



United States Department of Agriculture

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# News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Two More New Mexico Regions Chosen to get Federal Assistance for Community/Economic Development Training**

*National Program Provides Economic Development Assistance in Rural Areas*

**ALBUQUERQUE, NM** May 24, 2017 -- USDA Rural Development Acting State Director Eric Vigil announced today the selection of the Mid Central Rural Corridor and South Eastern New Mexico regions to participate in the Stronger Economies Together (SET) program.

The SET program is a joint initiative between the Western Regional Rural Development Center at Utah State University, New Mexico State University (NMSU) Cooperative Extension and USDA Rural Development to provide assistance in community and economic development planning.

For the next year the technical assistance and educational support will be provided by the NMSU Extension educators, RD staff, and other regional Rural Development Centers.

The Mid Central Rural Corridor project includes the counties of Los Alamos, Sandoval and Bernalillo. The South Eastern New Mexico project encompasses Chaves, Lea, Eddy, Roosevelt and Curry counties

In making the announcement Vigil said, "We believe the SET program will be instrumental in helping these two new regions identify their economic strengths which will allow them to create sustainable economic opportunities." Vigil added, "The previous SET regions have already seen success in their economic development because they are working together to achieve their common goal of creating better economic opportunities."

The SET program helps each region to examine and create a plan to determine if the area holds a competitive edge in the domestic and/or the international marketplace. Then the strategy will be implemented in six to seven months. The plan is designed to:

- Develop a model for action and accountability
- Design leadership structure appropriate for regional plan implementation
- Identify technical assistance needs for success
- Secure resources needed for success

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The current SET regions have identified numerous economic development goals to expand upon. Those goals include:

- Tourism by developing regional tourism opportunities
- Arts and entertainment by expanding opportunities for the movie industry
- Broadband and technology by upgrading the infrastructure to help grow solo employment, telehealth, distance learning in rural areas.
- Renewable energy and forest products.
- Agriculture and agribusiness by building on what we have and grow more organic produce.
- Health care and social assistance services to attract retirees and take care of an aging population.
- Develop a skilled workforce/education which is one of the biggest issues with many site selection expert.

These SET regions have begun to implement their plans by accessing funding from USDA Rural Development and other sources to implement the various projects highlighted in the plan they have written for their region.

The current regions include:

- East Central New Mexico - ECNM SET- Torrance, Guadalupe, De Baca, Quay
- Middle Rio Grande Economic Development Association- MRGEDA- Socorro, Catron, Sierra and Valencia
- North Central Tribal Groups SET- Tesuque, San Ildefonso, Picuris
- Northeast Economic Development Organization – NEEDO – Colfax, Union, Mora, Harding, San Miguel, Quay and Guadalupe counties.
- South Central Mountains Economic Development Assn. – SCMEDA- Lincoln and Otero counties and the Mescalero Apache reservation
- Trail of the Ancients- San Juan, McKinley Cibola Counties

For more information on the SET program contact Terry McDermott, USDA RD Community Development Coordinator at [terrence.mcdermott@nm.usda.gov](mailto:terrence.mcdermott@nm.usda.gov).

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