Strengths
(Highest Rankings listed first)

1. Energy Production (12 votes)
2. Natural Resources - Land, Potash, Water, Oil, Gas (10 votes)
3. Entrepreneurial Spirit (7 votes)
4. Education & Training Resources (6 votes)
5. Air Service (5 votes)
   Strong Public/Private Partnerships (5 votes)
6. Climate (4 votes)
7. Agriculture Production (2 votes)
   Work Ethic (2 votes)
   Tourism (2 votes)
8. Diversified Economy (1 vote)
   Nuclear Storage (1 vote)
   Rail Service (1 vote)
   Space (1 vote)

Challenges
(Highest Rankings listed first)

1. Lowest National Ranking and Poor Quality of Life (10 votes)
2. State and Federal Regulations (9 votes)
3. Aging Infrastructure (8 votes)
4. Drug Issues / Crime (7 votes)
   Lack of Skilled Workforce (7 votes)
5. Non-friendly Business Environment (5 votes)
   Lack of Access to Specialized Healthcare (5 votes)
   Water Shortage (5 votes)
6. Affordable Housing (4 votes)
7. State Tax Policy (3 votes)
8. Distance to Population Centers (2 votes)
   Professional Retention (2 votes)
9. Youth Out-Migration (1 vote)
10. Broadband and Cable (0 votes)
    Housing (0 votes)
    Zoning Issues (0 votes)

Key Data

Area	Strengths	Challenges
Demography	✓ Steady growth ✓ We have more working population, more tax base ✓ Income/poverty numbers are better ✓ Poverty is down/decreasing ✓ Income is up ✓ Population is getting younger	✓ Difference increasing between SE and the rest of the State in 2015-2020 (population) ✓ Elderly population has decreased ✓ Less diverse on race ✓ Migration ✓ Population dependent on commodity-based business and government ✓ Real medium income ✓ Retaining and attracting work force – age related
Human Capital	✓ People ready for training ✓ Some college graduates ✓ Tech transfer ✓ Population	✓ Low innovation / patents ✓ Low higher education / grad degrees ✓ 21% do not finish high school ✓ Education
Labor Force	✓ High earnings / per worker ✓ Population ✓ Attractive wages	✓ High unemployment, rate ✓ Skills

Opportunities
(Listed in alphabetical order)

Air and Rail Service	✓ Attract those subsidiary businesses that use these modes of transportation ✓ Use existing distribution avenues such as rail
Agriculture	✓ Value-added production of regional-produced commodities ✓ Value-added manufacturing, increase agri-business ✓ Export economic base
Education	✓ Align educational system with job opportunities
Energy	✓ Attract business to our energy-strong region
Natural Resources **Land, Solar, Wind, Climate**	✓ Attract these types of businesses ✓ Promote the asset ✓ Repurpose existing resources
Public/Private Partnerships	✓ Increase awareness and build our knowledge of the benefits of these relationships
Quality of Life	✓ Attract foundation support ✓ Invest in aesthetics
Tax Policy	✓ Overhaul the State of New Mexico Tax Policy
Tourism	✓ Network regionally and cross promote, "visit the region", include social media in a professional manner
Water	✓ Use entrepreneurship to clean up the water
Workforce / Training	✓ Need more workforce training opportunities ✓ Tailor trainings for educational licenses or certification at the airport (i.e., pilots, mechanics, etc.)

THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS WERE SUBMITTED BY EMAIL

Strengths

- ✓ Geology of Delaware Basin

  Oil and Gas Reserves are being compared to Arabian Peninsula. Companies are flocking to Delaware Basin communities from Midland, Houston, DFW, and Oklahoma City to build regional offices, transloading facilities, processing plants, and infrastructure.

- ✓ Mining

  Mining is still strong with 50-70 years of known potash ore left to mine.

- ✓ Tourism

  Carlsbad Caverns National Park had its highest visitation in decades last year.

- ✓ Nuclear Storage Facility

  Nuclear- WIPP is at its highest employment level in years, URENCO is strong, Eddy Lea Energy Alliance (ELEA)'s consolidated interim storage facility is in NRC permitting stage and will mean more nuclear jobs when it opens in a few years.

- ✓ Manufacturing

  Manufacturing is increasing in Carlsbad Area with four companies increasing their operations this year. Carlsbad has ample water to increase its manufacturing operations.

- ✓ Agriculture

  Pecan, Chile, Alfalfa, and Cotton production remain strong. Our region still has ample water to maintain or increase this production.

- ✓ Low unemployment

  Lowest unemployment of industrialized counties- but this becomes a challenge if too low.

- ✓ Air Service

  Air Service is improving (Roswell's flights to Phoenix, DFW; Hobbs' flights to Houston; Carlsbad's daily flights to Albuquerque and DFW) to entire region.

- ✓ Rail Service

  Heavy rail service (BNSF) is strong. Several new transloading facilities are under construction or are currently under construction in Eddy County.

Challenges

- ✓ Housing

  Housing is our area's #1 challenge. We have some housing under construction, but both the City of Carlsbad and Eddy County's recent housing studies call for thousands of units over the next five years.

- ✓ Unemployment

  Unemployment- Employee Recruitment starts to be a challenge as the unemployment rate dips to 4% and below.

- ✓ Remoteness

  Distance from major metropolitan municipalities, distribution networks, and ports is a challenge to company and worker recruitment.

- ✓ State Income Tax

  State Income Tax hinders some companies from setting up headquarters in our state.

- ✓ Commodity markets

  Commodity markets can affect oil, gas, potash and agricultural markets. Diversity is key to averting hardship during a downturn.