvements but not improvement for improvement's sake.
- Making it easier for local business to market and receive local contracts. Too many unlicensed contractors are utilized by both government and private entities. The good guys who pay for their licenses and insurance are underbid by illegal entities.
- Need to maintain county road, for back and forth to work and children to school.



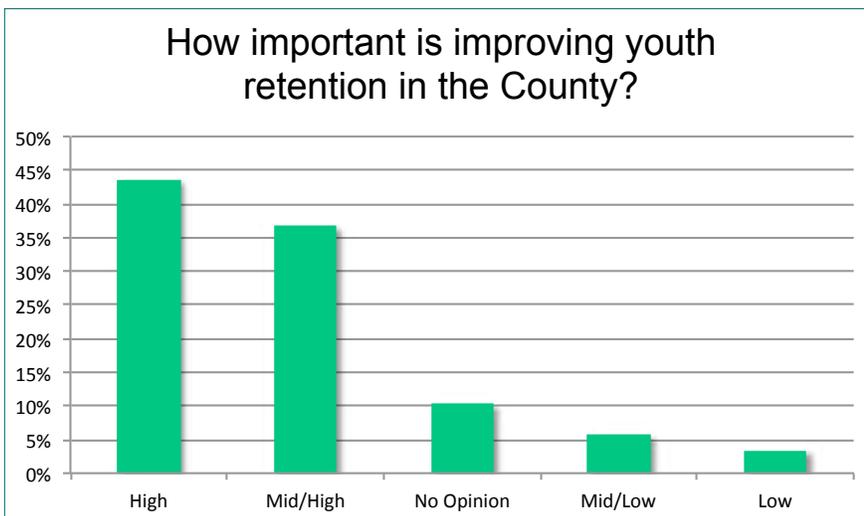
Question 4: What Industries would you like to see expand in San Miguel County?

Renewable energy was the highest ranked industry that respondents would like to expand (69%), followed by tourism (55%) and outdoor recreation (53%).



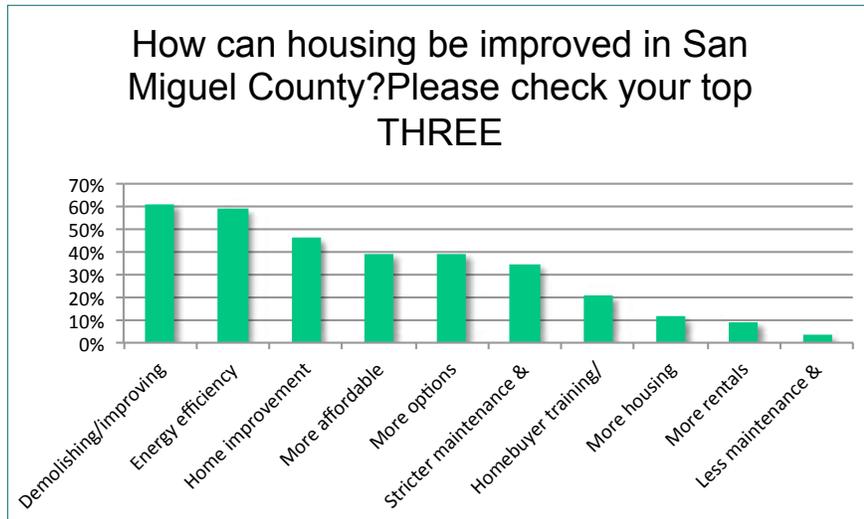
Question 5: How important is improving youth retention in the county?

Over 80% of the respondents rated improving youth retention either high or mid-high.



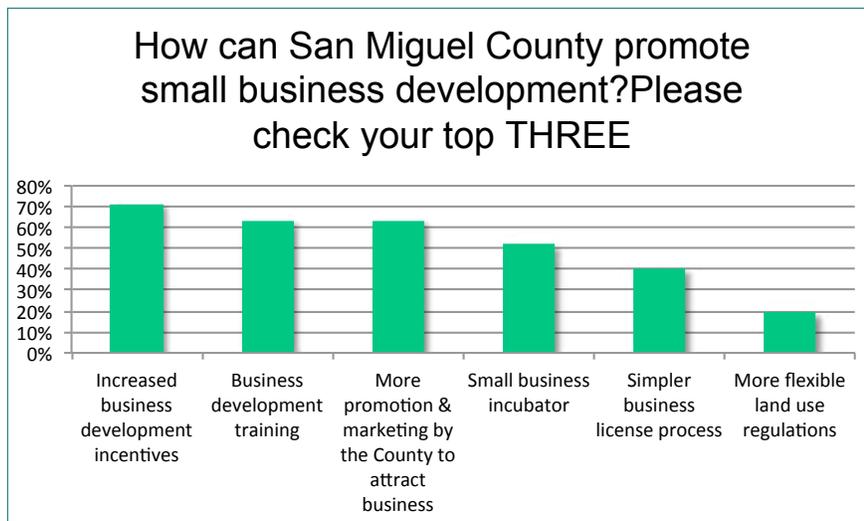
Question 6: How can housing be improved in San Miguel County?

Respondents were quite evenly split on the top two approaches to improving housing: demolition and improving abandoned houses (61%) and energy efficiency incentives (59%). Home improvement assistance (46%) was also a popular method.



Question 7: How can San Miguel County promote small business development?

Respondents favored three top ways to promote business: Increased business development incentives (71%), business development training (63%), and more promotion and marketing by the County to attract business (63%).



Question 8: What are your big ideas for improving San Miguel County?

Sixty respondents submitted statements. Most of the “big ideas” dealt with economic development (25), county government (20) and community development.

Some of the economic development ideas were: to further develop outdoor recreational tourism, business incentives, business-friendly, don't exclude chain organic farming, and wind and solar energy development, in eastern county area.

County government ideas included a higher level of maintenance of roads, additional support for fire departments, first responders, listen to the community, and eliminate corruption.

Community development ideas encompass a broad range of statements, including setting up youth centers, jobs for youths, bringing the community together, reducing alcohol-related accidents, and focusing on positive

Below are a few of the statements illustrating points of view:

Less politics, more communication

- 1) Increase the recycle rate from 2% to 90%
 - 2) More solar, wind, and sustainable energy sources
 - 3) Education for all in Financial Literacy
 - 4) Financial Transparency in the County Finance Department.
 - 5) Do not vacate our roads, maintain our roads
-
- 1) Market SMC aggressively to the right, targeted audience as a Plein Air Paint Out destination. These plein air venues and events are BIG BUSINESS for many places across the country!
 - 2) Create a San Miguel County Art Museum, featuring the best of county artists and crafts people. Give art lovers another good reason for coming here.
 - 3) Attract outdoor rec outfitters to set up business and offer all kinds of outdoor rec to both locals and visitors.
 - 4) Aggressively and on a *sustained basis* market the county arts in the major art publications and media outlets, such as the Santa Fe Collectors' Gallery Guide, Southwest Art Magazine, etc. Get the county galleries to form a gallery association to pool resources to do the same!!!!"

Tax big business and subsidize and support local enterprise. It is the only way our people can hope to make any kind of living in competition with the global elite. The agricultural areas of the county need you to protect our water rights, help our acequias, help ensure equitable markets for our produce. The eastern part of the county should never know poverty again. There is enough sun and wind there to power the whole state. Educate and provide incentives for the local population to harness this gold mine. This is the future of energy, and we have the resources in abundance. Let us enrich ourselves

Listen to community and get an answer in return, not to ignore calls.

Focus resources on youth development and education. Develop employment opportunities by promoting renewable energy and environmentally safe industry, to include tourism and film business, and foster small business opportunities.

Suicide prevention workshops for our youth. Drug and alcohol treatment facility for our youth.

San Miguel County, Las Vegas, suffers from a lack of more diverse restaurants, even chains such as Denny's, IHop, or Applebee's would be a huge improvement. Visitors and residents alike are limited to the same old choices if people are unaware of the new restaurants in the downtown area. The fast food chains on 7th St. are the only places that tourists passing through are likely to be made aware of or know.

Fort Union National Monument should receive more exposure. It is a fabulous and fascinating old fort; the staff are outstanding, picnic with the rabbits, bathroom facilities are clean and excellent although there is no camping, and one can wander the grounds with or without ranger guides, just watching out for rattlers. Volunteers are always welcome.

Appendix: Sign-In Sheets for Community Conversations

SAN MIGUEL COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE TOPICS SIGN-IN SHEET			
Project:	Comprehensive Plan Update: Pecos SubArea	Meeting Date:	8/29/2017
Facilitator:	ARC Planning	Place/Room:	

Name	Role / Affiliation	Phone	E-Mail
Betty Weeseman	PBA	505 757 6688	bweeseman@wildblue.net
Victor Ortiz	Public / School Rep.	505-757-6358	
EMILY ORTIZ	PUMC Bd. Mbr	505-757-6358	ejortiz1@gmail.com
Art Varak	Village of Pecos	505-757-6517	art@villageofpecos.com
Kevin Norris	PUMC	505-767-7124	Kevin.norris@pecoshealth.org
Alie & Sheryley	Business Owners	505 431 1132	
Ernest & Marti Rodriguez		505-469-4988	AbnFb70@outlook.com
Liz Stefanics	STATE SENATOR	505-699-4808	lstefanics@msn.com
Steve Romo	USFS	505- 257-21 ⁷⁵⁷⁻²¹	Sfromme@fs.fed.us
Christina Perea	Public	505-362-2761	Christina.perea.86@gmail.com
Tim Hagaman	NM EAD	505 862 2322	tim.hagaman@state.nm.us

SAN MIGUEL COUNTY COMP PLAN
GALLINAS 917

SIGN-IN

NAME	EMAIL (OPTIONAL)
Betty Martinez	betty Ludi martinez@gmail.com
ELMO BACA	ARC
Arnold Lopez	S.M.C.
Feliciano Chavez	S.M.C.
Mike Montañó	S.M.C. Fire Chief
Martin Brown	martinbrown21@gmail.com
Lea Knutson	lknutson@hermitapeakwatersheds.org
Lolanda Cruz	ycruzo@co.sanmiguel.nm.us
Daniel Encinas	RESIDENT
Harold Garcia	ggarciahardd505@gmail.com
Matt Stricker	rmcmcm@yahoo.com
LEROY MILLER Y ROMERO	l.miller@romero@gmail.com
Vidal Martinez	County Manager
JACK MARTINEZ	RESIDENT
Sheriff Gary Gold	Sheriff Sm County ggold@co.sanmiguel.nm.us

SAN MIGUEL COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE TOPICS | SIGN-IN SHEET

Project: Comprehensive Plan Update: Conchas SubArea	Meeting Date: 9/13/2017
Facilitator: ARC Planning	Place/Room:

Name	Role / Affiliation	Phone	E-Mail
Ross J Gurule		505 340 6558	ross.gurule@gmail.com
ALBERT WERNER	VOL. FIRE...	575-868-2904	AWERNER@PLATEAUTELECOM
BELINDA WERNER	VOL. FIRE ...	575-868-2904	" " " " " "
Joseph Jonathan		575 868-2331	
Benny Williams	Asst Chief FD	575 868-4578	williamsballeplateautel.net
Linda Williams	Fire Dept.	575 868-4578	" "
Ed Wright	Fire Dept	575 403-9744	ewright@co.sanmiguelnm.us
Carol Berryhill	Road Assiat	575-868-9099	creativecard@plateautel.net

Name	Role / Affiliation	Phone	E-Mail
Christina J. Jernome	Vol. Fire	575-868-0011	jnerkor@gmail.com
Niya Williams		575-781-9277	Niyawilliams@gmail.com
Jeanne Kelley		575-868-4561	
Helen Karno	Vol. Fire	575-403-5981	hkarno@plateautel.net
Joe Dick Nixone	Vol Fire	575-868-0011	JNNEKOR@gmail.com
Morgan	Vol Fire	575-868-2210	morgancenter@gmail.com

SAN MIGUEL COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE TOPICS | SIGN-IN SHEET

Project: Comprehensive Plan Update: El Valle SubArea	Meeting Date: 9/14/2017
Facilitator: ARC Planning	Place/Room:

Name	Role / Affiliation	Phone	E-Mail
Eileen Mulvihill	EVYFTM	421-2808	mulvier51@gmail.com
BDB WITTERS		505-454-1244	WTS PRUG PINE S RRENCH@GMAIL.COM
Emily Farmer		575-421-0279	
Angel Contreras	EVCC, SM DBLG La Cuesta Cemetery		coartega87901@hotmail.com
T. Salazar	State Rep.	421-2456	salazarte@plateau.net
Eva Artschutger	Steering Center	505 660-3434	evrus.ed.consulting@gmail.com
Maria Martinec	County Commissioner	505-429-4047	m.martinec575@yahoo.com
Martin Lopez	Chairman San Miguel Board	70-1738	martinly@v@aol.com
Yolanda Cruz	DWT	425-7998	ycruzeco.sanmiguel.nm.us
Patricia Gallegos	El Valle Com. Ctr	505 617-5281	patricia.gallegos2016@gmail.com
Morris Madrid	SM County	425-3664	
Alex Tafaya	SM County	425-7805	
Jose Gonzalez	SM County	505-340-5537	
Tim Haggaman	WMEAD	505-862-1312	tim.haggaman@state.nm.us
HENRY JUANTANA	Pres	505 231 7486	NA

**San Miguel County Comprehensive Plan
Rociada/Sapello Subarea Community Conversation Meeting
October 4, 2017 Sign-In Sheet**

Name	Phone #	Email
<u>Morris Madrid</u>	<u>425-3664</u>	<u>mmadrid@co.sanmiguel.nm.us</u>
<u>Alex Tafuya</u>	<u>425-7805</u>	_____
<u>Yolanda Cruz</u>	<u>425-7998</u>	<u>ycruz@co.sanmiguel.nm.us</u>
<u>Bernie Ortega</u>	<u>505 670 1313</u>	<u>ortega.bernie@gmail.com</u>
<u>Ben Ortega</u>	<u>505 670 2225</u>	_____
<u>Tim Haganman</u>	<u>505-862-2322</u>	<u>timhaganman@state.nm.us</u>
<u>Ellen Haganman</u>	<u>505-504-4772</u>	_____
<u>Tamara Schmidt</u>	<u>505-429-3966</u>	<u>dancinghawk7@gmail.com</u>
<u>Sam Arthur</u>	<u>505-425-8805</u>	_____
<u>James & Barbara Atencio</u>	<u>505-425-9122</u>	<u>nanatencio@gmail.com</u>
<u>Steve Wassler</u>	<u>505-425-3030</u>	<u>swassler@lynx.net</u>
<u>Leo Knutson</u>	<u>425-5514</u>	<u>lknutson@hermitspeakwatersheds.org</u>
<u>Vidal Martinez</u>	<u>718 9519</u>	<u>vmartinez@sanmiguel.nm.us</u>
<u>+ Abby Atencio</u>	_____	_____

